Interpreting

Briefing the interviewee: aide-memoire for interpreter-assisted interviews

The person who requires interpretation services will need to be briefed via the interpreter. You must conduct this briefing. The interpreter may add points for clarification. If the interview is to be video or audio recorded, then the briefing should also be recorded. A standard briefing may include the following phrases.

- ‘We will speak to one another via an interpreter.’
- ‘The interpreter is not part of the police. They are here to put what you say into my language, and what I say into yours.’
- ‘The interpreter will keep everything that is said during the interview confidential.’
- ‘Please do not try to have any separate conversation with the interpreter. They are not allowed to engage.’
- ‘The interpreter will interpret everything we say.’
- ‘If you have any questions, please ask me or your legal adviser. The interpreter is not allowed to give you any advice.’
- ‘We will speak directly to one another as though we share the same language. The interpreter will interpret what we say and speak in the first person.’
- ‘We will pause after each sentence to allow the interpreter to do their job.’
- ‘If one of us speaks for too long, the interpreter might stop us with a gesture like this.’ [The interpreter should then show how they will stop the interview. The gesture may vary in different cultures.]
 ‘We must not speak too quickly. If we speak too quickly, the interpreter might have to stop us and ask us to slow down.’

 ‘The interpreter is not an investigator and they will not ask questions. They will only interpret what we say.’

 ‘You may understand English, but please listen to the interpretation before answering the question in the language you share with the interpreter.’

 ‘The interpreter may ask questions to clarify what has been said to ensure the most accurate interpreting.’