



Legal Aid Agency

Birmingham Regional Office

Cannon House, 18, The Priory Queensway

Birmingham, B4 6BS

To: All Scheme Members of the Staffordshire
CJS Scheme Areas

Dear Sir/Madam,

Response to Consultation with scheme members of all of the Staffordshire CJS Scheme Areas following the Staffordshire Police decision to close Burton upon Trent Police Station Custody Suite permanently from Tuesday 15th January 2019.

On Friday 25th January 2019, 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. Burton upon Trent Police Station Custody Suite has been closed permanently and so a consultation was deemed appropriate given the significant impact on the current Burton upon Trent and Tamworth Police Station rota.

The consultation was regarding possible changes to the membership of the Duty Solicitor schemes affected by the closure of Burton upon Trent Police Station Custody Suite.

The deadline for responses to the consultation was Friday 8th February 2019 and the timetable for the consultation exercise indicated that following consideration of responses, all affected parties would be notified of the outcome of the consultation in the week commencing 18th February 2019 at the latest. This letter is therefore intended as formal notification of the outcome of the consultation.

Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to respond to the consultation.

11 responses were received, some from individual Duty Solicitors and some a combined response reflecting the views of a firm overall. The majority, (7/11), of respondents ultimately favoured **Option C** over any other option.

Many respondents expressed concerns regarding the travel time and costs both for the defence and other users of the Criminal Justice System in each of the options under consideration. Respondents sought to minimise any additional costs.

Whilst 4 respondents to the consultation elected for either option A or B, neither of these options were considered to be feasible given the disparity in size of the Custody Suites at Watling Street, Cannock and the Northern Area Custody Facility. In addition a number of concerns have been raised outside of the consultation process in relation to where clients from the Burton and Tamworth areas are being taken by the Police. Many firms have reported that their clients are being taken to the Northern Area Custody Facility in contradiction to what the LAA was told by Staffordshire Police and it is considered that this policy is likely to continue.

No decision can meet the expressed desires of all those who provided feedback to the consultation, whilst also meeting the needs of clients and the LAA. A decision has therefore been made which will provide rationalised, efficient and effective Duty provision across the schemes under review, having given due consideration to the feedback received.

It has been decided that the following arrangements will be implemented:

From Monday 1st April 2019 the membership of all of the existing Staffordshire CJS schemes will be combined into a Countywide Police Station Duty Rota.

There are no amendments to Remuneration Regulations or Contract arrangements and remuneration for Police Station Duty work and Own Client attendances within the CJS area will remain unchanged.

Please ensure that you work from the updated rotas when they arrive.

Next steps

- ☐ A new combined Staffordshire Police Station rota will be issued shortly to cover the rota period 1st April 2019 to 30th September 2019.