

NRPSI provides annual update on state of public service interpreting profession in the UK

29 September 2016: The National Register of Public Service Interpreters (NRPSI) has today published the third edition of its Annual Review. This provides independent analysis of the information held on the National Register and insight into the state of the public service interpreting profession in the UK*.

The Annual Review includes key information about the interpreters on the Register and their languages. 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 data on those Registrants subscribing to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) update service, which employers can use to check the security clearances of interpreters.

Registration data highlights:

- 1,882 public service interpreters are registered with NRPSI, demonstrating their commitment to professionalism.
- Registrants have been registered for over nine years on average.
- The majority (88%) of Registrants are on Full status, possessing both the necessary qualification and number of hours' experience required to work in a public service setting.
- 100 different languages are registered, with 14% of Registrants offering more than one language.
- Two thirds (65%) of Registrants are women. Most Registrants (76%) are between the ages of 35 and 64. The average age of female Registrants is 52, while the average age of male Registrants is slightly younger at 50.
- The 1,882 Registrants possess a total of 2,688 interpreting qualifications. 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. Almost half (49%) hold more than one clearance.

Professional standards

The latest Annual Review also highlights an overall steady increase in the number of complaints against registered interpreters received by NRPSI to 32 in 2015.

Over the past three years (2013-2015), the police, the major user of the Register, has brought the most complaints against registered interpreters (29 in total). Agencies brought the second highest number of complaints (18), followed by individual interpreters (12).

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

NRPSI itself has sponsored 10 complaints over the past three years, often as a result of breaches of its Code of Conduct being brought to light by its registration process.

Ted Sangster, Chair, NRPSI: *"While the Government is committed to reducing net immigration, it contributed almost 336,000 to the UK's increase in population in the year to June 2015. This coupled with the fact that almost one million respondents to the 2011 Census described their English language skills as 'non-proficient' highlights the continuing need for qualified public service interpreters.*

We are fortunate therefore that so many interpreters remain committed to the profession. The fact that our Registrant numbers remain steady in what is an ever more challenging environment is a testament to their resolve. While NRPSI registration and Registrants are increasingly perceived to be the 'gold standard' of public service interpreting, there is still a great deal of work to be done to have this standard formally recognised and underpinned by legislation. But that is our objective and what we will continue to work towards."

To view/download a copy of NRPSI's Annual Review 2015, visit <http://www.nrpsi.org.uk/AnnualReview2015.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 2015, together with an analysis of the complaints heard by NRPSI over the last three years (2013-2015).

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 1,882 covering 100 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/>