



25 October 2016

Dear Consultee,

**Update on Equality Screening and Consultations within the Public Prosecution Service (PPS)**

It is important that the PPS keeps those interested in its work regularly informed of what it is doing to assess the impact of its policies as regards equality of opportunity and good relations.

This update lists internal and external policies for which the PPS has carried out a screening exercise over the period 1 July to 30 September 2016. It also includes details of forthcoming, current and closed consultations.

*(a) Screening exercises completed 1 July – 30 September 2016:*

<b>Name of Policy</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>	<b>Screening Outcome</b>
<i>Establishment of the PPS Serious Crime Unit</i>	<i>The new Serious Crime Unit, established in January 2016, deals with a range of the most serious offences including murder, manslaughter, rape and serious sexual offences, human trafficking, prostitution and related offences.</i>	<i>Screened out, August 2016.</i>

*(b) Forthcoming consultations:*

<b>Name of Policy</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>	<b>Current Status</b>
<i>Court Witness Expenses Policy</i>	<i>The PPS is required to call the victims and witnesses of crime to court to give evidence in the prosecution of cases. This policy documents the process of inviting witnesses and reimbursing their expenses.</i>	<i>Due to a change in approach re design of the Victim and Witness Policy it has been decided to develop a separate policy outlining the processes of inviting witnesses and reimbursing their expenses. After further internal review, it is anticipated that the policy will be released for public consultation by mid-November 2016.</i>

*(c) Current consultations:*

<b>Name of Policy</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>	<b>Current Status</b>
<i>None</i>		

(d) Recently closed consultations:

<b>Name of Policy</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>	<b>Current Status</b>
<i>PPS Victim and Witness Policy</i>	<i>This revised policy describes the services that the PPS provides to victims and witnesses in cases which have been submitted to the PPS by an appropriate investigative authority. It outlines in practical terms how the PPS will meet the entitlements set out under the Victim Charter. Whilst the policy is directed specifically towards victims and witnesses it will also serve as a guidance document for PPS staff and external agencies on the best practice in the provision of these services.</i>	<i>This consultation closed on Friday 26 August 2016. A summary of consultation responses is currently being finalised. It is anticipated that the final policy will be published by the end of 2016.</i>
<i>Code for Prosecutors</i>	<i>The Code for Prosecutors, issued under section 37 of the Justice (NI) Act 2002, gives guidance on the general principles to be applied in determining in any case whether criminal proceedings should be brought, what charges should be preferred and how prosecutions should be conducted. It also sets out the standards of conduct that the PPS requires from prosecutors including external Counsel instructed on behalf of the Director.</i>	<i>The new Code and a summary of consultation responses have now been published on the PPS website.</i>

If you or your organisation is interested in receiving any consultation documents or wish to register an interest in forthcoming work, please contact me stating if you would prefer a hard copy posted to you or an email version, providing your email address. You can also request a copy of the full screening decision on any policy in this way.

You can visit the Public Prosecution Service website at [www.ppsni.gov.uk](http://www.ppsni.gov.uk) to access our equality information and can review current and previous Section 75 reports and policy screening forms (from January 2012). Any consultations undertaken by the PPS will be posted on the PPS website within the 'Consultation' area which is accessible from the home page. Other equality related information is located within the 'Equality' section.

Documents will be made available in alternative formats, for example Braille, audio CD or disk. If you have any requests for alternative formats, or if you wish to make any other comment about this equality work, please contact me through any of the ways set out below. You can also update me of any changes to your contact details that may be required for future correspondence.

Yours faithfully,

**Ryan McGuinness**

Equality and Governance Officer

Central Management Unit

Public Prosecution Service

Belfast Chambers

93 Chichester Street

Belfast

BT1 3JR

Direct Line: 028 90 264608

Fax: 028 90 897121

Deaf / Hard of Hearing (SMS) 07795 675528

Email: [equality@ppsni.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:equality@ppsni.gsi.gov.uk)