



MOMENTS OF  
FREEDOM

لحظات الحرية

MOMENTS OF FREEDOM

## Tips for multilingual working

[www.momentsoffreedom.org](http://www.momentsoffreedom.org)

outside the box



## Tips for multilingual working

At the Moments of Freedom group we use several ways of working to ensure group members are fully informed and can have their say.

Over the last 7 years we have used an interpreter during our group sessions which comes in especially helpful when we have guest presentations or speakers.

We use a mix of interpreting and translating:

- **Interpretation** converts spoken language or sign language into another spoken language.
- **Translation** converts written text from one language to another.

These are two different skills and not everyone will be able to do both.

Before you book any support be clear about what you are requiring.

## Working with interpreters

Anyone can book an interpreter through an agency. Some exist purely online, and others operate as part of a bigger organisation such as an integration organisation.

We currently use Voiceover Interpreting. They are a not-for-profit social enterprise founded by Govan Community Project in 2011  
<http://www.voiceoverinterpreting.org.uk/> .

Once you have opened an account with them you can book your interpreter online and they invoice you the following month. They have a long list of languages to select but they might not always be able to source an interpreter at short notice so it's best to book in advance.

There are other agencies that might suit your needs better – ask around for other recommendations.



Be clear about what the interpreter will be doing for you and give them an overview before you start the session/meeting. Lots of interpreters will be used for health or legal appointments which require a particular style of interpretation – everything must be interpreted with very high levels of accuracy.

At Outside the Box we use interpreters to support people to participate in group work sessions and at open community events. We use our interpreters as a 'safety net' to catch us when things might get misunderstood when working in English.

We give our interpreters clear instructions that the groups we work with are wanting to practise their English – this gives people time to find the words they are looking for before the interpreter steps in.

Interpreters need information to be broken into manageable blocks – remember to take breaks when you are talking to allow your interpreter to speak. They might ask you to stop so they can step in to speak – some may take notes as they go as it's often a lot of information to remember and repeat in another language.

Interpreters should act professionally and put their own views to one side whilst on a job. We have in the past had to request a change of interpreter when it was clear that an interpreter was sharing their own views that were not requested.

There are lots of New Scots who have wonderful language skills and will offer these to support your work.

Think about whether this could be appropriate for them, those they are interpreting for, or your organisation.

They may not have had any experience in interpreting professionally and may not be aware of a breach in confidentiality.

This may not be an issue if it's for something like a community coffee morning.

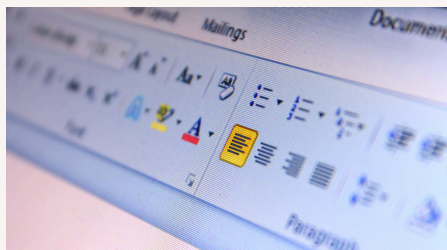
Think about how you will support them in this volunteer role and how to make it a good experience for them. Be clear about their role and the boundaries of it.

## Translation – from an agency

- You can send text to an agency to be translated – in the past we have used both Voiceover and Global. They usually charge per number of words, e.g. under 300 words is £29.50 + VAT.
- Word documents are relatively easy to get translated. If a document has been designed prior to translation that is more complicated. You might be asked to provide it as a word document, and you will have to insert the translated text back into your design. Some agencies might do this for you – this is called typesetting.
- If you are inserting the text into a designed document, you need to be aware that not all languages run from left to right - Arabic runs right to left. Line breaks could change the meaning of your text so get someone to 'sense-check' it for you before sending it out to others.

## Translation – doing it yourself

- There are lots of tools that will translate written text for you. Google Translate is a popular one but people have told us that it isn't always accurate.
- We use the in-built translation tool in online Microsoft Word, and we've been told that it's very accurate. We like it because it'll automatically justify the text in your document (e.g. text translated from English to Arabic will run from right to left).
- We have recently started using the auto-translate tool in Canva. We use this for documents that need to have an element of graphic design like leaflets or posters.
- These DIY tools are great if you need something translated quickly or you don't have a budget for using an agency.





MOMENTS OF  
FREEDOM  
لحظات الحرية

We hope you find  
this helpful!

Moments of Freedom

