

 Report No: **SLAB/2022/11**

 Agenda item: **15**

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| **Report to:** | The Board |
| **Meeting Date:** | 21 March 2021  |
| **Report Title** | Meetings with Outside Bodies |
| **Report Category** | For Information |
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| **Publication of the Paper** |
| This paper does not contain information of a sensitive nature and can be published. |

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| **Report** |

**SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT - JUSTICE**

***SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT, MINISTER FOR COMMUNITY & SAFETY, ASH REGAN, MSP****:*

On **9 December**, Colin Lancaster and Ray Macfarlane met with the Minister for Community Safety, Ash Regan on Teams. Colin briefed Ms Regan on our recently launched consultation on [**civil legal aid financial eligibility assessment**](https://www.slab.org.uk/news/consultation-launched-about-civil-legal-aid-financial-eligibility-assessment/) and other relevant current issues surrounding legal aid.

***SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT, DIRECTOR OF JUSTICE, JUSTICE DIRECTORATE:***

**On 22 December***,* Colin Lancaster met with Neil Rennick, Director of Justice within the Scottish Government alongside the presidents of the Law Society of Scotland and the Scottish Solicitors Bar Association to discuss moving forward with legal aid issues

**On 1 March**, Colin Lancaster, Graeme Hill and Marie-Louise Fox met with Director of Justice, Neil Rennick for an in-depth examination of the Resource Spending Review.

**On 7 March**, Colin Lancaster attended his regular catch up with Director of Justice, Neil Rennick. Matters discussed included the current issues in relation to the duty solicitor scheme withdrawals and recent proposals put forward to the Law Society of Scotland and Scottish Solicitors’ Bar Association in relation to fee reform.

***SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT, HEAD OF ACCESS TO JUSTICE, JUSTICE DIRECTORATE***

**On 7 December, 5 January and 2 February** Colin Lancaster attended a monthly catch up with Denise Swanson, Head of Access to Justice Unit, to discuss matters of mutual interest.

**On 13 December,** Colin Lancaster and Marie-Louise Fox met with Scottish Government’s Denise Swanson and other justice partners on Teams to discuss forward planning of holiday custody courts.

**On 13 January,** Colin Lancaster attended a meeting with Scottish Government’s Denise Swanson, Members of the Law Society of Scotland and Member of the Scottish Solicitors’ Bar Association to discuss issues surrounding solicitors’ fees.

**On 24 January,** Colin Lancaster met with Scottish Government’s Denise Swanson to discuss the  [correspondence](https://www.lawscot.org.uk/news-and-events/law-society-news/legal-aid-letter-to-scottish-government/) from The Law Society of Scotland President, Ken Dalling, and other matters of mutual interest in respect of legal aid funding.

**On 7 February,** Marie-Louise Fox met with Scottish Government’s Denise Swanson and representatives from Women’s Aid in relation to a Legal Services proposals put forward by the organisation.

***JUSTICE BOARD***

**On 16 December,** Colin Lancaster attended the Justice Board via Teams. The Agenda Included; COVID-19: Omicron Variant, Cyber Resilience, Justice Strategy: Vision & Outcomes and the Budget 2022/23.

**On 20 January,** Colin Lancaster attended the Justice Board on Teams, with the agenda included; COVID-19: Omicron Variant, Justice Strategy, Spending Review and Criminal Justice Committee Report: ‘Judged on Progress: The need for urgent delivery on Scottish Justice Sector reform’.

**On 17 February** Colin Lancaster attended the Justice Board on Teams, with the agenda included; DG Education & Justice Programme Management, Resource Spending Review and Criminal Justice Committee Report: Judged on Progress, Justice Strategy Delivery

**On 17 March**, Colin Lancaster attended the Justice Board on Teams, with the group being joined by Michael Kellet, Director of Population Health, and Orlando Heijmer-Mason, Head of Drugs Policy.

***CRIMINAL JUSTICE BOARD***

Colin Lancaster attends fortnightly meetings with other justice stakeholder bodies. These sessions are particularly focussed on the Recover, Renew, Transform programme which is reviewing how the system operates to ensure a resilient, effective justice system now and for the future.

***SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT: ACCESS TO JUSTICE PAYMENT PANEL***

On **19 January** Colin Lancaster, John Osborne & Matt Taylor met with members of Scottish Government’s justice economics and policy team to discuss matters in relation to the follow up work on the Expert Payment Panel.

***SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT – ACRA WORKING GROUP:***

Marie-Louise Fox led a meeting with senior representatives of all organisations involved in the Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019 working group, in preparation for implementation, effective from [**Friday 17 December**](https://www.slab.org.uk/news/childrens-team-preparing-for-changes-to-age-of-criminal-responsibility/). The Act raised the age of criminal responsibility in Scotland from eight years of age to 12 years of age.

***SCOTTISH CIVIL JUSTICE COUNCIL:***

On **31 January**, Colin Lancaster attended the first meeting of this year’s Scottish Civil Justice Council with the agenda including an Age of Criminal Responsibility update, the Consultation on Modes of Attendance and Aarhus compliance.

**On 14 March**, Colin Lancaster attended an in – person strategy meeting of the Scottish Civil Justice Council at the Radisson Blu, Royal Mile. The agenda included: The new rules for 2021-22, environmental scanning & the priorities for 2022-23.

***SCOTTISH CIVIL JUSTICE COUNCIL’S COSTS AND FUNDING COMMITTEE:***

On **13 December**, Ian Dickson attended a meeting of the Scottish Civil Justice Council’s Costs and Funding Committee on Teams

***SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT’S COVID-19 JUSTICE BOARD SUB GROUP:***

On **3 February and 3 March**, Kingsley Thomas attended a Scottish Government’s Covid-19 Justice Board Sub Group Teams meeting, which continues to monitor the latest on the pandemic and the easing of restrictions across the justice sector.

***SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT’S DIGITAL HUMAN RIGHTS BILL ACCESS TO JUSTICE WORKSHOP*:**

On **14 February**, Marie-Louise Fox and Wendy Dalgleish attended a digital Human Rights Bill Access to Justice session, focusing on Judicial remedies and routes to remedies. Organised by Scottish Government, this was the first of three workshops involving SLAB colleagues inputting their knowledge and experience to help inform the policy proposals for the Bill’s consultation this year and, more generally, the Bill’s development and implementation.

***SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT, ELECTRONIC BAIL MONITORING GROUP:***

On **7 March**, Paul Haran attended a meeting organised by Scottish Government exploring electronically monitored bail assessment, with discussion focused on the expectations for social work services at the point of assessment.

***SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT’S GOVERNANCE GROUP - IMPROVING THE MANAGEMENT OF SEXUAL OFFENCE CASES:***

On **21 December** Marie – Louise Fox attended the inaugural Teams meeting of the GovernanceGroup for improving the management of sexual offence cases.

**On 8 March,** Marie-Louise Fox attended a meeting alongside other justice partners organised by Scottish Government to discuss the creation of a national specialist sexual offences court working group.

***SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT CHILDREN’S HEARING IMPROVEMENT PROJECT****:*

On **16 February**, Marie-Louise Fox attended the Children's Hearing Advocacy Expert Reference Group, organised by Scottish Government, which continues to share learning and experiences of practice and problem solving.

***SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT RAPE TRIALS PILOT:***

On **10 March**, Marie-Louise Fox attended a meeting organised by Scottish Government, alongside other justice partners to consider a working group for a time-limited pilot of single judge rape trials.

***SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT, FAIs****:*

On **2 February**, Marie-Louise Fox and Wendy Dalgleish have met with Scottish Government’s Kieran Burke and Jill Stephen Poller to discuss legal aid funding for Fatal Accident Inquiries

**SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT – GENERAL**

***SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY MEETING***

on **28 January and 28 February**, Graeme Hill had an Accountability meeting with Scottish Government, with the agenda including the latest position on this year’s Admin spend and next year’s budget, this year’s Legal Aid Forecast and next year’s forecast, and the latest position on property updates.

***SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT’S CENTRAL GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT SHARED SERVICE STEERING BOARD***

On **10 March**, Graeme Hill attended the Scottish Government’s latest Central Government Procurement Shared Service Steering Board meeting on Teams, where the focus was operational and strategic support in all aspects of procurement.

***SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT, LETTER OF RIGHTS FOR SCOTLAND JOINT WORKING GROUP****:*

On **2 Feb**, Paul Haran attended a meeting of the Letter of Rights for Scotland Joint Working Group organised by Scottish Government, with the objective to establish recommendations to be taken to the Minister in respect of a new version of the Letter of Rights.

