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MODERNISING GOVERNMENT BID SUCCESSFUL

The Board's bid for a grant of £750,000 from the Modernising Government Fund has been successful. The grant will form part of a project costing around £1.8 million to enable the Board to conduct much of its business by "e-commerce" and meet the government's targets for our services to be available electronically by 2005.

Some of the long term benefits will be –

- solicitors will be able to submit applications and accounts electronically
- the process of applying for legal aid should become simpler and quicker
- less paperwork will mean that the scope for errors, and the storage and tracking problems associated with the 13 million documents currently received in a year by the Board will both be greatly reduced
- information and legal advice and assistance will be more widely available in rural and remote areas by use of digital and internet technology
- it will be possible to make and receive all payments (including, for example, contributions and payments of expenses) by BACS or other electronic means.

In addition to the benefits for legal aid applicants and solicitors, the introduction of e-commerce should allow the Board to identify and analyse trends in legal aid, reduce administration costs and increase efficiency, thereby producing savings for the taxpayer.

Wallace Gray, our Director of Information Systems, will be the programme manager for this initiative, and we will invite a representative of the Law Society to participate on the project board. The Scottish Executive will receive regular reports on progress. We will work closely with the Law Society and the Faculty of Advocates to ensure that the profession is consulted on the planning and implementation of the project over the next three years.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

THE BOARD ADVERTISES FOR INNOVATIVE PROPOSALS FOR PART V PILOT PROJECTS

Scottish Legal Aid Board aims to form partnerships with public, private and voluntary agencies to develop legal services in the community

Background

In the autumn of 2000, a multi-agency working group was set up by Justice Minister Jim Wallace to develop proposals on legal services in the community. Members of the group include the Law Society of Scotland, the Scottish Legal Aid Board, the Scottish Association of Law Centres, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, Citizens Advice Scotland and the Scottish Consumer Council. One of the objectives for the group set out by the Minister was to “stimulate local partnerships which will draw together what there is and in a spirit of co-operation, work out how best to meet the needs of the client”.

Pilot projects under Part V

As part of their development of policy on legal services in the community, Ministers have asked the Board to put in place a number of pilot projects and will shortly commence Part V of the Legal Aid (Scotland) Act 1986 to allow us to do so. It is expected that there will be a rolling programme of pilots with the first beginning as soon as possible.

Part V contains a range of provisions for the employment of solicitors by the Scottish Legal Aid Board. These provide for the employment of solicitors by the Board to

- ▶ give advice and assistance under the Act
- ▶ act for persons receiving legal aid
- ▶ work with local organisations.

The latter function would allow a solicitor to

- ▶ assist an organisation (perhaps by way of training and support) in its function of providing advice or guidance
- ▶ promote links between the organisation and local solicitors
- ▶ provide oral advice direct to clients

Working in partnership

Although neither private firms of solicitors nor local authorities can themselves be regarded as “local organisations” within the meaning of Part V, they may be able to participate in Part V projects run in partnership with local organisations. We are keen for the pilots to enhance links between private solicitors and the wider advice sector, as we believe that this will help improve access to appropriate services. We would, therefore, actively encourage the development of such proposals.

The Board has advertised widely for organisations to submit proposals for pilots and will be considering these applications over the next few months. The Board’s aim for pilots run under Part V is to allow the evaluation of different methods of improving access to justice through the direct employment of solicitors by the Board. Pilots might also allow the Board to monitor the effectiveness of innovative methods of providing legal services.

It is hoped that, by running a number of pilots, a comparison of the impact on access to justice of differing arrangements for the employment of solicitors will be possible. This experience will, in turn, be of great assistance in the formulation of an effective policy on community legal services, making best use of available resources. It is with this aim in mind that the Board will consider proposals for pilots.

The pilots will seek to make a real difference to the service an organisation provides, either in terms of improving the provision of an existing service, providing an existing service in a different way, or extending the service in new ways.

For more information on the scope and development of the Part V pilots please contact the Policy Unit on 0131 226 7061 or visit the Board’s web-site on www.slab.org.uk .

SERVICE STANDARDS PUBLISHED

Our service standards for applicants, opponents, solicitors and advocates are now on our public web site at www.slabb.org.uk and on our web site for the profession, www.slabbpro.org.uk. The standards set out the level of service which you can expect from the Board, both at specific stages of a case and in general matters such as communications. They will also be included in new leaflets for the public and assisted persons, which we are producing.

