



PRESS RELEASE

Milestone meeting as Justice Minister engages interpreter groups

11 December 2012

Helen Grant MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Justice, women and equalities, held positive discussions on 4th December with nine organisations who united as umbrella group Professional Interpreters for Justice and whose representatives were invited to talks.

In the meeting Helen Grant MP said that the system needs the professional interpreters' organisations and that if all can work effectively and positively together it will be good for the running of the justice system.

Problems with the operation of the Ministry of Justice contract awarded to Applied Language Solutions (and acquired by Capita at the end of 2011) prompted acritical National Audit Office (NAO)report earlier this year and more recently there have been two parliamentary inquiries by the Public Accounts Committee and Justice Select Committee, who will publish their findings in coming weeks.

Professional Interpreters for Justice has been invited to submit ideas on how the Ministry of Justice can carry out the recommendations of the NAO report, with particular regard to commissioning an independent evaluation of whether the new contract's quality standards for interpreting and translation are adequate and the incentives which might attract professionally qualified members of the interpreter organisations back to court work.

The NAO highlighted in its report that as few as 300 (13%) of the 2,300 professionally qualified interpreters on the National Register of Public Service Interpreters (NRPSI) are still working in the courts, which has caused problems with both supply and quality of interpreting in courts under the new contract.

Keith Moffitt, Chair of the Chartered Institute of Linguists, representing Professional Interpreters for Justice, says: "There's a real risk of the legal interpreting profession collapsing and we are encouraged that the Justice Minister wants to listen and properly engage the profession in the interests of delivering justice. Our members are principled

individuals who feel their professional status has been watered down by the absence of quality in this private contract. We'll be writing to the Minister with our proposals for working groups to tackle the issues.”

The Justice Minister invited proposals from Professional Interpreters for Justice within 14 days.

Ends

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Notes to Editors

Meeting with Justice Minister Helen Grant MP, 4December 2012, 11.45am

Professional Interpreters for Justice

Professional Interpreters for Justice is an umbrella group representing over 2,200 NRPSI registered and qualified interpreters in 135 languages. Our aim is to work in partnership with the Ministry of Justice to safeguard the quality of interpreting services for the Criminal Justice System.

The National Register of Public Services Interpreters (NRPSI) provides and maintains the voluntary register for the interpreting profession. It ensures required qualification standards are met; the quality of interpreting is defined and maintained through a Code of Conduct; and that access to a database of professional interpreters is freely available for all.

The NRPSI was originally managed by the Chartered Institute of Linguists and since April 2011 has been wholly independent.

Attendees at the meeting:

APCI Association of Police and Court Interpreters- Geoffrey Buckingham -Chairman

CIOL Chartered Institute of Linguists - Keith Moffitt – Chair

ITI Institute of Translation and Interpreting - Paul Wilson - Chief Executive

NUPIT National Union of Professional Interpreters and Translators (part of Unite the Union)
Amelia Naranjo - Secretary

NRPSI National Register of Public Service Interpreters Ltd – M. Eulália Pessoa- White -
Director

PIA Professional Interpreters' Alliance – Madeleine Lee – Director

SOMI Society of Official Metropolitan Interpreters UK Ltd – Klasiena Slaney –Director
/Company Secretary

SPSI Society for Public Service Interpreting - Guillermo Makin - Chairman

WITS Wales Interpreter and Translation Service - Tony Wilcox

Involvis Advisers – Penny Arbuthnot - Director