

**PRESS RELEASE**

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**.PUBLIC. DEFENCE SOLICITOR**

**TEAM OF SOLICITORS ANNOUNCED FOR PUBLIC DEFENCE  
SOLICITORS' OFFICE**

The Director of the Public Defence Solicitors' Office, Alistair Watson, today announced his team of solicitors for the pilot scheme which will open its doors in Edinburgh on 1 October.

Commenting on the appointments, Alistair Watson said: "I am delighted to have such a dynamic team in place. It had been suggested that we might struggle to attract good quality recruits. As can be seen however, we have been able to attract extremely able lawyers all with a proven track record in the criminal courts and drawn from a number of firms who are major players in this field. It is very important that the public know that if they are defended by a public defence solicitor they will be getting the necessary skills and expertise to ensure they receive a high quality service."

Alistair Watson also announced that the months selected as the criterion for directing clients to the PDSO will be January and February of any year. To ensure that the public defence solicitors deal with enough cases to make a fair and valuable assessment of the scheme, clients born in these months will be directed to the PDSO.

"The Scottish Office Central Research Unit will be independently monitoring the PDSO and there needs to be a suitable number and variety of cases to make the evaluation effective.

However, given the level of service that the PDSO can offer, I hope that many people will also choose to come to us as their first option," Alistair Watson said.

## **Team of solicitors for Public Defence Solicitors' Office announced Continued from page 1**

The Public Defence Solicitors' Office will be located at 37 York Place in Edinburgh and it is intended that the Scottish Office Minister for Home Affairs and Devolution, Henry McLeish, will perform the official opening of the new office on 1 October.

The five public defence solicitors are:

**.Elaine Crawford** - obtained her law degree and diploma in legal practice from Glasgow University in 1989 and 1990 respectively. She has experience of all aspects of criminal court work and joins the PDSO from More and Company, Edinburgh.

**Kenneth Cloggie** - studied law at Dundee University, graduating in 1992. He has practiced as a criminal defence solicitor for over four years and comes to this post from More and Company, Kirkcaldy.

**Glenn Fraser** - studied for his law degree and diploma in legal practice at Strathclyde University. Following his traineeship, Glenn joined Ross Harper and Murphy as a criminal assistant and more recently comes to the PDSO from Nigel Beaumont and Company, Edinburgh.

**Jill Malloy** - graduated from Dundee University in 1992 and went on to study for her diploma in legal practice at Strathclyde University. She has experience in criminal defence work and joins the PDSO from Drummond Miller WS.

**Matthew Nicholson** - graduated in 1993 from Dundee University and after completing his diploma in legal practice joined local criminal defence practice More and Company where he became a senior assistant.

The Public Defence Solicitors' Office will run from 1 October as a pilot scheme for five years. The office will provide legal advice, assistance and representation in court for those who cannot afford to pay for it themselves. It will deal with summary criminal cases in the sheriff and district courts in Edinburgh.

### **Editors' Notes**

The Director of the PDSO, Alistair Watson, is an experienced criminal practitioner, having spent over 15 years in both private practice and the procurator fiscal service. He serves on the Law Society of Scotland's Admissions Committee and is actively involved with the University of Strathclyde's Centre for Professional Legal Studies. Alistair will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the PDSO and will lead the team of public defence solicitors in providing criminal legal assistance to clients.

**For further information contact: Charlotte Townsend at the Scottish Legal Aid Board, on 0131 2267061.**