

## Breaking barriers

How good is your interpretation? Pretty good, I hear you reply. But is it accessible, and what barriers exist that make it difficult for your visitors to reach or understand it?

The majority of UK interpreters are well-educated, able bodied and Anglo-Saxon - and so are many of our visitors. But not all of them. In fact, a substantial minority of real and potential visitors would encounter barriers that exclude them from a meaningful interpretive experience.

These barriers might be physical, such as panels fixed too high for someone in a wheelchair to read. They might be sensory, such as text that is too small to read. They might be intellectual, such as language that is too technical to understand. They might be cultural, such as references to a mainstream culture that are not relevant to the cultural experience of ethnic minority visitors.

In this edition we address some of the issues about how to make our interpretation more accessible. Commissioning a balanced range of articles has been a challenge this time: there are no shortage of good examples of interpretation that's becoming more physically accessible. But sensory, intellectual and cultural access are still 'Cinderella' subjects worthy of far more attention.

The access debate is really only starting, spurred on by the Disability Discrimination Act and the social inclusion agenda. As interpreters we are beginning to meet the needs of a wider audience. Lets celebrate this progress, but be aware that more needs to be done. And as if this weren't enough to galvanise action, a unifying message in this edition is that getting access right, in all its dimensions, improves the visitor experience for everyone.

In this edition we also test a larger typeface to improve legibility, and in future all articles will be available as large print versions from our web site [www.interpretscotland.org.uk](http://www.interpretscotland.org.uk). As ever, let us know what you think.

David Masters, Editor