



Professional Interpreters for Justice (PI4J)

Report of the Steering Committee

Date: Tuesday, 28th November 2017

Time: The meeting commenced at 2.05 pm

Venue: Unite House - Holborn - London

Present: A. Murray [chairing], Geraint Wyn Parry [Cymdeithas Cyfieithwyr Cymru], A. Thompson [APCI], E. Ford, [NUPIT], A. Naranjo [NUPIT], S. Bishop [NRPSI], A. Carlisle [CIoL], K. P. Slaney (SOMI), M. Abbas (SOMI), P. Wilson (ITI).

Apologies: L. White [NRPSI], G. Buckingham [EULITA], I. Norton (APCI).

The meeting opened at 2 pm with the following agenda:

Report of previous meeting

Meeting with NPPC

APPG meeting

NRPSI meeting with LAAB

Query about Legal Aid Agency fees

Discussion Paper on future of PI4J

AOB

The report of the previous meeting was approved subject to one typographical amendment.

Meeting with NPCC

AT and KPS, KS and SB attended a meeting with the Strategic Language Group. It was felt that the meeting was fruitful for both sides. Topics discussed included training

for new police recruits and best practice in matters such as statement-taking, vetting and T&C. Plans for outsourcing are not yet finalized in that area. It is expected to be widespread but not necessarily universal.

The representatives from PI4J were able to highlight the continuing usefulness of the guidelines set out in the National Agreement and also of the fact that registration with NRPSI is a way of ensuring that an interpreter is suitably qualified and vetted. Problems encountered by interpreters when seeking security clearance and in particular when the interpreter does not wish to work through agencies, were discussed.

PI4J were invited to participate in a further meeting, to take place in March of next year.

APPG meeting.

Representatives from CioL, ITI, NRPSI and NUPIT had been invited to attend a meeting of the All-Party Policy Group on language provision in the Justice System. The meeting took place in the House of Lords. The SC was briefly informed of the contents of the meeting.

LSAB and NRPSI

The Language Services Advisory Board was set up by the Language Shop for the purpose of providing feedback on quality assurance services. Its terms of reference were set up at the first meeting. SB informed the SC that the meeting had taken place but that the actual proceedings were confidential. The usefulness of such a body was briefly discussed by the SC.

Query about Legal Aid fees

A BSL interpreter had encountered a problem relating to payment for time spent outside of court when acting as defence interpreter. It was decided that AM would enquire about the usual practice.

Reference was made to the fact that N. Evans had resigned from her position in NUBSLI and the SC wish to put on record its appreciation of her work over the years and her contribution to NUBSLI's achievements in successfully negotiating T&C for BSL and dealing with the IR35 question.

Discussion paper on future of PI4J

ITI and CIOL put forward a proposal to refocus PI4J, so that it would take on the role of a consultative, informative body rather than its present one as pressure group, given that circumstances had changed considerably since PI4J was first established. The proposal had been circulated to members of the committee on the eve of the meeting. Opinion was divided about the merits of the proposal.

PW said that working for change for the future required solid information and a refocused group would use this to build a case over the long term for the profession. It would continue to exert pressure on the government to recognize the value of Public Service Interpreting through consultation and negotiation that would help the group to argue for improved pay and conditions.

MA opposed the proposal on the basis that the paper represents the perception and view of ITI and CIOL and it highlights the difference between them and frontline interpreters. The role of the PI4J ought to complement, not to clash with or overlap, the role of interpreter organizations and as such, it is best to remain as a lobby group. While the long-term strategy suggested in the paper is important, what is pressing at the moment is working on the short and medium-term solutions because this is about frontline interpreters business and livelihood.

Some committee members thought that information was already being satisfactorily collected and collated by other organizations. GWP suggested that the SC should continue to lobby but that the next meeting should focus on a revision of aims and revised programme of work.

Although not everyone on the committee had made up their minds about their own position, some felt that if anybody benefited from the change of focus it would not be the interpreters themselves. It was decided that each organization would consult its own members with a view to discussing the proposal in depth at the next meeting.

AOB

It was decided that the SC would meet again on Thursday 22nd March 2018. There being no further business the meeting closed at approximately 4:06 pm.

Report by E. Ford, NUPIT.