



## News release

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### **SCOTTISH LEGAL AID BOARD PUBLISHES ANNUAL REPORT 2016-2017**

The Scottish Legal Aid Board (SLAB) has published its Annual Report showing activity in the last financial year.

The total cost to the taxpayer of legal assistance in Scotland was £135.7m in 2016-17, compared to £137.8 million in 2015-16.

The Annual Report was laid before the Scottish Parliament and covers the period from April 2016 to March 2017.

**Colin Lancaster, Chief Executive of the Scottish Legal Aid Board, said:**

“2016-17 has been a year of good performance for the organisation during a continued period of organisational change and a complex external environment.

“We developed a new three year Corporate Plan, which takes us up to March 2020. As part of this process, our Board agreed new strategic objectives for the organisation.

“The plan focuses on operational excellence, with a vision that we will transform the administration of legal aid.

“Although a significant focus of the Corporate Plan is on our internal operations and culture, everything that we do in pursuance of it will also aim to deliver positive outcomes for those seeking, accessing, and delivering legal aid.”

Our activities during 2016-17:

- For our main functions of taking decisions on legal aid applications and assessing and paying the accounts of solicitors and counsel we met or exceeded all but one of our headline performance indicators for the year
- We developed proposals for reform to fees for summary criminal legal aid, solemn criminal legal aid, and criminal ABWOR
- We developed and delivered advice to the Scottish Government on options for the delivery of legal aid for suspects in police custody in order to facilitate the implementation of the new Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2016
- For the first time, we developed three year business plans for our network of Civil Legal Assistance Offices
- We undertook consultation around the country with legal firms on options for how the legal aid system could be streamlined

- We were given important new duties as a Corporate Parent which gives us special responsibilities towards care experienced and looked after children and young people
- We have important equalities duties and during the year we developed and published a refreshed set of equality outcomes for delivery between 2017-20
- We implemented a quality assurance system for children's legal assistance in consultation with the Law Society of Scotland

The annual report and additional documents, including key statistics, are available on our [website](#).

For more information, please contact our Communications team on: 0131 240 1887