

Working with a Notetaker (Manual) or (Electronic)

Users

Many deaf and deafblind people will use notetakers, both manual and electronic. For those deafblind people who may not have sufficient sight to read, access can be given through the use of Versabraille. One of the important things notetakers can provide is the script, which belongs to the client and allows them freedom to watch the communication without having to worry about taking notes themselves. This is especially useful in education and employment settings. Notetakers are also used by British Sign Language users.

Role of the Notetaker (Manual) and (Electronic)

A manual notetaker produces a written summary record of what is spoken using paper and pens. The manual notetaker will highlight important points of the text, link the text with any handouts or tasks needed by the client and ensure the client is aware of any issues arising in the meeting or lecture.

The electronic notetaker produces a typed summary record of what is spoken using a laptop computer. The advantage of an electronic notetaker is that they can usually get more information down as typing is much faster than writing. Some electronic notetakers have specialist software with Speedtext or Stereotype and this allows them to have interaction with the client through linking two laptops or other technology together.

Electronic notetakers should not be confused with Verbatim Speech to Text Reporters (STTRs) who use a phonetic keyboard which provides a verbatim service. Electronic notetakers will provide a précis service.

All registered notetakers are capable of taking notes from a spoken message working at speeds of up to 150 wpm.

How to book a Notetaker

Some notetakers are booked up for several weeks so it is important to book well in advance. Notetakers can be found by searching the registers on the NRCPD website www.nrcpd.org.uk.

Before the meeting

- Inform the notetaker of the type of assignment and details of the date, time, length and location
- Tell them how many deaf/deafblind people will be using the support
- Make sure that the notetaker has a contact name and telephone number
- Ensure that the notetaker receives copies of the agenda and any other relevant papers, if possible at least a week before so they can prepare for the assignment

Position of the Notetaker

- The notetaker should be positioned near the speakers so they can hear them clearly. There should also be room for the client to sit near them, or in the case of electronic notetakers, access to a screen
- Correct seating is very important for the notetaker's health and safety. A chair without arms and, if possible, of adjustable height should be provided, along with a table to write/type the notes on
- Make sure that there is a standard 13A 240V ac power point near to the electronic notetaker's position in the meeting room

During the meeting

- Some manual notetakers may write on a clear transparency that is placed on an overhead projector so more than one person can read the notes as they are being created
- Some electronic notetakers may connect their laptops to a projector onto a screen for a group of deaf people
- Only one message can be conveyed at a time. It is important that participants speak one at a time
- The notetaker should have frequent short breaks during the day. If this cannot be done two notetakers should be booked