

FOLLOW UP LETTER TO THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

For those of you who wrote to your MPs, who then received an answer from the Ministry of Justice which did not answer the questions, please find below a further letter to be used/adapted by MPs to insist on specific answers, rather than bland statements of confidence in the language services provision at HMCTS.

Please copy and paste this pro forma and send to your MP, asking them to write to the Ministry of Justice again, *insisting* on the specific questions being answered.

Do not hesitate to copy me at mike@nrpsi.org.uk – we are keen to see the response from your MP and the response from the MoJ to your MP.

From: xxxxx

To: xxxxxxx

Thank you for your letter of XXXX and for raising this matter with the relevant authority.

I appreciate XXXX taking the time to respond. However, with all due respect, the response provided does not answer most of the questions I raised.

I understand the Ministry of Justice's (MoJ) language service contract has a clearly defined list of qualifications and have referred to the details of these qualifications online.

Specifically, I have read pages 90 to 98 of the 'Agreement relating to the Provision of Language Services – Spoken Languages (Lot 1 Redacted 2011116 V2)', which can be found at: <https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/975cb99e-fec6-430f-8f31-fd532a907137>.

This information indicates that language speakers with low level or no interpreting qualifications are used by the MoJ for certain types of assignment.

I would, therefore, be grateful if you could confirm in the interests of clarity and transparency whether Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) accepts individuals onto the MoJ list of interpreters, to be engaged in MoJ settings, with the following levels of qualification:

- Level 1 Foundation in Public Service Interpreting; a 2-to-4-week course
- Level 2 Public Service Interpreting Qualifications
- Level 3 and Level 4 Community Service Interpreting Qualifications; 'A' level standard
- A Bachelor's degree in Philology (but no Public Service Interpreting qualification)
- A Bachelor's degree in Linguistics (but no Public Service Interpreting qualification)

I have a number of other related queries regarding the qualifications and experience of those accepted onto the MoJ list of interpreters. I have listed these below in the hope that they too can be answered.

As previously mentioned, I have no doubt this information is readily available given that the MoJ's contracted language service providers and language service quality assurance provider are required to hold evidence of the qualifications and experience credentials of those on the MoJ list of interpreters.

I very much look forward to receiving answers to my questions or an explanation as to why these cannot be provided.

Yours sincerely,

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Contact details:

See attached further questions needing specific answers

Questions about the qualifications of interpreters used in court proceedings

1. How many interpreters on the MoJ list of interpreters engaged by HMCTS have a Level 6 (Bachelor's degree level) Diploma in Public Service Interpreting (DPSI) or Diploma in Police Interpreting (DPI)?
2. Of those with a Level 6 public service interpreting qualification, how many possess 400 hours or more of public service interpreting experience?
3. What evidence of public service interpreting experience do those on the MoJ list at the above levels need to provide?
4. How is this evidence of public service interpreting experience vetted and accredited?
5. Of those interpreters with a Level 6 public service qualification and 400+ hours' public service interpreting experience, how many comply with and abide by the National Register of Public Service Interpreter's (NRPSI) Code of Professional Conduct?
6. What percentage of the overall MoJ list did those interpreters with Level 6 public service interpreting qualifications and 400+ hours of public service interpreting experience make up, on average, in 2019 and in 2020?
7. Which academic/standards/training organisation or accrediting body oversees the justice system-specific training course, which all interpreters are required to complete before joining the MoJ list of interpreters?
8. Which organisation authored/wrote the justice system-specific training course?
9. Who conducts the training?
10. How long is the justice system-specific training course (i.e. what number of days are needed to complete the course)?
11. What level is it taught at (1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6)?
12. How are those taking the justice system-specific training course examined?
13. Do they receive certificates?
14. Is this an OFQAL endorsed-course, an OFQAL regulated-qualification or approved by another educational establishment and if so, by which one?
15. How many individuals sat the course in 2019 and 2020?
16. How many of those who sat the course passed, in 2019 and 2020?
17. What does The Language Shop managed annual audit of the credentials of language speakers booked for court assignments entail?