



# SOMALI WEEK FESTIVAL

HANNA ALI, FESTIVAL DIRECTOR

**Somali Week Festival is an annual event celebrating Somali arts and culture.**

**The 10-day festival is an integral part of Black History Month and is held across London in Oxford House Bethnal Green, City Hall, Southbank Centre, British Library, Rich Mix, The Broadway Theatre in Barking, Chelsea and Kensington Town Hall and The British Museum.**

**2018 was a particularly special milestone as the festival reached its 10th Anniversary, bringing together one of the largest gatherings of Somalis in the Diaspora. And Hanna Ali, Festival Director tells why terptree were, again, invited to be part of this event.**

*“As a company, we discovered terptree before last year’s Somali Festival Week. And when taking on the role of Festival Director this year, I inherited information and recommendations to use at my discretion.*

*The founder of our company had used terptree on several occasions in addition to the festival and highly recommended them”.*

She further explained, that after looking into the company details further, she could see that terptree had great credentials and customer feedback, so decided they were indeed a company she would like to work with; and there was no need to look elsewhere.

What they needed when they engaged with terptree was a company that not only fully understood the requirements, but also the type of event being organised. They had to appreciate the context of the event and the unpredictability. Hanna said: “It’s not scripted in any way. Therefore, the person we used needed to be mindful of this, and be able to cope with any situation.





terptree needed to assess this information and provide interpreters that would be able to manage the brief, and behave appropriately and in accordance with our wishes”.

The two interpreters were predominantly for the opening event of the festival. But they were also needed to assist with an additional event – the play performance. Both events were totally different artistically, and therefore the interpreters needed to be completely adaptable.

The festival team recalled that they distinctly remembered the terptree BSL interpreter they were assigned last year, because she made such a positive impression on them, and was very personable and friendly. She had made herself aware of the Somali culture and had some Somali friends, so was a great ‘fit’ for them and she was also very ‘connected’ to everything that was happening!

This year they requested and were provided with, two interpreters. And although they hadn’t met before the event, the team reported this didn’t matter as they were just as friendly and professional! Hanna stated “We believe it’s important to acknowledge we have people within our community with specific needs and we must accommodate them as much as we possibly can.

The benefits of using terptree to provide BSL interpreters for the Somali Week Festival were massive for us. We’re

very keen to involve the deaf Somali community – it’s very important to us. And this year, as we wanted to ensure we used our budget wisely, we decided to give our deaf community the festival programme ahead of the event. We then asked which two elements they would like to be interpreted. The two chosen were an overwhelming majority and proved to be a great choice as we had a fantastic turnout”.

She said “We were really happy that even as a small festival, with a limited budget, we were able to provide a service that made a difference. And that people can see what we are trying to achieve. So next year, hopefully, we can do even more”.

Hanna confirmed **“We will be hosting Somali Week Festival again in October and will definitely be booking terptree to help us again.** This year the festival will be a little smaller as we want to spread activities over several months. We’re engaging our younger Somali community too, to get ideas and feedback from them as to what they would like to get involved with or attend”.

Hanna explained that, based on this information, they would be able to decide on the right kind of events. And that whatever they are **“We will, of course, be using terptree to assist us once more”.**

When asked if she would recommend the services terptree provide, it was a resounding yes! Because, she said “They are efficient, for example, confirmation of our interpreters came within 24 hours, which was brilliant as we didn’t need to spend more time on it – it was something we could tick off our large ‘to do’ list! They completely understood our requirements and provided exactly the right interpreters for the job. And they were extremely professional – both the office team and the interpreters themselves. **They provide a really good service, and I wish all festivals and events could use them!”**



Hi, I’m Victoria, Founder of terptree. Call us today to find out how you can attract, serve and retain deaf customers and offer a world class deaf customer experience on **01635 886 264**.



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hello@terptree.co.uk

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