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PUBLIC SECTOR LANGUAGE SERVICES**

Private Eye: 11 Oct – 24 Oct 2023, p36

Questioning the decision by the Ministry of Justice launching a tender and seeking a new language services company prior to stakeholder discussions regarding the value of insourcing

COURT INTERPRETERS

Loss in translation

PROFESSIONAL interpreters are questioning a decision by the Ministry of Justice to seek new outsourced language services for the courts, before completing a review of current practices.

The collaborative review was being carried out with members of Professional Interpreters for Justice, who have long despaired over the impact of outsourcing interpreting services to commercial providers since 2012 (*Eyes passim*). In a model letter for its members to send to their MPs, the National Register of Public Service Interpreters notes that two out of the three agencies contracted are no longer even in business.

The third business, Thebigword, saw a fresh round of problems this summer, when its new booking app struggled to provide interpreters with the times and locations for court cases they were due to attend.

Justice minister Heidi Alexander has confirmed to MP Kerry McCarthy that a tender notice will be published soon, once again seeking outsourced providers. This also pre-empts the current House of Lords public services committee inquiry into whether the current provision of language services meets the needs of defendants, prosecutors, witnesses and legal professionals.



ENDS

9th October 2024