



Legal Aid
Agency

16th August 2019

To all Duty Solicitors on Huntingdon, Cambridge and Peterborough Duty Schemes

Huntingdon Police Station Duty Solicitor Scheme Consultation

Dear Duty Solicitor

Duty Solicitor Schemes

This consultation is in response to Cambridgeshire Police's decision to close Huntingdon Police Station to custody work and the subsequent impact on the associated Duty schemes.

We have tried to keep changes to a minimum whilst taking into account the likely impact on levels of service to clients and available work to providers.

This Consultation

This consultation paper comprises two sections:

Section 1 outlines the Police Station Custody closure and Duty Solicitor Schemes affected.

Section 2 outlines the options identified to change the Duty Solicitor Scheme affected.

Please note that given the short timescale to the new rota publication (from 1st October 2019) the consultation period is reduced to 2 weeks.

We are consulting on these proposals for 2 weeks from, from 16th August 2019 to 30th August 2019.

Responses should be sent by email to Andrew Taylor (andrew.taylor@justice.gov.uk) and Howard Chapman (howard.chapman@justice.gov.uk) with the heading marked "Huntingdon Police Station Consultation Response."

Section 1

Police Station Custody Closure and Duty Solicitor Schemes affected.

In Cambridgeshire the Police Station custody facilities for defendants is now closed at Huntingdon Police Station. Huntingdon custody may be used as an overflow or when either Cambridge (Parkside) or Peterborough (Thorpewood) custody suites are closed. It is also occasionally used for voluntary interviews.

Detention and interviews of clients from the Huntingdon area now primarily takes place at Cambridge or Peterborough, depending on the location of the arrest.

The Huntingdon Duty Scheme currently has just one member.

Section 2 – Proposed Changes

Option1 – The current Huntingdon Police Station rota be converted to a panel scheme. This would allow the current scheme member to retain those cases that continue to be dealt with via Huntingdon Police Station.

However, in view of the very low number of Duty Solicitor members of the scheme it would be necessary to set up an arrangement where if the DSCC call is not accepted by the Huntingdon Duty Solicitor within normal timescales the case is referred to back-up from one of the neighbouring schemes (Cambridge or Peterborough).

Option 2 – The current Huntingdon Police Station scheme is merged with the Cambridge and Peterborough Police Station schemes. The Huntingdon scheme member would be allowed to elect which scheme they wished to join (either Peterborough or Cambridge). This would ensure that the existing Huntingdon Scheme member firm does not lose out on access to matters arising from the area currently covered by that scheme.

Alongside this a panel scheme would operate for Huntingdon Police Station to ensure cover for occasions when it is being used for voluntary interviews. The panel membership would be made up from the current membership of the Cambridge and Peterborough schemes.

Our preferred option is Option 2 to allow clients continued access to a Duty Solicitor and to allow providers access to duty work.

In addition, if you have any other suggested options that you feel we should consider, we would be grateful for your views.

Please note, subject to the outcome of this consultation, it is our intention to issue the affected rotas with effect from **1st October 2019** to include Duty Solicitor applicants who have already submitted CRM12s for membership of the affected schemes. Please see paragraphs 6.56 and 6.60 of the 2017 Standard Crime Contract Specification.

Please ensure your final response is sent to andrew.taylor@justice.gov.uk and howard.chapman@justice.gov.uk with the heading marked “Huntingdon Police Station Consultation Response” to be received no later than 5.00pm on 30th August 2019.

We will aim to confirm the outcome of the consultation by **Monday 9th September 2019**.

NB Please note that the publication of new rotas from 1st October 2019 planned for early September will be delayed to mid September for Cambridgeshire Schemes to allow for the changes to be implemented following this consultation.