



National Register of
Public Service Interpreters

www.nrpsi.org.uk

INFORMATION PACK FOR APPLICANTS FOR THE POSITION OF NON-EXECUTIVE CHAIR

The purpose of this brief is solely to provide potential applicants with further background information to assist them in deciding on whether they wish to apply, and if so how they could seek to position their covering letter and accompanying CV.

You may have some understanding of the role, purpose and history of the National Register of Public Service Interpreters (NRPSI) already. Some information is given below and much more is carried on our website which also gives a brief outline of our current board members.

If any further explanation or comment is needed or you wish to arrange a telephone discussion to assist in your understanding please contact our Chairman, Ted Sangster, at chairman@nrpsi.org.uk or on his mobile 07770 646462, from whom further information such as accounts and minutes of previous board meetings is also available.

February 2022

1. The reason for the vacancy

Ted Sangster who has served as chair of the board since 2011 will be completing his final term of office at the end of April.

As a relevant point of information Hassan Sobati a practitioner director who also joined in 2011 will be standing down in April and a recruitment programme for his replacement is currently under way amongst our Registrants.

Another 2011 lay member finished last year and has been replaced and the final two 2011 appointments Steve Thacker and Lalia Pessoa-White (one lay, one practitioner) will be standing down in April 2023.

2. Background

The National Register of Public Service Interpreters Ltd (NRPSI) was established on 1st April 2011 as an independent company limited by guarantee.

It was previously a wholly owned subsidiary of the Chartered Institute of Linguists (CIoL) who after a number of years of discussion around such issues as potential conflict of interests undertook a detailed review of the future of the NRPSI in 2009. The result was that the CIoL decided to divest themselves of this subsidiary and set it up as a completely independent not-for-profit body.

4. The Board and the staff team

Our constitution provides for a board of 7 non-executive directors of whom 4 are lay members and 3 are practitioners (NRPSI Registered Interpreters.) The chair is one of the 4 lay members.

The current Board members are:

Ted Sangster	Chairman, and Lay Member
Alan Kershaw	Lay Member
Stephen Thacker	Lay Member
Nick Whittaker	Lay Member
Lalia Pessoa-White	Practitioner Member
Hassan Sobati	Practitioner Member
Madeline Lee	Practitioner Member

Our Executive Director is Mike Orlov.

The Board profiles are on the website www.nrpsi.org.uk

At the board meetings the papers are prepared by the Executive Director and the Chairman together with our external accountants.

The Executive Director participates fully at Board meetings and although he does not have voting powers is very much looked to for advice and comment on all issues.

The minutes are taken by one of the staff and after distribution to the Directors and approval at a subsequent board meeting are also placed in the 'Interpreter's Room' (which as Registrants will know is the access-controlled part of the website which provides Registrants with privileged access to the Minutes and Annual Accounts).

The Executive Director has a team of six staff of whom two (our Professional Standards Manager and our Registration Manager) have been with NRPSI since

before it became independent from the CioL in April 2011 and therefore have considerable experience.

Our registration team of four staff are involved in maintaining the Register, which requires in depth understanding of the registration criteria and great efforts have been made to retain experienced staff. Complaints against our Code of Conduct are managed by our Professional Standards Manager.

Whilst the Executive Director is accountable to the Board for the way in which he/she manages the NRPSI's affairs, all the Directors are non-executive so do not get involved in day-to-day operations (although on occasion the chair has done so in the past when the Executive Director has not been available). The Directors provide a range of skill sets and contacts however that the Executive Director can and does call on as the occasion requires and the Chairman has regular and fairly detailed contact with the Executive Director.

The practitioner directors being by definition actively involved in public service interpreting are particularly valuable in both supporting the Executive Director in maintaining awareness of issues within the profession and bringing an understanding of interpreting processes and Registrants' views to their lay director colleagues.

5. NRPSI's relationships

To a significant degree we have as NRPSI sought to distance ourselves from some of the lobbying and confrontational activity that has been taking place around the issue of the changes in the justice sector, seeking to position ourselves as an independent regulator, in touch with what is going on but retaining a degree of impartiality. Our constant message is that of the need to maintain the quality of public service interpreting and to stress that the use of the Register provides the "gold standard" of such quality.

A view of our website (www.nrpsi.org.uk) will give some examples of the way in which we have so engaged and positioned ourselves over the past year – and also the links we have with others in the interpreting community.

