

Title: Previous person ‘interpreting’ unqualified 1

Summary:

You have been booked for an employment disciplinary appeal following a Deaf staff members’ dismissal. You find out that the assignment was previously ‘interpreted’ by someone with Level 2 BSL skills.

Key words:

Agency. Agencies. Sue.

CMS summary:

You have been booked for an employment disciplinary appeal following a Deaf staff members’ dismissal. You find out that the assignment was previously ‘interpreted’ by someone with Level 2 BSL skills.

Dilemma:

You are an experienced and qualified interpreter, and have been booked for an employment disciplinary appeal following a Deaf staff members’ dismissal.

When you meet the client you realise that they are not a native or fluent BSL user, and whilst communication is possible, it is challenging and often ambiguous. When you check with the employer, they say that the previous interpreter had no problem at all.

When you check you find out that this ‘interpreter’ was someone with Level 2 ‘BSL’ skills.

What do you do?

Note – Stage or level 2 BSL is a basic language qualification, and is considerably below any level of reasonable fluency. It has nothing to do with being trained or assessed in BSL skills. In the UK this would not be enough for you to be able to register as an interpreter.

Professional and Customer perspectives (if any):

Interpreter – It was clear that there was substantial misinterpretation at the previous disciplinary, where the Deaf person lost their job. I chose to discuss this with the employer, and suggested that they sued both the individual who came and the agency that supplied them. I offered to support them should they choose to do this.

I then agreed that I would come back and interpret again at the appeal, but with another Deaf professional known to the Deaf person, who could help support communication and help ensure accuracy and understanding.

Work role & Country of sender: UK, Interpreter