



THE SCOTTISH LEGAL AID BOARD

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Criminal Legal Assistance

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

30 July 2009

Dear Madam/Sir

REVIEW OF DUTY SOLICITORS SCHEME 2009

As advised in May, as part of the wider monitoring and review of the summary justice reforms, the Board is now looking at the operation of the duty schemes throughout the country. We have gathered views on the operation of the duty plans, which will help us finalise our consultation paper and ensure that the needs of all stakeholders can be addressed. We have also been attending meetings of the Local Criminal Justice Boards throughout the country to discuss this review.

We now propose to issue our consultation paper by the end of September 2009. The usual 12 week consultation period will then run to December 2009. We feel it is better to hold this consultation period in the autumn rather than in the summer, when time is more limited due to the holiday period. This will then allow us to consider responses in early 2010, and then invite applications for the revised duty plans to run from 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011.

Moving the duty plans from calendar to financial years also has benefits; as the future application process will then take place in January/February instead of the summer months, and the change to the new plans in will take place in April, instead of the busy Christmas/New Year period. All of the current 2009 duty plans run out at the end of December, so we plan to extend these to the end of March 2010 to ensure duty cover can continue in early 2009.

When our consultation paper is issued, we will be happy to meet with local Faculties or Bar Associations, and others to discuss the proposals during the consultation period.

Yours sincerely

Kingsley Thomas
Manager, Criminal Legal Assistance