



**Mr Dominic Grieve QC MP
Attorney General
20 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0NF**

Our Ref: CW/GRIE01002/02120604

Dear Dominic

15 March 2012

I am writing to you because of mounting concern at the failures of Applied Language Solutions (ALS) to supply well trained interpreters in a timely fashion to our courts.

As I am sure you are aware these failures have caused a number of cases to be rescheduled causing delays and incurring greater costs for our court system. The Justice Minister, Crispin Blunt has acknowledged the very serious difficulties that are occurring, saying that there have been "an unacceptable number of problems in the first two weeks of full implementation of the contract".

In addition to the delays caused by the failure of court interpreters to appear in time for hearings, very serious criticisms have been made of the quality and appropriateness of court interpreters provided by ALS. It is alleged that some of the interpreters employed by ALS have not received the necessary training or legal experience to interpret in court and that they have not been properly vetted.

I understand that a number of wasted cost orders have been applied for by solicitors. I would like your urgent reassurance that the costs incurred by the Crown Prosecution Service are being monitored and would value the most recent data you have on the cost implications so far for these delays.

In addition to monitoring the implications for the Crown Prosecution Service, I would urge you to give specific consideration as to whether sanctions should be applied to the contractor. Given your rigorous application of the contempt of court rules I would also ask that you consider whether the failures of ALS amounts to contempt of court.

Best wishes

**Emily Thornberry MP
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