

# Police station representatives accreditation scheme

## *About the scheme*

Most solicitors' firms that carry out publicly funded criminal defence work have one or more accredited representatives—non-solicitor employees who go to police stations to advise and assist people who would otherwise have no legal representation. Accredited representatives are usually called out to a police station after the duty solicitor has spoken to the client by telephone.

The Police Station Representatives register is regulated by the Legal Aid Agency. The aim of the scheme is to accredit non-solicitors to advise and assist suspects being held at a police station and to claim payment from the Legal Aid Agency [<http://www.legalservices.gov.uk>] (LAA) for having provided such assistance.

## *Applying for scheme membership*

Applicants should refer to the:

- Standards of competence (PDF 11 pages, 44K) [[/globalassets/documents/solicitors/accreditation/criminal-litigation-psq-standards.pdf?version=4a1ace](#)] for the accreditation of solicitors and solicitors' representatives advising at the police station
- Legal Aid Agency guide (LAAwebsite) [[http://www.legalservices.gov.uk/criminal/police\\_stations.asp](http://www.legalservices.gov.uk/criminal/police_stations.asp)] (follow the link – guide located on right hand side under 'documents')
- Portfolio assessment guidance (Law Society website) [<http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/support-services/accreditation/documents/criminal-litigation-scheme-guidance/>]
- Police Station Register Arrangements (LAAwebsite) [[http://www.legalservices.gov.uk/criminal/stat\\_material/directions.asp](http://www.legalservices.gov.uk/criminal/stat_material/directions.asp)], under which the LAA operates and maintains the register of representatives

You can then register with one of the authorised assessment organisations [[#authorised-assessment-organisations](#)].

Your assessment organisation will inform you of the steps you must take next, providing you an assessments timetable and outlining the prerequisites of registration as a probationary representative.

You will complete three assessments:

- Portfolio [[#portfolio](#)]
- Critical Incidents Test [[#critical-incidents-test](#)]
- Written examination [[#written-examination](#)]

## *Portfolio*

The portfolio comprises two parts.

**Part A** consists of four case reports of advice provided at a police station with the direct involvement of a duty solicitor. The first two reports are of instances in which you've observed the duty solicitor giving advice, and the other two are of instances in which you have advised a

client, under the direct supervision of a duty solicitor.

Submit the Part A reports to your assessment organisation. They will give you an application form to register with the Criminal Defence Service [<http://www.legalservices.gov.uk/criminal.asp>] as a probationary representative.

Probationary representative status lasts for 12 months, and allows you to work at police stations—on a limited basis—without direct supervision.

**Part B** must be completed before the end of your 12-month period as a probationary representative. It comprises five detailed reports of cases that you have conducted yourself at a police station.

Your assessment organisation will supply details of the portfolio assessment, including

- time limits,
- types of cases to include, and
- issues you should cover.

Download the Police Station Representative Accreditation Scheme portfolio completion guidance (PDF 37K) [<http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/support-services/accreditation/documents/criminal-litigation-scheme-guidance/>].

### *Critical Incidents Test*

This is a live role-play test, based on audio-tapes of simulated police-station interviews.

You can offer advice during set pauses in the recording. You can also choose to interrupt the interview to give advice.

Your responses are recorded and subsequently assessed.

### *Written examination*

Some people are exempt from the written examination:

- barristers,
- fellows or members of the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives [<http://www.cilex.org.uk/>] (CILEX) who have passed the criminal law and litigation papers,
- anyone who has successfully completed the Legal Practice Course [[/students/lpc/](#)],

The written examination assesses knowledge and understanding of basic criminal law, the law of evidence, police station procedures, the adviser's role and necessary skills.

### *Time limits*

You must successfully complete at least one of the assessments within six months of registering as a probationary representative (an exemption from the written examination does not count for this purpose).

All assessments must be completed before your 12-month probationary representative period ends.

If you fail to meet the above requirements, the Criminal Defence Service will suspend you, and your firm will not be paid for work you perform at the police station.

## *Useful links*

Legal Aid Agency [<http://www.legalservices.gov.uk/>]

Legal Aid Agency (LAA) is responsible for the development and administration in England and Wales of the Community Legal Service [<http://www.legalservices.gov.uk/civil.asp>] and the Criminal Defence Service [<http://www.legalservices.gov.uk/criminal.asp>].

Police Station Representatives Service

Defence Solicitor Call Centre

Email [dsc.enquiries@ventura-uk.com](mailto:dsc.enquiries@ventura-uk.com) [<mailto:dsc.enquiries@ventura-uk.com>]

Tel 0345 543 8910

## *Authorised assessment organisations*

### *What is an assessment organisation?*

Assessment organisations administer Police Station Representatives Accreditation Scheme assessments on the SRA's behalf.

They also offer training to prepare people for the assessments (although it is not a compulsory part of the process).

The SRA operates a framework for the form and content of assessments, and authorises and monitors the assessment organisations.

We have authorised two providers as assessment organisations:

- Cardiff Centre for Professional Legal Studies [<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/law-politics>]
- Datalaw [<http://www.datalawonline.co.uk/>]

Before you select an assessment organisation, find out the answers to the following questions:

- When are the assessments held?
- What are the deadlines for submitting portfolios?
- Where are the role-play assessments held?
- What assessment preparation options are on offer?