

Current position Haringey Community Justice Court Initiative

1. The court will be held at Tottenham courthouse (subject to the results of a feasibility study) one day per week.
2. The court will focus upon quality of life crimes such as noise nuisance, littering, fly-tipping, anti-social behaviour, possession of drugs, prostitution and soliciting women.
3. The initial focus for the initiative will be for the above types of crimes committed in 3 wards- Tottenham Green, Tottenham Hale and Seven Sisters. Further wards are likely to be added subsequently once the court has become established.
4. It is currently envisaged that the court will deal with both adults and youths although this is subject to final confirmation.
5. These specialist community justice courts are likely to commence in late January with a press launch during February.

The differences from a normal magistrates' court

1. Magistrates engage more directly with defendants during hearings. The purpose of this engagement is to attempt to establish the root cause of a defendant's offending behaviour once any conviction is secured.
2. When giving community based sentences magistrates have a greater range of community based resources available which can be utilised to address the underlying causes of an offender's behaviour.
3. The court consults with the community to establish its current concerns. These concerns are one of the factors the magistrates consider when determining sentence.
4. The court consults with the community for their ideas of unpaid work for defendants to carry out locally.
5. Magistrates have additional powers to review community based penalties as they progress. Magistrates' listing will endeavour to ensure judicial continuity for sentencing review hearings.

Current Outstanding issues

1. A mechanism needs to be established to divide these cases from other cases at the point of charge (Police custody suite).
2. Outcome of a feasibility study into the use of Tottenham courthouse and whether it has sufficient accommodation for all aspects of the initiative eg. space for voluntary agencies to interview defendants.
3. Building work and alterations to the court house to provide the facilities required for community justice eg. an interview room.
4. Mechanism for deciding which magistrates will sit in the community justice court .
5. Training of the community justice magistrates once they are selected.
6. Training of Legal Advisers who will sit with magistrates in the community justice court.
7. Consultation with the community for unpaid work ideas in the locality for defendants to carry out.
8. Liaising with Probation concerning the feasibility of unpaid work projects suggested by the community.