



# Legal Aid Agency

**TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE NORTHAMPTON (INC CORBY /  
KETTERING / WELLINGBOROUGH) DUTY SCHEMES**

**Response to the Consultation with the Northampton (Inc Corby / Kettering / Wellingborough) Duty Schemes members for the provision of separate Duty Solicitors for GAP and NGAP courts and to amend the Corby Police Station scheme slots from a 24-hour period to a 12-hour duty period.**

On Friday 1 May 2026, the Legal Aid Agency issued a consultation regarding possible changes to the Northampton (Inc. Corby / Kettering / Wellingborough) Duty Scheme following a request from HMCTS for the provision of separate Duty Solicitors for GAP and NGAP courts sitting at Northampton Magistrates' Court.

In addition, following a request from a provider, this consultation also sought views on a proposal to amend the Corby Police Station scheme slots from a 24-hour period to a 12-hour duty period.

The deadline for responses to the consultation was Friday 22 May 2026. Therefore, this letter is intended as formal notification of the outcome of the consultation.

## **Summary of Responses**

A total of 9 Providers responded to the consultation on proposed changes.

Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to provide feedback on the proposals.

## **Consultation for separate duty solicitors for GAP and NGAP courts**

All respondents are members of the scheme, and every respondent supported the proposal to have separate duty solicitors for GAP and NGAP courts at Northampton Magistrates Court.

Comments in support included:

*'...The proposal to separate the duty solicitors for the GAP and NGAP courts is something that I wholeheartedly support. There have been many occasions when covering this slot has become hectic and almost unmanageable. It is invariably busy and having to split yourself between two courtrooms does not assist anybody. It is common for a court to be waiting for you while you deal with something in the other court and this not only causes delays for them, but also the clients. It also causes*

*stress to the duty solicitor which will negatively impact the job they are able to provide...'*

*'...This will take the pressure off the duty solicitor; client's will not moan about waiting to see the duty solicitor and the courts will not have to wait until the duty solicitor is done from another court with a duty client before they can get on with their court...'*

## **Decision**

Accordingly, the Legal Aid Agency will proceed with the proposed changes to the GAP and NGAP duty rota for Northampton Magistrates Court.

### **Option to amend the duration of a Corby Police Station slot from 24 hours to 12 hours.**

Six of the nine respondents, who are all members of the scheme, supported the proposal to amend Corby Police Station slots from 24 hours to 12 hours.

Comments in support included:

*'...suggested changes are sensible and indeed somewhat overdue...'*

*'...12 hour slots at WWJC are welcome. This would bring it in line with CJC. 12 hours makes things more manageable, especially when factoring in voluntary interviews...'*

Comments against the proposal were:

*'...We are happy with the current duration and do not have any issues nor have we had any with this time slot...'*

*'...we are content that a 24-hour slot works well and we have no issue with it remaining as it is. We do not believe a 12 hour slot would be useful...'*

## **Decision**

There is no decision that can meet the needs of all those that have fed back on the scheme changes and a decision has been made which is considered the most reasonable in the circumstances.

After careful consideration of the points raised within the responses, the Legal Aid Agency have decided to proceed with the proposed change to the Corby duty scheme, amending the rota from 24 hours to 12 hours.

The proposed scheme amendment was suggested by a local provider and reflected their concerns about the welfare and wellbeing of Duty Solicitors and their representatives due to the number of hours they were required to be on duty. Having carefully considered the proposal and the responses, we believe the proposed amendment will help mitigate some of those concerns. The change is not anticipated to have a detrimental impact on Duty Solicitors or their representatives in general

and we wish to support their wellbeing without compromising the operational effectiveness of the Corby Police Station Scheme.

### **Next steps**

- The amendment to the GAP and NGAP Duty Rotas at Northampton Magistrates' Court will take effect on **1 September 2026** to accommodate summer annual leave and existing provider operational arrangements. An amended rota, detailing the additional Court Duty slot allocation, will be issued with at least 4 weeks' notice.
- The amendment to the Corby Police Station duty solicitor scheme will come into effect from the **1 October 2026**.

Yours faithfully,

**Elaine Annable**  
**Area Contract Manager**  
**Legal Aid Agency**