

# Media information | 2015 <sup>1 | 9</sup>



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Thank you for your interest in the **National Register of Public Service Interpreters (NRPSI)**. This document contains information for the media regarding NRPSI's role, responsibilities, Board members/spokespeople, current campaigns, as well as key facts and figures.

Recent releases, statements and general news regarding NRPSI activities can be found in our online **News centre**, which is regularly updated with the latest information.

If you are looking for comment for an article, a thought piece on a particular issue, or further information on public service interpreting, please get in touch.

## Media contacts

For all media enquiries, please contact **Nina Croad**, Communications Consultant at Just Bee Comms, in the first instance:

**nina@justbeecomms.com**  
**07889 491259**

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## About NRPSI

### Our History

The National Register of Public Service Interpreters (NRPSI) was established in 1994, following a serious miscarriage of justice resulting from an 'interpreter' being engaged for a murder trial who was not trained and did not even speak the same dialect as the accused. This case led to a review of the Civil Justice System by Lord Woolf and it was based on the recommendations of his report, 'Access to Justice' (1996), that NRPSI was founded with support from the (then) Institute of Linguists (IoL), The Nuffield Foundation and the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). At this time the IoL was selected to be the home and custodian of the Register. NRPSI then became independent of the Chartered Institute of Linguists (CioL, formerly the IoL) on 1 April 2011.

### Our Role

Established on 1 April 2011 as an independent organisation, NRPSI regulates the public service interpreting profession in the UK. We are a voluntary public interest body and our primary role is to protect the public. We do this by ensuring that interpreters working in a variety of public service environments meet the standards required of these exacting roles.

### Our Responsibilities

#### Our core duties are:

1. Maintaining a publicly available and free to search UK Register of public service interpreters
2. Setting and maintaining the registration criteria, including the qualifications needed to become a professional interpreter
3. Ensuring that registered interpreters meet our standards for professional conduct and practice
4. Investigating complaints about an interpreter's conduct or competence
5. Promoting the role of the Regulator and the importance of registration to ensure understanding of the value they add to the profession and society.

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### How we are funded

NRPSI is a not-for-profit organisation, registered at Companies House as a company limited by guarantee. NRPSI is funded by the registration fees that interpreters pay to register and stay on the Register.

### About our Board

NRPSI's work is governed by a Board, which sets policy, strategic direction and financial priorities. The NRPSI Board consists of seven Non-Executive Directors: four lay members, including the Chair, and three registered interpreters. All seven Directors were selected through a competitive process following an open call for applications.

NRPSI's Executive Director is an advisor to the Board on matters of policy, strategy and financial priorities, with responsibility for the day-to-day operations of the organisation.

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## About our spokespeople

### NRPSI Chair

**Ted Sangster's** career has spanned both public and private sectors, large and small companies, as well as commercial and not-for-profit organisations. He worked for ferry companies Sealink and Stena, finishing as Route Director. He was Operations Director for Caledonian MacBrayne and then Director General in London for BIFA – the trade association and professional institute for the UK's freight forwarding industry. Ted returned to Wales in 1998 as Chief Executive of Milford Haven Port Authority, where he remained until his retirement in 2010. He has been a chair and non-executive director of a number of organisations. He is currently Vice Chairman of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority, a member of the board of the Haven Enterprise Zone, Vice Chairman of Saundersfoot Harbour Commission, a member of the HLF Committee for Wales, a public member of Welsh Water and Chairman of the National Register of Public Service Interpreters (NRPSI). He is a Chartered Director and a FCILT.



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### NRPSI Executive Director

**Stephen Bishop** joined NRPSI in April 2013 as Executive Director. With a background in educational and professional publishing, he is experienced in serving the needs of professionals who have a desire to maintain and develop their professional skills. As General Manager at the British Editorial Society of Bone and Joint Surgery (1997-2010) he played a central role in moving delivery of its CPD programme online. He also oversaw a local language translation programme that included new Spanish, Greek, Portuguese and Japanese editions.



### Practitioner Board members

**Silvina Katz** has more than 30 years' experience as an interpreter and translator, working for a range of organisations including the Police, Courts and Prison Service. Silvina has worked as a language tutor for many years and as an associate university lecturer on Diploma in Public Service Interpreting (DPSI) courses specialising in Law and Health. With a career spanning over 20 years in local government, she is responsible for Corporate Policy and Consultation for a large district council.



**M<sup>a</sup> Eulália Pessoa-White** (also known as **Lalia White**) has been a Director of the National Register of Public Service Interpreters (NRPSI) since April 2011 and is a member of its Professional Conduct Committee. An experienced freelance interpreter with more than 25 years' experience, she has worked for a variety of public services including the Metropolitan Police Service, UK Police Forces, Her Majesty's Court and Tribunal Services, Her Majesty's Customs and Excise, Immigration Services, and the Department for Work and Pensions. She has undertaken extensive voluntary work to help raise the profile of public service interpreters and improve their working conditions. She was instrumental in setting up the Society of Metropolitan Interpreters (SOMI), served on the Association of Police and Court Interpreters (APCI) committee, and was Chair of the National Union of Professional Interpreters and Translators (NUPIT). Before working in the Criminal Justice Sector, M<sup>a</sup> Eulália worked as secretary, translator and interpreter for industries ranging from engineering to commodities.



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**Dr Hassan Sobati** is a fully qualified interpreter and translator working in the field of law using his two native languages of Dari and Farsi. Since 2000, he has specialised in crime, immigration and family law, working with the Metropolitan Police Service, CPS, AIT, Crown, Magistrates' and County Court, and Home Office. Dr Sobati is a registered interpreter and a member of the Chartered Institute of Linguists (CIoL) as well as other professional interpreting and translation bodies. He is an examiner and tutor for degree level lingual exams and author of lingual expert reports for the Crown Courts and Tribunals.



### Lay Board members

**Ann Mealor** is Chief Executive of WilliamJack, an independent public relations consultancy, and Associate Lecturer at the London College of Communication, University of the Arts. She is also Head of Communications & Business Development for the International Travel Writers Alliance, the world's largest association of professional travel journalists, and Managing Editor of Allways Traveller. Ann began her career in local government PR, advancing to Head of Communications at the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. In 1997, she joined the then Institute of Public Relations (IPR). As Head of PR, Deputy Director General and, finally, Interim Chief Executive, she supported the development of the Institute through to it achieving Chartered status, and played a key role in helping the CIPR to more than double its membership to over 9,500 and quadruple its turnover to over £4m. An experienced and effective communicator with senior management and board level experience, she is committed to best practice and encouraging it in others. Ann is a CIPR Fellow and Accredited Practitioner.



**Nick Whitaker** was formerly a Partner at BDO LLP, one of the UK's leading accountancy and business advisory firms. A Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accounts in England and Wales (ICAEW), he has a background in corporate finance. During the course of his career he has provided expert counsel on corporate governance and finance to organisations in a wide range of sectors, both in the UK and internationally. Nick has been an advisor to various Government departments including the Department of Industry, Department of Transport, Cabinet Office, National Audit Office (NAO) and HM Treasury. His experience of working with Central Government is extensive and includes working on privatisations as well as being engaged by the NAO to evaluate the financial cost of Government using consultants. Nick has also been an expert witness in a variety of commercial disputes and professional negligence cases, and has High Court experience. He is a qualified mediator, working primarily on behalf of ICAEW, and has been the Treasurer of a number of not-for-profits including the charity Peaceworkers UK, now part of the larger agency International Alert.



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**Steven Thacker** is Managing Director of Sigma Consulting (UK) Ltd. He is also on the Board of four organisations, which includes being Deputy Chair of the National Register for Public Service Interpreters (NRPSI). Formerly a police Chief Superintendent, Stephen has held senior strategic positions as Divisional Commander, Deputy Director of HR and Head of Executive Support, as well as posts that include Head of Training and Career Development. He has also chaired discipline proceedings for the Secretary of State for Health, Health Care Commission, and Institute for Learning, as well as NRPSI, and is a member of the discipline committees for the Chartered Institute of Public Relations and Chartered Institute for Management Accountants. Stephen has extensive HR and talent management experience, and holds an MA in Educational Research and Evaluation (M.Ed.). He conducted four years post graduate PhD research at the University of East Anglia Centre for Applied Research in Education, and is a Fellow of the Institute for Learning and Institute for Leadership and Management.



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## Current issues in public service interpreting

### The outsourcing of court interpreting by the Ministry of Justice to language agency Capita TI

NRPSI has been working with other interpreting bodies through the umbrella group Professional Interpreters for Justice (PI4J) to raise concerns with government about the outsourcing of court interpreting to Capita TI under the Framework Agreement (FWA) since January 2012. Unlike the previous system the FWA does not require the use of quality assured interpreters who are on the National Register, threatening interpreting standards and public protection.

Capita TI has consistently failed to provide interpreters for court/tribunal cases, something which has been publicised by the MoJ itself via its 'Statistics on the use of language interpreter and translation services in courts and tribunals' bulletin. According to the MoJ report published on 30 October 2013, almost 10,000 complaints were received about the court interpreting services supplied by Capita TI between January 2012 (the start of its contract) and 30 June 2013. While in the most recent MoJ statistics, published on 15 April 2015 and covering the period from 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2014, the number of 'proven' complaints relating to completed service requests were reported to have fallen by more than 50% between 2013 and 2014, they still stood at almost 3,000. As a result of its poor performance and non-fulfilment of contract, the MoJ has fined Capita TI £46,000. This penalty however appears of little consolation in light of PI4J's calculation that the situation has cost the taxpayer in excess of £17 million since Capita TI started its contract in January 2012.

The PI4J campaign to raise concerns with government about the outsourcing of court interpreting to Capita TI under the FWA has resulted in three successive parliamentary inquiries (National Audit Office, Public Accounts Committee and Justice Select Committee) – all of which have been highly critical of the MoJ/Capita TI arrangement. As a result the Public Accounts Committee has begun further investigations.

Until 30 January 2012, and the appointment of Capita TI under the FWA, the MoJ sourced qualified interpreters using the National Register – an arrangement endorsed by the Justice Select Committee following its inquiry into the current court interpreting arrangements. In its 'Interpreting and translation services and the Applied Language Solutions Contract' report's conclusions and recommendations (no.4), the Committee said: "there do not appear to have been any fundamental problems with the quality of services, where they were properly sourced, i.e. through arrangements that were underpinned by the National Register of Public Service Interpreters."

A recent industry report commissioned by PI4J also confirms that the majority of public service interpreters believe not only in the benefits of industry regulation but that NRPSI is the body to carry this out.

As the UK's independent voluntary regulator, NRPSI's stance on the outsourcing of court interpreting has always been that whatever system is in place it must have at its forefront the provision of appropriately qualified interpreters and an effective mechanism for dealing with failures in the provision of a quality interpreting service.

Critically, NRPSI has called for the functions of commercial agent and independent regulator, which includes maintenance of the Register of qualified interpreters, to be kept separate and autonomous. This is important if standards are to be maintained, which involves having in place an independent complaints process, and healthy competition is to be promoted. It is also vital if the UK is to properly implement the Directive 2010/64/EU, which became law in October 2013. Member States are under a binding obligation to ensure a quality of interpretation (and translation) services that is sufficient for safeguarding the fairness of criminal proceedings. They are also bound by Article 8 (non-regression clause), which prohibits the lowering of existing standards in Member States during transposition.

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**Related NRPSI releases/statements:**  
**Capita TI fined thousands in penalties – NRPSI response**

**NRPSI wins interpreters' approval to regulate profession**

The following releases were issued by Professional Interpreters for Justice (PI4J) – the interpreting organisations umbrella group, of which NRPSI is a member:

**Increase in use of unqualified interpreters**

**£17 million lost in court interpreting fiasco**

On 18 December 2014, the long-awaited 'Independent Review of Quality Arrangements under the MoJ Language Services Framework Agreement' report (commonly called 'the Matrix report'), was published by the MoJ. This report was commissioned in response to the investigations conducted by the National Audit Office, the Public Accounts Committee and the Justice Committee of the House of Commons – all of which made recommendations on quality standards regarding the FWA implemented by the MoJ on 30 January 2012. The Matrix report makes five recommendations, and also a 'Review Observation' (as regulation was outside the scope of the review) that NRPSI should be 'given a more vital role', which would 'send a positive signal that the MoJ holds the interpreting profession in high regard'. It should be noted from the 'Government Response' that the MoJ does not accept all of the recommendations. However, it does state that it is 'keen to engage with professional interpreter organisations and with NRPSI to see how it can use its expertise on the potential development of a regulatory framework' in response to the 'Review Observation'.

Most recently, the MoJ has issued a Prior Information Notice (PIN), indicating the establishment of a new commercial arrangement for language services in the justice system to succeed the current framework. The MoJ contract with Capita TI ends in October 2016. The MoJ has commenced a consultation process. As part of this there was an initial Regulatory Framework Workshop with representatives from PI4J (including NRPSI) on 30 March 2015. There will also be other meetings and workshops including a supplier day on 1 May 2015. The outline plan is for the procurement competition to be developed by the MoJ and its stakeholders over the summer of 2015, ready for the language contract to be put to tender later in 2015. The contract award will then take place in the spring of 2016. The MoJ estimates that justice system spend under any resulting contract is likely to be in the £80-160m range.

Releases, statements, articles and general news on this issue can be found in our online **News centre**, which is regularly updated with the latest information.

Next | [Key facts and figures \(FAQ\)](#)

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## Related reports/ documents:

**Independent Review of Quality Arrangements under the MoJ Language Services Framework Agreement' report (commonly called 'the Matrix report')**, published on 18 December 2014

**MoJ Statistics on the use of language interpreter and translation services in courts and tribunals 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2014** published on 15 April 2015

**MoJ Quarterly statistics on the use of language services in courts and tribunals – June 2013**, published on 31 October 2013

**Select Committee Interpreting and translation services and the Applied Language Solutions Contract** report, published on 6 February 2013

## Key facts and figures (FAQ)

### Q: How many interpreters are currently on the National Register?

A: There are about 1,990 interpreters on the National Register spread across the UK, offering around 99 different languages. Further analysis of the National Register is published in the [NRPSI Annual Review](#).

### Q: What are the most popular languages?

A: The most common languages offered by Registrants are Polish, Urdu, Russian, Spanish, Arabic, French, Farsi, Romanian, Mandarin and Portuguese.

### Q: What is a public service interpreter? What's the difference between a public service interpreter and an interpreter who works for private sector businesses?

A: Public service interpreters work with a full range of public service organisations spanning Health, Police, Government and Legal sectors. Each of these sectors requires specialist knowledge and has its own terminology. Interpreters working within them face challenging situations that demand training, experience and professional competence.

### Q: Why should people use the National Register?

A: Using the National Register provides access to interpreters who:

1. Are qualified and accredited
2. Have agreed to abide by a Code of Professional Conduct
3. Can be held accountable if they break that code

People can use the Register to check if an interpreter is registered. All registered interpreters are also required to carry and present on request a NRPSI Photo ID card.

### Q: How much does it cost to use?

A: It doesn't cost anything to use the National Register to source a qualified, registered interpreter.

### Q: How is the Register funded?

A: It is entirely funded by the registration fees that interpreters pay to register and to remain on the Register.

### Q: How much does registration cost?

A: The application fee for one language is £205.00 for new applications. Interpreters who are already registered in another language can pay a one-off additional fee of £54.00 to register for each additional language. All interpreters are required to renew their listing on an annual basis. The renewal fee (regardless of the number of languages registered) is £205.00. All fees quoted include VAT. Visit the [NRPSI website www.nrpsi.org.uk](#) for a full list of fees.

### Q: How can people access the National Register?

A: By visiting the NRPSI website and using the search engine on the right-hand side of the screen. You search by selecting the language you require and the postcode where the interpreter will be asked to carry out the job. You are required to register before running a search for the first time. Registration is simple, free and a one-off process.

### Q: Can anyone join the Register?

A: Interpreters need to successfully meet NRPSI's entry criteria in terms of qualification and experience to become a Registrant and be listed on the Register. An interpreter with a rare language for which there is no recognised qualification may be eligible to join under the Rare Language category.

### Q: How many complaints are brought each year?

A: We typically receive 20-30 complaints per year. Of these around 80% are referred to our Professional Conduct Committee, and 20% of these go on to be reviewed by the Disciplinary Committee.

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## Related reports/ documents:

[NRPSI Annual Review of Public Service Interpreting in the UK 2013](#), published in October 2014



**Q. How should a complaint be made?**

A: A complaint must be made in writing to the National Register. See online under 'Clients of Interpreters' and 'Complaints about interpreters' for further information.

**Q. What happens if a complaint is upheld?**

A: Depending on the nature of the complaint, a Registrant can face a range of sanctions if found in breach of the NRPSI Code of Conduct. The most severe sanctions entail Registrants being suspended from registration for a period determined by the Disciplinary Committee; or excluded from registration with the possibility of application for reinstatement after a period and subject to conditions determined by the Disciplinary Committee. The minimum period of exclusion is normally two years. The outcomes of complaints are published on the NRPSI website and a statistical analysis of the complaints is published in the **NRPSI Annual Review**.

**Q. Can NRPSI investigate complaints about non-registered interpreters?**

A: No, NRPSI cannot review complaints about an interpreter who is not registered. Only interpreters on the Register have demonstrated their commitment to best practice by signing the Code of Conduct and can be held accountable.

For further information, please visit the NRPSI website [www.nrpsi.org.uk](http://www.nrpsi.org.uk) or get in touch.

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