

Prisoners get web link to their lawyers

PRISONERS can now speak to their lawyers directly from jail via web link after Emmersons solicitors became the first prison law legal practice in the region to install video link technology.

Emmersons, which recently launched a dedicated prison law department at its offices in Gosforth and Sunderland, will use the video link technology to interview and update its clients while they are behind bars.

Since the launch of its prison law department six weeks ago, Emmersons has taken on 60 new cases.

Partner Michael Robinson said: "We had the video link technology installed in our office last week, which is similar to a web cam, and means we can interview and update clients on cases in prison without the need to travel.

It means we can reach even more prisoners, advising them more quickly and efficiently.

"We now have the capability to represent prisoners not just from the

North East, but from across the UK. As far as we know, we are the only law firm in the region that can do this.

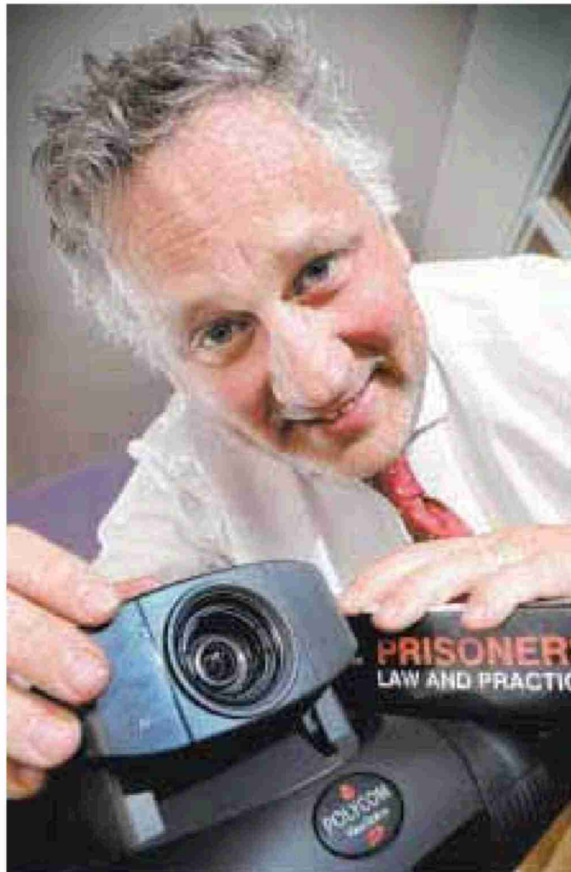
"We are taking matters forward at a rapid speed and have already had prisoners coming to us from all over the country and other solicitors are referring work to us, which we are turning around quickly. "

Emmersons is the only firm of solicitors in the region to have been awarded a contract from the Legal Services Commission to undertake criminal legal aid in Newcastle, Sunderland and the Tyne Valley.

The legal aid contract, which goes live from July 14, means Emmersons will be the closest law firm to

Newcastle's renowned Etal Lane police station, where the majority of people who are arrested in the city are interviewed.

This department is run by three criminal lawyers and a team of evening and weekend staff who man the service seven days per week, 24 hours a day.



NEW EFFORTS
Emmersons partner Michael Robinson with the web cam technology