



Legal Aid
Agency

**TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE CAMBERWELL GREEN, BROMLEY,
SUTTON, CROYDON & WIMBLEDON COURT DUTY SCHEMES**

Introduction and Background

This consultation is in response to the decision to temporarily close Croydon Magistrates Court on 19 August 2019.

This Magistrates Court is currently served by the Croydon Magistrates Court Duty Scheme Members. We have tried to keep changes to a minimum.

This Consultation

This consultation paper comprises of one section:

Section 1 outlines the temporary **Magistrates 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 **3 weeks**, from **Monday 22nd July 2019**.

Responses should be sent by email to: Uzma.Kanwal@justice.gov.uk by **5pm on Monday 12th August 2019**.

Our intention is to respond to the consultation by **Wednesday 14th August 2019**. We appreciate that this does not provide you with much notice, this is unavoidable due to us only recently being made aware of this court estate change.

Section 1 – Temporary Magistrates Court Closures and Duty Solicitor Schemes affected.

The following Magistrates Court will temporarily close from 19th August 2019.

- Croydon

This temporary closure is taking place to allow for unforeseen refurbishment/building works to take place to facilitate accommodating adult cases when Camberwell Green Magistrates Court does finally close. This temporary closure for Croydon Magistrates Court will be in place until approximately December 2019, but may be longer.

As a result of this temporary closure, we need to revise the Court Duty Rotas for the following schemes:

- Bromley Court Duty (Youth only)
- Wimbledon Court Duty
- Sutton Court Duty
- Camberwell Green

All postcode sectors are mapped into at least one Duty Scheme. The changes proposed here will not affect this.

Determining Eligibility for revised Schemes

To assist providers in determining which Scheme(s) they are eligible to join, the postcode sectors providing access to work within each scheme, which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/duty-solicitors-rotas-information-and-guidance> will be updated in accordance with this consultation.

Section 2 – Proposed revisions to schemes

Proposed Changes

We set out explanations, where appropriate, of how each of the approaches will affect the different schemes.

At the end we indicate the option we favour.

Where schemes only require minor adjustments, or are for notification purposes, 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 change(s) and scheme(s) you are referring to, and indicate your reasons for preferring these alternatives.

Croydon Magistrates Court

Croydon Magistrates Court will temporarily close from 19th August 2019.

Our proposals are as follows:

Change 1a:

The Court have confirmed that Duty solicitor work will be distributed between Camberwell Green and Wimbledon Magistrates' Courts on weekdays:

- Wimbledon will be receiving Sutton custodies and the Youths for both Croydon and Wimbledon Boroughs

Lambeth & Southwark Youth Court work from Camberwell Green moved to Bromley permanently last year.

Due to the Croydon Magistrates Temporary Court closure, Sutton and Croydon youth work will be listed at Wimbledon Magistrates Court on a Thursday and the first hearing will be held on 22nd August 2019

It is therefore proposed that Croydon Court Scheme members who are based in Bromley Offices have temporary access to the Youth Court work at Wimbledon

Bromley Providers do not have access to Wimbledon Magistrates Court currently. This option enables Bromley providers to have temporary access to the Youth Court work at Wimbledon that they would have undertaken on the Croydon Scheme.

This proposal allows those Providers to retain membership of the Youth Scheme associated to their Scheme Membership.

Current arrangements for Saturday custody work at Camberwell Green Magistrates Court will remain in place.

Change 1b:

Duty solicitor work will be distributed between Camberwell Green and Wimbledon Magistrates' Courts on weekdays:

- Camberwell Green will be receiving the adult custodies from Croydon Police station

Due to the short-term closure affecting Croydon Magistrates Court, we are consulting now on this temporary plan. We propose that Sutton providers have temporary access to Camberwell Green Magistrates Court Rota. This is in recognition of the impact a short-term closure in Croydon will have on Sutton Providers who have limited access to Court Duty Work.

The movement of Adult work from Croydon Magistrates Court to Wimbledon Magistrates Court will take effect week from commencing 2nd September 2019.

The LAA is aware of the plans to permanently close Camberwell Green Magistrates Court, however, we will consult further once we have the finalised plans for Camberwell Green Magistrates Court.

**Change 2:
Notification**

As part of the above-mentioned consultation (Change 1a and 1b), and at the request of the Court, we propose that the breach/local authority court be introduced for Camberwell on a Tuesday, to accommodate Croydon and Sutton cases. This will necessitate the provision of a further duty solicitor on top of the usual rota slots at Camberwell Green Magistrates Court. These Duties are to be covered by existing Camberwell Scheme members.

**Change 3:
Notification**

Wimbledon Magistrates Court will be running 3 extra courts which will necessitate Duty Solicitor cover for each of the following:

- There will both a GAP and an NGAP court in courts 8 and 9 respectively.
- They will also be running a Croydon/Sutton Borough Youth Court.

We propose that the additional GAP and NGAP courts being run at Wimbledon Magistrates Court on a Thursday will get covered by Wimbledon Scheme members. The first hearing will be on 5th September 2019.

Our Preference:

All changes mentioned above are preferred. The reasons for this are: -

- Change 1a) Camberwell Green will be receiving the adult custodies, it is therefore seen as being fair to allow Bromley Providers to have temporary access to the Youth Court work at Wimbledon.
- Change 1b) Sutton providers to have temporary access to Camberwell Green Magistrates Court Rota as they have limited access to other Court Schemes.

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