**UK GOVERNMENT**

***GOVERNMENT ACTUARY’S DEPARTMENT****:*

On **14 February**, Graeme Hill met with the Government Actuary’s Department to discuss SLAB’s pension scheme valuations and liabilities.

**LAWYERS AND REPRESENTATIVE BODIES**

***FACULTY OF ADVOCATES****:*

On **8 December**, Colin Lancaster had a quarterly catch up meeting via Teams chat with Roddy Dunlop QC, Dean of Faculty of Advocates, to discuss matters of mutual interest

***KEEGAN SMITH SOLICITORS, TRAUMA AWARENESS***:

On **15 December**, Colin Lancaster and Paul Haran met with Iain Smith, partner of Keegan Smith solicitors, to discuss trauma awareness in the criminal justice system.

***LAW SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND*:**

On **2 March,** Colin Lancaster had his first meeting with the new Chief Executive of the Law Society of Scotland, Diane McGiffen**.**

On **10 March,** Colin Lancaster and Chair of the Board, Ray MacFarlane met with the CEO, President & Vice President of the Law Society of Scotland for the first Quarterly catch up meeting of the year to discuss matters of mutual interest in relation to Legal Aid and in particular proposals for fee reform recently issued by the Scottish Government.

***LAW SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND, COVID – 19 RESILLIENCE GROUP*:** Paul Haran attended fortnightly Law Society of Scotland Resilience Group meetings, organised with other justice agencies and partners, which continues to monitor the impact of Covid-19 on the profession.

***LAW SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND, CPD SEMINAR:***

On **8 December,** Marie-Louise Fox, Ian Dickson and various other staff members attended a seminar on Teams conducted by Sarah Gilzean of Morton Fraser, which was a Law Society Accredited Specialist in Discrimination Law. Attendees were given a general refresher on the Equality Act and disability discrimination.

**On 20 January**, Paul Haran attended an event organised by The Law Society of Scotland titled ‘Introduction to Sentencing Young People’. The sentencing young people guideline was approved by the High Court of Justiciary on 09 November 2021 and came into effect on 26 January 2022. Recognising the greater capacity for change, the guideline puts rehabilitation at the heart of sentencing young people

***LAW SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND, QUALITY ASSURANCE:***Graeme Hill and Marie - Louise Fox attended monthly Civil QAC meetings hosted by the Law Society of Scotland where peer review and matters of Civil Quality Assurance were discussed.

***SHERIFF PATERSON***: On **31 January**, Paul met with Sheriff Paterson to discuss duty solicitor arrangements in the Borders area.

**JUSTICE SECTOR BODIES**

***CROWN OFFICE AND PROCURTAOR FISCAL SERVICE*:**

On **4 March**, Colin Lancaster had a quarterly catch up meeting with Crown Agent David Harvie where discussion focused upon management of the recent withdrawals from the duty scheme by the various Bar Associations throughout the country.

***COFPS DAS CONSULTATIVE GROUP***:

On **15 December**, Marie-Louise attended a meeting of the DAS Consultative Group in Glasgow, organised by COPFS, which brought together a Sheriff Principal, defence agent representatives and other criminal justice stakeholders to develop the PIDM Booking App and the strategic DAS solution.

**On 25 February**, Kingsley Thomas attended a meeting of the Crown Office’s Defence Agents Service Consultative Group, which is looking at ways of improving communications between the Prosecution and Defence solicitors in criminal cases.

***IRISH JUSTICE DEPARTMENT*:**

On **21 December**, Paul Haran and Paula McGee met with an Irish Justice Department representative who is conducting research into a Public Defender model for Ireland, to obtain information regarding the Scottish structure and operation of the Public Defence Solicitors’ Office.

***JUSTICE STAKEHOLDERS, DUTY CONTINGENCY PLANNING*:**

On **24 January,** Marie-Louise Fox and Paul Haran met with members of Scottish Government, Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service and Police Scotland, to discuss contingency plans regarding the duty solicitor scheme.

***MINISTRY OF JUSTICE*:**

On **17 January**, Colin Lancaster, Marie-Louise Fox and John Osborne met with the Director of Access to Justice from the Ministry of Justice to discuss matters of mutual interest in relation to legal aid north and south of the border.

***POLICE SCOTLAND*:**

On **10January,** Marie Louise Fox, Kingsley Thomas and Alistair Mathieson attended a meeting with Police Scotland to discuss intimation of withdrawal from the Duty Rota by a number of solicitors and the contingencies/effects moving forward.

***SRO GROUP MEETING FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE ORGANISED BY POLICE SCOTLAND****:* Marie Louise Fox attended the monthly SRO Group meeting for Criminal Justice organised by Police Scotland via Teams.

***SCOTTISH COURT AND TRIBUNAL SERVICE, ACRA:***

On **16 February**, Marie-Louise Fox attended an Age of Criminal Responsibility Act (ACRA) meeting on Webex, organised by The Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service, with the working group’s remit to create child friendly court forms drafted without jargon in child friendly language.

***SCOTTISH COURT AND TRIBUNAL SERVICE***:

 On **2 March** Paul Haran attended the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service’s latest Summary Update meeting via Webex.

***TULLIALLAN POLICE COLLEGE, CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORMS WORKSHOP*:**

On **9 February** Kingsley Thomas attended a Criminal Justice reforms session at Tulliallan Police College focused on the Summary Justice pilots due to take place later this year in Dundee, Hamilton and Paisley which aim to introduce new ways of dealing with summary procedure criminal cases more effectively.

 **PUBLIC BODIES**

***NDPB FORUM****:*

On **14 December**, Colin Lancaster attended a meeting of the NDPB Forum on Teams with Scottish Government’s Director of Digital, Colin Cook, regarding a rapid review of Scottish Government digital functions.

**On 3 February,** Colin Lancaster attended the Executive Non Departmental Public Bodies Forum meeting where Audit Scotland will discuss the development and delivery of their work programme on behalf of the Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission, as well review their relationship with and reporting to the Scottish Parliament.

***SCOTTISH LEGAL COMPLAINTS COMMISSION****:*

On **8 February**, Colin Lancaster and Andy McIntosh met with Neil Stevenson of the Scottish Legal Complaints Commission to discuss legal services regulation and legal aid.

**OTHER MEETINGS**

***CARE INSPECTORATE:***

On **27 January,** Paul Haran met with the Care Inspectorate on Teams to discuss AWI Guidance for Appropriate Adults, with the aim of bringing clarity to this area of practice for Appropriate Adults and services, and to inform a review of existing guidance.

***RAPE CRISIS SCOTLAND ROUNDTABLE:***

On **10 December**, Colin Lancaster and Paul Haran participated in a roundtable session, together with other relevant bodies, organised by Rape Crisis Scotland to discuss issues surrounding criminal proceedings for domestic abuse and sexual violence.

***SCOTTISH VIOLENCE REDUCTION UNIT****:*

On **20 January**, Paul Haran met with Niven Rennie, Director of the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit regarding proposals in relation to trauma awareness in the criminal justice sector and in particular, Custody navigator proposals.

**On 2 February**,Paul Haran met with Kirsty Giles from the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit to discuss a trauma training program for members of the PDSO.

***SCOTTISH WOMEN’S AID:***

On **2 March**, Colin Lancaster discussed access to solicitors and legal aid for women with Dr Marsha Scott of Scottish Women’s Aid (SWA), as well as proposals put forward by SWA to Scottish Government in respect of potential projects/pilots to assist women in the legal process.

***SHARED PARENTING SCOTLAND****:*

On **9 March**, Colin Lancaster and Marie-Louise Fox met with representatives from Shared Parenting Scotland to discuss access to solicitor issues and proposals put forward by the organisation in relation to the management of civil family law cases.

***SUPPORTING OFFENDERS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES (SOLD):***

On **24 February**, Paul Haran attended a roundtable event hosted by national network organisation Supporting Offenders with Learning Difficulties (SOLD) and supported by the Law Society’s Access to Justice Committee. The ARC Scotland practice guide was produced by the SOLD Network in collaboration with justice partners and they have now developed a series of ‘custody tools’ to aid communication between solicitors and their clients, to ensure that interviewees are reminded of, and can access, their rights.

***WEST LOTHIAN COLLEGE****:*

On **28 January**, Paul Haran met with Beverly Bruce from West Lothian College to discuss the new Appropriate Adult Framework.