Dear [Name],

COMMENCEMENT OF THE FLEXIBLE OPERATING HOURS PILOTS

I am writing to inform you that on Monday 2nd September, HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) will be commencing two Flexible Operating Hours pilots in the County Court at Brentford and the Manchester Civil Justice Centre.

Our Flexible Operating Hours pilot is a small part of the HMCTS reform programme which is looking to support a more efficient and effective justice system. By piloting the use of court hearing rooms outside the traditional hours of 10am to 4pm, we will test whether operating courts at different times of the day offers more accessible justice for court users.

Local Implementation Teams are in place in each pilot site, which include local representatives from the judiciary, housing associations and legal firms, and delivery partners from HMCTS estates and security. These teams will oversee the arrangements for the delivery of the pilots in Brentford and Manchester. The pilots will take place for six months and will consist of late sittings (4:30pm to 7pm) involving civil and family work at Manchester Civil Justice Centre and early (8am to 10:30am) and late sittings (4:30pm to 7pm) involving civil work only at the County Court at Brentford. Participation in the pilots is voluntary and parties have the option to opt out and have their case moved to a traditional day list if they wish.

We have appointed an independent organisation, IFF Research in consortium with Frontier Economics, to evaluate the pilots, looking at their impact on court users and an assessment of the costs and benefits of the pilots. We will publish a summary of the evaluation framework before the pilots commence. Once the pilots have concluded, we expect that it will take around three months for all the data to be captured and analysed, feeding into the final evaluation report. The final evaluation report will also be published once it is available.

Yours ever,

Paul

PAUL MAYNARD MP