



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

Date: Friday, 5th July 2013

Time: 2.00 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; Keith Moffitt, Chair, CioL Council; Madeleine Lee, Director, PIA; Geoffrey Buckingham, Chairman, APCI; Aqil Minhas, Treasurer, APCI; Klasiena Slaney, Director, SOMI UK;

By telephone: Paul Wilson, CEO, ITI; Guillermo (Willie) Makin, Chairman, SPSI; Eulalia (Lalia) Pessoa-White, Director, NRPSI; Tony Wilcox, WITS.

Apologies: John Podvoiskis, Director, PIA.

Meeting commenced at 2.00 pm

The agenda was set as follows:

Minutes of previous meeting;

Forthcoming meeting at MoJ;

The recent debate at Westminster Hall;

The new Capita terms and conditions;
Alternative Proposal;
The distribution list;
The SW Police Forces;
The IATI conference.

The minutes of the last meeting

The minutes were approved as accurate.

The forthcoming meeting at MoJ

The meeting with MoJ officials is due to take place on 25th of the current month. The subject of the meeting is quality but the Committee wish to make a point also about what the Minister said at the debate in Westminster Hall.

The committee means to make it clear at the outset that they do not wish the Minister to represent their participation in meetings as an indication that they are in agreement with what the Ministry is proposing. They are going to the meetings to put their point of view and not simply to listen to what the Minister and her officials have to say.

It was agreed by the committee that four SC members would attend the meeting, and that this would be sufficient to form a representative group, with the possible addition of P Arbuthnot of Involvis.

The committee decided that in between meetings with the Minister and her officials, it would be a good idea to press for progress reports from the ministry on how the various Select Committee recommendations are being implemented.

The Westminster Hall Debate

The committee were unanimously of the opinion that Helen Grant's speech at the debate ignored the issues and fell back on arguments which had already been shown to

be dubious when not entirely false, and failed to verify the statistics on which a large part of those arguments were based.

The committee was informed that a thank-you letter had been sent to MPs who had contributed to the debate. Penny had failed to send the letter to the majority of committee members for comment and the few who had seen it did not know for certain whether it had indeed been sent although GB thought it had. GB read the letter aloud and it turned out that it contained considerably more than just thanks to the MPs. However it was decided to ask Aisleen to send it out if she had not already done so. There was some doubt as to whether Aisleen was actually in the office although KM felt that Penny would surely not have gone away leaving nobody in charge, and that the 'out of office' automatic e-mail reply some SC members reported having received must have been a mistake.

The SC is aware that many interpreters wrote to their MPs about the debate and that some have received replies. The SC felt it would be useful to know what responses have been received from MPs and therefore wishes to invite any interpreter who has received a response to forward it to Madeleine Lee. It will not detract from the usefulness of the letters if interpreters want to remove any indications of their identities before forwarding them.

It is hoped also that interpreters will contact their MPs again and forward the letter the SC is intending to send to HG challenging her assertions during the debate, to make them aware of the SC's continuing dissatisfaction at the way the interpreting contract is being handled.

The SC decided that it will make its own assessment of ancillary costs arising from direct bookings of interpreters by courts, based on information obtained from the Delayed Cases page on the SE Circuit's website. This will provide a reliable basis from which to challenge the 'savings' figures relied on by the MoJ to support its determination to continue with the FWA. Members of the SC will make an inventory of claims made by the MoJ with a view to challenging them, and calling the MoJ to account. The SC intends to go on asking its questions until it receives a satisfactory answer.

The New Capita T&C

A Union Solicitor had looked at the new T&C issued by Capita and had given an opinion but at the meeting ML informed us that an interim decision made by a Tribunal judge in an ongoing case may set a precedent which could alter the Union solicitor's opinion. The PIA's own solicitor is already seeking further advice which ML will share with the SC at the earliest opportunity and this will be communicated to the Unite solicitor. No solicitor will be in a position to form a definitive opinion until the interim decision in the ongoing case is confirmed.

The SW Police forces

An interpreters' meeting was due to take place the day after the SC meeting. The interpreters and police have received advice from members of the SC which have been received with varying degrees of enthusiasm but now it is time for the people involved to make their own decisions and settle their differences in the way best suited to them.

The recent announcement that another NE police force has signed a contract with ITL was briefly discussed and it was decided that a letter could be sent to them similar to that sent to other forces, warning them of the disadvantages inherent in signing contracts with commercial agencies, and also to find out something about their minimum standards of qualification and vetting.

The Alternative Strategy

It is felt that it is now time to concretize our ideas for an alternative to the framework agreement into a more coherent proposal. Suggestions, some of them quite detailed, have been received from various sources with regard to this, and at the meeting an outline for a Community Interest Company sketched out by GB was looked at. SC members will study the suggestions already received in the light of the CIC outline and give their views as to how it could be used to provide a service fulfilling the justice services' 'wish list'. Members will send their comments to GB by the 27th, in time for him to compile a more detailed proposal for discussion at the next meeting.

Distribution List

It was suggested that the SC's mailing list was too comprehensive and that e-mail discussions were being copied to people who had no part to play in the campaign or reason to be interested. Therefore it was agreed to 'prune' the list and EF undertook to produce a suggestion for an amended list for AM to send to the communications department for use with the proposed automatic e-mail address.

AOB

ML informed the SC that the ATC has finally set up an ethics committee to deal with the complaint against Capita and Capita is prepared to respond.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 3.15.

Date of next meeting:

Tuesday 30th July at three o'clock in the afternoon.

Report by Eileen Ford (NUPIT)