The standards support the performance indicators which are published in our Corporate Plan. The Plan for 2001-2003 will be published in late April and will contain the performance targets for the three years.

ACCOUNTS ASSESSMENT UPDATE

CLAIMS FROM CUSTODY REPORTERS AND CURATORS

As part of our ongoing review of our accounts processes and to improve our service to you, we have identified the following areas where changes can be made to make the system more efficient.

Custody reporters

The process of allowing custody reporters to submit their claims direct to the Board has caused some problems. In many cases, we do not receive the legal aid reference number or enough details about the instructing solicitor to register the claim. This leads to a delay while we obtain all the necessary information. Then we must complete, register and process a reimbursement form and inform the solicitor when payments are to be made to their bank account. The solicitor then passes the payment to the reporter. This also causes difficulties when either party contacts the Board with a query about the claim.

In consultation with the Law Society, we have agreed that from 21 May reporters' accounts should be sent to the instructing solicitor, who will then submit a claim for reimbursement of outlays. The instructing solicitor will have all the necessary information about the case and this will allow us to register and process the claim more quickly. In turn, this will mean quicker payments to custody reporters and less correspondence for the instructing solicitor, reporter and the Board.

Claims from curators

Claims submitted by curators should also be sent to the Board by the instructing solicitor. We receive a number of claims each week direct from the curator and we have to return these, as we cannot accept the claim in this way.

Change to procedure for offer letters in criminal accounts

We have changed our procedure for making offers in criminal accounts. From 29 January this year, we have been sending a copy of the abated account with the offer letter and keeping the original. This means that both the Board and the solicitor have access to the abated account when any telephone negotiations take place. Our Accounts Assessment staff will note any amendments made during negotiations on the original, and you can keep the copy with any notes you have made. Where you are content with the offer made, you keep the copy account but you must confirm your acceptance in writing. A tear off slip on the offer form is provided for this purpose. If we do not receive the acceptance slip within 30 days, we will assume the offer has been accepted.

The new system avoids the need to send the original account back and forth between us until the account has been agreed, reducing time and administration costs for both the Board and the practitioner.

For any offers made before 29 January,

please return the original account with your response to our offer letter.

Guidelines for the profession

We are in the process of producing guidelines for our staff on fixed payment accounts. These will be in a similar format to the criminal accounts guidelines issued last year, and will also be issued to the profession. We will be publishing these within the next few weeks. These will be followed by guidelines on advice and assistance accounts, which we hope to publish in the summer.

We are also working on guidelines and practice notes on specific aspects of accounts for advocates. These will be discussed with the Faculty of Advocates and the Society of Solicitor Advocates before they are published.

PAYMENT RATES FOR EXPERT WITNESSES

Regulation 8(1)(b) of the Criminal Legal Aid (Scotland) (Fees) Regulations 1989 specifies that a solicitor will be paid the following outlays – “Fees paid to witnesses who are not on the Crown list, which fees shall not exceed the sums payable from time to time by the Crown to witnesses of the same categories.”

CROWN RATES		
The Crown rates have been amended with effect from 1 February 2001.		
For <u>professional witnesses</u>, these rates are:	Fee from <u>1.4.96</u> £	Fee from <u>1.2.2001</u> £
Engaged not more than 2 hours	53.20	59.60
Engaged more than 2 hours but not more than 4 hours	79.70	89.30
Engaged more than 4 hours but not more than 6 hours	119.50	133.90
Engaged more than 6 hours	159.30	178.50
For <u>expert witnesses</u>, these rates are:	Fee from <u>1.4.92</u> £	Fee from <u>1.2.2001</u> £
Engaged not more than 1 hour	60.10	75.50
Engaged more than 1 hour, but not more than 4 hours	123.30	152.70
Engaged more than 4 hours, but not more than 6 hours	185.00	229.20
Engaged more than 6 hours	246.70	305.60

Applications for sanction

We appreciate that there are occasions when it can be difficult to obtain the services of a particular expert at these rates and we are currently in discussions with the Crown about this. However, it can be seen that the Crown rates proceed on the basis of remuneration for the witness based on the number of hours spent on the work. In order to apply the regulation as it stands, it is clear that the Board requires a breakdown of the costs likely to be incurred by an expert witness, in particular:

- ▶ the hourly rate being charged
- ▶ the number of hours the witness is likely to be involved in the work
- ▶ likely travel time and
- ▶ estimated outlays.

