



Professional Interpreters for Justice (PI4J)

Report of the Steering Committee

Date: Tuesday, 29th November 2016

Time: The meeting commenced at 10 am

Venue: Unite House - Holborn - London

Present at the meeting: A. Murray, Regional Officer of Unite (chairing the meeting); GW Parry, Cymdeithas Cyfieithwyr Cymru; A. Naranjo, NUPIT; A. Thompson, APCI; Karen Newby, NUBSLI; S. Bishop, NRPSI; L. White, NRPSI; G. Buckingham, EULITA; K. Slaney, SOMI; P. Wilson, ITI; Jonathan Downie, ITI; K. Moffitt, CIoL.

Apologies: Apologies: I. Norton, APCI; Anne Carlisle, CIoL; E. Ford, NUPIT.

Agenda:

1. Notes of previous meeting
2. Advice of UNITE Lawyer
3. MoJ response to request for meeting
4. TBW response to request for meeting
5. Meeting with NPCC
6. Progress on work to determine equivalence ISL Certificates
7. Progress on potential conflict of interest re The Language Shop
8. Sharing or comparing rates.

The meeting opened at 10 am.

Legal advice regarding TBW's interpreter contract

The list of questions based on TBW's contract for interpreters working in the justice system, drawn up as discussed at the previous meeting of the SC, had been passed to the Union's legal department. A document had been received by AM, containing a preliminary opinion which for the time being could only be considered provisional because the lawyers needed

additional information before giving definitive advice. Some time was devoted to reading the contents of the document following which there was a brief discussion on the kind of information should be provided to the lawyers, who will need a clear picture of how interpreters work.

Responses to requests for meetings

It was recalled that the Ministry of Justice had manifested a willingness to meet with representatives of PI4J but that no response had been received from TBW. Most of the Committee was in favour of repeating the request to meet with them.

It was suggested that the group needed to find a way of making the MoJ pay attention to the interpreter issue because the latter had other issues which it considered more pressing.

Some felt that there was no point going back to the sort of campaigning which we had undertaken in previous years and that talking to people, although it gave the feeling of having achieved something by entering into talks, had not been particularly productive so that the SC's present approach, from the legal angle, seemed the only acceptable way forward.

Others felt that the previous campaign had not been ineffective but the results had been small in comparison with the expense involved.

AM said that what previous courses of action had achieved was to bring organizations together and to open doors which it was now important to keep open.

After this digression the group returned to the matter of the meeting with the MoJ, deciding only that the invitation should be accepted for some time in February, by which time the first quarterly figures would have been received, and that points for the agenda and details of who would attend could be decided nearer that time.

It was thought however that it would be preferable to meet with TBW before the said meeting with the MoJ took place. Since TBW has not yet responded to the SC's request to talk, it was decided that a further request should be sent to them, in which mention would be made of the fact that PI4J would be meeting with the MoJ, as this might help TBW to see its way to entering into talks.

Meeting with NPCC

It was reported that the meeting had been positive in a surprising way, in that the police seemed to have a much greater respect for quality assurance than the MoJ seemed to have. They are nevertheless under great pressure to economize, which restricts their choices when it comes to procurement. What we can do is offer our advice and expertise and let them take

it from there. PI4J will send a letter to them about a meeting in the future. It was agreed by everyone that it was important to make reference to the National Agreement wherever possible so that people realize it is still there and being used in some parts of the Justice system.

The point had been made that the NRPSI had a disciplinary committee which could deal with complaints free of charge and that listing on the register implied that an interpreter had the necessary qualifications and vetting, which simplified selection for them at the same time as reducing costs.

It was generally agreed that it was worth maintaining contact with police forces to remind them of quality and other issues, as policy reviews take place regularly and we need them to be aware of how we can help them.

New interpreting qualification

NRPSI are still in the process of finding out whether the ISL qualification meets its registration criteria.

Conflict of interest

It has not yet been established whether the relationship between board members of TBW, LS and the Language Shop constitutes a conflict of interest. Further enquiries will be made.

AOB

The rate card issued by NUBSLI/Clarion was discussed with no conclusions being drawn.

There being no further business, the date for the next meeting was set as Monday, January 16th at 10 am until noon, and the meeting was brought to a close.

Report by NUPIT