

Defence Practitioners

As you will be aware, we have been running a Defence Engagement pilot which we have today agreed to extend until 17 December 2020. We have heard your concerns about not being able to contact prosecutors, and this pilot will test the effectiveness of another means of prosecution/defence engagement by making best use of technology. The early findings are that we have seen queries answered, cases discontinued, and issues resolved in order to make trials effective on the day.

If the pilot proves successful, we will extend to other courts, but to fully test this model we need a greater level of uptake on the part of defence practitioners. This note is intended to encourage you.

To secure more engagement we are extending the scope of the pilot so that in addition to the Defence requesting surgeries the CPS may initiate engagement surgeries with the Defence to assist with progressing cases.

We are committed to closer working between prosecutors and defence practitioners by providing a regular virtual meeting space. This will include legal advisers with devolved decision-making powers and police representatives, where appropriate. Our ambition continues to be to reduce ineffective and cracked trials, and to resolve issues outside of the courtroom.

The courts within the pilot's scope are:

- **Bexley Magistrates' Courts**
- **Bromley Magistrates' Courts**
- **Highbury Magistrates' Courts**

We strongly encourage Defence colleagues to take advantage of this service, which will provide an opportunity to book a slot at our Microsoft Teams surgery to discuss cases with a CPS District Crown Prosecutor. Our hope is that this new service will lead to earlier resolution of issues and as a result more effective hearings for all parties. Our primary focus is upon contested cases, and the surgery is an ideal opportunity to explore acceptable pleas. The main areas that we are looking to discuss within the surgeries are:

- Discuss pleas and representations
- Missing documents
- Disclosure requests
- Diversion

However, we will run the pilot on a broad basis that will allow for discussion of any case not limited to the above.

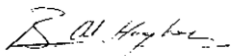
How to book a slot with the prosecutor over Teams

The surgeries will be held every Thursday between 15:00 and 18:00, and thereafter every subsequent **Thursday until 17 December 2020**. Please follow steps below:

- **Ensure you are in receipt of IDPC as you will require the URN to submit a request for a surgery slot**
- **Fill out a Microsoft Form and submit- which can be accessed through this link ([Defence Engagement Request](#))**
- **Once the request has been triaged, if the issues highlighted cannot be resolved you will be sent a meeting invite to a 20 min surgery slot**

We strongly encourage you to make use of this service as a successful pilot will make a good case for further rollout across London.

Yours sincerely,



Barry Hughes, Chief Crown Prosecutor, CPS London North