



Legal Aid Agency

**TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE HINCKLEY AND LEICESTER DUTY
SCHEME(S)**

Introduction and Background

This consultation is to consider the viability of the Hinckley Police Station Duty Solicitor Scheme following a reduction in membership and to determine the future operation of the scheme.

In addition, this consultation seeks views on a proposal to amend the Leicester Police Station scheme to a full-time rota. The rota currently operates from 17:00 to 09:00 on weekdays and from 18:00 to 09:00 at Bank Holidays and weekends with a panel during the daytime.

The Leicester scheme is one of the busiest schemes in the East Midlands and the only city to retain a panel element. Leicestershire Police also report a continued rise in detainees within custody suites, increasing over the past 12 months from approximately 1,200 to nearly 1,400 detainees per month on average.

This Consultation

This consultation paper comprises two sections:

Section 1 outlines proposals in respect of the Hinckley Police Station Duty Solicitor Scheme.

Section 2 outlines the option to amend the Leicester Police Station scheme to become a full-time rota.

We are consulting on these proposals for 3 weeks, from 15th June 2026. Responses should be sent by email to Nuno Lima via: NottinghamCM@justice.gov.uk

Section 1 - Hinckley Police Station Scheme

The membership of the Hinckley Duty Scheme has reduced to one Duty Solicitor and one provider from April 2026, requiring the Legal Aid Agency to consider its ability to meet demand, including where a conflict of interest might occur.

Police detainees are taken to either Keyham Lane or Euston Street Police Station, within the city centre boundary of Leicester, however voluntary attendees can be interviewed in any location in the South / Southwest of Leicestershire.

The Legal Aid Agency must therefore determine whether there is sufficient Duty Solicitor cover to meet demand, particularly if a conflict of interest arises and to avoid delays in deployment.

For your information, the Postcode Tool maps the postcodes currently eligible for Duty Solicitor membership of the Hinckley Scheme, and all other schemes, and can be found here: [Duty solicitors: rotas, information and guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/duty-solicitors-rotas-information-and-guidance)

The Postcode Tool would be updated, post consultation, for any changes to Duty Scheme eligibility, if appropriate.

The Hinckley scheme currently operates a rota overnight from 17.00 - 9.00 on a daily basis.

Options:

Option 1: Merge the Hinckley Duty Scheme with the Leicester Duty Scheme resulting in one Police Station scheme covering both the Leicester and Hinckley areas. This would in effect combine the existing membership of the Leicester & Hinckley Police Station schemes and require members to cover an extended geographical area, particularly for voluntary attendees.

Option 2: Merge postcode eligibility for the Hinckley Duty Scheme with the Leicester Duty Scheme but retain Hinckley as a separate Police Station Duty Scheme.

This would result in the relevant postcode sectors being eligible for membership of the Leicester and Hinckley Duty Solicitor Scheme, but membership would not be mandatory, and Leicester based applicants could choose if they also wished to join the Hinckley Scheme and vice versa.

Option 3: Maintain the existing arrangement with the Leicester scheme continuing to act as back up should the DSCC be unable to deploy to the Hinckley provider.

Subject to the outcome of this consultation, any changes to the Hinckley Police Station scheme would not take effect until the 1 October 2026.

Section 2 – Proposed revision to Leicester Police Station Duty Solicitor Scheme

Proposed Changes

Amend the Leicester Police Station scheme to a full-time rota. The rota currently operates from 17:00 to 09:00 on weekdays and from 18:00 to 09:00 at Bank Holidays and weekends with a panel during the daytime. The Leicester scheme is

one of the busiest schemes in the East Midlands and the only urban area to retain a panel element.

Leicestershire Police advise of difficulties securing the attendance of a Duty Solicitor on occasion and DSCC data indicates requests for legal advice are being cancelled by the Police monthly. This is being exacerbated by the demand for legal advice increasing due to the number of detainees in custody, as detailed above.

A rota would give providers certainty for resource planning purposes and prevent delays in deployment, impacting detainees, the Police and the DSCC, who are currently working up to 4 hours from the initial call to deploy some cases. In the period from April 2025 to March 2026 there were 1494 panel requests giving an average of 124 panel calls per month to the Leicester scheme or 29 per week.

Please note, as of April 2026, there are 62 Duty Solicitors and 21 providers on the Leicester scheme.

Option 1:

In terms of rota slot duration, option one would be to convert the Leicester Police Station scheme into a 24-hour rota.

Option 2:

Maintain the current hours with rota slots operating from 17.00 - 9.00 and from 9.00 -17.00 on weekdays and 18.00 - 9.00 and 9.00 - 18.00 at weekends.

This option would allow planning but also protect the welfare of Duty Solicitors who feel a 24-hour period would be too long.

It is accepted that additional rota slots would need to be balanced with Court Duty Solicitor slots.

Option 3:

Make no changes to the duration of Leicester Police Station slots.

Subject to the outcome of this consultation, any changes to Leicester Police Station scheme slots would not take effect until the 1 October 2026.

Respondents are invited to comment on these proposals, provide alternative suggestions and/or provide views on how any changes may be implemented.

For the avoidance of doubt, any changes to the duration of rota slots for Leicester would incorporate the Hinckley scheme, if, as a result of this consultation, the schemes are merged.

The Court Duty Solicitor slots for the Leicester city and county schemes are unaffected by this consultation.

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If you have any queries or wish to discuss the above consultations, please contact your Contract Manager.

Written responses are required and should be sent by email to: Nuno Lima via NottinghamCM@justice.gov.uk by **5.00 p.m. on 6th July 2026**.

Nuno Lima
Contract Manager
Legal Aid Agency