



To All Members of the Youth Court Panel and Stakeholders

Our ref: SRP /
Date: 14th August 2017

Dear Colleague,

CENTRALISATION OF YOUTH BUSINESS

Further to my previous correspondence in respect of the proposal to combine the three individual youth courts and centralise all youth business at the QEII Liverpool Youth Court.

As you are aware the formal consultation process originally took place over the period of the 6th March 2015-13th April 2015. It was decided at that time to form one combined Youth Panel for the Cluster and the decision to centralise all youth business in one location was deferred. Recently the decision was taken to revisit the matter, it was decided that the centralisation of youth work should be considered again.

My previous letter and the latest consultation document requested observations and feedback in respect of the issue and a number of responses were received from both magistrates and other stakeholders. Each of the concerns raised have been discussed informally and wherever possible solutions will be put in place. The concerns raised included the following:-

- Logistical problems for Wirral clients / parents / solicitors when attending court.
- Issues and problems experienced around the centralisation of DV work, lessons learned.
- Liverpool Youth Courts ability to accommodate the additional business.
- Magistrates having the required local knowledge when dealing with youth cases.
- Possible conflict between rival gangs appearing in the same building from different locations. Youths are often parochial in their outlook, as a consequence the security of the court could be an issue.
- Financial implications.

After due consideration, it has been decided to go ahead with the centralisation of youth business in Liverpool effective from the week commencing the 15th January 2018. I am at present in the process of arranging meetings with those directly affected by this decision to discuss further any practical issues with HMCTS administrative staff and all other affected stakeholders.

The number of youth courts required to sit at Liverpool each week has yet to be determined and is still open for discussion but it is envisaged that there will be no more than 4 full days each week and probably 3.

I will keep you informed of the progress made with regard to resolving practical issues.

If you have any further enquiries regarding this or any other matters please do not hesitate to contact either myself or Steve Pickstock. As mentioned, meetings are still in the process of being arranged with HMCTS staff and stakeholders but I thought that it was important to notify you immediately of the decision made. The issues and decision have been discussed at Bench Meetings and the Youth Panel Meeting.

Yours faithfully,

Ron Plinston
Chairman of the Youth Court Panel