



**TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE TORBAY AND PLYMOUTH SCHEMES**

## **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 closure 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 closure 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 four weeks, from 23 June 2017 (deadline for responses is 21 July 2017).

Responses should be sent by email to **[louise.hebblethwaite@legalaid.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:louise.hebblethwaite@legalaid.gsi.gov.uk)**.

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

In the Devon and Cornwall CJS region, the following Magistrates' Court will be closed:

- Torquay Magistrates Court (effective 1 September 2017).

In addition the following changes will apply:

- The closure will confirm the position that all overnight remands in South Devon will be taken to Plymouth Magistrates' Court for hearings.

As a result of this closure, we need to revise the following scheme:

- Torbay Scheme.

## **Section 2 – Proposed revisions to schemes in the Devon and Cornwall CJS Region**

### **Proposed Changes**

Where significant revisions are required, we set out two options reflecting two different general approaches, with explanations where appropriate, of how each of those approaches will affect the different schemes.

Where schemes only require minor adjustments, we set these out and invite any comments or feedback you may have on these changes.

It may be the case that you consider different approaches appropriate for different schemes. Please make it clear in your response which Option(s) and scheme(s) you are referring to, and indicate your reasons for preferring these alternatives.

## **Devon & Cornwall CJS Area**

**Torquay Magistrates' Court** in this CJS area will close on 1 September 2017.

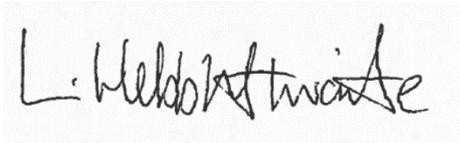
Our proposals are as follows:

**Option 1: South Devon Rota** – this proposal would have a rota operating at Plymouth Magistrates' Court that covers the work that would previously have been dealt with at Torquay Magistrates' Court.

**Option 2: Make no change to the current arrangement** – this proposal would keep the existing Plymouth Magistrates' Court rota in place and would mean that work previously dealt with at Torquay Magistrates' Court would be dealt with by the Plymouth scheme.

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

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Hebblethwaite', is written over a light grey rectangular background.

Louise Hebblethwaite

**Contract Manager – Legal Aid Agency**