



Legal Aid
Agency

TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE Highbury Corner Youth Court Duty Scheme and Inner London Youth Court Duty Scheme operating out of Highbury Corner Magistrates Court.

Introduction and Background

This consultation is in response to court's request to reduce the number of Youth Court Duty slots operating from Highbury Corner.

This Magistrates Court is currently served by both the Highbury Corner Youth Court Duty Scheme Members and the Inner London Youth Court Duty Scheme Members. We have tried to keep changes to a minimum.

This Consultation

This consultation paper comprises of two sections:

Section 1 outlines the future duty solicitor requirements

Section 2 outlines the options identified to change the Duty Solicitor Schemes affected within this location.

We are consulting on these proposals for **3 weeks**, from **Monday 19th August 2019**.

Responses should be sent by email to: tim.mcintyre@justice.gov.uk by **5pm on Monday 9th September 2019**.

Our intention is to respond to the consultation by **Wednesday 11th September 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 request from the court to amend future rotas.

Section 1 – Amendment to the Highbury Corner Youth Court and Inner London Youth Court Rotas operating from Highbury Corner.

A request has been submitted by the court to reduce the overall number of Youth Court duty solicitors serving Highbury Corner. This will affect:

- Highbury Corner Youth Court scheme
- Inner London Youth Court Scheme

Currently two youth court rotas operate from Highbury Corner. These are Highbury Corner and Inner London, the latter as an outcome of the closure of Hammersmith Magistrates Court in 2017. This has resulted in two duty solicitors attending each day, one from the Highbury Youth rota and one from the Inner London Youth rota.

The current position has been identified as exceeding the court requirements and as such the court is to reduce this to:

- two duty solicitors on Mondays
- one duty sol on all other days

As a result of this, we need to revise the current arrangements in place at this location.

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.

Highbury Corner Magistrates Court

The reduction in the number of youth court duty slots from 1st October 2019.

Our proposals are as follows:

Option 1:

Merge Highbury Corner Youth Court and Inner London Youth Court schemes

This would mean that one scheme would then operate from this location and slots proportionally allocated based on the current number of solicitors on each of the current schemes

Option 2:

Continue to operate separate Highbury Corner Youth Court and Inner London Youth Court schemes

This would mean splitting the available slots equally between the two schemes. In practical terms, based on need identified by the court, the result would be to allocate one duty slot for each scheme on Mondays and divide the remaining slots in the week equally across the two schemes

Our Preference:

The preferred option is option 2. The reasons for this is:

- This would result in the equal division of available slots between the two schemes.

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