



TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE WILTSHIRE 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 7th July 2017 (deadline for responses is 4th August 2017).

Responses should be sent by email to **louise.parcell@legalaid.gsi.gov.uk**.

Section 1 – Court Closures and Duty Solicitor Schemes affected.

In the Wiltshire CJS region, the following Magistrates' Court will be closed:

- Chippenham Magistrates Court (effective 1 April 2017).

In addition the following changes will apply:

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

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

- Wiltshire Scheme.

Section 2 – Proposed revisions to schemes in the Wiltshire 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.

Wiltshire CJS Area

Chippenham Magistrates' Court in this CJS area will close on 1 April 2017.

Our proposals are as follows:

Option 1: North Wiltshire Rota – this proposal would have a rota operating at Swindon Magistrates' Court that covers the work that would previously have been dealt with at Chippenham Magistrates' Court.

The amalgamation of North Wiltshire Rota into one scheme that covers Swindon Magistrates court

The proposed sitting pattern for court duties would therefore be:

North West Wiltshire (Swindon) rota

Monday – two duty solicitors at Swindon Magistrates Court

Tuesday - two duty solicitors at Swindon Magistrates Court

Wednesday - two duty solicitors at Swindon Magistrates Court

Thursday – no rota on this day as all remands being dealt with at Salisbury Magistrates Court (covered by the South East Wiltshire scheme)

Friday – one duty solicitor (shared remands with Salisbury Magistrates court)

Saturday – standby at Swindon

South East Wiltshire (Salisbury) rota

Monday – one duty solicitor at Salisbury Magistrate Court

Tuesday - no rota on this day as all remands being dealt with at Swindon Magistrates Court (covered by the North West Wiltshire scheme)

Wednesday - no rota on this day as all remands being dealt with at Swindon Magistrates Court (covered by the North West Wiltshire scheme)

Thursday – two duty solicitors (all remands to Salisbury)

Friday – two duty solicitors (shared remands with Swindon Magistrates court)

Saturday – no rota on this day as all remands being dealt with at Swindon Magistrates Court (covered by the North West Wiltshire scheme) (standby)

Option 2: Amalgamate the 2 schemes into 1 – this proposal would amalgamate the 2 schemes North Wiltshire and Salisbury into one Wiltshire scheme which would include both Swindon and Salisbury court.

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

Yours faithfully

Louise Parcell

Contract Manager – Legal Aid Agency