In this context we have allied ourselves with a number of interpreter representative organisations to present a united front in addressing the concerns caused by the Ministry of Justice changes to the way in which interpreters are booked and used in the courts in England and Wales. The alliance is the Professional Interpreters for Justice (PI4J) and one of our practitioner Directors sits on the committee alongside our Executive Director. The Chairman is also part of the communication network of PI4J.

We have also submitted evidence to parliamentary committee investigations and the chair appeared before the Justice Select Committee. More details are on our website.

Of course, saying that quality is what we are all about has to be demonstrated by the way in which we conduct ourselves and manage the Register. Our Code of Conduct and our disciplinary procedures are an essential part of this and both have been regularly reviewed and updated since the company was formed.

Complaints against the Code are managed by the Professional Standards Manager who issues them to a panel (the Professional Conduct Committee, or PCC) to consider whether there is a case to be answered and then if necessary on to a Disciplinary Committee for a hearing and decision. The chairman of the board is also the chair of the appeals committee.

Again relevant details and the [Code of Conduct](#) which will be familiar to all Registrants are contained on our website.

Following the early decision to maintain the Register as open access for all, we also improved the way in which our Registrants could display information and contact details about themselves – if they wished to do so.

Engagement with others has been important, with the Executive Director having regular dialogue with the MoJ, Police Authorities, agencies and interpreting bodies – with again some of this activity is evidenced on the website and on social media such as LinkedIn; see <https://www.linkedin.com/company/2134408/admin/> and <https://www.linkedin.com/in/orlovmike/>

The Executive Director and his team (and on occasion the chairman) have also embarked on a programme of presentations and visits to universities and language centres to promote and explain the Register to newly/about to be qualified students and others. Some of the practitioner directors have also spoken at language conferences and exhibitions and the chair also gets involved with some of these events albeit none have taken place during the pandemic.

6. Support relationships and development

With a small team of staff, it was obvious very early on that the Executive Director and the Board required a degree of professional support and a range of services to enable the most effective use of our own resources.

An early priority was to appoint Crossley, an accountancy company based in Kent that does all our accounts and financial transactions, working closely with the Executive Director.

We also engaged the services of the HR Services Partnership for HR support and issues ranging from a new staff handbook, recruitment and disciplinary issues and advice. They also provide advice and support for any internal HR issues that might arise.

We also have a PR agency, owned by Nina Croad, who works closely with the Executive Director and the Chairman.

We relaunched our website at the end of March 2014 and the website company, CNC, also provide basic but extremely valuable IT support.

The Board have undertaken some awareness discussions and obtained information as to the role and responsibilities of a Director.

We initially undertook a detailed strategic review of the business and have reviewed and restated this on a roughly three-year cycle. The current 2019-2021 plan is due to be refreshed and updated during 2022.

7. Current issues and challenges

The immediate major issue for all our Registrants and indeed for NRPSI as a small business is the impact that COVID has had since the first impact of the restrictions and controls were brought in in March 2020. That however is (hopefully) more ephemeral in nature than some of the more significant structural issues that face us and the sector our Registrants work in.

One of these, especially for those of our Registrants working in the justice sector in England and Wales (who are the majority) is the way in which the Ministry of Justice have moved away from the previous arrangements under what was termed “the National Agreement” to an operating model that uses third party agencies to source and manage public service interpreters. That trend is also being followed in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

NRPSI has by far the largest database of accredited interpreters in the UK, and there is no single membership body that protects their interests. The result is that Registrants sometimes expect NRPSI to act on their behalf in the way that a professional association or union would, whereas NRPSI’s objective is to protect the interests of those using interpreters.

Our summary statement of our strategic priorities as given below also identify the two challenges of maintaining number of Registrants and consolidating and extending our influence over decisions, often political, that impact on the terms and conditions of interpreters working in the public sector.

On the latter the Executive Director is very much involved, where appropriate supported by the chairman, in engaging with agencies, the police service, the MoJ and with politicians to reduce the negative impact of some of the changes made and being planned and promote the value of and stark need for what NRPSI provides in maintaining and ensuring quality of delivery against the drive for cheapest cost solutions.

With an income base almost totally dependent on registration renewal and recruitment of new Registrants it is important to diversify our revenue streams and one of the vital tasks for 2022 is the launch of a new register for translators (NRPST).

8. Recent activity and other relevant information

There is much more effort devoted to providing Registrants with information about registration, professional standards and events happening within the profession, with a Registrants Newsletter issued each month, as well as other news items published on the website and an increasing use of social media; see <https://www.nrpsi.org.uk/news-and-links.html>

With the launch of the new website, we instituted access control for those wishing to search the National Register. While still being free to access, the required registration process is providing us with valuable information on which organisations are actually using the Register, as well as the means to communicate with the users and forge beneficial relationships with them. At the end of November 2021 there were over 17,562 Website Users in the last 12 months who had registered to search, from over 900 different organisations, including 270 solicitors' offices and nearly every police force. Over 7,000 searches for an interpreter are made on our website each month.

