

Working with a Speech to Text Reporter

Role of the Speech to Text Reporter (STTR)

The role of the STTR is to produce a verbatim record of a spoken message working at speeds of up to 180wpm, using either a Palantype or Stenograph machine, which is instantly shown on a monitor or screen. The STTR provides a complete translation of the spoken words and environmental sounds, such as laughter and applause.

STTRs should not be confused with electronic notetakers using Speedtext, Stereotype, or other forms of electronic notetaking software. Notetakers provide a précis service for the deaf person and STTRs provide a verbatim service.

If anybody wishes to obtain a hard copy of the transcript of an assignment, you will need to obtain the consent of the STTR. It is not the primary role of the STTR to provide this.

Those STTRs who have additionally taken the "Live mode" examination assessed by the British Institute of Verbatim Reporters are capable of reporting in meetings where the language is specialised or technical, or where speech speeds are likely to be in excess of 200 wpm. These people will be indicated on the register by an asterisk. Although they will be prepared to accept all types of work, they should be contacted when an assignment is expected to be particularly complex.

How to book a STTR

Some STTRs are booked up for several weeks so it is important to book a STTR well in advance. STTRs can be found by searching the registers on the NRCPD website www.nrcpd.org.uk or they may be booked through one of the specialist agencies.

Before the meeting

- Inform the STTR of the type of assignment and details of date, time, length and location
- Make sure that the STTR has a contact name and telephone number
- Ensure that the STTR receives copies of the agenda and any other relevant papers (at least a week before the date) so that they may do any necessary dictionary work

Position of the STTR

- The STTR should be positioned near the speakers so they can hear them clearly
- Correct seating is very important for the STTR's health and safety. A chair without arms and if possible, of adjustable height should be provided
- Make sure that there is a standard 13A 240V ac power point near to the STTR's position in the meeting room
- The STTR will need a small table for their own laptop computer
- Additional tables for any monitors that are used will be needed

During the meeting

- The STTR should have frequent short breaks of 5-10 minutes during the day, at least every 1- 1½ hours. If this is not possible then two STTRs should be booked
- The chairperson should ensure that discussion is disciplined. STTRs can only report one person at a time
- Allow time for deaf people to look at visual material (e.g. slides, handouts). They can't read the monitor and materials at the same time

Additional equipment

Individual STTRs have their own equipment and can provide a service for one or two readers. Most agencies, in addition to the basic input machine and laptop computers, have monitors, which they can provide for additional readers. It is necessary, therefore, when booking an STTR to stipulate the number of people who will be using the system. Most people use data projectors and such equipment is more widely available now. However, the STTR or the conference organiser must know in advance whether additional equipment is necessary.