



NRPSI

National Register of
Public Service Interpreters



National Register of
Public Service Translators

Insourcing Rather Than Outsourcing in Language Services

Mike Orlov
Executive Director & Registrar
August 2024

Clarion Call for Insourcing



Given the issues with the current system of outsourcing public sector language services, these questions have been sent to MPs on 14th August 2024:

- Will the new Labour government commit to conducting a public review of whether public sector language services should be returned to being insourced?
- Will the new government commit to ensuring the Ministry of Justice only engages with independently regulated and registered interpreters who possess relevant vocational qualifications and evidenced experience?
- When will the findings of the independent review of the Ministry of Justice's language services that was launched in 2023 be made available?

<https://www.nrpsi.org.uk/news-posts/You-will-find-your-pro-forma-letter-here-so-you-can-ask-your-MP-to-question-the-Secretary-of-State-for-Justice-these-questions-need-to-be-answered-Click-here-to-find-out-more.html>



History of Outsourcing



Government spent £284 billion in 2019 on buying goods and services from external suppliers

This was a third of all public expenditure

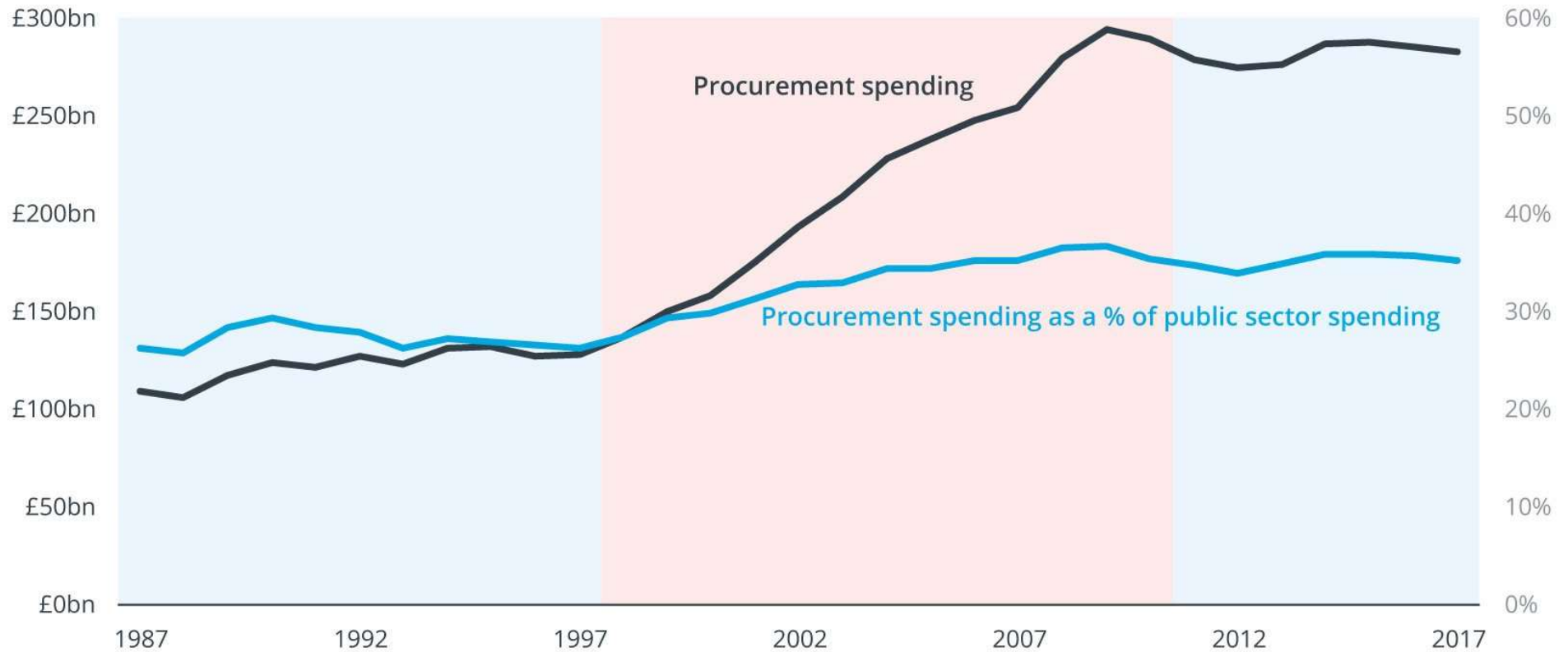
The money is spent on everything from goods such as stationery and medicine, through to the construction of schools and roads, the daily delivery of back-office functions such as information technology and human resources, and front-line services such as probation, social care and interpreting

The introduction of compulsory competitive tendering in the 1980s led to a significant expansion of private contracting, especially after 2003 and accelerated post financial crash of 2008



History of Outsourcing

Public sector procurement spending, 1987-2017



Source: Institute for Government analysis of ONS Blue Book data. Figures are shown in June 2019 prices.

