

18th July 2024 Template letter to download and send to your MP

You can **download and use the template letter/email on the next page** to ask your MP to support the NRPSI-backed Professional Interpreters for Justice (PI4J) manifesto concerning the steps that need to be taken to improve public sector language services in the UK.

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.

Should you need further information or specific evidence to support your communications with your MP, NRPSI is committed to helping with any such enquiries. Please contact us using the same email address provided above.

You might also want to read this latest article posted on LinkedIn;

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/time-improve-public-sector-language-services-mike-orlov-9qshe/?trackingId=wmrfcw0QxOiZNacNBzv1A%3D%3D>

Dear _____,

Re: Support to improve public sector language services and provide all who are entitled to use them with equitable access to the UK's health, legal and social care systems

Congratulations on the outcome of the 4 July election. I look forward to you representing our constituency and getting the voices of the most vulnerable members of the public heard in Parliament.

As an interpreter who is registered with and regulated by the National Register of Public Service Interpreters (NRPSI), it is also my job to give a voice to the voiceless. I do this by enabling communications between public sector organisations and those who do not speak English but are legally entitled to use their services.

My deepest concern and reason for writing is that not everyone who needs language services support is being provided with an appropriately qualified and experienced language practitioner, resulting in unequal access to the UK's public services. Public sector organisations frequently use sub-standard language suppliers, threatening the rights and lives of individuals, not to mention their own integrity and reputation.

Professional Interpreters for Justice (PI4J), a working group comprising eleven organisations in the language services ecosystem including NRPSI, has produced a manifesto concerning the steps that need to be taken to improve public sector language services and provide all who are entitled to use them with equitable access to the UK's health, legal and social care systems. Please visit <https://www.nrpsi.org.uk/news-posts/Read-the-latest-Manifesto-driving-lobbying-and-advocacy-for-professionalism-and-recognition-of-your-skills-knowledge-and-experience-click-here-for-more.html> to see the Manifesto.

Are you able to support this move and if so, can you tell me how you can support it?

To follow is a little more background information on the situation.

I look forward to receiving your response and have provided my contact details at the bottom of this document.

Further information about the current situation and the need for change

Currently, there are no universal standards applied to public sector language services. Driven to cut costs and outsource their language services, many public sector organisations have devolved their language services management to commercial agencies, electing to use them on the basis of the cost rather than the quality of their offering. This has paved the way for the frequent use of linguists with low-level or no interpreting qualifications and no relevant practical experience.

Given that there is a direct correlation between the quality of the language services provided to public sector organisations and the quality of the service that these organisations in turn provide to non-

English speaking members of the public, the fact that an unqualified and inexperienced linguist can be engaged to work in the public sector at all is significant. With the quality of the care or counsel someone receives being dependent on the quality of the language services provided to them, the link between consistent, high-quality language service standards and equitable access to the public services becomes clear.

Engaging linguists without the appropriate qualifications or experience to interpret in public service settings is not only harmful to the public and public services but the interpreting profession as well. In fact, the lack of professional recognition and respect that registered interpreters have had to endure as a result of unfair competition from unregistered and unaccountable linguists has led to a decline in their numbers. The result of this being that there are fewer professional interpreters available to the public services.

The new Labour government, in addition to pursuing its longer-term strategic goals, is clearly going to explore more immediate solutions the types of problem outlined. Such issues, brought about by the years of under-investment in our public services and outsourcing of their critical support functions, have only served to make worse the sense of isolation and disenfranchisement felt by many within our communities.

One such solution that would have a dramatic, immediate and potentially far-reaching positive human and financial impact would be to adopt the recommendations of the PI4J manifesto.

This move would ensure a consistently high-standard of language services across the public sector, levelling up access to its services. It would enhance inclusion and the wellbeing and safety of the public. It would also enable the public services to operate more effectively and therefore cost-efficiently.

We desperately need such bold action if we are to future proof the interpreting profession and ensure that the public services and public have access to the high standard of language services support that they require.

As my local MP, can I count on your support for this manifesto?

I look forward to your response and hearing about the type of support you can offer.

Yours sincerely,

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Contact details:
