

National Police Language Services Update - May 2021

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Introduction

Welcome to the second update from the Police Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) and the PAIT Scheme.

Having provided a lot of information in our March newsletter, this month it is much slimmer. Please do ensure you have read the March edition before diving into this one, as many of the concepts have been set out in far more detail and are expanded upon or only touched upon in this edition.

Procurement Update

The South West Region has now conducted Supplier Engagement Exercises with Approved LSPs on the DPS and is hoping to issue a tender some time in summer 2021. Other regions continue to progress to contract award as mentioned previously.

Police Approved Interpreters and Translators (PAIT) Update

PAIT Go-Live

The PAIT Scheme went live for spoken language face to face interpreting on 1st April 2021.

There was a complication in that contracts currently in place with Language Service Providers across the regions do not mention PAIT. Rather than negotiate new contracts, forces are able to take advantage of an NPCC exemption to PAIT so long as they are fully PAIT compliant by 1st April 2022.

Any new contracts awarded under the National Police DPS will mandate PAIT compliance.

The PAIT Scheme must be suitable for not only use by police, but also the interpreters and translators that will be undertaking the police assignments. We want to ensure that the widest pool is available to the police forces across the UK as well as ensuring standards and experience are carefully and accurately maintained.

For the first time ever (we believe) the police have set a definitive standard for those undertaking police interpreting and translation assignments.

This has been done in consultation with NRPSI, NRCPSD, CIOL, ATC, AIT and various BSL/non spoken organisations as well as individual interpreters and translators.

PAIT Presentations

We continue to deliver presentations regarding PAIT to groups and organisations when requested. Recently Chief Constable Simon Cole QPM and I presented to an All Party Parliamentary Group on the new PAIT classifications for spoken language interpreters and the regulatory and governance elements of the scheme. CIOL and NRPSI were invited to join this meeting. There were a number of members of the House of Lords present to listen to our presentation, then ask questions.

Baroness Coussins co-chaired with Lord Toby Harris. We received praise for our presentation, our scheme and we were told that the committee would look at our scheme with a view to replicating it in other public sector settings. We have taken this as a compliment and an endorsement that our scheme is not only meeting the specific needs of the police, but finding approval with the vast majority of interpreting and translating organisations and individuals across the UK. In the absence of mandatory regulation (which NRPSI and NRCPSD continue to lobby for and campaign to achieve), we believe that the police have the most robust systems in place to ensure the public remain protected and the integrity of investigations and prosecutions remain intact.

House of Lords Approval for PAIT Scheme

On Wednesday 18th May, Baroness Coussins delivered a speech to the House of Lords that declared 'the new flagship Police Approved Interpreter and Translator scheme has blazed a trail for high standards. It respects all parties and, combined with the register, could be a really effective model for the courts too.'

The full speech transcript may be found by following this link (the speech starts at 4.22pm): <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2021-05-18/debates/33A25936-7C04-40A5-8CAD-EB-920FB58292/details#contribution-814D36AA-DE2D-49C7-A91F-067580DD0B89>

Other Updates

Use of electronic devices for police assignments

I have been made aware that a number of interpreters and translators have been asked by police to type MG11 statements and other documents on their personal computers or tablets.

This is not permitted and is mentioned in the College of Policing Guidance as shown below. I have copied the relevant sections, but the full documents may be found by following this link: ([National Police Dynamic Purchasing System for Language Services \(npcc.police.uk\)](https://www.npcc.police.uk/national-police-dynamic-purchasing-system-for-language-services))

Interpreters are trained to take notes to aid their memory during interviews. Each interpreter develops their own note-taking strategy and it is unlikely that two interpreters take notes in the same way. **Any notes taken must be in hard copy. Electronic devices cannot be used.**

To comply with data protection regulations, interpreters cannot retain a copy of their notes since they may contain names, addresses or other personal information relevant to the case. Interpreters can make a separate note of any terminology of linguistic value for their professional glossary.

Under no circumstances should a witness statement be prepared on the interpreter's personal laptop or tablet, nor should a witness statement be removed from law enforcement premises for later translation.

The rationale is basically issues of operational security, integrity and data protection. If the force wants the interpreter to type the statement they should provide a vanilla laptop that is handed back at the end of the interview. In no circumstances should the interpreter be taking material home with them, and they definitely shouldn't be emailing information to a non-police account, or allowing material be stored on a non-police laptop.

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