This information should be shown clearly in the sanction request form, rather than simply quoting a total global fee. *Supplying this information at the outset will help to avoid delay in determining requests and will allow us to apply such flexibility as the current arrangements allow us.*

Accounts

To reduce delay at the accounts stage you should ask expert witnesses to submit their fee notes in a way that identifies:

- ▶ the broad bands of work done
- ▶ the time taken including travel and
- ▶ the charge out rate, rather than a global fee.

Again, this will help to avoid unnecessary continuations for this information at the accounts stage.

Mileage

The Board now pays a flat rate of 39 pence.

We are currently looking at our procedures and practices in connection with the consideration of sanctions in criminal cases with a view to expediting the process and we will make further information available to the profession in due course.

CRIMINAL LEGAL AID – FIXED PAYMENTS (SECTION 23(1)(b))

We have now finished our discussions (see Issue No. 30) on the interpretation of paragraph 2, schedule 1 of the Criminal Legal Aid (Fixed Payments) (Scotland) Regulations 1999 which provides remuneration in section 23(1)(b) cases. The paragraph reads:

“2. All work done in connection with a grant of legal aid under section 23(1)(b) of the Act including the first 30 minutes of conducting a proof in mitigation”.

As criminal practitioners are aware, the meaning of this provision was never clear. The first part of the regulation appeared to provide one fixed payment for all work done under a section 23(1)(b) certificate and this, indeed, is the interpretation the Board had placed on the provision. On the other hand, the second part did appear to indicate that it might not be exhaustive of all work which could be carried out in such a case. We decided, after some discussion, that there was scope for interpreting the provision less restrictively and that there were sufficient “grey areas” to justify what could be considered a broader approach.

The interpretation which the Board intends to place on this provision with immediate effect is that solicitors will be paid the fee prescribed by paragraph 2 for all work done under a Section 23(1)(b) certificate, including appearance at the first diet. In addition, however, all attendances at a diet of deferred sentence (as defined in the regulations) will attract the fixed payment prescribed by paragraph 6 of Schedule 1, and a proof in mitigation extending beyond the first 30 minutes will attract the further fixed payments prescribed by paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 of Schedule 1. Any other appearances which do not fall within the scope of the further fixed payments prescribed by paragraphs 3-9 of the schedule will be included in the core fixed payment prescribed by paragraph 2.

This applies to all cases where work has been carried out under the fixed payment regime from 1 April 1999.

If you wish to make a supplementary claim for payment for cases which have been previously settled, please forward a copy of your original claim form together with details of the additional payment sought. If you do not have a copy of the original forms, please complete and submit an ACC/CRIM/1 form ticking the supplementary account box together with details of the additional sum sought.

Trials

Further progress has also been made in clarifying what is a “trial”, for the purposes of the regulations:

Position prior to first witness being sworn

The case of *Ruxton –v- Borland* 2000 SLT 612 overruled the earlier decision of *Mitchell –v- Vannett* 1999 SLT 934. The effect of this is that *Borland* not only represents what the law is now; it represents what the law is deemed always to have been, as discussed in the case of *Millar –v- Dickson* 2000 SLT 1111 at 1117. For the purpose of dealing with accounts where the conduct of the ‘trial’ is an issue, the decision of *Borland* therefore not only states what the law is from the date of the

decision but what it has been since the fixed payment regulations came into force. Broadly stated, the decision in *Borland* is that a trial commences when the first witness is sworn.

The Board is of the view that the question of what fees are payable under the regulations requires to be determined at the date on which the payment is being made and that the law according to *Borland* should, therefore, be applied to all cases which raise the issue of the definition of a "trial" prior to the first witness being sworn. In any case in which payments under the regulations are being claimed it follows that any payments for "first" or subsequent days of trial will only be due if the trial had actually commenced, i.e. the first witness having been sworn. This will affect all cases where payment has not been made.

This decision, of course, does not arise as the result of a change in the legislation or a taxation decision. It has arisen as a result of the receipt of the opinion of senior counsel. A taxation on this issue which had been raised is no longer proceeding at the request of the solicitor. Clearly this does not affect any other solicitor who remains of the view that the position adopted by the Board is wrong and any solicitor who continues to hold the view that this remains a "question or dispute" with the Board is, of course, entitled to proceed to taxation.

