



18 April 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 January to 31 March 2016. It also includes details of forthcoming, current and closed consultations.

(a) Screening exercises completed 1 January – 31 March 2016:

Name of Policy	Brief Description	Screening Outcome
<i>Closure of Linum Chambers (Belfast)</i>	<i>The primary objective of this policy is the make more efficient use of PPS resources and to achieve estate cost savings.</i>	<i>Screened out</i>
<i>Closure of PPS Regional Offices (Lisburn and Ballymena)</i>	<i>The primary objective of this policy is the make more efficient use of PPS resources and to achieve estate cost savings.</i>	<i>Screened out</i>

(b) Forthcoming consultations:

Name of Policy	Brief Description	Current Status
<i>Victims and Witnesses Policy</i>	<i>This revised policy describes the services that the PPS provide 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 of victims and witnesses under the Victim Charter and forthcoming Witness 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>The policy has been redrafted and is with senior management for final approval. Work is ongoing to ensure that the document is accessible. It is intended to issue the new draft for public consultation by the end of May 2016. Training to all staff and external Counsel to be conducted thereafter.</i>
<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>To be incorporated into the revised PPS Victims and Witnesses Policy (see above).</i>

<i>Director's guidance on Prosecutorial fines</i>	<i>Guidance on the procedures and processes which prosecutors must follow in relation to the use of prosecutorial fines, which are an alternative to a court prosecution.</i>	<i>Policy in initial stages of development and discussions ongoing with DoJ about a potential implementation date.</i>
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(c) Current consultations:

Name of Policy	Brief Description	Current Status
<i>Draft Equality Action Plan 2016/17</i>	<i>The purpose of this plan is to outline the PPS's action measures to promote equality of opportunity and good relations.</i>	Consultation due to close on Friday 20 May 2016
<i>Draft Disability Action Plan 2016/17</i>	<i>The purpose of this plan is to outline the PPS's action measures to promote positive attitudes to disabled people and to encourage their participation in public life.</i>	Consultation due to close on Friday 20 May 2016

(d) Recently closed consultations:

Name of Policy	Brief Description	Current Status
<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 consultation has now closed. Responses are currently under consideration.</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 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,

Anna Scott

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