History of Outsourcing



Originally The term was ***outside resourcing***, and the business activity emerged in the 1950s in US companies

Not called ***outsourcing*** until the 1970s

Companies sought efficiency and began hiring outside firms to manage ***non-core, less-than-essential*** processes

It was introduced by the UK's Conservative government in the early 1980s as a way to neuter strikes, downsize council and NHS workforces, and cut costs

It was seen as a means of rolling back the 'bureaucratic' state, and injecting into supposedly moribund services the competition that was needed to drive up quality and make them more responsive



History of Outsourcing



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- 1980: Compulsory competitive tendering (CCT) first introduced by the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980
- 1982: Health authorities instructed to introduce competitive tendering for support services
- 1988: The Local Government Act 1988 extends CCT to refuse collection and ground maintenance, libraries and arts centre management
- 1989: Local authorities tender sports and leisure management services
- 1992: The private finance initiative is introduced to finance and operate hospitals, schools, prisons and other public buildings
- 1992: The NHS internal market is introduced
- 1994: Guidance is issued on Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) regulations 1981 - TUPE
- 1996: Professional services provided by councils - such as legal, construction and property, and personnel, come under the auspices of CCT legislation
- 1997: Labour wins the general election. It replaces CCT with best value, which still requires councils to look at outsourcing services
- Labour embraced - and expanded - the private finance initiative
- 2000: Labour signs a concordat with the private health industry under which it agrees to send thousands of NHS patients to be treated in independent hospitals
- 2001: Labour explicitly states that private or voluntary sector providers should be brought in where public providers are failing to improve, or where they can add value to public services
- 2002: Private health companies are invited to compete for multimillion pound contracts
- 2003: Ministers announce that they will consider drafting in private management teams to run NHS trusts that perform consistently badly



History of Outsourcing



Too many outsourcing contracts to mention from 2003 onwards but of note, outsourcing grew exponentially after the global financial crisis which began in 2008, leading to the chaos in outsourcing of public sector foreign language service delivery in the MoJ after 2012, through the inability of ALS and then Capita to deliver, and the subsequent contracts with tbw and those companies chosen as sub-contractors such as Debonair

The Trade Union Congress criticised the Government saying it 'has tended to rush' into outsourcing approaches 'without evaluating whether they are appropriate or how to mitigate any risks if they are not appropriate'. There are examples in which decisions about whether and how to procure were made even before a formal business case process was concluded; many cases of being 'penny-wise but pound-foolish' decisions



