



**Royal Mail Internal Information**  
**Criminal Investigation Team**

# **Appendix 9 to 7.4 Interpreters at Suspect Interviews**

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## Key Accountabilities

Who is accountable?	What do I have to do?	When do I have to do this?	How do I do this?
All members of Royal Mail Security	Ensure you comply with these procedures	Ongoing	As detailed within these procedures

## **Interpreters at Suspect Interviews**

### **1. General**

- 1.1** If it is known in advance that an interpreter might be needed, arrangements should be made for them to be present from the outset (at the suspect approach stage). If it becomes apparent after approaching the suspect then an interpreter should be called as soon as practicable.
- 1.2 Deaf people and people with speech difficulties.** Any interview with a deaf or partially hearing suspect or a suspect who has speech difficulties should be recorded on tape with a written record of the interview being recorded simultaneously. The interviewer shall make sure that the interpreter as well as the suspect is allowed to read the interview record and certify its accuracy as they may be called to give evidence.
- 1.3 Foreign Languages.** An interpreter will be required;
- 1.3.1** If the suspect has difficulty understanding English.
- 1.3.2** The interviewer cannot speak the suspect's own language.
- 1.3.3** The suspect wants an interpreter present.
- If the interview is recorded on tape there is no requirement for the interpreter to make a note of the interview. If, however, the interview is to be conducted by means of notes of interview an Investigator shall make sure the interpreter makes a simultaneous note of the interview in the person's language, for use in the event of the interpreter being called to give evidence. The interviewer should allow sufficient time for the interpreter to note each question and answer after each is put, given and interpreted. The interpreter must certify the accuracy of the notes at the end. The suspect must be allowed to read the interpreter's record or have it read to them and sign it as correct or indicate the respects in which they consider it inaccurate.
- 1.4 Recording arrangements to obtain an interpreter.** Any action taken to call an interpreter must be recorded.
- 1.5 Payment for interpreters.** Interpreters should be requested to submit an invoice which will be paid by raising a purchase order. Investigators should ask interpreters for a ball park cost figure as this will enable a purchase order to be raised prior to the actual invoice being received.

### **2. Obtaining Interpreters for Deaf People and People with Speech Difficulties**

- 2.1** Whenever possible Investigators should ensure that any interpreter engaged is registered on the National Register of Communication Professionals working with Deaf and Deafblind People (NRCPD). The register is accessible on the internet at <http://www.nrcpd.org.uk>
- 2.2** In order to engage the appropriate Communication Professional the Investigator will have to know the particular language used by the suspect as there are several types including;
- 2.2.1** British Sign Language (BSL).
- 2.2.2** Sign Supported English (SSE).
- 2.2.3** Lip Reading in conjunction with another.

- 2.3** The NRCPD website is user friendly and easy to follow. After getting a list of names of potential interpreters the Investigator should click on "Biography" next to the names. If the interpreter is not prepared to be called out there will not be any contact numbers. If there are contact numbers then the interpreter is available as detailed. The register has interpreters in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

### 3 Obtaining Foreign Language Interpreters

- 3.1 Whenever possible Investigators should ensure that any interpreter engaged is registered on the National Register of Public Service Interpreters (NRPSI). Access to this database is by subscription and RM Security do not subscribe. As such if an Investigator needs an interpreter at some date in the future they should attempt to obtain an interpreter on the open market. Hints and tips on sourcing an interpreter are detailed in paragraphs 3.2 & 3.3 below. If, however, a foreign language interpreter is required urgently then contact should be made with the local police as they may be able to assist in obtaining an interpreter.
- 3.2 **Internet Searches.** The Institute of Translation and Interpreting has a free "Directory of Members" from which interpreters can be drawn at <http://www.iti.org.uk/indexMain.html> The following searches are available;
- 3.2.1 Select "Directory of Members" - "Interpreters" - "Police & Court". Then enter the relevant language and the "Geographical Location". Click on relevant names to get their contact details.
- 3.2.2 Select "Directory of Members" - "Interpreters" - "Business". Use the drop down menu "Specialisation" and select police.
- 3.3 **Contacting Interpreters on the Telephone.** Below is a table detailing companies which offer interpreter services.