To emphasise NRPSI's role in setting standards, NRPSI sponsors the annual CIoL Award (suspended unfortunately in 2020/21) for excellence in the Diploma in Police Interpreting, given that the DPI meets NRPSI's qualification requirements for registration.

New qualifications emerge from time to time and our Qualifications Committee reviews the way that the qualifications criteria for registration are framed and whether any such new qualifications meet our criteria for registration. Increasingly the requirements will be defined by the National Occupational Standards in Interpreting.

To encourage greater use of the National Register, we advertise in publications such as the Law Society Gazette Wallplanner and in the Law Society Gazette and Your Expert Witness websites.

In early work with the PI4J group in a survey of interpreters 91% of respondents said that independent regulation of the profession was needed, and 85% confirmed that NRPSI was the best body to do this. So, both an endorsement of our role and purpose as well as a clear statement of the profession's expectations of us.

With an overall agenda of greater transparency, we are now listing the outcomes of all disciplinary panels-reviewed complaints.

The Annual Review that is sent to all our Registrants provides important data about the profession and also is widely used (and asked for) by those with an interest in public service interpreting. The latest can be found at :-

(http://www.nrpsi.org.uk/downloads/1240_NRPSI_Annual_Review_6th_Edition.pdf) and our next review will be published during 2022.

9. Financial Information

Our formal year end is 31st August. We are working within our current budget for September 2021 – August 2022 agreed by the Board. Income derives primarily from registration fees which are accounted for on an accruals basis given that such fees provide for 12 months subscription and therefore service provision.

The financial risks are identified as including

- retention of Registrants on renewal,
- attraction of new Registrants,
- cost effective management of services
- and the market level of registration fees.

The number of Registrants has fluctuated over the time we have been in existence from the 2,180 when we started in April 2011, reaching around 2,250 at one time to the current level of around 1,600.

There is no doubt that the MoJ changes and more recently the COVID crisis have meant that a number of interpreters have stopped working because they could no longer make a living, and therefore left the Register.

However, the number of new interpreters joining the Register each year has stayed relatively stable although the COVID restrictions and resulting cancellation or postponement of qualification examinations is undoubtedly having an impact on the number of new applications for registration.

Details of the financial reports to the board are contained in the minutes put into the Registrants' part of the website but given that these are not available to lay applicants if any potential applicant wants an explanation or more current information this is available on request from the chairman.

10. Our current strategy

Following a detailed review, we determined our strategy for the future development of NRPSI.

A strategy statement for 2019 – 2021 was prepared and agreed and this now serves as both a benchmark and a guide to building the future of the NRPSI. A summary is attached as Appendix A.

One of the tasks for the board this year will be to review and update our strategic aims for the next three years.

11. The Job description

JOB SPECIFICATION

The National Register of Public Service Interpreters Ltd

Non-executive Chair

The Board consists of seven non-executive Directors of whom four are lay members (including the chairman) and three are practitioner members (interpreters registered on the NRPSI).

The following brief summary applies to all Board members whether lay or practitioner.

A Board member is expected to:

1. act with independent judgement,
2. to use their skills and experience for the benefit of the Board,
3. to be committed to working solely in the best interests of the NRPSI,
4. to devote the necessary time to carry out the function of a Board member
5. comply with the Board 's governance requirements
6. accept and demonstrate a participative, active and team working ethos in Board discussions and decisions
7. to undertake such training as specified by the Board from time to time.

A Board member will be familiar with the functions of the NRPSI.

A Board member should have wide experience in one or more of the following areas, for which appointments will be made to facilitate a beneficial mix

- regulation
- interpreting and translation
- appropriate commercial industrial experience
- financial expertise
- strategic insight, marketing, administration, communication skills

In addition, the chair of the board:

- Leads, chairs and oversees the performance of the board
- Provides support and supervision to the Executive Director

12. Time commitment

In respect of the time commitment the basic requirement for members is to attend the board meetings which are normally held every two months.

There may be occasional additional board meetings to discuss strategy or other issues and members may serve on other internal committees and also on external groups.

In addition, some directors, including the chair will serve on appropriate committees (internally and when appropriate externally representing the NRPSI), attend conferences and act in any relevant manner to promote and explain NRPSI.

