



Asiantaeth Cymorth  
Cyfreithiol

Legal Aid  
Agency

## **Introduction and Background**

### **Mold & Hawarden and Wrexham Duty Solicitor Schemes**

This document is a response to the consultation issued in July 18 in relation to imminent changes to custody arrangements concerning Wrexham magistrates court and the pending closure of Wrexham police station.

Details of the consultation can be found here -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/duty-solicitor-scheme-boundary-consultations>

The consultation ran from 23/7/18 to 20/8/18.

## **The Consultation**

This consultation paper comprised two sections:

Section 1 outlined the Duty Solicitor Schemes affected by the change of custody arrangements.

Section 2 outlined the options identified to change the Duty Solicitor Schemes affected within this region.

**Section 1 – Duty Solicitor Schemes affected.**

We have been informed of imminent changes to custody arrangements concerning Wrexham magistrates court and the pending closure of Wrexham police station.

As a result of this, we would need to revise the following schemes:

- Mold & Hawarden Duty Scheme
- Wrexham Duty Scheme

## **Section 2 – Proposed revisions to schemes in Mold & Hawarden and Wrexham**

### **Proposed Changes**

As a result of the change in custody arrangements at Wrexham magistrates court and the closure of Wrexham police station it was proposed to replace the current Mold & Hawarden and Wrexham schemes with one merged duty scheme.

#### **Option 1**

To support these changes, we proposed that the Mold & Hawarden and Wrexham duty schemes were merged both for court duty work and police station matters.

This approach would support the merged bench and the merged sitting patterns in the court. It would result in one police station duty solicitor covering the wider geographical area, avoiding the need for the police and call centre to determine which duty solicitor would be required for each client.

#### **Option 2**

To support these changes, we proposed that the Mold & Hawarden and Wrexham court duty rotas were merged so that duty slots for the court were shared across all providers that qualify for the two schemes.

As part of this option, the police station rotas of Mold Police station and Wrexham Police Station would continue to remain separate, meaning police station duty qualification would remain as currently set.

This approach recognised the requirement to merge the court rota to reflect the merged sitting patterns but allowed for separate police station duties to remain. As it was expected that the clients from both schemes would be attending the same police station, this option would rely on the police and call centre to identify which duty list to employ for each client.

#### **Preferred option**

Option 1 was preferred; to merge Mold & Hawarden and Wrexham court schemes as well as merging the police station schemes. This option provided the solution that would best fit the working practice of the courts and police without prejudicing the client and would mirror the combined North-East Wales justice area.

Respondents were invited to comment on these proposals and, if not in support of the proposal, to offer an alternative suggestion. A non-response was deemed an acceptance of the preferred option.

## **Responses to Consultation**

Five providers responded to the consultation.

One provider supported option 1 namely a merger of both police station and court duty work between the two schemes.

Four providers responded that they wished to maintain the status quo of two schemes for both court and police station work but in light of court work being transferred to Mold and the listings being merged, would support a merger of the court rota and a continuance of separate police stations schemes as outlined in option 2.

Three providers did not respond which were deemed supportive of option 1.

Whilst the responders and deemed responders were tied between option 1 and 2, we are proceeding with option 2. This results in the least amount of change to the existing schemes but reflects the change that is required to the court rotas to facilitate court work from both areas being listed in Mold from the 24<sup>th</sup> September. Whilst it is noted that the police station is shortly due to move to Llay, we currently operate two schemes out of Wrexham police station and a change of location does not prevent this from continuing.

## **Option to be taken forward and Next Steps**

Option 2 will be taken forward. A merged court rota will be introduced but we will maintain separate police station rotas.