



Legal Aid
Agency

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Date: 14th August 2019

To: All Firms with Duty
Solicitors on the Camberwell
Green, Wimbledon, Croydon,
Sutton and Bromley Court
Schemes

Dear Sir / Madam

Response to Consultation: Croydon Magistrates Court Temporary Closure

On 22nd July 2019, the Legal Aid Agency issued a consultation regarding the temporary closure to Croydon Magistrates Court and the changes to duty rotas.

The deadline for responses to the consultation was 12th August 2019 and the timetable for the consultation exercise indicated that following consideration of any responses, all affected parties would be notified of the outcome of the consultation by 14th August 2019. Therefore, this letter is intended as formal notification of the outcome of the consultation.

Summary of Responses

A total of 5 responses to the consultation on the temporary closure of Croydon Magistrates Court were received.

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

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, particularly as this is a short-term measure, as we will be consulting on the longer-term plan of Camberwell Green Magistrates Court closing permanently in due course.

The 5 responses received came from 4 firms and 1 individual.

All 5 respondents had members on the current schemes, therefore, all respondents are directly impacted by any changes arising from this consultation.

4 of the 5 respondents were not in favour of any of the changes.

1 respondent supported change 1a.

Some alternative options were put forward by respondents: -

- a) Camberwell and Wimbledon Magistrates' courts should have separate courts sitting for the cases that would have previously gone to Croydon Magistrates' Court with the identical Croydon rota slots that have already been published, i.e. a separate Borough court each day of the week.
- b) Croydon matters should be listed in the Wimbledon or Camberwell Green Magistrates' court but be serviced by the duty solicitors already on the Croydon rotas as per the published rotas.
- c) To allocate Wimbledon and Camberwell Green duty work to Croydon Court Duty Solicitors

A. Decision

After careful consideration of the responses received, and the points raised as above, the Legal Aid Agency have decided to proceed with the following changes:

Change 1a:

The suggestions under points a), b) and c) above have all been taken into consideration. HMCTS have confirmed that duty cases currently dealt with at Croydon Youth Court will be heard on Thursdays at Wimbledon magistrates' court during this temporary change. They will be heard separately from the duty cases currently dealt with at Wimbledon Youth Court.

It has been decided that the Croydon Youth Court cases heard at Wimbledon on Thursdays will be dealt with by the members on the rota for Croydon Youth Court. The duty cases currently dealt with at Wimbledon Youth Court will be dealt with separately by the rota for that Court.

Change 1b:

HMCTS have confirmed that Croydon work at Camberwell Green Magistrates Court will not be separate from other work listed there. We cannot therefore proceed with the alternative suggestions set out by consultees above.

It has therefore been decided that Sutton, Croydon and Camberwell Green members will be sent to Camberwell Green Magistrates Court, where the work will be distributed by the Court. This is only a short-term measure as we will be consulting on the longer-term plan of Camberwell Green Magistrates Court closing permanently in due course.

For the avoidance of doubt this includes those Providers based in Sutton who would not normally be eligible for the Camberwell Green Court Scheme.

We accept that this will mean that Sutton providers will have access to work that they would not normally be eligible for, however, this is a short-term measure to deal with

the temporary closure of Croydon Magistrates Court. The alternative would be that Sutton Providers lose access to a significant level of court work during this period.

Change 2: Notification

The suggestions under point a) above has been taken into consideration. The breach/local authority court will 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. It has been decided that this work will go to Croydon members only.

Change 3: Notification

As per the consultation, it has been decided that that the additional GAP and NGAP courts being run at Wimbledon Magistrates Court on a Thursday will be covered by Wimbledon Scheme members.

B. Next steps

- **Change 1a** will take effect from 22nd August 2019.
- **Change 1b** will take effect from 2nd September 2019.
- **Change 2** will take effect from 2nd September 2019
- **Change 3** will take effect from 5th September 2019.
- New rotas which cover until the end of September are expected to be published by Thursday 15th August 2019 at 5pm.
- The postcode tool will be updated to reflect these temporary changes.

Yours faithfully,



Abbie Lane
Area Contract Manager