



Professional Interpreters for Justice

Report of the Steering Committee

Date: Tuesday, 26th February 2013

Time: 2.30 pm

Venue: Unite House - Holborn - London

Present at the meeting: Andrew Murray, Regional Officer of Unite, presiding over the meetings; Eileen Ford, Chair of NUPIT; Amelia Naranjo, Secretary of NUPIT Branch; Eulalia (Lalia) Pessoa-White, Director, NRPSI; Keith Moffitt, Chair, CIoL Council; Guillermo (Willie) Makin, Chairman, SPSI; Aqil Minhas, Treasurer, APCI; Klasiena Slaney, Director SOMI UK;

Via telephone link: Madeleine Lee, Director, PIA; Kasia Beresford ITI; Tony Wilcox, WITS.

Apologies: Geoffrey Buckingham, Chairman, APCI; Paul Wilson, CEO, ITI.

The meeting started at 2.30, in Room 4 at Unite House.

The items for discussion were:

The Seminar: press release, outcomes, accounts;
Reply to the MoJ's latest communication;
Plans for obtaining a debate in Parliament;
Alternative proposal;
The question of direct bookings and boycott;
Update on South-Western Police Forces;
Update on ATC complaint.

The Seminar

The press release had already been e-mailed on the morning of the day of the meeting and although it was sent too late for some members to have received it, others had already sent in comments. It was approved with some small amendments.

Everyone felt that the seminar had been a success, and that people had gone away with a feeling of solidarity and encouragement.

The £10 registration contributions together with the contributions from individual organizations were sufficient to cover the costs of running the seminar.

The survey results presented at the seminar are not yet ready for publication.

It is hoped to obtain copies of the speakers' notes.

Letter to MoJ

The letter from the Ministry of Justice was received too late to inform the debate at the seminar. Sometime was devoted to a discussion of what to say in the reply. A telephone call to S. Palmer is also contemplated, and an abbreviated version of the survey results can be sent along with the letter.

The survey showed that interpreters were against the FWA.

Some felt that the fact that Capita had indicated that it would not contest a move to drop the contract needed mentioning at some point, and there was some slight deliberation about what 'thinking creatively' might mean.

The parliamentary debate

There was a discussion on ways to achieve the SG's aim of obtaining a debate in Parliament. It was felt that the imminent discussions with the MoJ could provide us with some pointers as to what our next moves should be.

Alternative proposal

The SG feels that at the present stage, what is needed is a broad outline which can be elaborated more fully when we see what sort of reaction it provokes.

Direct bookings/boycott

The question of direct bookings and whether to keep up the boycott is a complex one and opinion is divided but it is felt that the next meeting with the MoJ may give us a clearer idea of what will be the best course to take in this respect. It has therefore been reserved for discussion at the next SG meeting after the meeting with the Minister has taken place but in the meantime, it is better to continue as at present unless the MoJ indicates it is willing to make some sort of commitment to the NRPSI. If we learn anything we will advise a strategy for all to adopt at the same time.

It was felt also that the MoJ's statistics should be challenged sooner rather than later and that it was worth stressing that the findings of later hearings superseded the original NAO findings advocating full implementation of the FWA.

The South-Western Police Contract Proposal

A meeting has been arranged with regard to the South-Western Police Contract.

GM was invited to attend and TW will be accompanying him. We think that finding enough suitable interpreters within a convenient distance will be much more difficult for them in the area concerned than it is in London or Cambridge, and they may find the costs much higher than they had anticipated. KS is able to provide figures obtained under the FOIA, a study of which may help GM and TW to make a convincing argument against outsourcing. At the same time, it will be useful to us to know what is being said in official circles about outsourcing.

ATC Complaint

ML informed us that the ATC had at long last contacted her saying that Capita/ALS had been issued with an ultimatum to answer to the PIA's allegations without delay.

The meeting closed at 4 pm and the date of the next meeting is 27th March.

Report by Eileen Ford (NUPIT)