



**Professional Interpreters for Justice**  
**Report of the Steering Committee**

Date: Tuesday, 13<sup>th</sup> May 2014

Time: 10:00 am to 1:00 pm

Venue: Unite House - Holborn - London

**Present at the meeting:** Andrew Murray, Regional Officer of Unite, presiding over the meeting; Amelia Naranjo, Secretary, NUPIT Branch; Eileen Ford, Chair, NUPIT Branch; Alan Peacock-CIoL; Lalia Pessoa-White, Director, NRPSI; Geoffrey Buckingham, Chairman, APCI; Aqil Minhas, Treasurer, APCI ; Penny Arbuthnot, Involvis.

**By telephone:** Klasiena Slaney, Director, SOMI UK; Madeleine Lee, Director, PIA, (intermittently).

**Apologies:** Keith Moffitt, Chair, CioL Council; Paul Wilson, CEO, ITI.

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**Agenda:**

One item only: proposal for a federation of interpreting organizations.

The meeting opened at 10:00 am.

A draft business plan based on what had been discussed by the sub-group of SC members which had been meeting for that purpose was distributed.

The aim of the proposed federation would be to become a champion of quality standards and an advisory body on related matters.

An analogy was drawn during the meeting pointing out that we should be aiming for a three-cornered structure similar to what we see in the NHS, where the General Medical Council is the regulator, the professional bodies notably the BMA are the membership organizations and the third 'prong' is the Royal Colleges. This could possibly be extended to cover translation in the future. It was claimed that the Federation would not be replicating any of the functions currently exercised by the existing organizations but not everyone felt that this was the case.

It was explained that the federation would not be concerned with the interpreters' side of things; matters such as terms and conditions would be dealt with by the individual organizations; the federation would be a championing body aiming to become an advisor to government providers of public service interpreters. In the view of the task-force the objective of being a single voice for interpreters would no longer be among the aims of the federation, which would concentrate on giving 'high-level' advice about quality and how to recruit and retain qualified interpreters. The Federation could commission an independent report on suitable remuneration etc.

There had been some discussion about the possibility of developing a kitemark for which agents could apply to prove that they were doing things properly. The kitemark figured quite prominently in the business plan but as no study has yet been made of any aspect of developing or awarding the kitemark, the figures given in the plan are purely conjectural. Questions about how the figures had been arrived at were set aside to be addressed later.

One committee member said he had had experience of applying for a kitemark and the process had been rigorous and costly.

The working party had made some outline suggestions for how the federation would be structured and staffed, and the plan contained some notional figures as to what would be the costs involved as far as staffing was concerned.

AM felt that time-scale was something that needed to be determined.

PA felt that the first thing to be established was whether Involvis fees would continue to be paid so as to be sure that the work could continue.

It was suggested that we needed to talk to the MoJ to see how they felt about the whole thing. There was a suggestion that the MoJ could be asked for funding but this was dismissed by others. It was mentioned that it also remains to be seen how the MoJ will deal with matters in the run-up to the General Election.

AM asked if the organizations that funded Involvis saw themselves as the core of the federation and remarked that the union would have to consider the role to play in the federation in the form currently envisaged. He also emphasized that members of all organizations had to be consulted before any decision is made.

It was decided that the organizations not regarding themselves as 'core' organizations would write a paragraph on how they saw their potential role in the Federation, and that PA would base an introductory section to the Plan on the paragraphs received and that an updated version of the plan would be circulated at the end of the first week in June. The following three months would be a consultation period.

The meeting ended at 11.30am approximately.

Report by NUPIT