



Summary criminal legal assistance reform: training seminars

Your details

Issued to all criminal legal assistance solicitors

Mailing 1: 30 May 2007

Your practitioner number

Your firm and branch code

REFORM OF SUMMARY CRIMINAL LEGAL ASSISTANCE TRAINING SEMINARS

This mailing encloses details on the reform of summary criminal legal assistance, which will be introduced on 30 June 2008.

To help inform and prepare you for the changes to both the criminal legal assistance system and the practical arrangements, we are holding a series of information seminars in June around Scotland. Although we will be publishing a number of guidance materials, these sessions will give you an overview of the changes, as well as a question and answer session on their implementation.

Seminars are free and qualify for cpd. They start at 6pm and are expected to conclude by 7.30pm. A buffet with tea and coffee is available from 5.30pm. You can read more details on the training seminars overleaf. To book a place for one of our training seminars, either book online at www.slab.org.uk or use this page and fax it back to us. As places are limited, please book at least two days in advance.

- Ayr - **Monday 9 June** - Ayr Racecourse, Ayr
- Inverness - **Tuesday 10 June** - Kingsmill Hotel, Inverness (formerly the Inverness Marriott)
- Falkirk - **Wednesday 11 June** - Park Hotel, Falkirk
- Fife - **Thursday 12 June** - Balbirnie House Hotel, near Glenrothes
- Dundee - **Monday 16 June** - Apex Hotel, Dundee
- Dumfries - **Tuesday 17 June** - Station Hotel, Dumfries
- Edinburgh - **Wednesday 18 June** - Quincentenary Hall, Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh
- Paisley - **Thursday 19 June** - Holiday Inn Glasgow Airport
- Central Scotland - **Monday 23 June** - Dakota, M8 Eurocentral Junction
- Glasgow - **Tuesday 24 June** - The Teacher Building, St Enoch Square, Glasgow
- Aberdeen - **Wednesday 25 June** - Hilton Treetops, Aberdeen
- Glasgow - **Thursday 26 June** - The Teacher Building, St Enoch Square, Glasgow

2. Please give us the names of any colleagues who will also attend this seminar.

Now return this form by fax back to: 0131 220 4878

Or email your details to: general@slab.org.uk or post to: Communications, Scottish Legal Aid Board, 44 Drumsheugh Gardens, Edinburgh EH3, 7SW.

More information on the seminars

The Scottish Legal Aid Board is running a series of evening training seminars on the reforms of summary criminal legal assistance, announced by the Cabinet Secretary for Justice. The legal assistance changes will be implemented on **30 June 2008**.

Although the Board will issue written guidance, the training seminars will give you an overview of the changes being made, to help you prepare for 30 June. These seminars will:

- help inform you about the changes to criminal advice and assistance, ABWOR and summary criminal legal aid
- enable you to learn about the practical changes, such as the introduction of new application and accounts forms, guidance and Legal Aid Online services
- following the presentation, you can ask questions about the implementation of the reforms, to help you prepare for the changes on 30 June.

Please note that these seminars are to provide training about the implementation of the reforms, and are not to discuss the merits of the changes. You should note that:

- the seminars will **start at 6pm** and close at 7.30pm
- a light buffet with tea and coffee will be available before the session from 5.30pm
- you can obtain CPD for these events
- they are **free** and open to staff in your office involved in criminal legal assistance work
- you should return your booking form at least two days in advance of the sessions. Places at seminars are limited. We may arrange further sessions depending on demand.

How to book and venue details

To book a place at an event, please complete the booking form:

- online on our website <http://www.slab.org.uk/profession/summarycriminal>
- return the booking form overleaf.
- you can find details of the venues including location maps on our website <http://www.slab.org.uk/profession/summarycriminal>
- we will also send you information on the venues by post.

For any seminar booking queries, contact the Board's Communications Department on **0131 240 1985** or email general@slab.org.uk



Summary criminal legal assistance reform

Mailing 1: 30 May 2007

Reform of summary criminal legal assistance Implementation date: 30 June 2008

The changes to summary criminal legal assistance will come into effect on Monday 30 June 2008. This first mailing is to advise you of the reforms information that we will be issuing over the next weeks. Also attached are details of the 12 evening training seminars we are holding across Scotland in June, together with a booking form.

Background to the reforms

The changes to summary criminal legal assistance have been developed from the original reform proposals, following consideration of all the issues raised from last year's consultation process, including those arising from the series of roadshows which formed part of that process, and from the discussions held subsequently with the legal profession's representatives. The final proposals were then approved and announced by the Cabinet Secretary for Justice on 8 April 2008.

The changes underpin the wider summary criminal justice reforms essentially by front-loading the system. They have been specifically designed to support the main features of these reforms such as the greater use of alternatives to prosecution, early effective preparation, early resolution of cases, where appropriate, and the intention to bring cases to court more quickly.

The main features of the summary criminal legal assistance reforms are:

- increasing duty solicitor payments
- enabling, with appropriate checks, appointed solicitors (solicitors of choice) to represent their clients from custody
- increasing criminal advice and assistance fee rates and ABWOR block fees to assist early negotiation and information gathering
- extending the scope of ABWOR and consolidating the tests for its grant
- reducing bureaucracy wherever possible
- introducing a new case disposal fee for the Sheriff and Stipendiary Magistrate's Courts to pay solicitors more appropriately for work done at the earlier stages of a case.

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Reforms implementation

We are currently working with colleagues in the Scottish Government to ensure that all appropriate regulations are amended to reflect these changes. Changes to the affirmative regulations were laid on 8 May 2008, and have just passed through the appropriate parliamentary procedures for implementation on 30 June 2008. Changes to the negative regulation will be laid by 5 June 2008, and will also come in force on 30 June 2008.

We are also working on changes to our own computer systems, guidance and application forms:

- we will be issuing new application forms for criminal advice and assistance/ ABWOR, summary criminal legal aid and for post-grant work such as sanction, together with a new accounts synopsis form
- our Legal Aid Online service will be updated for the advice and assistance changes, with other criminal legal aid services available later this year
- we are running training seminars during June and will be sending you guidance to help you prepare for the changes. Please refer to the cover page for details on the dates and locations of the seminars.

During June our programme of mailings and seminars will include:

- 4 June 2008 -Mailing 2 will detail the main features of the reforms and the new fee structure. It will also include details of the new application forms, which will automatically be sent to you.
- 9 - 12 June -evening training seminars in Ayr, Inverness, Falkirk and Fife
- 16 - 19 June evening training seminars in Dundee, Dumfries, Edinburgh and Paisley
- Mid-June - mailings with guidance on the summary criminal legal assistance reforms and form changes
- 23 - 26 June evening training seminars in central Scotland, Aberdeen and Glasgow
- Mid/late June - packs of the new printed forms will be automatically sent to you
- Late June - mailing with details of the changes to the accounts synopsis forms and Legal Aid Online changes for current users of the service.
- **30 June 2008 - implementation of the reforms.**

Our website www.slabb.org.uk will also contain all the up to date information on the reforms implementation.

You should now decide which training seminar you wish to attend and return your booking form to us.