# Guidelines for using Zoom with Deaf participants and interpreters

*Please note: the following guidelines are based on Zoom features - alternative online video platforms such as Skype, FaceTime, Slack, Facebook Messenger, Microsoft Teams etc. will vary in functionality. Familiarising yourself with appropriate instructions for different platforms is advised.*

These guidelines are for hosts/facilitators booking a NZSL interpreter for an online meeting involving one or more Deaf participants, and one or more NZSL interpreters, where participant/s and interpreter/s are not in the same room.

Online interpreting services can be provided by freelance NZSL interpreters, or an interpreter agency, and in the current COVID-19 situation you can still book an interpreter through normal channels.

The aim of this document is to ensure your interaction is as accessible and inclusive as possible, for all participants. Online interpreting presents some unique challenges:

## 1. IDEAL TECHNOLOGY

Ideally, the device you use will be connected by an ethernet cable rather than relying on a wifi signal.

- Use a trusted online video platform with end to end encryption.
- Use adequate and up to date anti-virus software.
- For optimal visibility a separate webcam is recommended.
- For optimal sound quality a headset is recommended as it helps to isolate the audio output of the speaker/facilitator.

## 2. ZOOM FEATURES

HOST CONTROL - the host can override microphones and camera views - please remember it is vital that the Deaf participant/s and interpreter/s can see each other, at all times, during the meeting.

PIN - Deaf participants/interpreters may use this feature in Zoom as it allows better visual access. If there is more than one interpreter they will take turns throughout the meeting.

SPOTLIGHT - this will override the view of all participants to show just one person. Please do not use this feature in an interpreted meeting as it overrides the PIN feature.

SCREEN SHARE - Please give a warning if you are about to use Screen Sharing. This allows the Deaf participants/interpreters time to readjust the screen to maximise their visual access. You may need to allow participants time to view your shared screen before talking.  For Deaf participants it is difficult to watch both the shared screen information and the interpreted information from your speaker.

BREAKOUT ROOMS - Breakout room participants can be allocated by the host or randomly selected by Zoom. If planning to use this feature during your meeting it is important that the host organises the Deaf person/s into a breakout room with the interpreter/s.

CAMERAS OFF - Some participants have found that Zoom quality is compromised if there are many cameras on. If possible ask participants to turn their cameras off to ensure the highest quality Zoom function.

MUTE - Zoom works primarily on noise recognition. Asking participants to turn off microphones unless they are needed is a standard tip given by Zoom.

### 3. WORKING WITH INTERPRETERS VIA ZOOM

Has your host/chairperson worked with interpreters before? Here are some general tips:

PREPARATION - Any information in advance helps the interpreter/s more smoothly navigate the interaction.  Examples of preparation material can include - knowledge of the material to be discussed, who is attending, if/how the participants are known to each other, and who is facilitating.

EARLY ACCESS - Please consider whether it is helpful allowing early access to the Zoom meeting in order for the participants, Deaf and hearing, the facilitator and the interpreter/s to meet each other and iron out any technical issues prior to the start of the meeting.

If there are 2 OR MORE INTERPRETERS they will take turns.  If possible the interpreters can work with the host/chair by using the Zoom chat function to signal 'interpreter swap', allowing the host to briefly pause and allow for Deaf participants/interpreter adjustments to screens/PIN function*.

INTRODUCTIONS - it is helpful if participants can introduce themselves when speaking in the meeting - this allows the Deaf person and the interpreter to more easily identify the speaker.  In a large Zoom meeting the order of the participants in 'gallery view' can change making finding a speaker tricky.

CAMERAS OFF - Continual visual access is vital for Deaf participants and interpreters. Turning off all unnecessary cameras helps in the interpreting process as it makes all the remaining faces larger, allowing better visual access. Having the speaker's camera on only when required also helps the Deaf participant/interpreter quickly identify who is speaking.

MUTE -  It is enormously helpful to the interpreter/s to have minimal auditory interference - that way they have a better chance of relaying the speaker information.

MANAGING INTERACTIONS - There is a delay due to the nature of the interpreting process and this may mean the Deaf person/s may miss opportunities to add their feedback - having fewer cameras on means the host will be able to easily identify if the Deaf person has feedback or questions to add.

Interpreters will often RENAME themselves as Interpreter (insert name), or Interpreter A/B so they are readily identified.

For more information on working with NZSL interpreters -
(https://www.odi.govt.nz/nzsl/tools-and-resources/)

For more tips on using Zoom - (https://zoom.us/)

*These guidelines are up to date to the best of our knowledge*

We look forward to working with you.