

NRPSI Registrant Writes to Local Media

Note the letter below sent by Phil Muriel to his local newspaper, which he also amended to send to the local radio stations.

If we all do this, we will get much more coverage of the need for a public discussion regarding insourcing of language services in the courts.

Copy this letter and send to your local media outlets.

Dear Editor,

As a Chartered Linguist, member of CIOL and public service interpreter registered with NRPSI, I read with interest the article in Private Eye: "Loss in translation". The Ministry of Justice's decision to outsource interpreter provision to private commercial agencies in 2012 has proved to be the disaster we professional interpreters had predicted it would be!

To put it in a nutshell: "the system wasn't broken, so it didn't need fixing"! In fact, 'insourcing' prior to 2012 was working very well as it was managed directly by the Courts (who knew how the system works), using only qualified, trained interpreters registered with the national voluntary regulator, NRPSI and the rate of pay was fair and commensurate with the interpreters' level of qualification (degree level).

The new Prime Minister has been quoted on several occasions saying that he wants to reverse 'outsourcing' and bring in 'insourcing'. This makes the MoJ's decision to publish a tender notice for the provision of legal interpreters in 2025 totally incomprehensible!

To repeat: the 'insourcing' system worked, the 'outsourcing' system has failed spectacularly (untrained 'bi-linguals' used instead of trained interpreters, a rate of pay often below minimum wage, qualified interpreters leaving the profession).

The solution is simple: reverse the process, restore insourcing and insist on proper training and qualifications for Court interpreters as per the 1993 Runciman Royal Commission's recommendations and fair pay commensurate with our qualifications. This, in my opinion would incentivise our colleagues who have left to return to the profession.

In the long term, interpreting needs to be recognised and regulated as a profession and benefit from protection of title in the same way that doctors, nurses and lawyers do; those are the aims of the NRPSI and, I believe, the only way forward!

Kind regards,

Philippe MURIEL (MCIL, CL, NRPSI, AIT)