



## **Duty System Practice and Procedural Guidelines**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The purpose of the Duty System is to provide a framework for the Youth Justice Service to deliver services and respond to enquiries and referrals from individuals and other agencies. The Duty System also enables tasks and responsibilities that do not fall within the remit of any one particular member of the team to be dealt with, and provides cover for staff who are on leave or off sick.
- 1.2 This document links with and should be read in conjunction with other Youth Justice Service policies, procedures and guidelines (e.g. court duty, remand management, appropriate adults, etc).

### **2. Organisation**

- 2.1 The Duty System operates from 9am to 5pm each working day, during which times there will be one Duty Officer available.
- 2.2 The Duty System is organised on a rota basis so that the role of Duty Officer is shared between all appropriate members of the team. In the event of the designated Duty Officer being off sick a replacement(s) from the available staff will be sought by the Duty Senior. Wherever possible a volunteer replacement(s) will be negotiated, but there may be occasions when the Duty Senior will have to instruct a member of the team to undertake duty responsibilities.
- 2.3 The Duty Officer and Admin Team need to work closely together as it will often be the Admin Team who take initial calls and who will be required to support the Duty Officer.
- 2.4 There will be a nominated Duty Senior who should always be available for consultation and advice.
- 2.5 The Duty System runs in parallel with the Court Duty system, and the Duty Officer may at times be required to support the Court Duty Officer, but is not responsible for the provision of Court Duty on designated Youth Court days (Thursdays).
- 2.6 Similarly, it is not the purpose of the Duty System to carry out the functions and responsibilities of other members of the team unless this is necessary due to vacancy, sickness or leave. In the case of annual leave, staff are expected to make arrangements for their commitments to be covered and only negotiate for duty to do this if no alternative is available.

### **3. Responsibilities of the Duty Officer**

- 3.1 The Duty Officer must ensure that they are in the office by 9am and do not have other commitments or appointments that will prevent them from being available for duty business. Duty responsibilities may extend beyond 5pm in order to finish particular pieces of work. The Emergency Duty Team should be notified of any work that is anticipated coming in after normal working hours.
- 3.2 The Duty Officer will work from an allocated desk within the office.
- 3.3 Although the duty service ends at 5pm, Duty Officers must be prepared to occasionally work beyond 5pm in order to complete work begun during the duty day.
- 3.4 Once the duty rota has been issued it is the responsibility of the designated Duty Officer to arrange any changes to the rota that may be necessary due to unforeseen commitments so that cover is maintained. Management and the Admin Team must be notified of any changes made to the rota.

### **4. Role and Duties of the Duty Officer**

Because of the unpredictable nature of duty it is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of the tasks of the Duty Officer. What follows is an outline of what the Duty Officer should do to ensure that all appropriate duty tasks are identified and carried out. If in doubt consult the Duty Senior.

- 4.1 At the beginning of the duty day the Duty Officer will liaise with the Admin Team and the Duty Senior.
- 4.2 Where a member of staff is on unexpected leave, the duty officer may be required to cover any appointments with children that have been scheduled.
- 4.3 Check messages that have come into the office overnight and take whatever action is appropriate.
- 4.4 Alert other team members to any pieces of work that may require their involvement (e.g. Duty Senior, Police Officer(s), Specialist Staff, etc.).
- 4.5 Check that admin have sorted incoming post and deal appropriately with anything that requires urgent attention (e.g. communications for members of the team who may be on annual leave or off sick and post for duty) and bring these to the attention of the Duty Senior.
- 4.6 Follow up any unfinished work as requested by the previous day's Duty Officer.

- 4.7 Contact and alert other agencies with whom there may need to be discussions or consultations concerning Hillingdon YJS clients (e.g. other YJS's, Social Work Teams, Court's, Probation, etc.) utilising the duty log to report any actions taken.
- 4.9 Where a child is in custody at Polar Park and is the responsibility of another authority eg: they live in an address outside Hillingdon or are a LAC to another local authority the Duty Worker should contact the home YJS to advise of the detention and share information.
- 4.10 Take calls and respond appropriately (after discussion with Duty Senior if necessary) to referrals and requests for service from individuals and other agencies. This will include requests for information, arranging Appropriate Adults, attending Court hearings, case transfers and requests for care taking from other local authorities. These should be recorded on the duty log.
- 4.11 Ensure that the Admin Team is kept aware of commitments and availability so that they can respond appropriately to duty calls.
- 4.12 Liaise with Duty Senior before taking lunch to ensure adequate cover is in place.
- 4.13 If Duty demands become excessive seek advice from Duty Senior about prioritising demands and/or securing additional support.
- 4.14 Make sure all work undertaken and messages taken are fully recorded on Childview.
- 4.15 Ensure any actions taken are recorded on the Duty Log including details of anything to be handed over to the Duty Officer the following day. Bring this to the attention of the Duty Senior and share via e-mail.
- 4.16 Ensure that staff are reporting to the duty officer when they are leaving for and returning from a home visit.
- 4.17 Before the end of the duty day attempt to get results of any court appearances not covered by Court Duty.
- 4.18 Advise Duty Senior they are leaving and give the names of any staff who have not returned from a home visit.