



## Analysis & Management Information

Thistle House

91 Haymarket Terrace

Edinburgh

EH12 5HE

### VIA EMAIL

14<sup>th</sup> July 2025

Dear,

### Freedom of Information request

I am writing in response to your email received 1<sup>st</sup> July 2025 where you asked the following three questions:

- The number of 'active' legal aid solicitors in Scotland (as opposed to simply 'registered' legal aid solicitors, as I understand the Scottish Government makes a distinction between the two as referred to) in the calendar years 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025 to date. For clarity, the Scottish Government has said the following about the difference between 'active' and 'registered' legal aid solicitors: [Written question and answer: S6W-32820 | Scottish Parliament Website](#)
- The top ten highest amounts of legal aid paid to individuals in the past five years, and the reason for their claim (e.g. to deal with a custody case, to deal with an immigration case etc).
- Whether any record is kept of the average amount of times a legal aid solicitor is approached before an individual finds one willing to take their case - for both civil and criminal, in the calendar year 2024.

The answers to your questions are shown below.

**Question 1:** The numbers of active legal aid solicitors in Scotland for the time periods requested are shown in the table below. I have included the period for the 12 months to 1<sup>st</sup> July 2025 (the date of your request) to enable a like-for-like comparison with the previous 12 month periods for the full calendar years.

The period you requested for 2025 – i.e. from 1<sup>st</sup> January to 1<sup>st</sup> July, is only 6 months long. Using a shorter time period will, in itself, cause the count of active practitioners to reduce so to compare that with the counts for the 12 month periods is of doubtful validity.

Time Period	Number active legal aid solicitors
2022 calendar year	1566
2023 calendar year	1530
2024 calendar year	1487
2025 to 1 <sup>st</sup> July 2025 (6 months)	1362
12 months to 1 <sup>st</sup> July 2025	1486

**Question 2:** With regards to your question: *top ten highest amounts of legal aid paid to individuals etc*, please be aware that in Scotland legal aid is not paid to assisted persons.

A grant of legal aid is made by or to the solicitor representing the accused. Payments are made to solicitors and to counsel following agreed work being undertaken, and accounts being submitted and assessed by SLAB according to the rules C regulations of the relevant legal aid payment schemes.

Payments made include fee payments for the solicitor, and counsel if involved, and pre-agreed outlays such as expert witnesses or travel required.

For more information please see: [Legal aid in Scotland - Scottish Legal Aid Board](#).

I am therefore unable to answer your question as legal aid is not paid to individuals as explained above.

**Question 3:** With regards to your question: *Whether any record is kept of the average amount of times a legal aid solicitor is approached before an individual etc*

The answer is no as this is not possible.

The way the legal aid system operates in Scotland is that persons seeking legal assistance contact legal aid solicitors (private or public) themselves to see if they can help. There is no central mechanism available to record the number of times an individual may contact a solicitor. Depending on the circumstances a variety of

schemes are in place to ensure that legal advice C representation is available.

Examples of such schemes are:

- Police Station Duty Contact Line – to put unrepresented persons detained by the police on a criminal matter in contact with a solicitor who can advise them whilst in detention. For more information please see: [Police station duty plans - Scottish Legal Aid Board](#);
- Court duty scheme – to put unrepresented persons appearing from custody, or on an undertaking, at a criminal court in contact with a duty solicitor who will act for them at their first appearance on a summary charge. For more information please see: [Criminal court duty plans, eligibility criteria and consultation with local faculties - Scottish Legal Aid Board](#)
- The Children’s Duty Scheme – for more information please see: [The Children’s Duty Scheme and Automatic Legal Aid - Scottish Legal Aid Board](#);
- The Civil Legal Assistance Office (CLAO) part of SLAB, ([Home | CLAO](#)) is a network of three offices in Scotland that helps people with civil legal problems. Their solicitors can provide advice and representation to people with particular types of civil legal problems. The offices cover Highland and Islands, Argyll and Bute, Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, and Edinburgh and the Lothians. They help individuals in three ways:
  - Taking on cases directly
  - Referring to a suitable legal or advice provider
  - Signposting to other sources of help

SLAB also provides an online tool to assist individuals in locating a legal aid solicitor – please see: [Find a solicitor - Scottish Legal Aid Board](#).

This concludes my response. I have appended below details about your rights to request a review of this response.

Yours sincerely,

**Manager of Analytics**

If you would like me to send this letter or email to you in a different format or language, you can make a request by responding to the email. Where possible we will try and do this within five working days of receiving your request.

### **Your right to request a review of decision**

If you are dissatisfied with the way in which we have handled your request for information, you may ask us to review our decision. A request that we review our decision should be made in writing within 40 working days of the date of this letter or, if we have not responded to your request, within 40 days of the date by which we should have responded (that would normally be 20 days after receiving your request).

We will review our decision and tell you the outcome within 20 working days of receiving your request.

If, having done so, you remain dissatisfied, you may ask the Scottish Information Commissioner to review our decision. You must submit your request in writing to the Commissioner within 6 months of first receiving notice about the matter you are complaining about.

The Commissioner will not deal with an application unless SLAB's review process has been used and exhausted – in other words, until you have asked us to review our decision and you are not satisfied with our response or have not received a response within 20 working days of your request.

The Commissioner's contact details are:

The Scottish Information Commissioner  
Kinburn Castle  
Doubledykes Road  
St Andrews  
Fife  
KY16 9DS  
Telephone: 01334 464610  
Fax: 01334 464611  
Website [www.itspublicknowledge.info](http://www.itspublicknowledge.info)  
E-mail: [enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info](mailto:enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info)

Your appeal can also be dealt with online. The Commissioner has an online appeal service which is available 24/7 and offers requesters real time help and advice about their appeal. This can be accessed at: [www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal](http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal)