



National Register of  
Public Service Interpreters

[www.nrpsi.org.uk](http://www.nrpsi.org.uk)

## INFORMATION PACK FOR APPLICANTS FOR THE POSITION OF NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - LAY MEMBER

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.

The NRPSI website will enable you to update yourself, particularly on current issues and news. The website also gives a brief outline of our current board members, both practitioner and lay 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](mailto: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.

July 2021

### 1. The reason for the vacancy

Ann Mealor, one of our founding directors in 2011 has completed her final term of office and stood down from the board at our April meeting.

### 2. Background

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

It was previously a wholly owned subsidiary of the Chartered Institute of Linguistics (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

The Board consists of 7 non-executive Directors of whom 4 are lay members and 3 are NRPSI Registered Interpreters.

The current Board members are:

Ted Sangster	Chairman and Lay Member
Stephen Thacker	Vice Chairman and 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](http://www.nrpsi.org.uk)

In respect of the time commitment the basic requirement 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 that emerge from time to time, and members may serve on other internal committees, on external groups representing NRPSI, providing their experience to a project or supporting the Executive Director.

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 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 five staff of whom two (our Professional Standards Manager and our Registration Manager) have been with NRPSI since 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. 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 able to support the Executive Director in maintaining awareness of issues within the profession and also on the board in bringing an understanding of interpreting processes and registrants' views to their lay director colleagues.

The lay directors bring independent views and relevant business, strategic and other experience and contacts to the board.

## 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](http://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 appeared before the Justice Select Committee. More details are on our website.

We are conscious that a lot of our headline activity is focused on relationships with the justice sector including police authorities and much of this is seen as MoJ and London based. We are the UK's voluntary Register however and a lot of work, albeit with a less volatile profile, goes on in engaging both with other parts of the UK and also in the health and local government sectors where many of our registrants work and for which our prime purpose of ensuring public protection through espousing and ensuring the quality of interpreting provision is as equally important as it is in the justice sector.

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.

Again relevant details and the [Code of Conduct](#) 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, NHS, Police Authorities across the UK, 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 directors) have also embarked on a programme of presentations and visits to universities and language centres across the UK to promote and explain the Register to newly/about to be qualified students and others.

## 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 The Accounts Department, the trading arm of an accountancy company (Crossley) 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.

We have also appointed 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 more recently reviewed and updated that.

## 7. Current issues and challenges

The 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.

Another area of impact 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.

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.

## 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 January 2021 there were over 16,140 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.

To emphasise NRPSI’s role in setting standards, NRPSI sponsors the annual CIoL Award (suspended unfortunately in 2020) 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 Professional Interpreters for Justice 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 professions 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

([http://www.nrpsi.org.uk/downloads/1240\\_NRPSI\\_Annual\\_Review\\_6th\\_Edition.pdf](http://www.nrpsi.org.uk/downloads/1240_NRPSI_Annual_Review_6th_Edition.pdf)) 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.

## 9. Financial Information

Our formal year end is 30<sup>th</sup> June although this year will be extended to 30<sup>th</sup> August, and we are working within our current budget for the extended year as 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 1,700.

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 which is not accessible to non-registrants. Therefore, if any potential applicant wants an understanding of our accounts or financial position 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.

The key summary of our strategy statement is attached to this brief as a pdf and is available at <https://www.nrpsi.org.uk/news-posts/NRPSI-Our-Strategy-for-2019-2021.html>

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 Board Member

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, from 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



## 12. Terms of appointment

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

It is expected that the time commitment will include attendance at the six main 6 board meetings a year, plus the occasional extra board meeting. In addition, directors will serve on appropriate committees from time to time (internally and when appropriate externally representing the NRPSI) and provide their expertise in other ways that are productive and appropriate.

Remuneration of £1,750 pa will be made available.

Reasonable expenses incurred will be reimbursed.

## 13. Applications

Applications, preferably by email, are by a letter addressed to the chairman ([chairman@nrpsi.org.uk](mailto:chairman@nrpsi.org.uk)) outlining suitability for the role, an 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 candidate's prior agreement.

The closing date for applications is Monday 6<sup>th</sup> September

## 14. 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, another non-executive director and the Executive Director.

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