

VHCC notification rules

Notifying us of very high cost cases

All defence teams (including those who are not panel members) must now notify the Complex Crime Unit (CCU) of any case where the trial is likely to last for no fewer than 25 days.

The defence team must submit a VHCC Notification Request Form as soon as it appears that the case is likely to be a VHCC and within five working days of the:

- plea and case management hearing
- defence team having identified that the case will be or is likely to be a VHCC.

This is the only form of notification the CCU will accept.

Following notification, the CCU will inform your team whether the case falls within the definition of a VHCC and whether it will be conducted under the new VHCC Panel.

Please see the panel member's contract for the definition of a VHCC. Failure to notify or a delay in notifying the CCU of a potential VHCC may constitute a breach of contract.

Who can carry out very high cost cases

If you are a panel member and the CCU agrees that a notified case falls within the definition of a VHCC, they will send you a Contract Decision Letter. This will confirm you may carry out the case in question as a VHCC under the new contract.

Should a case be selected for contract and you are not a panel member, you will have to transfer the case to one.

All VHCCs will be conducted by panel members and panel advocates, except in exceptional circumstances.

VHCCs where the representation order is granted before the panel start date will operate under the previous VHCC contracting system.

For more information

The CCU's guidance manual will be available shortly. The CCU will in the meantime assist with further information and guidance wherever possible.

If you have any queries about the new VHCC panel and potential VHCC cases, please email: VHCCpanelenquiries@legalservices.gov.uk.

Specific concerns regarding any particular contracted VHCC should be raised with your CCU Contract Manager.

Please pass this information on to all named individuals in your panel application and all fee-earners within your firm.