

FOR GUIDELINE PURPOSES ONLY

TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE INTERPRETERS

The majority of Public Service Interpreters are engaged on a sessional basis. It would be unreasonable to seek their professional services without a prior agreement concerning fees and expenses. The normal method is to draw up an agreed standard letter of engagement, with a copy for the interpreter.

Such letters should include:

- specifications of employment (i.e. the task which the interpreter is required to do). For Police Forces this will include the requirements of statement taking i.e. the interpreter to provide a statement in English and the Other Language.
- the hourly fee. A good guideline is the scale of fees paid by the Metropolitan Police Service or those recommended by ACPO to constabularies in England and Wales, which include different rates for office and unsociable hours and a minimum fee
- hourly rate for travelling time
- cancellation fee where proven loss of earning has been incurred by the interpreter
- expenses for travel and subsistence
- position with regard to PAYE and social security contributions
- method of payment and an undertaking to pay within 28 days or at agreed intervals during a prolonged case
- insurance details.

The most usual qualification for a public service interpreter is the Institute of Linguists' Diploma in Public Service Interpreting in the relevant specialism. This examination is at approximately first degree level in respect of language standard.

Holders of the Diploma have been objectively assessed in their:

- background understanding of the English or Scottish legal system, or the provision of health care and local government
- knowledge of English and their other language in this context
- interpreting skills, i.e. the ability to transfer accurately the meaning of what is said in one language into the other language
- translation skills (sufficient to deal with short, straightforward texts), i.e. the ability to transfer accurately the meaning of what is written in one language into written form in the other language
- sight translation, i.e. the ability to transfer accurately the meaning of what is written in a short text in one language into a spoken form in the other language.