



Legal Aid
Agency

Manchester Office

**7th Floor, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street
Manchester, M1 2WD**

**To: All Lancashire and Fylde Duty Scheme Members
Re: Saturday/Bank Holiday Courts – Lancashire and Fylde**

Response to the Consultation with Lancashire and Fylde Duty Scheme members on the arrangements for Lancashire and Fylde Saturday/Bank Holiday Court Duty Allocation at Preston Combined Court.

On 11 May 2026, the Legal Aid Agency issued a consultation regarding possible changes to the Saturday/Bank Holiday Court Duty Solicitor allocations at Preston Combined Court.

The deadline for responses to the consultation was 7 June 2026 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 no later than 22 June 2026. 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 proposed changes to the Lancashire and Fylde Duty Schemes was received.

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

The Proposed Options

OPTION A: COMBINE ALL LANCASHIRE AND FYLDE DUTY ROTA MEMBERS TO ALLOCATE THREE SATURDAY/BANK HOLIDAY COURT DUTY SOLICITORS.

This proposal would ensure fairness to access the Saturday/Bank Holiday Court Duty slots for all Lancashire and Fylde Duty members at Preston Combined Court.

OPTION B: CONTINUE TO ALLOCATE SATURDAY/BANK HOLIDAY COURT DUTY SOLICITORS FROM THE PRESTON/CHORLEY/ORMSKIRK/SOUTH RIBBLE & LEYLAND ROTA ONLY.

This proposal is a continuation of the current allocation arrangements, however will increase to three Duty Solicitors from the same rota on any Saturday/Bank Holiday.

Summary of Responses to the Options

We received 5 responses to the consultation on proposed changes. All 5 responses supported Option A. Three of these responses were from current members of the Preston/Chorley/Ormskirk/South Ribble & Leyland rota (from which the current Saturday/Bank Holiday Court Duty slots are allocated to). Two responses were from Duty Solicitors on other Lancashire and Fylde rotas.

Comments in support of Option A included:

“...as the detainees hail from the whole of the Lancashire area, Duty Solicitors should be allocated from that entire area. It is clearly an unfair advantage, to those Solicitors currently allocated i.e. from Preston, given that Clients from, for example, Blackpool do not have access to a Solicitor from the Blackpool and Fleetwood Scheme...”

“...Assuming that three duty solicitors will be appointed each week, it is our view that extending the pool of duty solicitors to Lancashire firms would be appropriate. The demands of three duty slots each week and those slots being limited to firms on the Preston rota only would place a heavy burden on those firms. There are firms on the Preston scheme with only one or two duty solicitors. To expect those firms to be able to manage additional duty slots would be inappropriate in our view...”

“...Ever since the Saturday morning cases were centralised at Preston CC I have thought that it was not fair that only the Preston scheme solicitors were included on the scheme despite defendants from Blackpool accounting for quite a proportion of those remanded...”

Decision

After careful consideration of the unanimous responses received, and the points raised within the same, the Legal Aid Agency have decided to proceed with **Option A: Combine all Lancashire and Fylde Duty Rota Members to allocate three Saturday/Bank Holiday Court Duty Solicitors.**

Next steps

- Option A proposed in the consultation document will take effect on 7 July 2026.
- New rotas will be issued to cover the period 7 July 2026 to 30 September 2026.

Yours faithfully,

Nicola Johanson
Area Contract Manager
Legal Aid Agency