

Report No: **SLAB/2022/19**

Agenda item: **10**

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| **Report to:** | The Board |
| **Meeting Date:** | 16 May 2022 |
| **Report Title** | Meetings with Outside Bodies |
| **Report Category** | For Information |
| **Issue status:** | Business as usual |

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| **Written by:** | Emma O’Hara |
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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, DIRECTOR OF JUSTICE, JUSTICE DIRECTORATE:**

**On 21 March**Colin Lancaster, Paul Haran & Marie–Louise Fox met with Neil Rennick, Director of Justice within the Scottish Government alongside Denise Swanson, Head of Access to Justice to discuss contingency planning in respect of duty solicitor scheme withdrawals.

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

**On 29 March** and **27 March** Colin Lancaster attended a monthly catch up meeting with Denise Swanson, Head of Access to Justice Unit, to discuss matters of mutual interest in relation to legal aid.

**JUSTICE BOARD*:* On 21 April** Colin Lancaster attended the Justice Board on Teams. The Meeting focused on a session with the Chief Inspectors in the justice system providing a presentation on work plans and thematic issues; emerging and cross-cutting themes.

**SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT, ACCESS TO JUSTICE, JUSTICE DIRECTORATE:**

**On 29 April** Colin Lancaster met with Justin Haccius and Shona Urquhart of the Scottish’s Governments Access to Justice Unit to discuss escalation in action being taken by private solicitors in relation to SSBA announcement of withdrawals from S1 Domestic Abuse cases and contingency planning.

**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 CIVIL JUSTICE COUNCIL:****on 25 April** Colin Lancaster attended the Scottish Civil Justice Council gathering at the Apex Hotel in Edinburgh City Centre, with the agenda including an Age of Criminal Responsibility update, Justice System reforms and rules review/proposals.

**SCOTTISH CIVIL JUSTICE COUNCIL’S FAMILY LAW COMMITTEE: On 5 April**, Marie-Louise Fox attended the latest Scottish Civic Justice Council’s Family Law Committee on Webex, which discussed and reviewed the latest updates and issues in relation to family actions and proceedings relating to children.

**SCOTTISH CIVIL JUSTICE COUNCIL’S PERSONAL INJURY COMMITTEE:** **On 4 April**, Marie-Louise Fox attended the latest Scottish Civil Justice Council’s Personal Injury Committee on Webex, which reviewed practice and procedure to be followed in the Scottish civil courts, in relation to personal injury actions.

**SCOTTISH CIVIL JUSTICE COUNCIL’S RULES REWRITE COMMITTEE: On 26 April** Ian Dickson virtually attended the latest meeting of the Scottish Civil Justice Council’s Rules Rewrite working group.

**SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT’S SINGLE JUDGE PILOT GROUP: On 21 April**, Marie-Louise Fox attended the Scottish Government’s ‘Single judge pilot’ meeting alongside other justice stakeholders, with representatives from victims’ rights groups such as Victim Support and Rape Crisis Scotland.

**SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT’S STRATEGIC LEADS GROUP*:*** Marie-Louise Fox attended fortnightly meetings on Teams. The Group’s focus is draft aims and outcomes to be included in the draft Justice Strategy.

**SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT – GENERAL**

**SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT SPONSOR TEAM – FINANCE: On Monday 28 March** Colin Lancaster & Graeme Hill met with member of the sponsor team at the Scottish Government to discuss SLAB’s pensions and planning for Graeme’s retirement.

**SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT’s SPECIALIST COURT WORKING GROUP: On 1 April** Marie-Louise Fox attended the second meeting of the Specialist Court Working Group meeting organised by Scottish Government together with other invested justice stakeholders.

**SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT**

**TRANSFORMING SCOTLAND’S JUSTICE SYSTEM: On 30 March** Marie-Louise Fox attended a virtual event organised by Holyrood events in relation to: Transforming Scotland’s Justice System. The event, chaired by Murray Etherington, Vice President of the Law Society of Scotland, brought together stakeholders from across the public and third sectors and those with lived experience.

