



PRESS RELEASE

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Magistrates' Association responds to Government statement on court closures

The MA met the Minister of Justice on 15 December 2010 to discuss the court closure statement.

Afterwards, John Thornhill, Chairman of the Magistrates' Association said,

“Many of the points and concerns raised by the MA have been mentioned in the Government's national response but it is clear that final decisions have been made. We expressed grave disappointment that the number of magistrates' courts to be closed is as high as 93 with only 10 being reprieved. We support those court closures which have been accepted by magistrates believing that for their area, rationalisation is the best way forward and that access to justice will not present a problem for court users. In other areas however, magistrates have expressed grave concern about the impact of court closures. Their responses to the consultation have provided clear evidence that closures will adversely impact on court users and easy access to justice. For those areas this is a shattering blow to community summary justice and contrary to the principles of the Big Society as understood by the Magistrates' Association. We remain concerned about the consultation process and the quality of the information provided to the consultees. We are not satisfied that in every case the additional information that we provided has been properly taken into account.”

16 December 2010

END

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