



Asiantaeth Cymorth  
Cyfreithiol

Legal Aid  
Agency

## **Introduction and Background**

### **Duty Solicitor Schemes**

This consultation is in response to HMCTS's announcement of magistrates' court closures currently served by a Duty Solicitor Scheme.

Details of the consultation can be found here -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposal-on-the-provision-of-court-and-tribunal-estate-in-england-and-wales>

We have tried to keep changes to schemes to a minimum whilst taking into account the likely impact on levels of service to clients from solicitors whose offices will no longer be local to the court dealing with their matter.

## **This Consultation**

This consultation paper comprises two sections:

Section 1 outlines the court closures and Duty Solicitor Schemes affected.

Section 2 outlines the options identified to change the Duty Solicitor Schemes affected within your local region.

We are consulting on these proposals for 3 weeks, from 19/09/16 to 10/10/16

Responses should be sent by email to [james.o'reilly@legalaid.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:james.o'reilly@legalaid.gsi.gov.uk), titled 'Dolgellau' Consultation'.

**Section 1 – Court Closures and Duty Solicitor Schemes affected.**

In the Dolgellau Region, the following Magistrates' Court has closed:

- Dolgellau Magistrates Court

In addition the following changes will apply:

- Dolgellau Magistrates court work has moved to Caernarfon Magistrates court.

As a result of these closures and other changes, we need to revise the following schemes:

- Dolgellau Court Duty Scheme
- Caernarfon Court Duty Scheme

All postcode sectors are mapped into at least one Duty Scheme. The changes proposed here will not affect this.

### **Determining Eligibility for revised Schemes**

To assist providers in determining which Scheme(s) they are eligible to join, the postcode sectors providing access to work within each scheme, which can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/duty-solicitors-rotas-information-and-guidance> , will be updated in accordance with the outcome of this consultation.

## **Section 2 – Proposed revisions to schemes in the Dolgellau Region**

### **Proposed Changes**

As a result of the Dolgellau Court closure, HMCTS are listing Dolgellau Court matters in Caernarfon Magistrates Court.

#### **Option 1**

To support this listing pattern, we propose that the Dolgellau Court rota is closed but the Dolgellau police station panel will remain in force.

#### **Option 2**

To support this listing pattern, we propose that the Dolgellau and Caernarfon court duty rotas are merged so that duty slots for the court are shared across all providers that qualify for the two schemes. Allowing a duty solicitor to attend all matters listed allows for court efficiencies to be realised.

As part of this option, the police station rotas of Dolgellau Police station and Bangor Police Station will continue to remain separate, meaning police station duty qualification remain as currently set.

#### **Option 3**

To support this listing pattern, we propose that the Dolgellau and Caernarfon court duty rotas are merged so that duty slots for the court are shared across all providers that qualify for the two schemes.

As part of this option, the police station rotas in Bangor and Dolgellau would also be merged.

**Respondents are invited to comment on these proposals and, if not in support of the proposal, to offer an alternative suggestion.**