

BSL Consultancy

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In order to make sure your theatre and performance experience is accessible to a sign language using audience, you will need to work with a British Sign Language (BSL) consultant.

Their role is to focus on the use of BSL in R&D and theatre productions.

It is crucial that your BSL consultant is Deaf, and a fluent user of BSL. It is also important that you consider representation, lived

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experience and skill set when employing their services. This will ensure that you avoid the accusation of cultural appropriation.

A BSL consultant can:

- support with the translation of some aspects of the script into BSL
- support with the use of historical BSL which may have since evolved over time
- the use of regional BSL where a show might be placed or performed in a particular region of the UK

- support directors on the use and direction of BSL in a performance, including how to direct a show that involves the use of an integrated interpreter (rather than side of stage).
- support actors where they may be performing in multiple roles - there will sometimes be the need for them to be able to use BSL in different ways to denote the different character they are inhabiting.

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A BSL consultant can provide advice and support on the varied use of a visual language, including the use of cultural BSL, or SSE (signed supported English), or visual vernacular (VV). They will be able to advise on the use of BSL in any performance and work with Deaf actors, hearing actors using BSL, interpreters etc so that the use of BSL looks natural, even when it is used on an ad hoc basis. The consultant can also work with the interpreter if they are new to performance interpreting.

The consultant can support with translation of parts of the script into BSL, but they will not give you a fully completed translation. It will be a collaborative exercise including the performers, directors, interpreters etc. Everyone has their own

unique style in BSL, and it is important to work together to find the most suitable way of using it in a performance.

It also alleviates the pressure of the Deaf actor having to be completely responsible for the full translation of the script,

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where they might not necessarily have the skills or experience to do so.

A consultant can feedback on an actor's BSL translation of the written script and provide appropriate feedback on any changes that might be necessary, as well as ensuring that the produced BSL can be understood by Deaf audiences.

Where multiple characters are using BSL on stage at the same time the consultant can also advise on how to draw the audience's attention in a timely way to the appropriate place to engage with the action or dialogue.

Taking Flight can work with you to discuss your requirements so that all parties are clear on how we can support you. Our BSL consultants are keen to answer any questions you might have and will tailor their advice accordingly.

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