

Registration of BSL/English Interpreters

Meeting of Christopher Stone, Trudy Field, Cathy Barnes, Jim Edwards (4/6/07)

Background

In response to a view expressed by some parties in the field of interpreting that the registration system held by CACDP was not sufficiently independent, in August 2005, the then chief executive of CACDP asked the IRP to consider presenting a business case to CACDP for financial independence from CACDP. A group from the IRP drafted an outline of a proposal and in 2006, consultants were engaged to produce a business plan which was submitted to CACDP with further financial figures. The figures did not prove the viability of such a move, and there was uncertainty about support from the field

Recent Developments

However, rather than abandoning the whole idea, it was decided that the time is right to investigate alternative ways of achieving a greater degree of independent governance for the register(s).

The aim of the register remains: ensuring the quality and quantity of BSL/English interpreters for the benefit of consumers and the professionals; any changes must ensure this aim is fulfilled.

A meeting between representatives of CACDP and the IRP was convened on 4th June 2007. The meeting involved a very positive discussion about what the IRP had achieved, and what will be necessary to ensure a robust system in the foreseeable future, assuming that Government backing/funding for registration remains unlikely.

The initial idea is to establish an independent governing body with an independent chair, who is not allied with any interested parties / language professionals, to oversee the development and implementation of relevant policies. Panel(s) of people with technical knowledge to develop and oversee the practical issues of registration within each specialism will be maintained under this umbrella governing body.

The establishment of such a body would need to include a review of the present policy and procedures. This coincides with the recent IRP decision to review the Policy for the Registration of BSL/English Interpreters created in 1999.

The other exciting thing is the opportunity to include other registers under the one governing body, adopting a similar model to the Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence (www.chre.org.uk), which promotes best practice and consistency in the regulation of healthcare professionals for nine regulatory

bodies, ensuring consistent procedures are in place to benefit consumers.

At present questions are being asked about the possibility of establishing registers for people working in bilingual communication roles in education. Similar questions are being raised over the various roles undertaken by Deaf people under the umbrella term of 'Deaf Interpreters'. This proposal could widen the remit from the present one undertaken by the IRP to create and administer these registers. Another possible benefit is that the new governing body could oversee the registers for a wider range of language professionals.

Future Action

A small advisory group is to be established so that developments can be communicated to stakeholders and advice sought. This will of course include at least one representative from ASLI and one from the IRP. Cathy Barnes, Director of Quality & Standards, will be undertaking the necessary work to take this forward. Comments and suggestions from interested parties regarding this project would be welcomed. Please email your ideas directly to Cathy Barnes (cathyb@cacdp.org.uk)