

TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE CHICHESTER AND WORTHING POLICE STATION SCHEMES

Dear Sir/Madam,

Response to Consultation with scheme members of the Chichester and Worthing Scheme Areas following Sussex Police's announcement that Chichester police station will close on 1st November 2018

On 3rd September 2018, the Legal Aid Agency issued a consultation under paragraph 6.6 of the 2017 Standard Crime Contract Specification - Duty Solicitor Provisions, which states we may consult on a proposal to change the postcode boundaries in respect of a scheme following the closure of a police station/custody suite. The deadline for responses to the consultation was the 1st October 2018

The consultation was a response to Sussex Police's announcement that Chichester police station will close on 1st November 2018. It is planned that detainees will be sent to Worthing police station.

The consultation provided two options:

Option 1

- (a) Combine the membership lists of Worthing and Chichester police station and court duty schemes. The duty solicitors from the Chichester list will be allocated slots on the Worthing rota and there will no longer be a Chichester rota. The scheme will be renamed the Worthing and Chichester Scheme.

Or;

- (b) As above but due to the potential for increased call volumes we would like to consider setting up an 'A & B' police station rota by which two duty solicitors would be rota'd for each police station slot on the combined scheme, with calls allocated on an alternate basis.

Option 2

Retain the existing Chichester and Worthing schemes; dependent on the location of their arrest, clients detained at Worthing will be offered a representative from the appropriate Police Station rota. This option relies on the police and call centre to identify which duty list to employ for each client.

Summary of responses received

7 responses were received and we thank everyone who took the time to respond to the consultation.

The majority of respondents favoured **Option 2**, that is to retain the existing Chichester and Worthing schemes; dependent on the location of their arrest, clients detained at Worthing will be offered a representative from the appropriate Police Station rota.

A number of respondents felt it was too early in the new Contract to make any significant changes to scheme membership and all responses expressed concerns regarding the geography of a merged scheme and its potential adverse impact on clients' receiving advice from a local solicitor. A number of respondents felt that a merged scheme should only be considered in tandem with a review of eligible postcodes.

No respondents felt it necessary to make any changes to the current Court Duty scheme arrangements.

Consultation Outcome

Given the overwhelming support for Option 2 we will take the necessary steps to implement this proposal.

Further Enquiries

Should you have any queries please contact the South East Contract Management Team
SEContractManagers@Justice.gov.uk