

The Ethical Code and Code of Practice for Notetakers

Interim from 1 January 2009 until Further Notice

Introduction

In this document, the term Notetaker means any person who is registered as a Member of the Register of Level 3 Notetakers (Manual) or (Electronic) or as a Registered Level 2 Notetaker (Manual) or (Electronic) in accordance with the conditions of registration.

Notetakers are expected to abide by the Ethical Code and work to the Code of Practice for Notetakers. When Notetakers are managing, training, supervising or mentoring other Notetakers, or are working with consumers, they should abide by the Ethical Code and work to the Code of Practice.

Ethical Code

The Ethical Code sets out the principles that must underpin the work of the Notetaker. The purpose of the Ethical Code is to ensure that the Notetaker carries out his/her work with a due regard for the fundamental rights of deaf and hearing people involved in, or affected by, all aspects of the communication process. The notetaker must be able to justify any course of action by reference to the ethical principles below.

The Notetaker's duty is to:

- do no harm;
- be honest;
- keep their promises;

- act justly and fairly towards other people;
- recognise the personal choices another person makes.

These five principles support the Code of Practice. Under the Complaints and Disciplinary Procedure the Notetaker may be asked to explain why they have done something which seems to break the Code of Practice. They may defend their choice of action using the principles above. If there is conflict between the principles, principle one “do no harm” is the most important.

Issues of professional competence, practice and procedures that are specific to the role of a Notetaker are covered by the Code of Practice.

Code of Practice

1. Status and Spirit of the Code

- 1.1 This Code gives standards of how Notetakers must behave and work. If they do not follow the Code when working, it may be necessary to investigate the behaviour and ability of the Notetaker using the Complaints and Disciplinary Procedure.
- 1.2 If a way of behaving or working is not found in this Code, this does not mean that it cannot be used for disciplinary purposes. When they are working, Notetakers must keep to the content and spirit of the Code.
- 1.3 Notetakers must know about the Complaints and Disciplinary Procedure. They must co-operate with the NRCPD Professional Standards Panel should an investigation be necessary. They will provide information about the Complaints and Disciplinary Procedure if requested.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 'Consumer' means any person, or group of people, who use a Notetaker.
- 2.2 'Work' means notetaking or the teaching of notetaking, or activities connected with it.
- 2.3 'Manual Notetaker' means a person who takes handwritten précis notes which a deaf person may use and take away for revision or reference.

'Electronic Notetaker' means a person who produces an accurately typed summary which a deaf* person may use and take away, eg as a saved file, for revision or reference.

Ownership and distribution of the notes should be established at the time of booking, depending on the nature of the assignment.

3. Standards of Work

- 3.1 Notetakers will record as accurately as possible. They will not add anything or take anything away from the meaning, and they will keep to the spirit of what is said.
- 3.2 If there are problems during an assignment, Notetakers will do their best to solve them using their professional skills. If this is impossible, they will stop notetaking and let the consumers know there is a problem.

4. Acceptance of Work

- 4.1 Notetakers will only accept work where they have appropriate qualifications, skill, experience, and competence. They should ensure that the client requires a notetaker (Manual) or (Electronic) rather than a verbatim Speech to Text Reporter.
- 4.2 When the Notetaker accepts work, s/he will say that s/he is a registered Notetaker.

- 4.3 Notetakers may refuse any assignment without giving a reason.
- 4.4 When an assignment has been accepted, the Notetaker will not cancel it without good reason. If the Notetaker cannot go to an assignment s/he will tell the people concerned as soon as possible, and try to find another registered Notetaker with the same qualification to take her/his place.
- 4.5 Notetakers will not pass on an assignment to another Notetaker without the agreement of the people involved.
- 4.6 Notetakers will ask to be paid in a professional way. They will agree the amount to be paid and the working conditions when they accept the work. Any problems after the work should be resolved with the person who booked the Notetaker. This may not be the deaf person.

5. Confidentiality

- 5.1 Any information Notetakers learn when working will be confidential. This includes telling others that they are doing a particular job.
- 5.2 Evidence of notetaking may be needed for training or assessment. Notetakers will respect the consumer's right to confidentiality. Notetakers can leave out agreed information, or the consumer may agree to a prepared statement.
- 5.3 They may also give information from their work if they could be prosecuted for not doing so or if asked to by law.
- 5.4 They may also give information to protect the welfare of an individual or the community.
- 5.5 Information given and recorded in public is not confidential.

6. Impartiality

- 6.1 Notetakers will not give advice or offer their own opinion about anything discussed or about people in the room in a notetaking assignment.

- 6.2 Notetakers will be impartial, and show no bias or preference to either side when communicating.
- 6.3 Notetakers will not work in any situation when people could question their impartiality.
- 6.4 Notetakers will not benefit unfairly from any information learned while they are working.
- 6.5 Notetakers will say if they have any business, financial or other interest that might make it difficult to be impartial. They must do this either before the assignment takes place, or as soon as possible.

7. Professional Behaviour and Relationships

- 7.1 Notetakers will support the reputation of the notetaking profession and work to improve their professional standards and status. They will not do anything to damage the profession.
- 7.2 Notetakers will respect the ethics and the working practices of other professions.
- 7.3 Notetakers will use their knowledge of the correct environmental conditions to help in communication with deaf and hearing people. This includes making sure that the environmental conditions (light, positioning, background) are suitable.
- 7.4 Notetakers will not wear clothing and jewellery that may be distracting to deaf people.
- 7.5 Notetakers may advertise their services but what is advertised must be accurate, relevant and must not mislead. It will not be harmful to deaf people or to the profession of notetaking.

7.6 Notetakers will support each other when working together and respect co-working procedures.

7.7 Notetakers will co-operate with other Communication Professionals (e.g. BSL/English Interpreters, Speech to Text Reporters, LSPs –Deafblind Manual) and make sure they do not do anything that makes it difficult for them to carry out their work.

8. Professional Development

8.1 Notetakers will try to improve and develop their skills and knowledge. They will try to take any training and development opportunities offered to them.

8.2 Notetakers will encourage and help other Notetakers with their professional development. They will try to make opportunities for new Notetakers to learn.