

To all Duty Solicitors on the Hammersmith (West London), Inner London Youth, City of Westminster & Highbury Corner courts schemes
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Dear Duty Solicitor,

**Consultation response on Duty Solicitor Schemes following closure of Hammersmith Magistrates Court**

This consultation response follows the Legal Aid Agency's consultation document of the 21<sup>st</sup> July 2017 in which we proposed the following options for each court scheme:

**A) Inner London Youth Court**

The Inner London Youth Court closed on Friday, 9th June 2017 and all work has transferred to the Highbury Corner Youth Court. Moving forward, one slot will be required to cover this work.

The two options proposed were as follows:

- 1) That Providers listed on the Inner London Youth Court rota would retain membership of this scheme but travel to the Highbury Corner Youth Court instead. The designated day will be on Mondays on a weekly basis. This scheme would remain an attendance scheme and therefore travel would only be payable if an attendance were required on a non-business day, in accordance with the Criminal Legal Aid (Remuneration) Regulations.

Any Providers not wishing to retain membership of this scheme would need to notify the Duty Solicitor Team who would remove them accordingly. However, any removed would not lose membership of the Adult work scheme sitting at City of Westminster (see below).

- 2) In line with previous London court consultations, Providers would lose membership to this scheme as they are no longer eligible.

**B) Hammersmith Magistrates' Court**

Current Hammersmith adult work will be transferred over to City of Westminster court. All bail cases have already transferred to this court.

The two options proposed were as follows:

- 1) Like Option 1 above, current Hammersmith court members would retain their membership of this scheme which will sit at City of Westminster Court. The court has confirmed that they will require a slot per day to cover this work, along with the bail court slot that has already transferred over previously.
- 2) Current Providers lose membership to this scheme as they are no longer eligible.

## **Summary of Responses Received**

Two responses were received, both of which expressed a preference for Option 1 in both schemes. A concern was raised that the adult work in City of Westminster covering both Hammersmith and City of Westminster could in effect be merged over time. This is not something that the LAA can influence but we anticipate that, with the retention of the Hammersmith slot, work will be retained by those eligible for Hammersmith and is therefore the most equitable solution.

## **Consultation Outcome**

The LAA also considers Option 1 for both schemes to be the most equitable solution and will therefore take the necessary steps to implement this option.

For the avoidance of doubt, those currently members of both the Inner London Youth Court and Hammersmith Court schemes can split their membership and those not wishing to retain membership of the Youth court, sitting in Highbury, can retain their membership of the Hammersmith adult scheme, sitting in City of Westminster.

Please notify the Duty Solicitors Team at [dutysolqueries@legalaid.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:dutysolqueries@legalaid.gsi.gov.uk) by 8<sup>th</sup> September 2017 should you wish to remove yourself from membership of the Inner London Youth scheme.

## **Further enquiries**

Should you have any queries or need to discuss this consultation response further you should contact your Contract Manager.