



Legal Aid  
Agency

South West Regional Office  
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Date: 27 July 2017

To: All Firms with Duty  
Solicitors on the Torbay and  
Plymouth Schemes

Dear Duty Solicitor

**Response to Consultation with Torbay and Plymouth scheme members following HMCTS announcement to close Torquay Magistrates' Court**

On 23 June 2017, the Legal Aid Agency issued a consultation regarding possible changes to the Torbay Duty Solicitor scheme affected by the HMCTS decision to close Torquay Magistrates' Court.

The deadline for responses to the consultation was 21 July 2017. This letter is intended as formal notification of the outcome of the consultation.

**Summary of Responses**

A total of two responses to the consultation on proposed changes to the Torbay Duty Solicitor Scheme as a result of the closure of Torquay Magistrates Court were received.

Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to provide feedback to the proposals.

There is no decision that can meet the needs of all those that have fed back on the scheme changes and a decision has been made which provides the greatest fairness to all scheme members that are affected by this change.

## Summary of Feedback

- One response fed back that they would want Option 1 (South Devon Rota) but only if travel was claimable. If this could not be remunerated then they would prefer Option 2 (Make no change to the current rota). They suggested a third proposal to make no change to the current arrangement pending the possible use of a virtual court. The other response fed back that they would prefer Option 1 (South Devon Rota).

## Decision

After careful consideration of the responses received, and the points raised within the same, the Legal Aid Agency have decided to proceed with **Option 2 – make no change to the current rota. This proposal will 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.**

This option has been selected as there is no consensus for having a separate South Devon rota where travel will not be remunerated.

## Next steps

- Option 2 proposed in the consultation document will take effect on 1 September 2017.
- New rotas will be issued to cover the period 1/9/2017 to 31/7/2017.

Yours faithfully



Nicole Mason  
**Area Contract Manager**