

Campaign lobbying for improvements in NHS language service delivery:

30th September 2023

The second template letter for you to download and send to your MP to drive for improvements in public service interpreting in NHS settings is on the next page:

You can **download and use the template letter/email on the next page** to ask your MP to raise questions at a local and national level about the use of unregistered interpreters by the National Health Service (NHS).

To find the contact details of your MP, visit:

<https://members.parliament.uk/members/Commons>.

We would be interested to know which MPs are contacted for future reference as part of our ongoing lobbying activities. So, please do let us know if you make use of the letter and the name of your MP by emailing mike@nrpsi.org.uk.

We would also be delighted to hear about any response you receive to your letter. If you are happy to share this, please email a copy to mike@nrpsi.org.uk.

Dear (name of MP)

I am writing to ask you to support The British Medical Association's and some senior Conservatives' call for the regulation of NHS managers initiated by the recent Lucy Letby case. (*The Guardian*: 'Labour vows to make NHS managers accountable after Lucy Letby failings', 28 August). I am an accredited public service interpreter, regulated and registered with the UK's voluntary not-for-profit regulator, the National Register of Public Service Interpreters (NRPSI).

NRPSI is committed to safeguarding the public and providing them with access to the very best that our public services exist to provide – including our health service.

This involves supporting public sector professionals to do their jobs as effectively and efficiently as possible, free from the fear of being undermined or let down by the incompetence or misconduct of those facing little or no regulation who work in related fields.

We agree that the best way to accomplish this is through greater accountability and the independent regulation of those professionals that doctors, nurses and other medical practitioners rely on in order to be able to do their job.

Despite some common misconceptions, independent regulation isn't about excessive restrictions or red tape. It is about enabling people to do their job with confidence, knowing that a transparent system and procedure exists to protect them and others should things go wrong.

It is only right that NHS managers are regulated as doctors and nurses are. And it is right that only Registered Interpreters with the requisite qualifications and practical experience are engaged in healthcare settings.

NRPSI has campaigned for the use of Registered Interpreters by the health service to be made mandatory for some time.

We, therefore, welcome the recent commitment from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to undertake a review of community languages translation and interpretation (CLTI) services across the NHS and the invitation to consult on this. We however have major concerns regarding the proposed NHS framework for public service interpreting which was recently published; see <https://slator.com/uk-national-health-service-launching-gbp-400m-language-services-tender/>

We would urge the NHS to reconsider this proposed framework.

Although a quantum leap improvement compared to current handling of language services in the NHS, there are still glaring problems with this proposed framework. If implemented it will allow under-qualified and un-qualified pseudo public service interpreters in to NHS settings, potentially leading to risk for patients who do not speak English.

I ask you to question this proposed NHS framework and ensure your constituents who do not speak English have access to professional, accredited public service interpreters.

Yours sincerely,

YOUR NAME
NRPSI Registrant
RPSI

BACKGROUND

The following statement was published on NRPSI's website on 1st September 2023: <https://www.nrpsi.org.uk/news-posts/NRPSI-supports-the-call-from-The-Shadow-Health-Secretary-The-British-Medical-Association-and-some-senior-Conservatives-for-the-regulation-of-NHS-managers-initiated-by-the-recent-Lucy-Letby-case-click-here.html>:

NRPSI STATEMENT ON THE REGULATION OF NHS MANAGERS

1 September 2023

As the voluntary regulator of public service interpreters, NRPSI supports the call from The Shadow Health Secretary, The British Medical Association and some senior Conservatives for the regulation of NHS managers initiated by the recent Lucy Letby case. (See The Guardian: 'Labour vows to make NHS managers accountable after Lucy Letby failings', 28 August).

We believe in safeguarding the public and providing them with access to the very best that our public services exist to provide – including our health service.

This involves supporting public sector professionals to do their jobs as effectively and efficiently as possible, free from the fear of being undermined or let down by the incompetence or misconduct of those facing little or no regulation who work in related fields.

The only way to accomplish this is through greater accountability, which can only be achieved via independent regulation of those professionals that doctors, nurses and other medical practitioners rely on in order to be able to do their job.

Independent regulation isn't about restriction, nor should it be about over-complication, it is about enabling people to do their job with confidence, knowing that a transparent system and procedure exists to protect them and others should things go wrong.

NRPSI has been campaigning for only Registered Interpreters with the requisite qualifications and practical experience to be engaged in healthcare settings for some time. We, therefore, welcome the recent commitment from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to undertake a review of community languages translation and interpretation (CLTI) services across the NHS and the invitation to consult on this. It is only right that this takes place immediately to ensure those interpreters working with NHS medical professionals are held to equally high professional standards.

**Mike Orlov, Executive Director and Registrar
National Register of Public Service Interpreters (NRPSI)**

Please note the following, including the recent letter to the government, shadow minister and also to the CEO of the NHS; <https://www.nrpsi.org.uk/news-posts/Click-here-to-read-the-open-letter-sent-to-the-Health-Minister-and-Shadow-Health-Minister-about-the-death-of-a-Gloucester-mother-who-tragically-died-owing-to-a-delay-in-post-birth-treatment-and-poor-interpreting-services.html>

Note NRPSI asked Registrants to write to their MPs; see <https://www.nrpsi.org.uk/news-posts/Join-the-campaign-to-lobby-for-improvements-in-NHS-language-service-delivery-for-patients-and-save-lives-by-clicking-here.html>. This has been a very effective tool in lobbying and actually kick-started many improvements being planned in the MOJ, but not yet implemented, following a similar campaign in 2021.

See <https://www.nrpsi.org.uk/news-posts/If-you-disagree-with-this-statement-then-click-here-people-can-have-legal-representatives-who-can-help-Friends-family-and-non-government-organisations-can-also-assist-the-person.html>

If you have not seen the NHS Guidelines for managing language services, you can find them here: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/guidance-for-commissioners-interpreting-and-translation-services-in-primary-care.pdf> . As you can see, NRPSI is accepted as central to best practice; sadly the government so under-funds the NHS these best practice guidelines are often ignored by procurement management.

Follow up letter re NHS

<https://www.nrpsi.org.uk/news-posts/Click-here-to-read-NRPSI-follow-up-lobbying-with-the-NHS.html>

On 8th August 2023 NRPSI was informed that the NHS's Healthcare Inequalities Improvement team will be leading a language-services scoping review; see the letter dated 8th August 2023 (<https://www.nrpsi.org.uk/news-posts/The-NHS-s-Healthcare-Inequalities-Improvement-team-will-be-leading-a-language-services-scoping-review-see-the-letter-dated-8th-August-2023.html>).

The letter stated: 'Ensuring solutions are identified which that will bring about the **necessary changes** – we are very much welcoming the opportunity to speak to NRPSI'

Sadly the following announcement (<https://slator.com/uk-national-health-service-launching-gbp-400m-language-services-tender/>) indicates a total lack of understanding by the NHS of professionalism in language services.