

**CONSULTATION PROTOCOL FOR PROPOSED CHANGES TO MDP  
VARIABLE SHIFT ARRANGEMENTS**

1. This Protocol has been agreed by the Chief Constable and the Defence Police Federation (DPF) and will apply to the consultation process for proposed changes to existing MDP Variable Shift Arrangements (VSA). It is a binding document and will be incorporated into the Force policy on Shift Working.

2. The consultation process on any proposals to alter an existing VSA will be meaningful and in accordance with agreed Departmental consultation policy and the law. This requires the need for a change to be set out, for comments and alternatives to be provided and for these to be considered with care before a final decision is taken. Consultation will address the operational needs for change, across the whole Force or by station or group of stations, as needed.

3. When the pattern has been agreed individual officers may ask that their particular circumstances and needs are taken into account, given the potential impact on the officers concerned. This Protocol therefore sets out an overarching consultation framework that will be initiated when proposed changes to an existing VSA are being considered by the Force.

4. If the Chief Constable reasonably believes that an existing VSA is no longer delivering the customer requirement for MDP services and capabilities in the most efficient and/or cost effective way, or does not comply with recognised good practice in the wider UK police service, he may seek change. The following process will then apply:

- **The requirement** – The Force will provide the DPF with the case for change to an existing VSA. This will set out the customer and/or MDP reasons for the proposed change, and in particular why the existing shift pattern is not delivering the operational requirement in the most efficient and cost effective way.
- **The proposed VSA change** – The consultation proposal will include details of the alternative shift pattern that is proposed by the Force, how this would operate in practice and why this would be a better option to meet the operational requirement than the current VSA.
- **Equality and Diversity Impact** – This assessment will provide an assurance that the proposed alternative shift pattern will comply with the relevant Employment legislation and that the circumstances of individual officers have been considered in the specific context of Equality and Diversity concerns.
- **Response** – The DPF will be given the opportunity to address the issues of concern that have been identified by the Force.
- **Consultation approach and timetable** – The DPF will be asked to respond as swiftly as possible, within 30 days, to the Force proposal.

- **Engagement of the Chief Constable** – If the DPF believe that meaningful consultation and due process has not been followed, as detailed above, they may, at any time, engage directly with the Chief Constable
- **Decision** – The Chief Constable will make the decision in the best interests of the force taking account of the operational priorities and needs of the customer.
- **Implementation** – The new arrangements will be brought into operation not less than 30 days after the announcement by the Chief Constable.

4. Individual officers affected by proposed changes to a VSA may, at any time, seek an alternative working pattern. The Force will consider all such cases with due care and will look to accommodate exceptional circumstances where possible.