History of Outsourcing

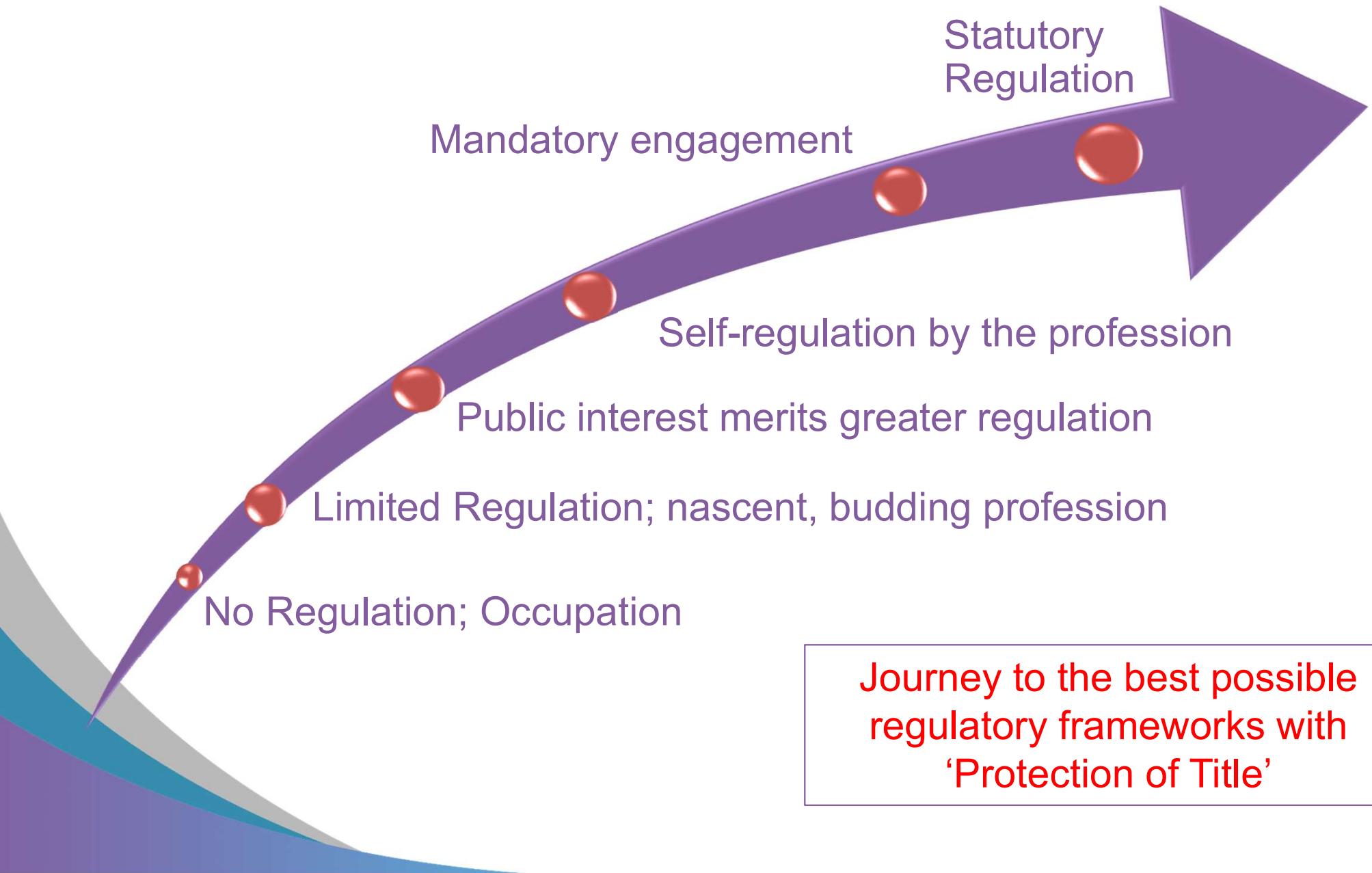
Ways of delivering services

IfG



Source: Institute for Government analysis of DCMS, Alternative delivery models explained, GOV.UK, 28 March 2017; Amey, Staffordshire Highways; ODS, *Annual report 18/19 - A doing good company*; Hammersmith and Fulham, 'H&F to return its housing repair service to council control', press release, 18 October 2018; Local Government Group, *Shared Services and Management: A guide for councils*, 2011.

Inexorable Inevitability



Journey to the best possible regulatory frameworks with 'Protection of Title'

Outsourcing Today



The rationale for outsourcing

Applying market mechanisms and private sector expertise to the work of government can reduce costs, raise quality and achieve wider benefits such as greater innovation and improved efficiency



Outsourcing Today



The consensus is breaking up...

While few question whether government should purchase goods such as stationery or IT hardware from private providers, there is an increasingly vigorous public debate about the supply of more complex public services – including spoken language services



Outsourcing Today



The consensus is breaking up...

The outsourcing industry continues to be keen to encourage further outsourcing, but there are now many organisations suggesting government has driven down the pricing of contracts too far while others questioned the adequacy of the protection of employees and those delivering the service when they are self-employed who were actually carrying out work on behalf of public sector organisations and the government



Outsourcing Today



The consensus is breaking up...

The House of Commons public accounts committee recently revealed a contract for 'Gemini', the case management system for tagging prisoners which was managed by Capita for the MoJ, had to be cancelled at a cost of nearly £100 million. This 'tagging fiasco' meant the MoJ wasted public funds - but added to the stakeholder value of Capita



Outsourcing Today



There are questions about:

- What is to be checked is actually the right measurements
- The quality of government supervision of the list of checks
- Cost and supply focus without a focus on quality
- Definitions of quality and how this is measured
- Flow of information from private companies to the public sector
- Whether the public and the public services were adequately protected from a failure by a supplier
- Small suppliers of big contractors should carry as much risk as they do



Outsourcing Today



Just some outsourcing scandals

- Army drafted in to provide security at the Olympics
- The fiasco over G4S and Serco charging the MoJ for tagging offenders who turned out to have left the country
- Failures in probation services
- G4S allowed a prison it ran to fall in to chaos
- Capita failed to send letters to 40,000 women about cervical cancer screening
- Circle's contract for Hinchingsbrooke Hospital failed
- Contract between Cornwall Council and BT prematurely ended after only two out of ten years because the company did not provide '...the service it had promised to the standard it had promised'
- The Department for Education (DfE) terminated its contract with Randstad, which had won the bid for the National Tutoring Programme (NTP) but failed to deliver
- School meals outsourced to Edenred; failed to meet demand
- Interserve went into administration owing more than £100m to creditors
- Collapse of Carillion
- Debonair



