

A licence to interpret. Or a risk.

This is what an institutional source told me.

Swipe to learn →

Not vocabulary. Cognitive load.

The DPSI tests the ability to process language and interpret under time pressure — with real-time choices across structurally different languages. Vocabulary can be learned quickly. The cognitive capacity to interpret cannot.

What the DPSI tests

Simultaneous and consecutive interpreting. Sight translation. Real-time decisions under pressure.

What it is not

A vocabulary test. Bilingual ability alone is not enough to pass.

New guidance. Will it hold?

The Home Office has released comprehensive new guidance recommending accredited qualifications for asylum interpreters. It has been welcomed — but interpreters worry it will not be fully enforced in practice.

What the guidance says

Accredited qualifications recommended. Qualification and experience requirements set out.

What interpreters fear

That it won't be fully enforced. That 'recommended' stays optional.

DPSI: you know.

No licence: a risk.

A person without a full driving licence may be able to drive. Getting in a car with them is a risk. An unqualified interpreter may be bilingual. Putting them in an asylum hearing is the same.

DPSI-qualified interpreter:

Level 6. Rigorously assessed. Consecutive, simultaneous, and sight translation.

Unqualified interpreter:

May be bilingual. Track record unknown. Risk unquantified.

Procurement first. Statute: unlikely.

Procurement contracts specifying DPSI as a minimum — plus proactive Home Office monitoring — would be a meaningful step. Statutory enforcement is the ideal. But given how UK government organises public services, it is very unlikely.

Follow for findings as they emerge.

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All sources anonymised.