A 'trial' has already been defined for the purposes of these regulations as commencing 'when the first witness is sworn' for all proceedings in existence as at 1 October 1999. [The Criminal Legal Aid (Fixed Payments)(Scotland) Amendment Regulations 1999.]

Position after first witness is sworn

The position of a "trial" after the first witness is sworn was clarified in a recent taxation and subsequent note of objections to the sheriff in the case of *P.F. (Edinburgh) -v- Kenneth O'Brien*.

This case involved a number of adjourned trial diets after the commencement of the trial. (Evidence had been led and it was agreed that the trial had commenced.) Some of the diets were of a formal nature, some attendances taking place without the attendance of either the accused or the witnesses. Notwithstanding, Mr McConnell, the Joint Sheriff Court Auditor, held that "whatever the reasons for the various adjournments between [the date of commencement and the date the trial concluded] it seems to me that the trial was still in progress and all advocacy in the intervening days was, in my opinion, consistent with the conduct of the trial". The effect of the decision is that all trial diets whether or not evidence is led after the commencement of the trial will be dealt with in terms of paragraphs 3, 4 or 5 of Schedule 1 to the regulations.

A copy of the decision will be made available on the Board's website.

APPLICATIONS UPDATE

Extensions to grants of civil legal aid

We have recently reviewed our approach to the procedure to be followed when seeking an extension to an existing grant of civil legal aid (for example, to change forum, add a new crave or opponent, oppose an interim appeal). Previously, the opponent did not necessarily know that an extension to the grant of legal aid was being sought, and any extension granted was not effective from a particular date. Urgent steps were undertaken with the risk that there would be no mechanism for payment if the extension request was refused.

We will now be treating requests for extensions to an existing grant of legal aid in the same way we treat an application for civil legal aid. The effects of this change are as follows.

We will have to consider whether the statutory tests of *probabilis causa litigandi* and reasonableness are met in respect of the proposed extension. We will already have determined financial eligibility, but the solicitor should remind the client of his/her duty to inform us of any change in circumstances.

The opponent has to receive intimation of the proposed extension and be given an opportunity to lodge objections within 14 days.

Specially urgent work can now be undertaken under regulation 18 of the Civil Legal Aid (Scotland) Regulations 1996. If the extension request is refused, payment for specially urgent work may be sought under the Secretary of State's determination, subject to the usual tests in the determination. There will be no need to collect any notional contribution, given that we will already have determined financial eligibility.

The effective date of the extension will be the date we were satisfied that the statutory tests were met for that matter.

Requests for extensions to grants of civil legal aid must be submitted on form AMND/APP. The extent of the existing grant of civil legal aid and the scope of the extension should be clearly set out in the form. Extension requests should be accompanied by the following documents –

- ▶ a supplementary memorandum
- ▶ an intimation document
- ▶ the original papers
- ▶ copies of any reports which have been obtained
- ▶ additional statements
- ▶ a copy of the pleadings to date together with any interlocutors which have been pronounced.

Where an extension request is refused, the applicant may seek a review of the decision to refuse.

ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE

Advice and assistance helpline number change

From 26 January, the telephone number for our advice and assistance helpline changed to 07711 424344. You can call the helpline outwith office hours if the current level of authorised expenditure is insufficient to cover the work to be done before the Board's next working day. If the person staffing it cannot answer immediately, you can leave a message and we will get back to you as quickly as possible. The helpline is intended only for emergency situations and any requests for an increase granted on it must be backed up as soon as possible with a fax or written confirmation to the Board.

Advice and assistance forms

We are no longer accepting advice and assistance forms (AA/APP) marked "Revised 5/98".

We announced the change in the forms in January 2000 in Issue 29 of the Recorder. In November 2000, in Issue 31 of The Recorder, we told you that we were no longer accepting the old advice and assistance forms. New supplies marked "Revised 9/99" have been available from George Stewart & Co. for over a year.

We are still receiving over 200 old versions of the form each day and we are, therefore, now returning these to

the nominated solicitor, unregistered. From now on you should only use the new version marked "Revised 9/99". The Board's Resource CD-ROM has not yet been updated and revised. We will, therefore, continue to accept the version marked "Revised 5/98" only if it is the digital version printed from the CD-ROM, although you can update this from our web site for the profession, SLABPro. If you have old stocks of the form, you can send them to the Board's Communications Office for recycling.