Outsourcing Today



‘As a Conservative MP observed when commenting on yet another failing contract “ the projected savings are a wish list of hope over stupidity” ...it seems even some of the most unlikely people like Jeremy Hunt have begun to question some of the fundamental thinking around outsourcing core public services in recent press statements. With the former suggesting that in times of austerity it is better to retain direct control over services as it gives you the flexibility to change and adapt that being locked into a long-term contract doesn't.

Maybe I am being too optimistic in hoping that more decision makers will start to ask some fundamental questions about who is best placed to deliver the very services the public depend on, with the minimum amount of risk. I certainly think that anyone who ignores the lengthening list of outsourced failures and doesn't build safeguards into their processes will do so at their peril.’

Paul O'Brien

Chief executive: Association for Public Service Excellence



Outsourcing Today



Governments have repeatedly outsourced in pursuit of large savings, with little reason to think suppliers could deliver – think ALS

‘Often poorly thought through, many of these government programmes are inefficient, counterproductive and lead to greater costs at the public expense. The decision to privatise court interpreting services, covering foreign language and deaf interpreting in England and Wales, which marked its first anniversary on 30 January 2013, is no exception’

Aisha Maniar



NRPSI



Registered and Regulated Interpreter

ACCREDITED



In need of a trusted public service interpreter?



Check my credentials.
Find me listed on the free-to-access online National Register of Public Service Interpreters at www.nrpsi.org.uk.



YOU WOULDN'T ACCEPT AN UNREGULATED AND UNREGISTERED DOCTOR OR LAWYER, SO DON'T ACCEPT AN UNREGULATED AND UNREGISTERED PUBLIC SERVICE INTERPRETER.



Registered and Regulated Interpreter



National Register of Public Service Interpreters

www.nrpsi.org.uk

Where would you put your trust?

7. #Experience

NRPSI

The National Register of Public Service Interpreters

95% of NRPSI Registered Interpreters possess a minimum of 400 hours of proven public service interpreting experience.

Of the 5% who do not possess 400 hours of experience, the 2% who speak Rare Languages are required to provide evidence of 100 hours of experience. The remaining 3%, who possess the relevant DPSI* qualification, must demonstrate they are working towards the required hours of experience.

*Diploma in Public Service Interpreting (DPSI) or equivalent qualification



MoJ

The Ministry of Justice's language services

The MoJ doesn't require anyone on its list of interpreters with any level of public service interpreting qualification to provide evidence of any public service interpreting experience.

As of March 2021, there are 1,660 NRPSI Registered Interpreters and 2,184 language speakers on the MoJ list of interpreters.

Where would you put your trust when a court judgement is at stake: in a bilingual speaker who hasn't provided any evidence of any practical experience of public service interpreting or a Registered Interpreter who has provided evidence of 400 hours of practical experience and has also had this verified by an independent regulator?

Just some of the many images developed for NRPSI social media ad campaigns

NRPST



National Register of
Public Service Translators



Registered
and Regulated
Translator

Looking for an accredited public service translator?



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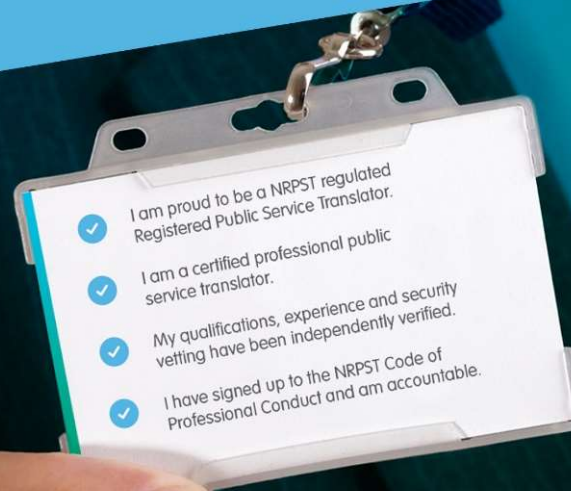
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- ✓ I am a certified professional public service translator.
- ✓ My qualifications, experience and security vetting have been independently verified.
- ✓ I have signed up to the NRPST Code of Professional Conduct and am accountable.

Check my credentials.

