



Legal Aid
Agency

**TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE WEST BERKSHIRE (NEWBURY) AND
READING MAGISTRATES' COURT DUTY AND POLICE STATION
SCHEMES**

Introduction and Background

Duty Solicitor Schemes

This consultation is the result of a review of the continuing viability of the West Berkshire (Newbury) scheme and consideration of the continuing need and sustainability of maintaining both a West Berkshire (Newbury) and a Reading scheme.

The current arrangements allow those providers with offices within the Reading Scheme area to also benefit from membership of the West Berkshire (Newbury) scheme without the need to maintain an office with the scheme area. Any Provider based within the West Berkshire scheme area (there is currently one) does not benefit from a reciprocal arrangement and would need to maintain an office under the terms of the 2017 Crime Contract, to access the Reading scheme.

Newbury Magistrates Court closed in 2016 with cases drawn from the 2 scheme areas being heard at Reading Magistrates Court.

This Consultation

This consultation paper comprises two sections:

Section 1 outlines the options identified to change the Duty Solicitor Schemes affected within your local region.

Section 2 provides details of the postcode that would be affected under Option 3

We are consulting on these proposals for **3 weeks**, from **15th January**.

Responses should be sent by email to: paula.hopkinson@justice.gov.uk and/or simon.fletcher@justice.gov.uk

Section 1 - Proposed revisions to schemes in the West Berkshire (Newbury) and Reading areas.

Proposed Changes

Where significant revisions are required, we set out several options reflecting different general approaches, with explanations where appropriate, of how each of those approaches will affect the different schemes.

At the end we indicate the option we favour.

Thames Valley CJS Area – West Berkshire (Newbury) and Reading Schemes

Our proposals are as follows:

Option 1: Make no changes to the current West Berkshire (Newbury) and Reading Schemes.

Option 2: Combine the two schemes into one scheme, with providers with post codes in either the current West Berkshire (Newbury) and Reading schemes becoming eligible for the resulting combined West Berkshire (Newbury) and Reading scheme.

This option would require those providers based West Berkshire (Newbury) scheme area to attend Reading Police Station Custody Unit. It would also require those Providers based in the Reading scheme area to attend Newbury Police Station Custody Unit.

Option 3: Extend membership of the Reading scheme to those postcodes that currently give access only to the West Berkshire (Newbury) scheme. The relevant postcodes are attached at appendix 1.

Option 3 is preferred by the Legal Aid Agency as it represents a more sustainable and effective way to administer and provide access to justice for potential clients within those scheme areas.

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

Section 2

Appendix 1

West Berkshire (Newbury) postcodes to give access to the Reading Scheme under option 3.

RG7 3
RG7 4
RG7 5
RG7 6
RG8 7
RG8 8
RG8 9
RG14 2
RG14 3
RG14 5
RG14 6
RG14 7
RG17 0
RG17 7
RG17 8
RG17 9
RG18 0
RG18 3
RG18 4
RG18 9
RG19 3
RG19 4
RG19 6
RG19 8
RG20 0
RG20 4
RG20 5
RG20 6
RG20 7
RG20 8
RG20 9
RG30 3
RG31 4
RG31 7