

Expanded Criminal Duty Counsel, Port Coquitlam Courthouse—launched in March 2015

Expanded Criminal Duty Counsel is a new pilot program offered by LSS that seeks to achieve early resolution of files and contribute to court efficiency. Under this pilot program, duty counsel will retain conduct of select uncomplicated files and provide services to a broader range of clients. This initiative complements two other criminal justice system reforms: the Provincial Court Scheduling Initiative and the Crown File Ownership Project.

Questions	Answers
<p>What services are provided by Expanded Criminal Duty Counsel?</p>	<p>Expanded Criminal Duty Counsel will provide advice to people making initial appearances in the Provincial Court. It will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus mainly on achieving a resolution before the trial date is set in addition to providing advice. • Provide continuing services to try to achieve early resolution of cases, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reviewing disclosure • having discussions with Crown Counsel • attending court if a guilty plea is required to resolve the case • Provide information and advice about the charges people are facing. • Review police reports to Crown Counsel with the person charged so that they understand the evidence in their case. • Explain the court process and discuss the options available. <p>Expanded Criminal Duty Counsel will not conduct bail hearings.</p>
<p>What is new and innovative about this service?</p>	<p>Expanded Criminal Duty Counsel is innovative and transformative in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the Expanded Criminal Duty Counsel pilot program, the same lawyer will provide services to the client until a trial is scheduled or the matter is resolved. <p style="margin-left: 40px;"><i>Previously, people usually spoke with a different lawyer every time they went to court.</i></p> • Expanded Criminal Duty Counsel will focus mainly on achieving a resolution before the trial date is set in addition to providing advice. <p style="margin-left: 40px;"><i>Previously the focus was mainly on providing advice.</i></p>

<p>How do clients access the service?</p>	<p>The Expanded Criminal Duty Counsel service is available during court hours. If clients have already received a copy of the police reports, they can make an appointment in advance of their court appearance. To make an appointment, clients should contact the Legal Service Society.</p>
<p>How was the Port Coquitlam location selected?</p>	<p>The location was selected by considering a range of factors including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the volume of anticipated cases • the number of initial appearance days • availability and suitability of space • distance to public transit and the courthouse
<p>How will the pilot improve the efficiency of and timely access to the justice system?</p>	<p>By focussing on early resolution, fewer cases will proceed to trial, freeing up court resources.</p>
<p>How will the Expanded Criminal Duty Counsel pilot benefit clients?</p>	<p>Clients will have increased access to criminal legal aid services, and will have their cases dealt with in a more timely manner.</p> <p>Since the same lawyer will provide services to the client until the trial is scheduled or resolved, clients will also have better continuity of service.</p>
<p>Why doesn't LSS increase the number of representation referrals instead of adding this service?</p>	<p>The pilot program is part of the Ministry of Justice initiative for Justice Transformation. LSS can use the funding only for services that are innovative or transformative, and cannot use it to increase the capacity of existing tariff bar services.</p> <p>LSS is using this funding to provide the kind of initiatives proposed in its report <i>Making Justice Work</i> and recommended in Geoff Cowper's report <i>A Criminal Justice System for the 21st Century</i>. The provincial government committed to this initiative in its white paper on Justice Reform in 2013.</p>
<p>How will the pilot be evaluated to determine if the new model improves the efficiency of and timely access to the justice system?</p>	<p>The pilot will be evaluated by an independent evaluator who will test whether or not it has met all of its objectives.</p>