



**Professional Interpreters for Justice (PI4J)  
Report of the Steering Committee**

Date: Monday, 16<sup>th</sup> March 2015

Time: 4:30 pm to 5:45 pm

Venue: Unite House - Holborn - London

**Present at the meeting:** A. Murray (chairing); A. Thompson (APCI); A. Minhas (APCI); L. White (NRPSI); S. Bishop (NRPSI); K. Slaney (SOMI); A. Naranjo (NUPIT); E. Ford (NUPIT).

**On telephone** J. Smith (NUBSLI); P. Arbuthnot (Genesis)

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The meeting opened at 4.30. The agenda was as follows:

Notes of previous meeting

PI4J Manifesto

NUBSLI's meeting with CCS

Forthcoming meeting with MoJ

Objectives and Strategies document

PI4J website.

**Notes of last meeting:**

The notes were passed for posting on the website with an amendment as previously proposed by some members.

**'Objectives and Strategy' document:**

A list of campaign objectives and a list of strategies had been devised by which the objectives might be attained.

It was felt that the use of 'FWA' should be avoided both here and in the manifesto, and the term 'arrangements' should be used instead. There was also some discussion of whether the expressions 'treatment' and 'terms and conditions' were interchangeable and it was decided that 'terms and conditions' was preferable in most contexts.

#### **PI4J Manifesto:**

[After discussion of the draft manifesto at the previous meeting and further exchanges of e-mails, the SC decided the document was too difficult to adapt to the purpose for which it had been written. A new version was proposed due to some objections.

An interim meeting was therefore convened for the purposes of establishing the aims of the campaign. That meeting took place on March, 10<sup>th</sup>.

In advance of that meeting, a new manifesto was drafted which was considered by the SC to meet the requirements and it was this document that was used as the basis for discussions at the meeting. It required very little adjustment in order to satisfy everyone].

The document was studied paragraph by paragraph and minor adjustments were made, attention being paid to the correct titles of bodies and documents. JS asked for the term BSL to be re-styled as BSL/English as this was now the preferred term among BSL professionals, but PA thought this would be hard for people to understand so it was decided not to use it in this document. Care was taken to avoid words such as 'contract' and 'framework agreement' where the more all-embracing term 'arrangement' could be used to allow for any change in nomenclature introduced by the government in the future. The SC pronounced itself satisfied with the manifesto subject to the amendments agreed under this agenda-point and it was happy to send it as the final version to the campaign department for typesetting and artwork.

#### **NUBSLI's Meeting with CCS:**

Thanks to a very successful, uncompromising launch, NUBSLI's 'Scrap the Framework' campaign had attracted a lot of high-profile support. Their open letter to Francis Maude

had been signed by numerous MPs and by Unite's Len McCluskey and over a thousand others, and had achieved wide dissemination on blogs and websites. The CCS as a result invited NUBSLI to meet with them. JS, together with NUBSLI vice-chair V. Curran and AM accordingly met with the executive director of CCS, Matt Denholm and the head of 'People' category which includes language services, Sue Cowgill. The meeting was thus at a higher level than those PI4J had achieved so far. NUBSLI was able to express its dissatisfaction at the way representations had been handled or ignored, and discuss important matters relating to points of the FWA such as travelling expenses and pricing structure.

Although the meeting centred on those parts of the FWA affecting deaf people, NUBSLI and AM felt that the meeting had been useful. AM had pointed out to CCS that they needed to learn from the experience of the MoJ if they did not want to see their service providers walk away. He felt that the meeting was listening to what NUBSLI and he were saying, but realized that the decision did not solely rest with the CCS as there could be pressure from Francis Maude or the Cabinet Office not to delay bringing it out. However, he provided the CCS with a copy of the letter from Dame Ann Begg saying that in view of her committee's criticisms regarding Access to Work, NUBSLI's views ought to be taken seriously.

NUBSLI wants the FWA to be scrapped but as a tactical move has only asked for the sections referring specifically to deaf people to be removed. They are aware that the DWP have taken the decision to use the FWA and believe that the low-level qualifications to which we have objected are being retained

JS stressed the importance of getting PI4J's message to the CCS as soon as possible because there were signs that the latter were determined to push the FWA through before the end of the month. Genesis was urged to send it out immediately as it truly was the eleventh hour after which the opportunity could be lost. It was finally decided that KS would draft an e-mail to send to the CCS saying we could not support any framework agreement that did not take into account the wishes of the profession as outlined by PI4J. It is important for them to know that it is not just the BSL/English interpreters who are of this mind, but all the interpreter organizations.

The SC was informed that Thames Valley Police are determined to use the FWA and are prepared to extend their agreement with LL until such time as they are able to do so.

### **Forthcoming meeting with MoJ**

The meeting will be primarily about regulation. It was pointed out that the intention was to establish what each party means by 'regulation' and discuss different aspects of the topic including the difference independent regulation can make to demand and supply. It would also be an opportunity to talk about how qualified interpreters can be motivated to work, and about ongoing assessments and rare languages. It was suggested that it would be useful to brief the MoJ about the current approach to rare languages, from the point of view of the NRPSI and also that of the IoLET examinations. Also if they could comment at this stage, they would like to plan some next steps on regulation and what the process might be over the next year and a half for example. KS asked if it would be possible to mention the National Agreement by saying that there is a whole system in place which is still viable although they try to say it is obsolete. The whole SC was in agreement over this proposed agenda.

### **The web-page:**

It was pointed out that it is confusing to have the url of PIJ when everyone now knows us as PI4J and there is a need for revising objectives and strategies. AM said if he received a copy containing those changes he could send it to the IT department and get the references to PIJ changed to PI4J at the same time.

The manifesto could be added later.

### **A.O.B.:**

The date of the next meeting was discussed but not decided upon. There will be an e-mail discussion of how we can get our members involved, e.g. by sending the manifesto to parliamentary candidates.

The meeting ended at 5.45.

Report by E. Ford (NUPIT)