

News story: Crime news: LGFS consultation and fee cut update

From:

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Consultation on reforming payments through the Litigators' Graduated Fee Scheme and changing rates for court appointee work is now open.

Proposals to change how payments are calculated for Crown Court work are set out in a 6-week consultation called 'Litigators' Graduated Fee Scheme and Court Appointees'.

The consultation opened on 10 February and closes on 24 March 2017. It proposes changing the basis on which LGFS payments are calculated and capping payments to court appointees at legal aid rates.

Second fee cut

The government has said that it is minded not to reinstate the second (8.75%) fee cut for defence litigators that was suspended in April 2016 for a period of 12 months.

This is subject to the outcome of the consultations on proposals for 'LGFS and Court Appointees'.

Partnership working on LGFS

The government wants to work with the Law Society and other representative bodies to reform LGFS so that it better measures the relative complexity of cases.

The idea is to reduce or remove reliance on counting Pages of Prosecution Evidence (PPE). In the short term, the government would also like to act quickly to lower the upper limit for counting PPE.

PPE is no longer seen as the most effective way of assessing how much work a litigator needs to do on individual cases.

Payments to court appointees

The consultation also seeks views on capping payments to court appointees at legal aid rates.

Court appointees are paid at rates that are significantly higher than legal aid rates. This is for carrying out work that is very similar to criminal

legal aid work.

The government view is that these higher rates cannot be justified.

Further information

[MoJ consultation: LGFS and court appointees](#)

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China to start anti-graft inspections in universities

China will send anti-corruption inspectors to centrally-administrated universities, discipline authority of the Communist Party of China (CPC) announced Wednesday.

The new inspections will scrutinize Party committees of 29 universities, including Peking University, Tsinghua University, Beijing Normal University and Nanjing University, according to a statement released after a Wednesday meeting before the launch of the 12th round of inspections.

Inspection teams will re-examine the work of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region

as well as provinces of Jilin, Yunnan and Shaanxi.

The new round of inspections will also cover the Office of the Central Leading Group for Cyberspace Affairs, State Council Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development, China Railway Corporation and China Shipbuilding Industry Corporation.

Attending the meeting, Wang Qishan, who heads an inspection leadership group of the CPC Central Committee, called for better problem-finding inspections.

The meeting urged inspectors to not only listen to what the Party officials say, but also watch what they do during inspections, and stressed that judgements should be made on the basis of people's comments on the work of Party committees.

Inspections should focus on rules implementation and discipline in elections and official selection to ensure a clean political environment, the statement said.

More flexible measures should be introduced in the inspection mechanism to expose and prevent corruption within discipline authorities, it added.

Press release: Town's flood gates to be replaced

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Part of:

Environment Agency hosts drop-in event where community can find out more about Yarm flood gates replacement.

Residents in Yarm are invited to a community drop-in this week to find out more about Environment Agency work to replace the flood gates in the town.

The project will start in April and is expected to be complete by June, taking around 12 weeks.

There are 30 flood gates along the flood defence in Yarm, and as part of the work some of the gates may be replaced and others may be removed and the flood wall bricked up, subject to further discussions with residents.

The work will start by replacing the flood gates along True Lover's Walk

riverside path, starting with flood gates at West Street and working towards Silver Street.

Residents are invited to find out more at a community event taking place at Yarm Town Hall on Friday 24 February. They can drop in any time between 3pm and 6pm.

Project Manager Neil Smith said:

The gates are being replaced because many of the existing flood gates are approaching the end of their usable life. To maintain the current standard of protection for the town it's essential these gates are replaced.

By carrying out this work we will ensure the town continues to be protected from flooding from the River Tees in the future. I'd urge residents to come along to the event where they can find out more about the work we are carrying out in the town.

Work is also already underway to carry out improvements at the Boat Landing stage. Some wall coping stones and block paving have been repaired and new handrails will be put up along the waterside of the boat landing in May.

In addition, there will be restoration and repainting of the perimeter fence and replacement of benches and litter bins in the area.