The time commitment for the chair is, as might be expected, more than this given the close working relationship with the Executive Director with whom there is regular contact, certainly on a weekly and at times a daily basis.

Most of this contact is by email or telephone, especially as the past couple of years has significantly reduced the number of face-to-face meetings in line with most organisations across the UK.

13. Terms of appointment

The appointment will be made for a term of three years, following which a further term is possible subject to the board's decision.

Remuneration of £6,000 pa will be made available and reasonable expenses incurred will be reimbursed.

14. Applications

Applications, preferably by email, are by a letter addressed to the chairman (chairman@nrpsi.org.uk) outlining suitability for the role, and accompanying CV and the names and contact details of two referees – who will not be contacted until later in the process and also not without the candidates prior agreement.

The closing date for applications is Monday 28th February 2022.

15. Interviewing process

After the closing date applications will be reviewed and a shortlist drawn up for interview – either at Token House or online via Zoom or similar depending on the regulations in place at the time and individual preferences.

Interviews will be taken by the chairman, a practitioner non-executive director, a lay non exec and the Executive Director.

Dated: February 2022

APPENDIX A

The UK's National Register of Public Service Interpreters

Our Strategy for 2019 - 2021

"Promoting and maintaining standards in interpreting"

The importance of professional interpreters

The UK benefits from a multicultural society in which over one million people regards their English skills as 'non-proficient'. With a population of over 65 million and net migration of over 105,000, the need for increasing professionalism and ensuring effective regulation of those acting as interpreters in their potentially life-changing interactions with the public services have never been more important

NRPSI Background

The 1985 case of R V Iqbal Begum highlighted the importance and need for professional interpreters. In overturning her murder conviction the Court of Appeal said in a landmark ruling that highlighted the problems that can occur from inaccurate court reporting :-

'It is beyond the understanding of this court that it did not occur to someone that the reason for her [the defendants] silence..... was simply because she was not being spoken to in a language which she understood.'

The subsequent 1993 Runciman Royal Commission recommended the establishment of a register so that only trained and qualified interpreters, governed by a Code of Conduct should be used in Court. In 1994 NRPSI was established by the Chartered Institute of Linguistics and became an independent body in 2011.

What NRPSI does

NRPSI is the independent voluntary regulator for those acting as interpreters across the range of the public services in the UK. In order to do this we:

- Assess and determine the standards required for registration
- Ensure that registered interpreters meet our standards for professional conduct and practice
- Maintain the National Register of Public Service Interpreters, providing a free online resource, accessible to all
- Recognise the qualifications needed to become a professional interpreter

- Investigate complaints about an interpreter's conduct or competence through a transparent process
- Promote the role of the regulator and the importance of registration to ensure understanding of added value, both to the profession and to society more widely

The future

The core activities of the NRPSI remain as relevant now as when the organisation was founded in 1994. We intend to embody and enhance our regulatory role, acknowledging that it is voluntary and therefore requires the engagement of both the interpreters themselves and the users of their services.

Our objectives

- Bring about statutory regulation of public service interpreting
- Ensure protection of title of RPSI

Our continuing tasks

- Run NRPSI effectively and sustainably
- Increase the number of NRPSI registered interpreters
- Promote the use of NRPSI and registered interpreters
- Provide a robust professional complaints service for users of interpreters
- Lobby central government and promote to the public services to use only registered interpreters
- Review the standards that form the registration requirements
- Promote the value of the register to all users in the public and linked private sector
- Ensure that NRPSI is relevant to all parts of the UK
- Maintain openness and honesty with all
- Communicate widely and effectively our aims, standards and approach
- Raise professional standards

Our strategic aims for 2019 - 2021

- Assist our Registrants to maintain and improve their professional skills through the promotion of CPD
- Influence Government regarding their sourcing of language services and in particular persuade the MoJ to insist on the use of RPI's for the next wave of contracts
- Establish the means to achieve our objectives of statutory regulation and protection of title
- To be recognised by all as the arbiter of quality in interpreting.
- Launch a register for translators - NRPST
- Review the potential impact of new technology, assessing the needs for changes to training and skills of Registrants
- Encourage the use of the register to users in the private and voluntary sectors
- Increase the number of new entrants to the profession and onto the register

- Manage our post-Brexit future and maintain and develop relationships with other registers in linked areas in the UK and Europe
- Seek to be recognised as the government's arbiter of quality definition and maintenance across all levels of linguistic practitioners

“NRPSI - Promoting and maintaining standards in interpreting”