SECTION 17 OF THE LEGAL AID

(SCOTLAND) ACT 1986 - the handling of principal sums

and the submission of advice and assistance accounts.

On 7 March we wrote to all legal aid practitioners about changes to our procedures relating to section 17 of the Legal Aid (Scotland) Act 1986, the handling of principal sums and the submission of advice and assistance accounts.

A press release on behalf of the Scottish Executive, the Board and the Law Society was issued at the same time, with a small amount of press coverage on the following days. On Monday 12 March public notices were placed in the Scotsman, the Herald, the Dundee Courier, the Aberdeen Press & Journal, the Daily Record and the Metro.

Dedicated helplines on this matter for the public and the profession have meant that anyone needing more information has been able to obtain this quickly and easily.

The helplines had, at the time of writing, received fewer than 200 calls from members of the public. Of these roughly 50% appear to fall within the criteria. In each of these cases we have suggested that the applicant should approach the nominated solicitor who acted for them. We have also received around 30 calls from solicitors mostly asking for clarification of the new procedures. Some have expressed concerns about their inability to charge in respect of the work done in identifying claims. We have received a small amount of mail on similar matters.

We do not yet know how many members of the public have contacted their solicitors, but informal discussions with members of the profession suggest that the number is small. We will continue to monitor the volume of enquiries and claims.

MEDIATION IN NON-FAMILY CASES – COVER PROVIDED BY LEGAL AID

The costs of non-family mediation may be allowed as an outlay in a solicitor's account under advice and assistance or civil legal aid, provided certain conditions are met.

Since 1995 the cost of mediation in family cases has been allowed in certain circumstances as an outlay in a solicitor's account. The reimbursement of these costs has been sought in relatively few cases. Nevertheless, we recognise mediation as an option that may be preferred by some individuals in certain circumstances. We are aware that mediation may also be available in non-family cases. Although the level of demand for mediation in such cases is unclear, we consider that it should be given the same recognition as mediation in family cases. Accordingly, we will now consider requests for increases in expenditure under advice and assistance or for sanction in civil legal aid cases to cover the costs of mediation in non-family cases.

There is no restriction on the type of case which can be considered suitable for mediation, but the Board's consideration of requests will be based on the criteria set out below.

As with family mediation cases, the costs of mediation in non-family cases will be regarded as an outlay in a solicitor's account under advice and assistance or civil legal aid. This will, of course, apply only to the client's own share of the total mediation fee, and not any share which is to be borne by an opponent or opponents. If the opponent is also receiving legal aid or advice and assistance, s/he should seek sanction or an increase in authorised expenditure to cover his/her share of the cost.

The Board will normally only consider requests for mediation involving mediators accredited by the Association of Mediators, the Centre for Dispute Resolution (CEDR) or the Law Society of Scotland under its Accord scheme, although we may also agree to the use of other accredited specialists.

Where solicitors wish to make use of mediation facilities, they must:

- ▶ obtain the Board's approval for unusual expenditure before incurring the outlay in civil legal aid
- ▶ request an increase in authorised expenditure to cover the cost of the mediation proceedings in advice and assistance. An initial increase of £500 will normally be considered reasonable.

Before we can consider a request for sanction or an increase in authorised expenditure, we need the following information:

- ▶ the form that the mediation will take and, in particular, whether there will be legal representation on both sides
- ▶ details of the fees the mediator will charge and whether this will be at a flat rate, regardless of the duration of the mediation, or at an hourly or daily rate
- ▶ an estimate of the time to be spent by the solicitor on advising the assisted person before and after the mediation
- ▶ the prospects of success and the likelihood of being able to resolve the dispute by way of mediation
- ▶ the client's attitude towards the mediation and the likelihood of both parties accepting the outcome of any mediation
- ▶ where possible, the costs that will be avoided should the mediation go ahead, for example, avoiding a proof or other court hearing.

We would normally expect the parties to enter into a legally binding agreement at the conclusion of the mediation. Solicitors should provide the Board with information on the outcome of the mediation and, if it was not successful, the reason why not. We will need the latter information if a further increase is sought, or a civil legal aid application is submitted after the mediation has taken place. Where the case concludes following the mediation, the solicitor should indicate in the narrative of their account whether the mediation resulted in a settlement.

All intimations and applications concerning mediation will be dealt with by the Board's Legal Services Department. If you have any queries regarding these guidelines, please contact Catriona Whyte, Solicitor, on 0131 226 7061, ext. 276.

