



National Register of  
Public Service Interpreters

## **Frequently asked questions (FAQ) on the Ministry of Justice's (MoJ) procurement for the Language Services Contract, November 2015**

### **What is the MoJ's procurement process for language services?**

Following the publication of the Prior Information Notice (PIN) by the Ministry of Justice (see NRPSI Registrants' Newsletter, [April 2015](#)), the MoJ published the Contract Notice in the Online Journal of the EU (OJEU) on 15th October for the Language Services Contract. The MoJ has divided the procurement into four lots: Lot 1 is for the provision of spoken language interpreting, Lot 2 is for translation, Lot 3 is for non-spoken interpreting, and Lot 4 is for quality assurance. The supplier selected to deliver Lot 4 will be unable to take up a contract for any of the other three lots.

The current contract with Capita TI comes to an end on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2016. The first stage of the procurement process for each of the four lots comprises a 'pre-qualification questionnaire' (PQQ), which aims to reduce the number of suppliers for each lot to a maximum of three or four. The submission deadline for the preliminary PQQ stage was 17:00 on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2015. At the next stage, the shortlisted suppliers will be asked to enter formal bids. This 'tender stage' is due to be completed in February 2016. The MoJ intend to announce the preferred suppliers for each lot in March 2016.

### **Is NRPSI taking part in the procurement?**

The specification of Lot 4 includes the identification and monitoring of the quality standards for interpreting and is a close fit with NRPSI's aims, objectives and expertise as an organisation. It provides NRPSI with an opportunity to make a major improvement in language service standards in the UK. It was also clear, in reviewing the documentation provided by the MoJ, that further expertise in delivering projects to government would be more likely to make any submission from NRPSI accepted into the next phase. After considering a number of possibilities, NRPSI decided to form a partnership with Interserve, and therefore a joint Interserve/NRPSI submission has been made to the MoJ. NRPSI considers that this collaboration will ensure that all the requirements set out by the MoJ in Lot 4 can be delivered successfully, and provide both organisations the strongest possibility of success in the procurement process.

### **Why didn't NRPSI bid for MoJ Lot 4 alone?**

NRPSI reviewed the documentation provided by the MoJ for Lot 4 and considered the scale of the requirements to be larger than anything it has delivered in the past. While it might be possible for NRPSI alone to deliver the MoJ's requirements, in practice it would be difficult to pass the procurement criteria without any history of doing so on the scale required.

### **Were any other suppliers considered as NRPSI partners?**

NRPSI held discussions with a number of potential partners and gave serious consideration to each of them. However, the Interserve partnership was clearly the most attractive.

### **Who are Interserve?**

Interserve (<http://www.interserve.com/>) is a FTSE 250 company that has won plaudits for delivering services while working in partnership with charities and not-for-profit organisations, including Shelter and the Citizens Advice Bureau. Interserve does not have language expertise, but it has delivered other government projects successfully, including in the justice sector. It also has expertise in vocational training.

### **What are the benefits to NRPSI of such a partnership?**

Interserve has experience of working with government on various projects on a scale similar to the Language Services Contract, and much larger, while NRPSI has no similar expertise. NRPSI has experience of managing the National Register and of working with language professionals to maintain standards.

### **Won't Interserve dominate NRPSI as it is a much smaller organisation?**

Interserve has an excellent track record of collaborating with other smaller organisations to achieve agreed goals. Interserve recognises the expertise in languages that NRPSI brings to the partnership, and both Interserve and NRPSI will formally agree the way in which each organisation participates in the partnership.

### **When will Registrants know more details about the arrangements?**

Registrants will be informed whether the Interserve/NRPSI submission has successfully gone through to the next phase of the MoJ procurement process as soon as the MoJ's decision has been received by Interserve/NRPSI. We understand that we will receive this in December 2015. We will still be

bound by the confidentiality agreement that all participants in the procurement process have had to sign, but we will keep Registrants informed of developments thereafter as much as is possible.

**Does Lot 4 have any influence over the terms and conditions of interpreters working in the courts?**

No. Lot 4 is entitled 'Quality Assurance' and is purely about the standards of the language professionals that will be engaged by the suppliers selected to deliver Lots 1, 2 and 3.

**Why weren't Registrants informed about the partnership earlier?**

The timescale from publication of the specifications by the MoJ to the submission deadline was short. During this time, NRPSI had discussions with a number of organisations, before choosing to partner with Interserve because of the clear advantage it provides in terms of being able to deliver on the MoJ's requirements. We want to keep Registrants informed about the partnership and procurement process in a timely manner, however, bearing in mind that all participants in the process had to sign confidentiality agreements and also that there is likely to be strong competition, we decided to make details more widely known after the PQQ submission closing date, once we had received agreement from both our partner and the MoJ to do so – hence our email to all Registrants on 30 November 2015.

**Will this partnership benefit NRPSI financially?**

This partnership has the potential to help make our organisation more robust and sustainable, which will serve the interests of our core activity of maintaining and developing the National Register. Furthermore, should Interserve/NRPSI be selected to deliver Lot 4, there would be significant other benefits. NRPSI would be at the heart of ensuring the appropriate standards as well as the quality of delivery of interpreting and translation services provided to the MoJ.

**Would there be any benefits to Registrants in NRPSI delivering the Lot 4 contract?**

Should Interserve/NRPSI be selected to deliver Lot 4, any financial benefit to NRPSI resulting from delivery of this contract would be retained within NRPSI, thereby strengthening the organisation and enabling it to pursue its objectives for the benefit of Registrants and the profession. Furthermore, in much the same way as Registrants can apply to play a role in the NRPSI complaints and disciplinary process, there would be an opportunity for Registrants to apply to help in the delivery of quality assurance to the MoJ.

**Is NRPSI partnering with Interserve on any other projects?**

There are no current plans to work together on other projects.

**What happens if the Interserve/NRPSI submission does not pass the PQQ stage?**

If the MoJ's procurement team determine that the Interserve/NRPSI submission has not passed the requirements of the PQQ stage, we will play no further part in the procurement and those suppliers who have passed will bid for the Lot 4 contract.

**Who should I contact with any further queries on this subject?**

NRPSI is handling any queries from Registrants about the Interserve/NRPSI submission, and will answer questions as far as possible under the terms of the confidentiality agreement it has signed as part of the procurement process. Queries should be sent via email to [feedback@nrpsi.org.uk](mailto:feedback@nrpsi.org.uk). Any questions received and the answers to these may be added to this FAQ document for the benefit of all Registrants.