

**London Overnights / Vulnerable Prisoners Policy**

Dear Defence Community

On the 6th August 2018, the Magistrates Courts across London introduced a London Overnights / Vulnerable Prisoners Policy.

The policy was introduced as a result of the number of vulnerable prisoners who were not being reached until the afternoon and were therefore spending excessive amounts of time in a cell. Also, some of those remanded in custody were not reaching the relevant establishments until late and on occasions being locked out.

We all have a part to play in the successful implementation of this policy, with the Police and Prisons advising us first thing of any vulnerabilities. CPS are responsible for ensuring that IDPC bundles are received by Defence for the vulnerable prisoners within 30 minutes of request, and the court will prioritise these prisoners to ensure they are brought before the court as soon as possible.

We do also need some assistance from you:

Firstly we ask that, when you arrive at court, you immediately liaise with the list caller or Serco to ascertain who are our vulnerable prisoners.

Secondly, please prioritise the taking of instructions from any identified prisoners who are to be represented by you.

Thirdly, when taking instructions, please ensure that you speak to no more than two individuals before returning to court. We do appreciate that it may be more convenient for you to speak to all prisoners you are representing on one visit, but your reporting back to the court more frequently assists the court in calling on the most vulnerable first so we do ask you strictly to observe this “two at a time” rule.

We thank you in advance for working with us to ensure that we can achieve the stated aims of this policy.

If you have any queries please feel free to contact Alison Aedy on 0208 736 3602 or email to Alison.Aedy@justice.gov.uk

London Overnights / Vulnerable Prisoners Project Team.