



National Register of
Public Service Interpreters

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

Tuesday 1st July 2025

Dear Lady Morris,

Response to the Government's Reply to the Public Services Committee Report –
Lost in Translation?

Thank you for your continued engagement with the National Register of Public Service Interpreters (NRPSI), and for inviting us to update the Committee on how we are responding to the Ministry of Justice's (MoJ) formal reply to your report *Lost in Translation? Interpreting Services in the Courts*.

You will see from the attached copy of this communication, sent on Monday 23rd June 2025, that we recognise and welcome the constructive steps being taken by the MoJ to improve the provision of language services within the courts. In particular, we are encouraged by the Government's acceptance of the Ann Carlisle review recommendations, commissioned in 2021 by the MoJ and results published on 17th March 2025. This shift by the Ministry of Justice in its movement towards the professional standards that have long underpinned NRPSI by October 2026 is welcomed; the implementation of the new Qualifications Framework and a strengthened Quality Assurance (QA) regime are positive developments.

However, as we set out in our response to the MoJ, we do not believe it is possible to improve QA or ensure consistent standards across court interpreting without taking action to address the systemic issue that continues to undermine the justice system's access to skilled interpreters: inadequate pay and terms and conditions (T&Cs).

The Committee rightly recognised that improvements to standards and QA cannot be realised while the reliance on off-contract bookings continues. As we pointed out in our letter to the MoJ, the primary cause of this dependence lies in interpreters' widespread dissatisfaction with the current remuneration structure and working conditions. Unless and until this is addressed, off-contract bookings will persist – and will likely increase in frequency and number.

The MoJ's failure to engage meaningfully with these structural issues will, we believe, significantly affect its ability to meet demand under the new framework. Once implemented, the framework will require a larger pool of qualified interpreters, particularly those at Level 6 holding the Diploma in Public Service Interpreting (DPSI) or an equivalent qualification. However, the lack of movement on pay and T&Cs provides no incentive for such professionals to join the MoJ list of interpreters that is managed by its contracted language services provider.



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NRPSI Registrants regularly decline to work via the MoJ's contractor due to the unsatisfactory terms, opting instead for better conditions available through off-contract arrangements. This dynamic directly threatens the sustainability and effectiveness of the new system and also undermines the MoJ's planned introduction of a second-tier language agency, intended to reduce reliance on off-contract bookings. Interpreters will continue to refuse to work with agencies – whether primary or secondary – unless pay and working terms are improved.

As highlighted in our correspondence with the MoJ, far from replacing what was seen as a costly and time-consuming burden on court administrators, outsourcing has created a layered and fragmented system. What was once a one-tier structure – where courts sourced interpreters directly from the National Register – has evolved into a two-tier model (contractor and off-contract) and is now moving towards a three-tier system (primary contractor, secondary agency, and off-contract bookings). Each additional tier adds complexity and cost without resolving the core issue: interpreters' willingness to engage with the service under current conditions. An extra tier of agency-involvement will leave less funds available to recompense self-employed professional practitioners who are actually delivering language services for the courts and for the public.

As we also highlighted, fewer than half of the those on the MoJ list of interpreters hold a Level 6 qualification. In contrast, NRPSI maintains a register of more than 1,600 Level 6 qualified interpreters, each with at least 400 verified hours of experience. This represents a significant, untapped resource of professionally regulated interpreters.

The Committee's report clearly identified the need for a single, independent register with robust standards. NRPSI already fulfils that role. We remain the only independent, public-interest regulator with a transparent vetting process, a code of professional conduct and a disciplinary regime. Yet, despite this, the MoJ continues to rely on agency-managed 'lists' with variable standards. We believe this is both inefficient and detrimental to quality assurance. We therefore reiterate our call for the Committee to go further and explicitly recognise NRPSI as *'the'* register of public service interpreters for the justice system. This is a position strongly supported across the sector, as evidenced by submissions from Professional Interpreters for Justice (PI4J) (see PI4J's letter to the Committee dated 28 April 2025) and others.

NRPSI remains fully committed to supporting the implementation of reforms to public sector language services that are in the public interest. Sustainable progress is only possible if the MoJ is prepared to address interpreter pay and conditions through formal and constructive dialogue with the profession and key stakeholders. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss how we can move forward collectively to secure a sustainable future for interpreting in the justice system, underpinned by formal recognition at the highest level of public sector interpreters as a regulated profession.

Yours sincerely,

Mike Orlov

Chief Executive and Registrar
National Register of Public Service Interpreters (NRPSI)