

NRPSI Annual Review reveals the state of public service interpreting

28 September 2015: The National Register of Public Service Interpreters (NRPSI) has today published the second edition of its Annual Review to share independent analysis of the information held on the National Register and provide informed insight into the state of the interpreting profession*.

The Annual Review includes key information about the 1,909 interpreters on the Register and the languages they have registered. It also contains professional standards data relating to the number of complaints NRPSI has heard and its performance in dealing with them.

New for this year, the report includes information on the age profile of Registrants, the number of security clearances they retain, and a breakdown of the relevant qualifications they hold.

Registration data highlights:

- 1,909 public service interpreters are registered with NRPSI.
- The majority of Registrants are on Full status, possessing both the necessary qualification and number of hours' experience required to work in a public service setting.
- 101 different languages are spoken by Registrants, with 15% offering more than one language.
- Most Registrants (77%) are between the ages of 35 and 64.
- The 1,909 Registrants possess a total of 2,733 interpreting qualifications. The most popular qualification, held by two thirds of Registrants, is the Diploma in Public Service Interpreting (DPSI) in Law.
- About a quarter of Registrants reported being a member of a professional association, with 119 being members of more than one.
- All Registrants are required to provide evidence of at least one valid security clearance required in order to work with the police, in medical settings, etc. 44% hold more than one clearance.

Professional standards

The latest Annual Review also highlights that, although there is a trend of an increase in complaints about Registered Interpreters, the actual number of complaints referred to NRPSI is quite small, totalling 72 for the period 2012-2014. It is thought that the increasing trend represents a greater confidence among the public services to submit complaints to NRPSI.

The majority of complaints that NRPSI received during the period 2012-2014 did not relate to linguistic skills, but to other breaches of NRPSI's Code of Professional Conduct, for example not behaving impartially or not maintaining confidentiality.

While a maximum period of 34 weeks is prescribed for the completion of all stages of the complaints process, cases heard in the last three years (2012 to 2014) took, on average, 12.9 weeks to complete.

Ted Sangster, Chair, NRPSI: *"With, according to the last Census, 88 main languages other than English spoken throughout England and Wales, and almost one million respondents describing their English language skills as 'non-proficient', the need for interpreters who are equipped to work in public service settings to facilitate their smooth running is all too clear.*

The fact that so many interpreters continue to support the Register despite challenging economic circumstances speaks volumes about the value they place on preserving professional standards and their professional integrity. Not everyone is willing to be held accountable for their work. Our Registrants are not alone in their recognition of the role NRPSI serves in maintaining standards either. This has also been borne out by a survey we conducted early in 2015 with users of the Register. Notably, they reported a satisfaction rating twice as high with interpreters drawn from the Register compared with their satisfaction when using unregistered interpreters."

To view/download a copy of NRPSI's Annual Review 2014, visit
<http://www.nrpsi.org.uk/downloads/AnnualReview2014.pdf>.

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Editors' Notes:

***About the data**

The 'NRPSI Annual Review of Public Service Interpreting in the UK' provides data on the Registrants on the National Register at the end of 2014, together with an analysis of the complaints heard by NRPSI over the last three years (2012-2014).

About National Register of Public Service Interpreters (NRPSI)

The National Register of Public Service Interpreters (NRPSI) is the UK's independent voluntary regulator of professional interpreters. Funded by Registrants' fees, it is a not-for-profit organisation. By maintaining interpreting standards it safeguards the public. All NRPSI registered interpreters, there are currently 1,909 covering 101 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 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/>