

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Key Purpose
3. Values
4. Context
5. Key Objectives
6. Implementation

Introduction

This document sets out NRCPD's strategic priorities for the next three years. It describes our key objectives and what we will do to achieve them. It is supplemented by a detailed operational plan that guides the work of our executive team.

Key Purpose

NRCPD is the UK voluntary regulator for communication professionals working with deaf and deafblind people. Its key purpose is to act in the public interest by:

- keeping registers of practitioners who meet agreed standards of practice in their work
- setting the standards that practitioners need to meet to get onto and then stay on the registers
- requiring registered practitioners to abide by a Code of Conduct
- investigating complaints about alleged breaches of the Code and taking appropriate action

Values

NRCPD aims to demonstrate the following values:

- To have regard to the UK Principles of Better Regulation:
proportionality
accountability
consistency
transparency
targeting
- To be professional and demonstrate integrity in our dealings with all those who come into contact with us
- To deliver quality and value for money in all that we do
- To be open and accessible to all our stakeholders
- To exercise the principles of equality and diversity

Context

This is a time of significant change for NRCPD. We are preparing for our future as an independent organisation and we have announced our intention to seek the statutory regulation of communication and language professionals working with deaf and deafblind people.

Regulation needs to be fit for purpose and provide tangible safeguards and benefits for the public and for those who are regulated. The regulatory sector in the UK has evolved rapidly over the past 10 years to accommodate the changing needs of society, fast paced technological development, and above all the increasing expectation that professionals will deliver to the highest standards.

We are pursuing statutory regulation because it will ensure that every practising communication and language professional meets minimum standards of training and practice, thereby increasing public protection. Communication and language professionals are often needed so people who are deaf, deafblind, hearing or have a hearing loss can communicate with each other. If a communication and language professional does their job badly the consequences can be serious. In a health or criminal justice setting it can threaten someone's life or freedom. Statutory regulation would prevent unqualified persons from practising.

The value of registration is well understood by sign language interpreters, and many are registered with us; however, there is still a need to increase supply to meet demand, particularly interpreters for deafblind people, lipspeakers, notetakers and speech to text reporters. We also need to make sure these professions understand the value of registration.

Communication provision is evolving due to the development of technology, the requirements of people in education and employment, and changes in the way people choose to communicate. We will explore whether there is a need to develop new registers, and be more responsive to the changing reality of communication between deaf, deafblind and hearing people.

Setting professional and educational standards is central to how we protect the public. It improves the quality of communication and language support, and we require registered communication professionals to develop and improve their practice by undertaking continuing professional development. We will continue to review those standards and work closely with the professional associations and other stakeholders to ensure that the standards are maintained.

We have improved our processes for recording concerns and dealing with complaints about the professional conduct and/or competence of our registered practitioners. We will keep these under review to ensure that they continue to be fit for purpose, accessible and transparent.

By working with other organisations we will be better placed to meet our aims and objectives. Over the past three years we have successfully urged government, public

services and agencies to only employ registrants. In the domains of health, criminal justice and employment we have made significant progress.

In the next three years we will continue to promote registration, particularly in educational environments; and we will work with our partners to make sure the requirements of contracts, statutory standards and codes of practice are met. We will also increase communication with deaf and deafblind people. They have a key role to play in raising the standard of communication and language support. As well as telling us about their concerns and making complaints, they can tell us about their changing needs.

The sector as a whole will benefit from a better understanding of the market in communication and language support. We will work with government and our partners to develop that understanding.

Statutory regulation is a long- term aim. In the meantime, NRCPD needs to prepare for the future by strengthening its governance, and its policies and procedures; ensuring that the public are protected but that they are able readily to access the profession; setting standards that are realistic and operating a complaints process that is fair, easy to use and transparent; and by communicating with and involving all stakeholders in NRCPD's development. We will continue to research regulatory best practice, including the standards by which other regulators measure themselves.

Key Objectives

Registration

Support, develop and increase registration, to provide stronger and more effective regulation in the public interest:

- provision of highly regarded and good value registration services which will encourage communication professionals to regard registration as a key professional requirement for practice
- explore the potential need for new registers, and routes to registration, responding to the needs of the market in the public interest

Standards

Set, develop and improve professional and educational standards to ensure that the public receives the highest level of communication and language support from registered practitioners:

- engage effectively in the review of national occupational standards in interpreting
- review and assess training routes and requirements
- ensure that approved courses and assessments continue to meet agreed professional standards
- review and improve the CPD scheme and associated audit process
- promote high professional standards by keeping the Code of Conduct under review, to ensure that it is fit for purpose and supports robust and transparent complaints procedures

Communication and stakeholder engagement

Gain wider recognition as the voluntary regulator for communication and language professionals, promoting the importance and value of regulation and the use of registered practitioners:

- raise awareness of NRCPD and its purpose among the professions, the public and relevant organisations, such as professional associations and representative bodies
- continue to build relationships with service users, registrants and appropriate organisations
- continue to forge links with relevant government departments and agencies
- develop strategies to enhance our communication capability
- work towards statutory regulation by developing partnerships/ relationships with appropriate organisations

Governance

Ensure NRCPD's governance is clear, transparent and fit for purpose to support its aim to achieve statutory regulation:

- work with Signature to ensure the smooth and effective transition of NRCPD to becoming an independent organisation
- ensure that NRCPD Board members and staff have the requisite skills and knowledge to deliver the organisation's strategy and business requirements
- monitor and protect the financial well being of the organisation
- ensure that equality and diversity is embedded in the organisation, its governance and its processes and practices

Implementation

An annual Operational Plan will set out in detail how NRCPD will implement or make progress towards implementing the Strategic Plan. The Operational Plan will be structured to reflect the four key objectives, showing actions, outputs, target dates, and accountability.

Progress on the Strategic and Operational Plans will be reported to the NRCPD Board.