

**BOARD REPORT**

**AGENDA ITEM: 14  
REPORT NUMBER: SLAB/2023/40**

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| **Report to:** | The Board |
| **Meeting date:** | 18 September 2023 |
| **Report title** | Meetings with Outside Bodies |
| **Report category** | For Information |
| **Issue status:** | Business as usual |

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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, INTERIM DIRECTOR OF JUSTICE, JUSTICE DIRECTORATE**  **On 11 August:** Colin Lancaster met the new Interim Director of Justice, Scottish Government to welcome them to the role and for a brief catch up on the current legal aid related issues.  **SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF JUSTICE, JUSTICE DIRECTORATE**  **On 16 August and 13 September:** Colin Lancaster had his regular monthly catch up with Scottish Government’s Deputy Director of Justice to discuss and action outstanding legal aid issues.  **SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT’S ADULTS WITH INCAPACITY LEGISLATION AND PRACTICE TEAM**  **On 5 September:** Wendy Dalgleish and Cindy Morrice attended a session at St Andrew’s House, organised by the Scottish Government’s Adults with Incapacity Legislation and Practice Team, to discuss possible reform of legal aid in respect of applications for civil legal aid under the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000.  **SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT’S CHILDREN (CARE AND JUSTICE) BILL IMPLEMENTATION GROUP**  **On 1 August**: Kingsley Thomas attended a meeting of the the Scottish Government’s Children (Care and Justice) Bill Implementation Group, which reviewed some of the implications of the forthcoming legislation, including the proposal to remove most criminal cases for 16 and 17 years olds from the criminal courts by raising the maximum age for referrals to the Children’s Reporter to 18.  **On 4 September:** Wendy Dalgleish attended a meeting of the Children’s (Care and Justice) Act Implementation Group at Victoria Quay, to plan for implementation of the Act and discuss timescales.  **SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT’S CHILDREN'S HEARINGS IMPROVEMENT PARTNERSHIP (CHIP)**  **On 12 September:** Liz Cuschieri attended the latest meeting of the Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership (CHIP) on Teams, which brings together various public and professional bodies to share ideas and work together for a coordinated effort to improve services for children and young people.  **SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT, CRIMINAL JUSTICE BOARD**  **On 11 August :** Colin Lancaster attended the Criminal Justice Board via MS Teams. The agenda included System Response to Court Backlogs and Journey Times: Response to Audit Scotland Report & Three Year Delivery Plan (Paper) and an update on GeoAmey issues.  **On 21 August:** Kingsley Thomas attended a meeting of the Scottish Government’s Criminal Justice Board at St. Andrews House. The session was to reflect on lesson’s learned from Audit Scotland’s recent [report](https://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/uploads/docs/report/2023/nr_230525_criminal_courts_backlog.pdf) on the Criminal Courts backlog.  **On 25 August:** Colin Lancaster attended the Criminal Justice Board via MS Teams. The agenda included an update on Pay Policy 2023-24, Prison Population, GeoAmey Update, Summary Justice Review: Digital Productions Update and Person–Centred and Trauma-Informed: Performance Management Approach.  **SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT’S CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROGRAMME BOARD**  **On 9 August:** Marie-Louise Fox attended a meeting of the Scottish Government’s Criminal Justice Programme Board on Teams, the Board continues to bring together sector organisations for a collaborative approach to addressing Justice Transformation challenges.  **SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT FUTURE OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION WORKING GROUP**  **On 30 August:** Colin Lancaster attended the second session of the Future of the Legal Profession Working Group on MS Teams, chaired by the Law Society of Scotland Chief Executive, Diane McGiffen. The working group’s focus is to:  • address difficulties in recruitment to the Criminal Bar  • widen access to the profession with a focus on new routes in  • improve diversity across all stages of the legal profession.  The agenda for the session included an update on work of the Legal Aid payment panel, which is being replaced by the Scottish Government-led Research on Legal Aid Payments in Scotland Project. The session also included papers on ‘Entering the Legal Profession’ and ‘How the Legal Profession Works’ including flexibilities, inclusion, and retention.  **SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT’S PRISON POPULATION LEADERSHIP GROUP**  **On 7 September:** Colin Lancaster attended a meeting the Prison Population Leadership Group, following information arising from the Criminal Justice Board meetings regarding concerns with the rising prison population in Scotland. Cat Dalrymple, Scottish Government’s Interim Director of Justice, established the group to explore the issues driving the increase so there’s collective understanding across leadership roles.  **SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT SPONSOR TEAM, ACCESS TO JUSTICE UNIT**  **On 16 August:** Linda Ross, Audrey Crawford and Brian Sinclair met with members of the Scottish Government’s Sponsor Team for the latest Scottish Legal Aid Board Accountability meeting.  **On 11 September:** Carolyn McLeod met with representatives from the Scottish Government to discuss Electronically Monitored bail.  **LAWYERS AND REPRESENTATIVE BODIES**  **LAW SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND**  **On 14 August:** Colin Lancaster and Board Chair Ray Macfarlane met with the newly appointed President of the Law Society, Sheila Webster, together with the Society’s CEO, Diane McGiffen at Atria One.  The agenda included:  • Future Of the Legal Profession: Recruitment and Retention  • Joint Working Opportunities  • Committee Members: Peer Review Scheme  • Legal Aid Sector and Fee Review Mechanism  • Geographical And Access to Justice Issues and  • Traineeship Fund.  **JUSTICE SECTOR BODIES**  **SCOTTISH COURTS AND TRIBUNAL SERVICE**  **On 24 August:** Wendy Dalgleish attended a meeting of the Edinburgh Sheriff Court Adults with Incapacity User Group on Teams, with the court providing an update about the current management of cases to practitioners.  **On 28 August:** Kingsley Thomas attended the first meeting of the Scottish Courts’ Trauma Informed Domestic Abuse Model (TIDAM) project on Teams, which is looking at developing the use of virtual trials in domestic abuse cases.  **On 5 September:** Colin Lancaster attended an emergency meeting with Criminal Justice Board partners and members of the justiciary, arranged by the Scottish Court and Tribunal Service’s Chief Executive, Eric McQueen, to discuss an ongoing situation with prisoner transport in the Scottish Courts, which has caused significant delays and disruption to court business to discuss contingency planning and possible mitigations.  **OTHER MEETINGS**  **NON-DEPARTMENTAL PUBLIC BODIES (NDBP) CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S FORUM**  **On 14 September****:** Colin Lancaster attended the latest meeting of the Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDBP) Chief Executive’s Forum via Ms Teams. The agenda included:   * Programme for Government   • Public Sector Reform  • Regular updates from Public Bodies Unit and Forum representatives/observers on other groups |