

NRPSI welcomes Lord Wolfson's commitment to a full independent review of court interpreting standards

13 January 2022: The National Register of Public Service Interpreters (NRPSI) welcomes Lord Wolfson's (Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Justice at the Ministry of Justice) announcement that he will be commissioning a full independent review of the existing qualifications and standards, and the requirements for each type of assignment covered by the Ministry of Justice's (MoJ) language services contracts.

The announcement, made by Lord Wolfson in the House of Lords on 12 January 2022, follows Baroness Coussins' widely supported move in the House of Lords on 22 November 2021 to amend the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill to establish in law minimum standards for the level of spoken word interpreter used in courts and tribunals.

The review, which will consider experience levels and rare language requirements, will establish a detailed framework of the standards and qualifications required for all assignments covered by the MoJ's language services contracts, with clear explanations and justifications for each.

Lord Wolfson also confirmed that the review will be completed in time to inform the retendering of the MoJ's contracts in 2023 and that external stakeholders would be consulted, including NRPSI whose, he said, "input is highly valued".

Mike Orlov, NRPSI Executive Director and Registrar, said: *"We welcome Lord Wolfson's announcement and the aim of the review to improve the quality of the language services provided across the justice system. NRPSI thanks Baroness Coussins for pursuing this important matter and achieving this positive step forward. We see this as a real opportunity to address issues with the MoJ's existing language services provision and develop a long-term solution. One that not only meets the needs of the justice system but protects both the public and interpreting professionals and helps to ensure the future of the interpreting profession as well."*

[Read the transcript of Lord Wolfson's announcement](#), including the preceding debate, in the House of Lords on 12 January 2022.

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Editor's notes:

About NRPSI

The National Register of Public Service Interpreters (NRPSI) is the UK's independent voluntary Regulator of the public service interpreting profession. Funded by Registrants' fees, it is a not-for-profit organisation. By maintaining interpreting standards, it safeguards the public. All Registrants – there are currently around 1,800 covering approximately 100 languages – satisfy rigorous entry criteria in terms of qualifications and experience, and demonstrate their commitment to professional standards by signing NRPSI's Code of Professional Conduct. While NRPSI is a voluntary Regulator, its powers allow it to discipline and, ultimately, exclude a Registrant who breaks its Code of Professional Conduct. In this way, it can ensure that interpreters on the National Register, which is publicly available and searchable online for free, are appropriately qualified, have the level of competence claimed and employ best practice. <http://www.nrpsi.org.uk/>