



NORTHERN IRELAND
**COURT
SERVICE**

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26 February 2010

Dear Consultee,

Provision to allow the Public Prosecution Service to commence proceedings without recourse to a lay magistrate

The Northern Ireland Court Service will be publishing the above document for an eight-week period of public consultation on Monday 1st March. The document will be available on the Court Service web site at www.courtsni.gov.uk.

The subject of the consultation is the proposal that the Public Prosecution Service should be able to commence criminal proceedings in magistrates' courts by issuing a summons to the defendant on its own authority, i.e. without the requirement that the summons be signed by a Lay Magistrate. It is intended that the proposal will help streamline procedures and help address avoidable delay in the criminal justice system. The paper invites consultees' views on specific aspects of the proposal.

The full details of the policy proposals are contained in the consultation paper, which you are encouraged to read. Hard copies and alternative formats (including large print, audio cassette, Braille, computer disc and other languages) are also available on request, by contacting our Communications Group at communicationsgroup@courtsni.gov.uk or alternatively on 028 9041 2292.

The closing date for receipt of comments is **23rd April 2010**.

Should you wish to discuss this policy proposal, please contact the consultation co-ordinator.

If you require any further information please contact:

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Yours sincerely

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