DSP Communication Guidelines: Communicating with deafblind people

- Use clear plain language
- Wear dark/neutral clothing
- Ensure lighting is bright but not glaring
- Interpreters faces should be well lit
- Be aware of background noise
- One person to communicate at a time
- Background should be contrasting
- Communication protocols should be established at the start of each process; turn taking, break times agreed,

Deafblind people can use more than one method of communication including the following:

- BSL within a restricted visual frame
- Hands-on signing is often used if a BSL user can no longer see the signs, they may use hands-on signing (also known as tactile signing). This is where they follow the signs by placing their hands on top of those of the person signing.
- Deafblind manual alphabet may also be used if a BSL user can no longer see signs, it is similar to the BSL finger-spelling alphabet, words are spelt onto the hands of the person who is deafblind. Each letter is signified by a particular sign or position on the hand.

Meetings and events

To ensure inclusive communication at events and meetings involving Deaf and deafblind people the following guidelines should be followed:

Preparation
- Set meeting dates at least 6 weeks in advance
- Book communication support at the time of setting the meeting
- Communication support should include BSL interpreters (at least 2), hands on BSL interpreters (2 for each BSL tactile BSL user), deafblind manual interpreters (2 for each deafblind manual user, Electronic note takers and a guide/communicator for each deafblind person.
- Ensure the venue has the following – a loop system, accessible entry, adequate lighting, enough seating space to accommodate participants and interpreters.

Papers
- Ahead of the event or meeting any papers should be provided to the participants at least 7 days in advance in appropriate formats; these include BSL, plain English (large print, Arial, font 18), moon and Braille
- Each addendum to the minute (i.e. financial report, other report etc.) should be printed on a different paper colour so that they could be found and identified easily
- In addition, to allow interpreters preparation time they should receive all papers 7 days in advance

On the day

- On the day of the meeting a named person should take responsibility for:
- Ensuring that the loop system is set up, tested and working
- Ensuring that the seating is arranged to accommodate the participants.
- Ensuring that lighting is adjusted according to the needs of the participants

During the meeting

To ensure that communication during the meeting is a respectful and inclusive process the following guidelines should be followed:

- A chair person should be nominated.
- The chair should issue the group with communication cards; these are to indicate that a person wishes to speak or that a person requires support or clarification and are usually two different colours/have raised icons.
- The communication cards should be held up, the chair should give the go ahead to speak.
- Each speaker should give their name at the start of each turn, this allows interpreters to identify clearly who is speaking and note-takers can accurately record each speaker.
- One person only should speak at a time.

Producing video clips

- Video clips should be 5 to 10 minutes long
- Presenter should wear dark neutral clothing
- Presenter's face should be well lit
- Background should be contrasting
- Signing should be in a small restricted visual frame
- Do not use jargon
- Be clear and straight to the point
- Subtitles will enable deafblind to access information in an alternative format, for example the text can be transcribed into Braille or moon
- Subtitles should be white letters on a black background
- See below for some helpful websites for adding subtitles

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ml1VJs5MmoY

http://www.wikihow.com/Add-Subtitles-to-a-Downloaded-Video

https://transformativeworks.org/projects/subtitles-and-translations