



JP confirmed that the LSC, in conjunction with HMCS, are focussing on the poor performing courts to improve performance.

It was agreed that in future the agenda pack and any accompanying data would be circulated in advance of the meetings.

**Action: LSC to ensure agenda pack forwarded to providers at least one week prior to next meeting.**

**ITEM 4 - REPORT FROM DEFENCE SOLICITORS ON SCHEME PERFORMANCE AND ANY ISSUES ARISING (Including Agenda Item 6 – CJS Liaison)**

A heated discussion followed regarding operational performance across the CJS area, including that of CDS Solicitors, the Police, the CPS and the Courts.

Particular concerns expressed included the following:

- CPS taking overly long to make decisions, being inefficient and lacking in knowledge.
- Agency targets, particularly the police, contradicting each other.
- Insufficient number of interview rooms, resulting in long waiting times.
- Beverley police station only has one interview room.
- Scepticism that the LSC will be able to influence the working practices of other CJS agencies that adversely impact upon the defence solicitor's ability to be effective and efficient.

**Action: JP agreed to take this forward and confirm areas to focus on as a priority with the Humberside defence solicitors at the next meeting.**

Police Station and Court Costs for 2005/06 were provided as part of the agenda pack. It was agreed these were very useful and should be included in future agendas.

**Action: Include in future agendas.**

Concern was expressed at the average costs in light of the fixed fees. JP pointed out the calculations were not straight forward, as the figures include items such as CDS 7's, exceptional cases etc.

Concern was also expressed that practises in certain areas increased costs and that the fixed fee regime rewarded these inefficiencies.

JP stated she was looking to make contact with the police at a local level and that other regional offices had done so and had a positive response. The attendees were quite clear – they needed to see results. They were concerned that they/we do not have sufficient influence to effect change and this was something that should have been addressed sooner. They stated they were the ones who would suffer under a fixed fee regime and that fixed fees would be unsustainable without it.

**Action: Defence solicitors to feedback areas/police stations of concern for JP to focus on.**

#### **ITEM 5 - DUTY SOLICITOR ARRANGEMENTS**

JP confirmed the decision had been taken to continue with the existing Duty Solicitor Rota arrangements (one slot for one solicitor, with the slot belonging to the solicitor's firm).

JP also confirmed that a three-month rota would be issued from October 2007.

The existing General Criminal Contract will be terminated with effect from 13 January 2008.

For those firms that have been awarded a new General Criminal Contract on 14 January 2008, a further six-month rota will be issued.

Firms should notify John Robinson (Duty Solicitor Rota Co-ordinator, Newcastle office) at the earliest opportunity about any duty solicitor amendments effective from October.

#### **ITEM 7 - FUTURE MEETINGS**

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held at the end of November/early December. The exact date and location is to be confirmed.

It was further agreed that future format, frequency and location would be discussed at the next meeting.

#### **ITEM 8 - ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

No further business was raised.

There being no further business the meeting was closed.