CIVIL LEGAL AID APPLICATIONS

FORMS RETURNED AS INCOMPLETE

We have noticed an increase in the number of civil legal aid application forms we are returning to solicitors as incomplete. This causes a delay in registering and considering the application and extra administration for both the Board and the solicitor. Most importantly it can result in a delay before the application is determined.

We are currently carrying out an investigation to identify the areas of the forms that are causing the most problems. This will allow us to make improvements to the system, such as amending our practice if we are returning forms as incomplete where it is not absolutely necessary to do so, and advising practitioners of the mandatory sections that are most frequently left blank.

We will update practitioners of the results of this investigation as soon as possible. In the meantime, please help us minimise this problem by completing all mandatory sections of the forms.

COMPLIANCE UPDATE

A copy of the Criminal Legal Assistance Register was sent to Compliance Partners in December 2000. Since then a significant number of firms have informed us of changes to their firm or solicitors who are registered to provide criminal legal assistance. Any firms who have not already done so should check the details for their firm and registered solicitors, and contact our Criminal Legal Assistance Registration Unit (CLARU) as soon as possible with any changes.

The *Code of practice in relation to criminal legal assistance* states that the Compliance Partner should inform the Board immediately when a solicitor leaves or joins their firm. This ensures that our records are up-to-date. It also allows us to regularly update the register on our public web site, to help people looking for a solicitor who carries out criminal legal aid.

GOLD AWARD FOR THE BOARD'S MAILROOM

Our mailroom has been awarded gold accreditation from Royal Mail following a comprehensive audit of our mailroom operations. The gold award is the highest standard awarded by Royal Mail, which visits mail rooms throughout the UK. Auditors from Royal Mail spent a day carrying out the audit which included all aspects of our mailroom's operations, including location, environment, layout, equipment, inward processing and distribution of mail, outward processing and despatch, staffing, performance and operational structure, quality, financial issues, health and safety, and security.

The auditors praised the work of the Board's mailroom and said the gold accreditation was a deserved award for a well run, hard working department.

On average, the staff in our mail room process over 4,200 items of incoming mail every day which adds up to more than 1,000,000 incoming items of mail a year. The team also sends out an average of 900 envelopes via DX and 1,850 by Royal mail each day.

All our mail is received and sorted centrally and then delivered to departments. The mail room team aim to deliver the day's incoming mail by 10am, with applications taking priority. All applications mail is opened from 7.30am to allow the staff in the relevant departments to begin processing applications immediately when they start work at 8am. We have a dedicated DX address for applications which allows our mail room to identify these quickly and have them ready first.

LEGAL POST

We wrote to solicitors in January about Legal Post. The following is a summary of the current situation.

We will accept mail addressed to us by

Hays DX, to	Scottish Legal Aid Board Applications only 555251 Edinburgh 30	Scottish Legal Aid Board General mail 555250 Edinburgh 30
Royal Mail, to	Scottish Legal Aid Board Applications only PO BOX 12650 Edinburgh EH3 7SX	Scottish Legal Aid Board 44 Drumsheugh Gardens Edinburgh EH3 7SW
Legal Post, to	Scottish Legal Aid Board LP 1 – Applications only Edinburgh 7	Scottish Legal Aid Board LP 2 – General Mail Edinburgh 7

We will continue to send mail out only by Hays DX and Royal Mail, and to use Parcelforce and DX Direct for parcels.

No solicitors' records will be changed to include a Legal Post address – if you choose to come off DX, we will change your address to a postal one on our systems. We are continuing to monitor our incoming mail. For every ten pieces of Hays DX mail, we are receiving four pieces of Royal Mail and three of Legal Post. Until these volumes change we will not be joining Legal Post as full members.

WHO'S WHO AT THE BOARD

To help you find the right person at the Board to answer your query, the list below gives you a number of useful contacts.

Chief Executive – Lindsay Montgomery

E-mail – montgomeryli@slab.org.uk

Chairman – Jean Couper

E-mail – couperje@slab.org.uk

Fax – 0131 220 5145

Legal Services Department

Fax – 0131 225 3705

Director – Tom Murray

E-mail – murrayto@slab.org.uk

Solicitors – Alex Anderson, Helen Bell, Eve Crowe, Alison Granger, Douglas Haggarty, Olive Hogg, John McCleary, Caroline Robertson, Philip Shearer and Catriona Whyte.

