



# THE SCOTTISH LEGAL AID BOARD

44 Drumsheugh Gardens

Edinburgh EH3 7SW

Telephone (0131) 226 7061

Criminal Applications Division

Please ask for extension no 220

Your ref: -

Please quote the department above and  
our reference: KT/DP

Dear Sir/Madam

## CRIMINAL LEGAL AID - DUTY PLANS 2008

We are currently preparing the 2008 duty plans for the various sheriff and district courts.

If you wish to apply for inclusion in a plan you should complete and return the accompanying form, to reach us no later than **31 August 2007**.

To be eligible you must

- hold a practising certificate with no restriction affecting your entitlement to undertake legal aid work as at the closing date for applications
- have been accepted onto the Criminal Legal Assistance Register.
- have a place of business within the sheriff court or district court area for which the duty plan is being prepared and conduct the majority of your business within that court

The full eligibility criteria are shown overleaf. There are a number of changes this year in connection with the time a solicitor must wait before becoming eligible to apply for inclusion on a duty plan. Newly qualified solicitors must still have been providing criminal legal assistance and practising in the criminal courts for a period of one year, and then must serve on a district court duty plan for one year before being considered for inclusion on a sheriff court plan.

However, we are now inviting applications from all other experienced solicitors, including those who have recently moved to another area, or have set up a new firm. A number of local policies have restricted the involvement on the duty plans of new firms and experienced solicitors who have moved to another area. Our view is that these policies can no longer be justified, as they disadvantage new firms, and may well breach fair trading principles.

An application form is attached. The completed form must be accompanied by a copy of the applicant's practising certificate. If you apply to be included on more than one plan, we reserve the right to select in which plan, if any, to include you, without recourse to you. You should therefore state any preference clearly on the application form. We will acknowledge all applications on the date of receipt or as soon as possible after that date.

Please submit your application as soon as possible to avoid last minute difficulties.

A copy of this letter, the application form and the Duty Solicitor Guidelines are also available on the Board's Internet site ([www.slab.org.uk](http://www.slab.org.uk)).

Yours sincerely

Kingsley Thomas  
Manager of Criminal Legal Assistance