

## House of Lords Public Services Committee (PSC) Inquiry Report Update

The letter below is the Professional Interpreters for Justice ( PI4J ) approved version, which was sent to the House of Lords PSC on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2025

*On behalf of Professional Interpreters for Justice (PI4J), I am writing to express our appreciation for the Committee's recent report "Lost in translation? Interpreting services in the courts." We welcome this comprehensive examination which substantiates many of the concerns PI4J organisations have consistently raised, regarding the court interpreting system in the United Kingdom.*

*The report's findings align closely with PI4J's ongoing mission to advocate for high professional standards and the proper recognition of qualified language professionals within our justice system. We are particularly encouraged by the Committee's acknowledgment of critical issues affecting court interpreting services, including qualification requirements, inadequate remuneration, challenging working conditions, and insufficient quality assurance mechanisms.*

*We strongly support the Committee's recommendations, especially those that directly address the professional concerns of court interpreters:*

- Improving data collection and reporting mechanisms to address concerns about lack of transparency, and encourage greater sharing of information*
- Establishing Level 6 qualification as the minimum standard for court interpreters, ensuring appropriate linguistic expertise in legal settings*
- Improving pay and working conditions to attract and retain qualified interpreters*
- Enhancing the professional status of interpreters within the justice system*

*We support the official recognition and continued use of the existing independent register – the National Register of Public Service Interpreters (NRPSI). This register has long served as the gold standard for quality assurance in the sector, offering a robust framework for verifying qualifications, upholding professional conduct, and ensuring interpreter accountability within the justice system. Importantly, we wish to highlight the regulatory function of the Professional Conduct Committee and the Disciplinary Committee for those registered with NRPSI, which provides an essential mechanism for maintaining trust and professionalism within legal interpreting services.*

*PI4J stands ready to offer our expertise to help implement these important recommendations. Specifically, we would be pleased to:*

- Collaborate with the Ministry of Justice on developing robust qualification pathways for court interpreters*

- *Support efforts to expand government funding for interpreter training, up to and including achieving the Diploma in Public Service Interpreting (DPSI), to enable additional interpreters to qualify to meet the needs of our courts*
- *Continue to promote the professional development and codes of conduct for court interpreters*

*To ensure these vital recommendations are implemented effectively, PI4J will seek to reinstate regular meetings with the Ministry of Justice and other key stakeholders. We also look forward to greater transparency on rates which are being offered to interpreters, including the publication of the Big Word rate card which currently is not available for stakeholders and interpreters to see, share or discuss publicly.*

*This report represents a significant validation of PI4J's longstanding concerns and provides a valuable opportunity to influence positive change in court interpreting services. We thank and commend the Committee for its thorough inquiry and considered recommendations.*

**The letter below is the NRPSI Board approved version of NRPSI's letter, which was sent to the House of Lords PSC on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2025**

*Baroness Morris of Yardley,  
Chair of the Public Services Committee – Interpreting and Translation Services in the Courts  
House of Lords  
London  
SW1A 0PW*

*26 March 2025*

*Dear Lady Morris,*

*Re 'Lost in translation? Interpreting services in the courts' report (24 March 2025)*

*We would like to congratulate you as Chair of the Public Services Committee that conducted the Inquiry into Court Interpreting and Translation Services on the publication of the 'Lost in translation? Interpreting services in the courts' report. We would also like to thank you and the Committee for your management of this inquiry.*

*The National Register of Public Service Interpreters (NRPSI) welcomes the report and many of its recommendations.*

*We are particularly pleased that the Committee's report seeks to resolve many of the concerns raised by NRPSI by recommending steps that must be taken to improve the training, qualifications, treatment, pay and working conditions of interpreters. For, as highlighted in our*

*written and oral evidence, such steps must be taken to ensure a sustainable highly skilled interpreting workforce and high-quality court interpreting service.*

*There is, however, one recommendation that is deeply disappointing to NRPSI:  
'39. 'The Government should ensure that a new independent single register of interpreters is established which ensures a high standard of vetting and entry criteria, so that highly skilled interpreters have access to work across the criminal justice system.'* (p. 56)

*The Committee's call for an independent national register to be accepted as the single register of court interpreters mirrors that of the 1993 Runciman Royal Commission on Criminal Justice, which resulted in NRPSI being established.*

*As you know, prior to the outsourcing of court language services in 2012, the cause of many of the issues that this Committee is seeking to address with this report, interpreters were booked by courts directly under the National Agreement. The National Agreement stipulated that only NRPSI Registered Interpreters could be booked by the courts, and NRPSI undertook complaints and disciplinary measures.*

*NRPSI, with its high standard of vetting, entry criteria and Code of Professional Conduct, was accepted as the only independent register and regulator of court interpreters.*

*Furthermore, NRPSI is still the only independent register and regulator of court interpreters today. NRPSI is THE register – all other 'registers' of interpreters that have come into existence along with the outsourcing of court language services since 2012, are mistakenly and misleadingly called such. They are in fact 'lists', as the Committee's report rightly notes, with varying standards and entry criteria, that are managed by commercial agencies for commercial gain. This is a vitally important distinction.*

*As the only independent regulator of public service interpreters in the UK with the independently vetted register of public service interpreters, why has the Committee held back from recommending NRPSI as the single register, particularly as the report indicated the majority support for this outcome?*

*Indeed, we consider that your recommendations should have gone further by:*

- 1) recommending all court interpreters must be registered with NRPSI, THE Register of public service interpreters brought into being by the Royal Commission in 1993; and*
- 2) giving regulated Registered Public Service Interpreters (RPSIs) the professional recognition they deserve by granting them protection of title.*

*We would like to understand why your recommendations did not extend to this by calling the Government to answer the call of successive reviews, including that of Lord Justice Auld's Review*

*of the Criminal Justice System (2001), for the standards of the National Register to be met by all interpreters engaged in the courts?\**

*We look forward to your response.*

*Yours sincerely,*

*On behalf of Mike Orlov  
Chief Executive and Registrar*

*\*See p.158, Ch.11 of Lord Justice Auld's Review of the Criminal Justice System (2001)*

Visit <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/430/public-services-committee/news/205980/lost-in-translation-significant-issues-must-be-addressed-for-effective-interpreting-services-in-courts/> for more details of the report.

ENDS  
28<sup>th</sup> April 2025