

# IMMEDIATE CALL TO ACTION FOR ALL INTERPRETERS/LINGUISTS SIGNED UP TO MoJ' ALS/CAPITA CONTRACT

January 2013

England & Wales - Manchester, Birmingham, Oldham, Liverpool, Lancaster, Newcastle, Edinburgh, Cardiff, Swansea, London, Bristol, Oxford, Exeter, Southampton.

Dear ALS/CAPITA colleagues,

How have you embraced the 'reward' offered to you by Capita (former ALS) for all your hard work over the last 13 months or so? This so called 'reward' now translates into you having to drive long distances day or night for actually less than 20p per mile and robbed of your travel time every time (the calculation is made on the basis you are not paid for the first 2 hours and the first 20 miles of your return journey to the assignment venues). What rights or authority does ALS/Capita have to help themselves to the money they charged HMCTS for travel expenses whilst those amounts have not been paid to us in full from the very beginning and slashed furthermore with effect from January 8<sup>th</sup> 2013?

If we were to quantify the number of miles and hours of travel time they have not paid us in the last 13 months, we would quickly see that the amounts they help themselves to on our backs are quite copious to say the least. These amounts may well be part of the hundred millions of pounds in profit they parade on their website as being a financial success.

**We, a large and increasing group of CAPITA (former ALS) interpreters covering different languages in various parts of the country have decided that enough is enough and since the January 7<sup>th</sup> 2013 we have stopped providing any kind of assistance and/or interpreting.**

We strongly believe that most of you one way or the other have already informed CAPITA's language coordinators that you simply cannot afford to carry out any assignments at their imposed shameful rates of pay but despite that they have still pestered you with calls offering you even more interpreting assignments. The number of assignments offered to most of you has increased simply because a large number of interpreters like us have refused to take them on.

We have been informed that after the January 7<sup>th</sup> on numerous occasions some of our colleagues interpreters have been pressured and psychologically intimidated by the language coordinators and/or management by being told that 'a note of your refusal to cooperate will be added to your profile which may affect your chances of getting any interpreting assignments for a long time'. This in itself is unacceptable and should be reported to the appropriate authorities with utmost haste. If you have suffered this kind of bullying please report it to us as soon as possible. It is time for all the appropriate bodies/govt. agencies to see CAPITA's steel claw wrapped in velvet cloth and the proverbial bull set free in a China shop. It is time to join our brothers on NRPSI and it is now time to join their admirable efforts to show the entire political echelon what kind of 'beast' of a company they have entrusted to provide such an important public service and to look after the professionals and skilled linguists doing the 'foot soldier's work'.

We also ask ourselves how on earth did we fall for some of their pitiful tricks they have been playing on us – i.e. posting a job for a couple of minutes only to withdraw it or make it look as if it had been assigned to an interpreter only to create pressure and a false feeling that if you did not accept the assignment immediately no matter what conditions there would be others willing to jump at the opportunity.

How many times did we have to query payments which had already been purposely miscalculated by staff ('because Google says so') only to find that the travel allowance was ridiculously low? How many times were your payment queries ignored for days or weeks on end with for sole purpose to mentally wear you down and make you give up contacting them again which resulted in you accepting any payment just to

spare yourself the mental torment.

Despite all criticism launched at us (in the forums we have been called all sorts of names such as “capita slaves”, “terps”, etc.) and despite the unacceptable rates of pay we have been conditioned to accept we are confident that most of us have put in a lot of effort and dedication and we have strived to provide the best service we could have provided. We must think of the public we have served so far, we must bear in mind that whilst we interpret at police stations, courts, tribunals, etc. other people’s future is at stake and we have to admit that an unmotivated, despised and unrewarded professional will not provide the best service. We would not allow a relative or a family member to be offered the services of a low paid, unmotivated, stressed individual so why should we carry on pretending that it is all fine when deep inside we are all totally unhappy and disgusted with the way ALS and Capita has treated us. We are at risk of jeopardizing and possibly ruining other people’s life by carrying on working for such a dismal pay.

We hope that you join the movement and follow our action and we take this opportunity to reassure you that we share your concerns and anger caused by the unacceptable way you are being treated. Looking back we realise and feel ashamed about how easily and unconditionally we all blindly accepted the payment 'leftovers' they threw at us and the endless lies they have been feeding us with from the very beginning.

If you have read this far we are confident that you identify yourselves with the situations we highlighted and we hope you have the strength to join us in order to regain our self-respect.

## PROPOSALS

- CPD training as mentioned in the agreement;
- mileage to be paid at 40p per mile (which just covers the cost of fuel) as stated in February 2012 and promised to be permanent;
- two or three hours minimum payment for all local jobs;
- door to door mileage for all assignments
- full travel time paid
- public transport expenses paid on submission of relevant receipts
- Reassessment of travel allowance each year in line with real cost increases.

This can only be achieved by joining forces.

We plan to stage a strike for two weeks or more during which we will ask all interpreters to refuse any interpreting assignment. We all have families to support, rents to pay, heating bills, car insurance and petrol costs, car maintenance, etc. and we understand it is going to be tough but it cannot be tougher and it cannot cost us more that it has cost us so far as you will probably agree. We need to stand together in solidarity to protect and promote our common interests in the future. E-mail us to discuss the proposals and receive further information on how you can take part in our action and express any concerns or ideas you may have. A Twitter account will soon be set up to coordinate our actions and our quest for JUSTICE!

Do not feel intimidated by Capita, they don’t own you, slavery has long been abolished and modern slavery must not be tolerated any longer!

Signed

LIN/ I/CANNOT/BE/BULLIED