



Legal Aid Agency

Contract Management
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To: All Firms with Duty Solicitors on the Brentford Court Scheme

Dear Duty Solicitor,

Response to Consultation – Duty Solicitor Scheme

This letter is the Legal Aid Agency's response to the consultation in respect of changes proposed for the Brentford Court Scheme as a result of the closure of Feltham Magistrates Court on the 30th September 2016.

Background

The consultation started on the 16th August 2016 and closed on 19th August 2016. Due to the publication of the rotas on the 1st September 2016, a short timeline for the deadline response was required.

As the London scheme rules allow providers to choose 2 court schemes, the LAA will allow any firm currently on the Feltham court scheme to choose a new court scheme in their area.

The proposals outlined in the consultation attempted 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, alongside maintaining fair and reasonable access to Duty Solicitor work for all firms whose offices are located within the affected Scheme boundaries.

Summary of Responses

A total of 7 responses to the consultation were received. The responses from the firms elected to transfer to either the Uxbridge or Ealing Court Schemes. A total of 14 firms failed to respond to the consultation and were accordingly allocated schemes by the Duty Solicitors Team.

One respondent considered that the proposal made by the Legal Aid Agency was appropriate, and offered no other alternative solutions:

“We are sad to see Feltham Court close but understand the need for savings to be made and consolidation. With any proposal to close the Brentford Court Duty scheme we would only request that we are not, where possible, put at a disadvantage.”

The Legal Aid Agency consider that clients should continue to have the choice to instruct a Solicitor of their choosing, and the clients ability to instruct a solicitor from their local area will not be affected by this decision.

Next Steps

The Feltham Magistrates Court will close on the 30th September 2016. Accordingly, the Brentford Court scheme will close and will revert to a Police Station only scheme. The Providers affected have been allocated to alternative Court Schemes.