

# **NRCPD**

The National Registers of Communication Professionals  
working with Deaf and Deafblind People

## **ANNUAL REPORT 2012**

**For the period 1 August 2011 – 31 July 2012**

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## Foreword by NRCPD Chair

Welcome to the NRCPD annual report for 2011/12. This is first annual report we have published, though the activities we detail in it are informed by three decades' of registration experience.

The role of NRCPD is to regulate in the public interest communication professionals who work with deaf and deafblind people.

At the beginning of the year we finished our largest ever stakeholder consultation. The information we received informed and influenced the activity we have undertaken in the twelve months this report covers. As the year ended, the board was continuing to progress its programme of policy and service revisions to put NRCPD in a strengthened position to deliver its aims.

Regulating is a collaborative effort. We could not do our job without the dedicated support of our Professional Standards Advisors; colleagues in the professional associations; many individuals who offer direct advice; members of the public who use our service; the staff at Signature who support us; and the steadily growing number of professionals who choose to register and abide by the standards we set.

Our aim is more than simply to regulate. We also need to ensure that there is greater awareness amongst deaf and deafblind people, the public sector and employers more generally, of the importance of using properly qualified and registered communication professionals. We intend to work closely with others, including our colleagues in Signature, in ensuring that this message is understood widely.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Huw Vaughan Thomas". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Huw Vaughan Thomas  
NRCPD Chair

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## Introduction

NRCPD (The National Registers of Communication Professionals working with Deaf and Deafblind People) regulates professional practitioners to safeguard the wellbeing and interests of people who rely on the services provided by:

- Interpreters for Deafblind People
- Lipspeakers
- Notetakers
- Sign Language Interpreters
- Sign Language Translators; and
- Verbatim Speech to Text Reporters

To do this effectively we intend to raise the standards and profile of our regulatory function; making NRCPD procedures and requirements more credible, professional and accessible.

Our work is overseen by a board ([www.nrcpd.org.uk/board](http://www.nrcpd.org.uk/board)), which acts as the guardian of professional standards in the industry. The board is committed to making sure that deaf people, service providers and employers can access high quality communication services.

NRCPD was established by Signature and is operated as a business activity under Terms of Reference (Annex 1) agreed with the Signature Board of Trustees. We aim to become self-financing by the end of the 2014/15 financial year.

The report covers our operating year 01 August 2011 to 31 July 2012.

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## Annual Activity Report

The report of the activity we have undertaken this year is arranged in three sections in keeping with our operational plan: Improving accessibility, increasing credibility, raising professional standards.

### Increasing credibility

In November 2011 the **Ministry of Justice** announced it would allow only NRCPD Registered communication professionals to work in courts and tribunals. This was in direct response to months of campaigning work undertaken by NRCPD and our partners.

We reviewed our **Complaints Procedure** to strengthen it and make sure new legal requirements are included. For the first time we have begun to publish on our web pages, information about complaint processes, together with other information about our work and the decisions we make.

In keeping with other professional registers, we introduced an annual **revalidation** requirement to make sure Registered communication professionals are keeping their skills and knowledge up to date. Though the proposal to introduce such a requirement has been much discussed over previous years, we took account of the feedback we received in our consultation exercise and decided to adopt a gradual implementation process. To renew their registration in 2013, professionals are required to have recorded 12 Hours of professional development in the previous twelve months. The annual requirement will increase in stages to 30 hours in 2015.

We reviewed and simplified the process we use for **quality assuring training courses** we approve for entry to the Registers. We introduced new, clearer paperwork in May 2012 and amended our quality audit to include providers' internal quality assurance measures.

### Improving accessibility

We launched a **new website** on 2 March 2012. The layout and content is informed by feedback from users and responses to a website survey. The site features an improved search function embedded on every page, and has had positive feedback from registered professionals and members of the public alike.

We **simplified the structure of the registration categories** we offer to provide an easy to understand category structure with consistent standards and policies. Since January

2012 we have provided: one Registered and one Trainee category in each of the six professions we regulate.

The number of professionals on the Registers increased in the course of the year as follows:

		31/07/2011	31/07/2012
Sign Language Interpreters	Registered	656	737
	Trainee	258	237
Registered Sign Language Translators	Registered	N/A	1
	Trainee	N/A	0
Registered Lipspeakers	Registered	35	42
	Trainee	N/A	0
Registered Speech to Text Reporters	Registered	23	24
	Trainee	N/A	0
Registered Level 3 Electronic Notetakers	Registered	25	23
	Trainee	N/A	N/A
Registered Interpreters for Deafblind People	Registered	16	18
	Trainee	N/A	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,013</b>	<b>1,082</b>

### Raising professional standards

NRCPD decided to build on benchmarking activity carried out by partner organisations to create a suite of government-recognised **National Occupational Standards for Speech to Text Reporters**. We funded and commissioned a project that brought partners together to debate, discuss and draft for consultation a set of standards. The public responses informed the final document our partners at Skills CfA presented to the UK Commission on Employment and Skills for adoption. The standards were approved and adopted in April 2012.

We introduced a requirement for all Registered and Trainee practitioners in all our categories to have in place their own **Professional Indemnity Insurance** from 1 April 2012.

After nearly four years' work with partner organisations we were very pleased to open on 3 January 2012 a **Register of Sign Language Translators**. The new Register reflects a distinct professional role that has developed and expanded greatly in the past few years as video technology and broadcast regulations mean more web content and television programmes are translated into signed languages. The UK's first qualified Sign Language Translator registered with NRCPD in March 2012.

