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Colin Lancaster
Chief Executive
Scottish Legal Aid Board
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1 April 2026

Dear Colin,

Grant under section 4A of the Legal Aid (Scotland) Act 1986

Directions from the Scottish Ministers

The Scottish Ministers give the following directions under section 4A(11) of the Legal Aid (Scotland) Act 1986 (“the Act”), in relation to a plan as to grant criteria to be prepared by the Scottish Legal Aid Board (“the Board”) and submitted to Ministers for approval in accordance with section 4A(7) of the Act.

The Board must include in such a plan that a grant may be made for the provision of legal advice to women affected by gender-based violence who are being supported by Edinburgh Women’s Aid. The key aspects for which grant funding can be provided and which should feature in such a plan are as follows:

- A project under this plan is to be led by Scottish Women’s Aid, working in partnership with Edinburgh Women’s Aid and Baker Gostelow Family Law.
- To meet the requirements for a grant to be made, the application or grant proposal must –
 - prioritise the tackling of identified issues affecting effective and efficient early diagnosis of legal issues at the crisis point when clients first seek help,
 - focus on tackling an evidenced problem at (one or more of) the following stages:
 - initial access to the project (information gathering, problem diagnosis and identification of the client’s legal support needs),
 - initial urgent presenting matters (excluding work which would fall under the civil legal aid scheme).

Specified limits

In accordance with section 4A(4) and (5) of the Act, the Scottish Ministers specify that the maximum amount that may be paid out of the Scottish Legal Aid Fund for a grant under the above plan is £160,498. The period in relation to which this limit applies is 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027.

I look forward to receiving the Board's plan in accordance with the terms of this direction within 3 months of this letter.

Yours sincerely



DENISE SWANSON
Deputy Director
Civil Law and Legal System