**UK GOVERNMENT**

**GOVERNMENT ACTUARY’S DEPARTMENT**: **On 23 March** 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 19 April** Colin Lancaster had a quarterly catch up meeting on Teams with Roddy Dunlop QC, Dean of Faculty of Advocates, to discuss matters of mutual interest.

**LAW SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND**

**COVID–19 RESILLIENCE GROUP:** Paul Haran attends 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 DINNER: On 6May** Colin Lancaster attended the Law Society of Scotland’s Presidents Dinner held at Kelvingrove Art Gallery in Glasgow.

**QUALITY ASSURANCE: On 4 May** and **5 May** Marie-Louise mFox attended meetings with the Law Society in relation to Peer review & matters of Civil Quality Assurance.

**JUSTICE SECTOR BODIES**

**LADY DORIAN’S GOVERNANCE GROUP**: **On 25 April** Marie-Louise Fox virtually attended Lady Dorian’s Governance Group, which will be focused on exploring changes to the management of sexual offence cases.

**SCOTTISH COURTS AND TRIBUNAL SERVICE: On 25 March** Colin Lancaster attended a regular quarterly catch up with Eric McQueen, CEO of Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service, to discuss matters of mutual interest with focus upon contingency planning for the duty solicitor scheme.

**VIRTUAL TRIALS: On 29 March** Marie-Louise Fox attended the latest meetings of the Virtual Summary Trials National Steering Group organised by SCTS together with other justice agencies. The Group continues to progress with recommendations for specialist online courts to tackle domestic abuse cases.

**PUBLIC BODIES**

**NDPB FORUM***:* **On 24 March** Colin Lancaster attended a Non-Departmental Public Body Chief Executive’s Forum meeting on Teams, with the agenda including a Public Bodies update from Scottish Government, a Director for Digital update, Pay policy and resource budget overview, discussion on blended/hybrid working, and Networking – strategy, people, environment and risk.

**FINANCE FORUM: On 31 March** Colin Lancaster & Graeme Hill attended a meeting with the Public Bodies Directors of Finance Forum and CEOs for a session with Finance Minister Mr Arthur on the Resource Spending Review (RSR). The Minister was keen to hear from public bodies to obtain insight on how the RSR might help support them and discuss how to build from the innovations that public bodies have put in place in response to Covid-19.

**UNIVERSITY OF STRATHCLYDE LAW SCHOOL: On 10 May** and **11 May** Colin Lancaster attended the University of Strathclyde School Of Law’s Annual Retreat to Ross Priory. The keynote speaker was Mark Cohen, CEO of Legal Mosaic.

**OTHER MEETINGS**

**CARE INSPECTORATE:** **On 22 March** Paul Haran attended a Short Life Working Group meeting, organised by the Care Inspectorate, which focused upon AWI Guidance for Appropriate Adults.

**CLAN CHILD LAW: On 19 April** Marie-Louise Fox met with representatives from Clan Childlaw, Scotland’s law centre for young people which aims to protect and strengthen children’s rights, to discuss legal representation for children.

**MODERNGOV WORKSHOP: On 22 March** Marie-Louise Fox and **On 30 March** Ian Dickson, along with various heads of department and managers, attended ModernGov’s ‘Ensuring Effective Policy Implementation’, delivered by Impact Assessment Expert, Philip Davies. The workshop explored the key elements of successful policy implementation and delivery, common pitfalls to avoid and the necessary tools to ensure policies achieve their desired outcomes.

**SCOTTISH WOMENS RIGHT CENTRE**: **On 22 April** Marie-Louise Fox attended a Scottish Women's Rights Centre training course entitled ‘Understanding Domestic Abuse and Developing A Trauma-Informed Practice’, facilitated by legal expert Helen Hughes, editor and co-author of the publication ‘Domestic Abuse and Scots Law’, and Scottish Women's Aid National Training Manager, Jodie McVicar.