Audit and Compliance Department

Fax – 0131 220 9850

Director – Ian Middleton

E-mail – middletonia@slab.org.uk

Manager, Compliance Audit – David Buchanan-Cook

E-mail – buchananda@slab.org.uk

Finance Department

Fax – 0131 220 5133

Director – Jim Edgar

E-mail – edgarji@slab.org.uk

Accounting and Budgeting Manager – Alan Williamson

E-mail – williamsonal@slab.org.uk

Receipts and Payments – Liz Reid

E-mail – reidli@slab.org.uk

Accounts Assessment Department

Fax numbers Civil accounts – 0131 220 3908

 Criminal accounts – 0131 220 4895

 A&A accounts – 0131 220 4882

Manager – Judith Cemery

E-mail – cemeryju@slab.org.uk

Treasury Department

Fax – 0131 220 5091

Project Co-ordinator – Joe Kelly

E-mail – kellyjo@slab.org.uk

Advice and Assistance Department

Fax – 220 3462 or 0131 220 2904

Assistant Manager – Billy Mattison

E-mail – mattisonbi@slab.org.uk

Civil Applications Department

Fax – 0131 220 4879

Manager – Derek Arthur

E-mail – arthurde@slab.org.uk

Criminal Applications Department

Fax – 0131 226 5477 or 0131 220 2905

Manager – Kingsley Thomas

E-mail – thomaski@slab.org.uk

Policy Unit

Fax – 0131 220 4878

Head of Policy – Colin Lancaster

E-mail – lancasterco@slab.org.uk

Information Systems Department

Fax – 0131 225 8357

Director – Wallace Gray

E-mail – graywa@slab.org.uk

General enquiries – support@slab.org.uk

Personnel and Development Department

Fax – 0131 225 7862

Personnel Manager – Linda Laughland

E-mail – laughlandli@slab.org.uk

Personnel Manager (Development) – Moira

Williamson

E-mail – williamsonmo@slab.org.uk

Secretariat (including Communications Office)

Fax – 0131 220 4878

Head of Secretariat – Janet Nixon

E-mail – nixonja@slab.org.uk

E-mail – general@slab.org.uk

FIND US ON THE WEB

You can find information for solicitors and advocates on our web site for the profession at www.slabpro.org.uk.

From 1 May, the new username for SLABPro is **mandate** and the password is **b9657a**. Our public web site is at www.slab.org.uk.

If you are sending e-mails to our general enquiry address – general@slab.org.uk – please make sure that you include the .uk section of the address. E-mails that do not contain this are wrongly directed to a person with a similar web address.

HAVE YOU RECEIVED THIS INFORMATION?

Since issue 31 of The Recorder was published in November 2000, the following mailshots containing important information about legal aid, have been sent to practitioners. If you did not receive these, contact our Communications Office for a copy or look on our web site for the profession, SLABPro, at www.slabpro.org.uk.

- ▶ Letter from Tom Murray, Director of Legal Services, to all firms enclosing a copy of the advice and assistance guidelines - November 2000
- ▶ Letter from Jim Edgar, Director of Finance, to all registered practitioners about the change to our procedures for offer letters in criminal accounts - 5 January 2001
- ▶ Letter from Tom Murray to all firms giving details of the change to ABWOR regulations in relation to employment tribunals, plus a new section of the Advice and Assistance Guidelines - 16 January 2001
- ▶ Letters from Colin McKinnell, Facilities Manager, to all firms who use Hays DX about the introduction of the Legal Post service - 17 and 26 January 2001
- ▶ Letter from Tom Murray to all solicitors including guidelines, concerning changes to the Board's procedures in relation to Section 17 of the Act - 7 March
- ▶ Letter from Jim Edgar to all practitioners about the new Financial Accounting and Management System (FAMS) - 29 March
- ▶ Changes to eligibility limits plus Keycard and pro forma calculation sheet

CHECK YOUR DETAILS

To ensure that correspondence, *The Recorder* and other important information from the Board reaches you, please make sure that you tell us immediately if you change address or firm.

Please also remember to tell us if your firm changes to or from Royal Mail and Hays DX so that we can update our records and send mail to you by the most appropriate means.

You should notify our Finance Department in writing of any change in address or practitioner details. Finance will inform the other departments within the Board which require this information.



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