

NRPSI's Annual Review indicates a strong commitment from Registered Interpreters to professional standards, despite a challenging environment

13 July 2017: The National Register of Public Service Interpreters (NRPSI) has today published the fourth edition of its Annual Review to offer insight into the state of the public service interpreting profession in the UK.* This publication provides independent analysis of the information held on the National Register about Registered Interpreters and their languages, and shines a light on the NRPSI's professional standards records.

The National Register data shows that the number of Registered Public Service Interpreters has remained stable over the last three years (2014–2016). It also indicates that the average number of years that interpreters stay on the National Register has increased steadily, and is now nearing ten.

Of the 1,889 qualified, experienced, security-cleared and accountable interpreters on the Register servicing the UK's public services, almost a third (31%) are non-UK EU nationals.

Stephen Bishop, NRPSI Executive Director, explains the significance: *"NRPSI is a not-for-profit organisation funded by the Registrants' annual registration fee. That so many interpreters continue to provide strong support to the Register despite the challenging economic circumstances speaks hugely in favour of the value they place on professional standards and their commitment to professionalism. It would be a travesty for the UK interpreting profession and public if we were to lose so many of our skilled interpreters because of the UK's withdrawal from the EU, and so we remain committed to lobbying the UK Government to ensure this catastrophic skills gap doesn't occur."*

National Register data highlights:

- 1,889 public service interpreters are registered with NRPSI, demonstrating their commitment to professionalism.
- Registrants have been registered for almost ten years on average.
- 1,660 Registrants have a language registered at Full status, meaning that they possess both the necessary qualification in this language and 400 hours' experience of using it in a public service setting.

- 104 different languages are registered, with 15% of Registrants offering more than one language.
- Most Registrants hold British nationality (62%), but a significant number (31%) are from EU countries outside the UK.
- The majority of Registrants are women (65%). The average age of female Registrants is 50, while the average age of male Registrants is slightly older, at 54.
- 2,691 interpreting qualifications are held by the 1,889 Registrants. 37% of Registrants hold two or more qualifications.
- All Registrants are required to provide evidence of at least one valid security clearance, as this is required by public service users. More than half (54%) hold more than one type of clearance.

Professional standards

Over the past three years (2014–2016), NRPSI has received only 87 complaints in total about Registered Interpreters. Most complaints, almost a third (29%), came from the police, who are the main users of Registered Interpreters.

The majority of the complaints made did not relate to linguistic skills but to breaches of other sections of NRPSI's Code of Professional Conduct, such as bringing the profession into disrepute or not acting with integrity.

Of the 87 complaints made in the past three years, 18 resulted in an admonishment/warning, two in a conditional suspension, six in a suspension and two in expulsion from the National Register.

Ted Sangster, NRPSI Chair, says: *"We are fortunate that so many interpreters remain committed to the profession and serving our public services. These are uncertain times for many people, but the need for skilled public service language professionals who are prepared to be accountable remains constant. And so too does NRPSI's resolve to ensure that public service interpreting standards are upheld to protect the profession, those working within it and the public. We will do everything in our power to ensure we continue to fulfil our role as the UK's public service interpreting regulator. One way in which we are currently doing this is to consult with the police on their language service requirements and procurement procedures to ensure they receive the high-quality interpreting support they need."*

To view/download a copy of NRPSI's Annual Review 2016, visit:

<http://www.nrpsi.org.uk/AnnualReview2016>.

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Editor's notes:

***About the data**

The 'NRPSI Annual Review of Public Service Interpreting in the UK' provides data on the Registrants that were on the National Register at the end of 2016, together with an analysis of the complaints heard by NRPSI over the last three years (2014–2016).

About NRPSI

The National Register of Public Service Interpreters (NRPSI) is the UK's independent voluntary regulator of the public service interpreting profession. Funded by Registrants' fees, it is a not-for-profit organisation. By maintaining interpreting standards, it safeguards the public. All Registrants – there are currently 1,889 covering 104 languages – satisfy rigorous entry criteria in terms of qualifications and experience, and demonstrate their commitment to professional standards by signing NRPSI's Code of Professional Conduct. While NRPSI is a voluntary regulator, its powers allow it to discipline and, ultimately, exclude a Registrant who breaks its Code of Professional Conduct. In this way, it can ensure that interpreters on the Register, which is publicly available and searchable online for free, are appropriately qualified, have the level of competence claimed and employ best practice. <http://www.nrpsi.org.uk/>