Find me listed on the free-to-access online National Register of Public Service Translators at www.nrpst.org.uk.



YOU WOULDN'T ACCEPT AN UNREGULATED AND UNREGISTERED DOCTOR OR LAWYER, SO DON'T ACCEPT AN UNREGULATED AND UNREGISTERED PUBLIC SERVICE TRANSLATOR.

Registered and Regulated Translator

Just some of the many images developed for NRPST social media ad campaigns

Outsourcing Tomorrow?



According to the House of Commons' Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee, public trust in outsourcing has been seriously damaged

The future of outsourcing is no longer whether it will go or stay; it is the extent to which it will continue to change the nature of public services and which public services should be outsourced

If the Government wishes to continue with outsourcing for particular services it needs to rebuild trust in the process by which it makes decisions – at a time when trust generally in the government is at an all time low – standards in public service need re-building, including standards in public sector language services



Outsourcing Tomorrow?



The Government can only achieve this rebuilding of trust by being transparent about how and why it decides to purchase a good or service – at a time when transparency and ethical probity seems to be lacking in the UK's Executive branch

Authorities wanting to outsource should make a special effort to ensure that there is robust oversight and effective appeal mechanisms

The Government should publish its rationale for each decision to outsource, notify parliament and be accountable for the processes it went through to make the decision

Outsourcing foreign spoken language services in the MoJ was due for review in late 2022/2023 but has not yet happened



Outsourcing Tomorrow?



231207 The Times newspaper coverage of issues in public service interpreting

Entitled: Shortage of Interpreters Delays Trials

Written by Catherine Baksi

Published in The Times on Thursday December 07 2023, 12.01am

See <https://www.nrpsi.org.uk/news-posts/Read-here-in-PDF-format-the-article-published-in-The-Times-on-Thursday-December-07-2023-written-by-Catherine-Baksi-reviewing-issues-in-public-service-interpreting-click-here.html>



Outsourcing Tomorrow?



Extract:

Poor quality interpreting — or the absence of a specialist — “means witnesses’ words are not are not heard, victims’ are not fully heard and an accused cannot get the best possible defence,” Mike Orlov, executive director of the voluntary regulator, the National Register of Public Service Interpreters, says.

“It also means that there are miscarriages of justice and court time is wasted while they wait for a qualified interpreter.”



Outsourcing Tomorrow?



Extract:

Orlov says that the problem stems from the justice ministry's decision to outsource the supply of court interpreters to save money after the 2008 financial crash, rather than allowing courts to continue to make their own arrangements by contacting interpreters on the regulator's register.

“The number one priority of an outsourced agency is not to the public, but their fiduciary duty to build profits, deliver dividends to shareholders and build shareholder value,” he argues.

Apart from fees, Orlov is concerned by the low standards required by the outsourcing agreements, which can amount to the equivalent of GCSE knowledge.



Outsourcing Tomorrow?



Extract:

Orlov wants a move away from outsourcing, coupled with an “acceptance of public service interpreters as a profession, with protection of title and an independent regulator”.

He also wants an increase in the standards required in public service contracts — a call backed by the crossbench peer, Baroness Coussins, who in 2021 sought an amendment to the Police, Crime and Sentencing Bill to legislate for increased minimum standards in line with the practitioner regulator’s requirements.



Time for Insourcing



Constant maneuvering over issues of:

- Outsource or not
- Cost issues
- Supply problems
- Quality: what to be, and how to be, measured
- Experience levels required
- Accountability
- What information remains commercially sensitive if outsourced
- Whether regulation is necessary
- If so, independent or government-controlled regulation
- Engagement remuneration, terms, conditions and rights



Inexorable Inevitability...



This happens, when management thinks anybody can do any work.



In sourcing Tomorrow

- <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmpubadm/748/748.pdf>
- <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/government-outsourcing-reform-WEB.pdf>
- <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/summary-government-procurement-scale-nature-contracting-uk>
- <https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/TUC%20and%20NEF%20Outsourcing%20Public%20Services.pdf>
- <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmpubadm/748/748.pdf>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/updated-outsourcing-playbook>
- <https://www.apse.org.uk/apse/index.cfm/blog/is-outsourcing-failing-public-services/>
- <https://irr.org.uk/article/shambolic-and-unworkable-outsourcing-of-court-interpreting-services/>
- <https://www.linkedin.com/in/orlovmike/recent-activity/posts/>
- <https://www.nrpsi.org.uk/news-posts/Explore-just-some-of-the-work-carried-out-by-NRPSI-when-lobbying-for-greater-professionalism-in-public-service-interpreting-click-here.html>



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