Organisation	Number during office hours	Number out of office hours
In Real Time Translation Knockhundred Translation Ltd Tongue Tied Ltd Andiamo Language Services Ltd	GRO	GRO Not available Not available Not available

### 4. Unable to Contact an Interpreter

- 4.1 If Investigators are unable to arrange for an interpreter to be present and the interview is **not immediately** necessary then the interview should be delayed until an interpreter is present. (In respect of searches consent from deaf people or people with speech difficulties can be obtained in writing and in the case of foreign languages over the telephone (see 4.5 below). If it is considered that an immediate interview is necessary the following course of action should be followed.
- 4.2 **Deaf People or People with Speech difficulties.** If necessary the interview can commence by way of notes of interview if the suspect agrees to do so in writing. Alternatively the suspect could attend a Police station voluntarily and not under arrest so an interpreter can be obtained. Should the suspect decline both then the assistance of the police should be requested.
- 4.3 **Foreign Languages.** In the first instance the suspect should be asked (using the telephone translator) to attend a Police station voluntarily and not under arrest. If the suspect declines to go voluntarily then the next course of action will be dependent on their understanding of English. (Investigators should note that a suspect may have a level of English but be more fluent in another language

and as such prefer the interview in their fluent language). If they have a level of English and they consent to be interviewed then the interview can commence without an interpreter, but only if a Senior Investigation Manager (SIM) at BPC 8 or above considers that the delay will lead to any of the 5 consequences detailed below and the interview would not significantly harm the person's physical or mental state. (A record must be made of the grounds for the decision).

**4.3.1** Interference with, or harm to, evidence connected with an offence;

**4.3.2** Interference with, or physical harm to, other people or,

**4.3.3** Serious loss of, or damage to, property;

**4.3.4** The alerting of other people suspected of committing an offence, but not yet apprehended for it or,

**4.3.5** Hindering the recovery of property obtained in consequence of the commission of an offence.

However once the risk has been averted the interview should be ceased until an interpreter is present.

**4.4** Should the suspect have insufficient understanding of English then police assistance should be requested.

**4.5 Knockhundred Translation Ltd** provide a 24/7 telephone interpreter services. To access this service telephone the Free-phone number 0800 731 7878. The pin number for RM Security account is KH001. The operator will arrange a conference call. Before calling try to establish which language and dialect is required as this will save time. In addition to the Investigator making notes of any conversations they must ask the interpreter to make a record of them as well. If attempting to get consent to search it is advised that the forms, GS004 and GS005, are faxed or e-mailed to the interpreter in order that they can document exactly what has been interpreted.

## **5. Briefing an Interpreter**

**5.1 Direct Approach.** The interpreter should be asked to take the Direct Approach to interpreting. That is to say the Investigator should talk directly to the suspect and the interpreter should interpret the exact words used. For example if an Investigator asks the suspect "I want you to answer the question yes or no" the interpreter should say in relevant language exactly what the Investigator said, "I want you to answer the question yes or no". The interpreter should **not** rephrase the question to "he said that he wants you to answer the question yes or no". Additionally when answers are given by the suspect the interpreter should state the exact words spoken without rephrasing the answer.

**5.2 Speed of interview.** The Interpreter should be asked to keep the pace of the interview down as this will aid all parties. Also they should be told that if the interviewee speeds up the interpreter should ask them to slow down and inform the Investigator that they have done so.

**5.3** The interpreter should be briefed that they must **not**;

**5.3.1** Speak on behalf of the suspect and answer questions for them. They should merely interpret what the suspect says.

**5.3.2** Engage in side conversations with the suspect. If anything requires discussion the interpreter should discuss it with the Investigator.

**5.3.3** Talk at the same time as the Investigator or suspect.

**5.3.4** Compress or alter whatever is said by the Investigator or suspect.



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**Glossary**

Abbreviation or Term	Meaning
<b>SIM</b>	Senior Investigation Manager

## Document Summary

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