

TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE NORTHAMPTON POLICE STATION SCHEMES

As members will be aware, consternation has been raised by Northamptonshire Police relating to increasing demand in their custody suites, particularly at weekends at Brackmills CJC, for both Duty Solicitor Services and Own Client Solicitors. Northants Police appreciate local provider's efforts to meet demand by sending additional legal representatives and that their own working practices and resourcing contribute to demand at certain periods, however this is unlikely to change in the short term and further support is sought.

At a multi-agency meeting at Northampton Magistrates' Court on the 19th July, it was suggested that the LAA seek feedback and/or suggestions as to how these peaks in demand can be met by the Duty Solicitor scheme to avoid lengthy delays in custody for detainees, Solicitors and the Police.

Current proposals are:

1. The Duty Solicitor Performance team endeavour to ensure that providers do not have concurrent slots on either the Corby or Brackmills Police Station rota. This is a challenge with only 5 providers authorised for duty work however this will be reviewed by our rota production team.
2. Amend slots for the Brackmills Police Station scheme to 24-hour slots from 18.00 to 18.00 hours. 24-hour slots operate in the majority of conurbations in the East Midlands and work well as Duty Solicitors are able to pick up and conclude work picked up during the evening period and held over until morning/afternoon, whilst on duty.

12-hour slots can mean Duty Solicitors have numerous outstanding interviews to resource when they cease acting as such.

3. Appoint two duty solicitors, from different providers, on the rota for the slot that commences on Friday evening (at either 18.00 or 21.00 hours, subject to (2) above) for the Brackmills, Northampton Police Station Scheme through to either 18.00 (or 21.00) on Sunday.

Two duty solicitors allocated at the weekend is common practice for city schemes and schemes that cover wide geographical areas where work is concentrated on specific custody suites. Duty cases are alternated by the DSCC between the duty solicitors concerned and in Northants, this would relieve pressure on providers to despatch additional legal representatives and alleviate delays experienced by the Police and detainees securing the attendance of a legal representative at the agreed time.

4. Amend the Corby Police Station scheme (Weekley Woods) to a panel scheme, save for weekends, as the consensus appears to be that work is currently concentrated on Brackmills leaving the Corby Duty Solicitor less busy than colleagues allocated to the Brackmills duty scheme.

Please note there is no intention to change the eligibility for the Police Station duty solicitor schemes or postcode boundaries or impact upon the existing court duty schemes.

If you have any other suggestions that you feel should be considered, we should be grateful for your views.

As rota production for the October 2018 rotas will occur in August (please see: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/duty-solicitors-rotas-information-and-guidance> for more information), I should be grateful for your views, no later than 5.00 p.m. on Friday 17 August.

This Consultation

We are consulting on these proposals for 3 weeks, from 27 July 2018.

Responses should be sent by email to: Jo-Anne.Johnston@justice.gov.uk