

Message from Outgoing Chair, Alan Kershaw

Dear friends and colleagues,

It is with a heavy heart that I stand down from my responsibilities as of 31st March 2024 at NRPSI/NRPST, brought on by no more than an unexpected increase in my responsibilities at another Board I chair.

I am indeed sorry to be moving on at such a crucial point in the organisation's history, with the new NRPST starting to take root just as public agencies are beginning to realise how exposed the public services are when they try to rely on 'interpretation' which is not underpinned by solid, independently-assessed qualifications and experience. I was closely involved in the establishment of NRPSI as a properly independent body over twelve years ago, when I did the analysis of how we might function, wrote the first governance documents and recruited the first Chair and Board. As a project grounded firmly in the principle that a Register exists to define, and then put a boundary around, competent practice in an identifiable professional group, it has always been a project close to my heart.

Mike Orlov and our incredibly dedicated team have given everything to the nurture and development of NRPSI as a viable entity, and it is to them that we owe the existence of the organisation despite the efforts of many (including, sadly, some within the interpreting community itself) to sideline, disparage and generally fail to support an organisation which has always existed to promote the standing of public service interpreting as a demonstrable public good. If I have a parting message, it is to the interpreting and translating community serving the public sector: to get behind the one organisation that can advance that aim and see off the distressingly common assumption that anyone who can speak a language can therefore be a public service interpreter or translator.

But my main message must be one of thanks to the range of colleagues who have pulled together to achieve what has been achieved already - and to express the expectation that green shoots will indeed bear full fruit as time progresses. To my immediate successor, Nick Whittaker, to Mike and the team, and to all of you, I offer my best wishes. I shall watch closely what happens in the future.

Kindest regards,

Alan Kershaw

Monday 11th March 2024