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## Governance

We secured new **Terms of Reference** for NRCPD as set out in Annex 1. This sets out the role and expectations of board members and clarifies the relationship between NRCPD and Signature.

The following served as **Board Members** in the course of the year:

Huw Vaughan Thomas (Chair); Appointed June 2010

Craig Crowley MBE; Appointed March 2009, reappointed March 2012

David Evans; March 2009 to August 2011

Michael Guthrie; Appointed March 2009, reappointed March 2012

Hilary Maxwell-Hyslop; March 2009 to December 2011

Katherine Phipps; Appointed November 2009

Ross Trotter; Appointed November 2009

Sandra Verkuyten OBE; Appointed December 2011

Jenny White MBE; Appointed December 2011

The board's year started on a sad note with the death of David Evans . NRCPD benefitted from David's input and advice for two and a half years. We will miss his insight.

Hilary Maxwell-Hyslop stepped down at the end of December, after three years of invaluable service. Her experience and contacts were genuine assets, especially during the initial setting up of NRCPD.

We advertised **board vacancies** in the autumn. Jenny White and Sandra Verkuyten were appointed as NRCPD Board Members on 1 December 2011.

The Board was advised and supported during the year by Jim Edwards, Signature Chief Executive, and his staff, in particular, Paul Parsons, Signature Director of Marketing and Communications, who acts as Director for NRCPD; and Angela Nunn and Clare Towns who carry out the day to day functions of NRCPD.

The Board established a **Practitioners' Forum** to allow professional associations and representative groups the opportunity to comment on matters of emerging policy and contribute directly to the decision making processes of NRCPD. Forum members agree to work under a formal Memorandum of Understanding. The first meeting took place on 20 October 2011. At 31 July 2012 member organisations were Association of Lipspeakers, Association of Notetaking Professionals; Association of Sign Language Interpreters, Association of Verbatim Speech to Text Reporters, and Visual Language Professionals.

We issued new terms of appointment to clarify the role and status the **Professional Standards Advisors**, who provide technical support and advice to assist the day-to-day functions of NRCPD. Advisors have expertise and experience in the professionals we regulate, or in the training, assessment, use and employment of registered professionals in our fields. We recruited new advisors this year increasing their number from 14 to 18.

## Financial Position

The following table shows the overall financial position for 2011/12. It includes costs incurred by Signature in supporting the activities of NRCPD.

	£	£
<b>Incoming resources from Registration</b>		161,394
<b>Resources expended on Registration</b>		
Direct costs	57,370	
Staff costs	95,374	
Premises and Other Indirect Costs	<u>126,595</u>	
		279,339
<u>Net movement of funds</u>		<u><u>-117,945</u></u>

Extract from the audited financial statements of CACDP prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice and the Companies Act 2006, the Charities and Trustee Investment(Scotland)Act 2005, and regulation 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006(as amended)

## **NRCPD Board – Authority and Terms of Reference**

NRCPD Board [NRCPD] has delegated responsibility for oversight of the professional registration service.

### **Summary**

Signature Board of Trustees [Signature] has delegated to NRCPD funds and overall responsibility for setting standards, policies and procedures for the professional registration of communication professionals working with deaf and deafblind people.

NRCPD has authority to set its strategy and budgetary priorities.

NRCPD will report to Signature at agreed intervals on key issues arising from registration, including an annual report on activity.

### **Terms of Reference**

#### Duties and Authority

Signature charges NRCPD to deliver the following requirements:

- a. Formulate and publish a strategy to meet the the objective(s) set out in its annual letter of authority (see below).
- b. Approve such policies as may be necessary (e.g. Code of Conduct for Communication Professionals) to support the effective operation of its regulatory functions.
- c. Champion professional standards.
- d. Promote and disseminate information about registration.
- e. Increase the value of NRCPD Registered status.
- f. The Chair to present to Signature for approval a draft Annual Report that includes a fee structure and three-year financial forecast.

In pursuance of that Signature delegates to NRCPD authority to:

- g. Search for and recommend to Signature individuals for appointment as Members.
- h. Appoint standards advisors.
- i. Establish and disband consultative forums as required.
- j. Determine strategic spending priorities within its delegated budget.



### Letter of Authority

Signature will issue to NRCPD each July a Letter of Authority detailing agreed objectives, a one-year budget including incomes and expenditures, arrangements for managerial and administrative support, and requirements for financial reporting for the following financial year (August to July).

### Membership

A Chair, who will not be a member of the Signature Board of Trustees, will be appointed directly by Signature.

One Member, who will be a member of the Signature Board of Trustees, will be appointed directly by Signature.

NRCPD will regularly review the skills, expertise and experience mix of its Members to enable it to meet its strategic needs. The Chair will recommend to Signature for appointment as Members as necessary to maintain an additional minimum membership of five. The maximum number of additional Members at any one time shall be seven.

Membership will be reviewed by the Chair if an individual is unable to attend at least two meetings a year.

### Meetings

The NRCPD Board will meet three times a year. In addition to formal meetings, Members will be asked from time to time to comment on relevant issues and documents.

Quorum will be the Chair and 50% of Members. In the event that the Chair is unable to attend a meeting, Members present are empowered to nominate one of their number as a substitute chair. In this case quorum will be substitute chair and 50% of Members.

Meetings will be attended and advised by the Signature Chief Executive Officer, or a deputy, who will not be counted as a member in the above calculation.

### Term of Office

Members will serve terms of no more than three years.

Subject to satisfactory performance Members may be invited to serve a second term. No Member may serve more than two terms.

### Reporting

NRCPD will report to Signature as specified in the annual letter of authority.