

OFFICIAL MEETING NOTES (FINAL)

HMCTS and Professional Interpreters for Justice - meeting held on 12 March 2013

Officials from HM Courts and Tribunals Service Interpretation Project (the Project) and representatives from Professional Interpreters for Justice (PI4J) met on 12 March in the latest opportunity for the Working Group to discuss the Language Services contract and overarching Framework Agreement.

The Project is running a series of workshops with different groups of interpreters (those who work for Capita-TI and those used by the Tribunals Service) to explore potential changes to Capita-TI's terms and conditions under the Framework Agreement which may help to attract additional interpreters to sign up. This is in line with recommendations made in recent Select Committees which instructed the Ministry of Justice to work with interpreters to attract others across the required languages and geographical locations. These changes will incur additional expenditure by the MoJ on the contract.

The Project, when asked by PI4J about their progress on roll-out of FWA, said that there was a pause while this package of proposals, which is an important step on that path, was consulted on.

PI4J members were glad that the dialogue established in late 2012 was continuing subsequent to the Select Committee reports (as these had established that the views of professional organisations had not previously been afforded sufficient weight) and that the Project had taken into account the replies to the Involvis Survey of February 2013.

The Project presented their proposed potential changes to terms and conditions which will benefit interpreters working under the Framework Agreement. PI4J did not agree that this would attract sufficient additional interpreters of the calibre required to the Framework Agreement and retained the view that the Framework Agreement itself is flawed and costly to the justice sector.

PI4J explained the findings of the Involvis online survey which 859 interpreters completed and which showed interpreters' unwillingness to work for Capita. Terms and conditions are only part of the picture of why 81% of NRPSI interpreters will not work under the Framework Agreement. Use of the NRPSI to source interpreters is key, for example.

PI4J said the FWA is unsalvageable. They are keen to look at an alternative model to be developed in collaboration with the interpreting profession which would have terms and conditions in line with the previous National Agreement. The group said however that they will continue the dialogue with the Project, including on the independent assessment of the tiering system and quality standards, which will be the subject of the next workshop.

The Minister will be presented with the views collected during this process from the different interpreter groups in order to inform her decision on any changes which are proposed to the Framework Agreement. PI4J will then have another opportunity to meet with the Minister to discuss any future work.

PI4J asked when the MOJ will publish the next set of figures since there had been no published statistics since the report for the period February – August 2012. They also pointed out that any future publication should make clear the high percentage of interpreting assignments in the justice sector (including short notice bookings) being fulfilled outside of the Capita-TI contract. The Project said that the next report would be published on 28 March but that this will not include the changes recommended by the Justice Committee, as the

Committee's recommendations are still being considered. The Chief Statistician would need to be briefed before the format of the published report can be changed.

Ends

Note

Also see ANNEX 1 (Terms of Reference).