



## **Professional Interpreters for Justice**

### **Report of the Steering Committee**

Date: Thursday, 30<sup>th</sup> August 2012  
Time: 3:20 pm to 4:30 pm  
Venue: Unite House - Holborn - London

**Present at the meeting:** Andrew Murray, Regional Officer of Unite (presiding); Amelia Naranjo, Secretary, NUPIT Branch; Eileen Ford, Chari, NUPIT Branch; Geoffrey Buckingham, Chairman, APCI; Aqil Minhas, Treasurer, APCI; Maria Brown, Director SOMI UK; Eulalia (Lalia) Pessoa-White, Director, NRPSI.

**Via telephone link:** Madeleine Lee, Director, PIA; Guillermo (Willie) Makin, Chairman, SPSI.

**Apologies** Paul Wilson, CEO, ITI; T. Wilcox, WITS; Keith Moffitt, Chair, CioL Council (Observer); A Linhartova, Melanie Beaumont, Committee Members, SITA.

The following points were suggested for the agenda:

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Updates on NAO investigation

Parliamentary Event

Submission to the Justice Committee

The complaint to the ATC professional ethics committee

Consideration of the INVOLVIS survey

Case studies

ML had provided a copy a letter of complaint to the ATC's professional ethics committee about ALS, which the PIA had drawn up and proposed to send to the PEC as soon as it was finalized. This was distributed to those present who devoted a little time to reading it before discussion began. A few minor amendments were suggested but on the whole the steering group was very happy with the document at first reading They did however agree to look at it again more closely after the meeting and make known any comments or suggestions by e-mail in time for it to be sent off. Generally speaking, it was felt that the letter stated the case very clearly and was a fairly strong indictment of ALS. It showed that as far as could be seen there was only one item of the code of conduct that ALS had not breached.

It was felt that the complaint could be included in submissions as it reflected the feelings the steering committee, who were asked to signify approval for that purpose.

Also provided to the meeting were a copy of the response to the PIA's complaint to the DATA Commissioner and the latest version of the case studies to be passed to Andy Slaughter at the next meeting between him and representatives of the Steering Committee.

The discussion moved on to the joint submission being made by the Steering Group to the Justice Committee. The deadline for submissions was the following Monday and it was important to have everyone's comments in time to incorporate them before sending in the submission by Saturday's post. It was felt the ATC letter could form a part of it, and Andy Murray undertook to e-mail those committee members not at the meeting to suggest this.

It was felt that the draft of the joint submission to the JC, which people had received some days previously, and therefore had had time to study, was very nearly complete but people could still send in last-minute suggestions by e-mail provided they were received by Friday at the latest, to give time for them to be incorporated into the document. The possibility of including a mention of the flawed assessment process was briefly discussed.

It was decided that rather than a list of individual signatures, the submission could contain a statement that each organization had stated its willingness to have their name on it as those not present had already signified their approval in e-mails. There were two people who had not had a chance to read it, who needed to do so and give their approval.

The Group heard about the results of the recent INVOLVIS survey, which had been encouraging even though, probably due to the holiday period, the number of responses was not quite what had been hoped.

We were told the findings showed very clearly that ALS's claims were to a high degree false and that qualified interpreters were not working for them. The document, which is in two parts, is informative and worth reading in its entirety. It is due to be submitted on Friday, and is highly relevant to points 5 and 6 of the terms of reference.

The proposed event at the Houses of Parliament was discussed. There had been no new developments because Parliament would not be properly assembled until after the party conferences are not yet known. It was going to be necessary to have another meeting with Andy Slaughter, for which a selection of case studies had been prepared.

The proposed briefing for AS had not yet been completed because it had been hoped to include material based on the results of the NAO investigation which has not yet published its findings. However, the document did not need to be ready until later in September so there was still time. It was remarked that at the rate at which the things were changing, leaving a briefing until nearer the date would not do any harm.

Andy Slaughter had been clear about what he wanted from case studies and it had been a huge task to go through all the available material and identify ones that contained the details he needed, which is to say, verifiable facts such as dates, name of judge and concrete examples of what the interpreter did wrong.

The meeting on the whole was happy with the selection of case-studies distributed but Lalia White still wanted to do a little more work on it. They are presented in a format which makes for clarity and ease of reference.

It had been brought to the committee's notice that there had been incidents in the Immigration Tribunal Hearings that could provide good evidence because AS needed to know that things were going wrong in other areas besides the criminal courts. The information held so far on these hearings did not contain sufficient factual details for it to be used on this occasion. The facts need to be such as to enable people to check them to verify their accuracy.

Justice Minister Lord McNally had said he wanted to hear from judges and magistrates rather than reports from interpreters of the type INVOLVIS had been asked to bring to the fore and which were included in a 9-page appendix to the INVOLVIS report.

The case studies selected for AS could be sent to him and at the same time Andy Murray would inform the union's political department.

The need to make the event a multi-party affair was discussed as was also the need to find out which non-Labour MPs were sitting on the sub-committees. They should all be provided with the information gathered in the case studies and reports which are all fairly copious and would be a revelation to any MP who had not been aware of the matter from the start. The means of identifying and contacting MPs were discussed.

The meeting ended at 4.30 and AM immediately sent the e-mail to SC members not present at the meeting to inform them of the need to send any comments on the letter and the JC submission before the end of the next day.

The next meeting is tentatively agreed for Wednesday, 26<sup>th</sup> September.

Report by Eileen Ford (NUPIT)