



## Press Release

24<sup>th</sup> March 2011

### **Legal aid applicant pleads guilty to providing false information.**

A woman, who applied for legal aid, pled guilty to two offences at Stirling Sheriff court, 25<sup>th</sup> February; of providing false information in order to gain legal assistance, contravening Section 35(1)(b) of the Legal Aid (Scotland) Act 1986, and was ordered to pay £1,084 as compensation to the Scottish Legal Aid Board.

Rabenia Black (64) had applied for legal assistance for a case involving residence and contact.

The Board's background checks revealed that Rabenia Black had held sums at the time of her applications of around £54,000.

The Board then reported the matter to The Crown Office.

The civil legal aid bill amounted to £1,084.

A spokesperson for the Board stated, "A number of people attempt to defraud or abuse the legal aid system. We carry out a variety of work to minimise fraud and abuse, this includes checking with third parties such as banks and employers. Where an applicant fails to tell us about an important change in their financial circumstances or makes a false disclosure about their financial circumstances, we can refuse legal aid, or if legal aid has already been granted, we can withdraw it or issue warning letters and reassess their financial eligibility. In the most serious cases, we report the person to the Procurator Fiscal."

**Ends**

**Journalists please contact:**

Mat Lopez tel. (direct) 0131 240 1887.