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Colin Lancaster  
Chief Executive  
Scottish Legal Aid Board  
Thistle House  
91 Haymarket Terrace  
EDINBURGH  
EH12 5HE

8 August 2023

Dear Colin,

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

Scottish Women's Aid Project

I wrote to you on 19 May 2023 with a Direction from Scottish Ministers 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, and working in partnership with Baker Gostelow Family Law.

On behalf of Scottish Ministers, I can confirm that I have reviewed the plan, which is attached at Annex A, and that I am content that it is in accordance with the terms of the Direction. I note that the plan is published on SLAB's website via the link below:

<https://www.slab.org.uk/corporate-information/publications/grant-funding-publications/>

Yours sincerely,



**DENISE SWANSON**  
Interim Deputy Director  
Civil Law and Legal System Division

Scottish Ministers have directed SLAB to develop a plan as to criteria for a grant under S4(A)7 of the Legal Aid (Scotland) Act 1986.

A grant is to be made available 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 are:

- The lead applicant for a grant must be 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 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 £431,955. The period in relation to which this limit applies is 1 June 2023 to 31 March 2026.

#### **Application assessment criteria**

The application must set out sufficient information to allow assessment against the following assessment criteria:

1. The application describes the nature of the issue or blockage(s) that affects effective and efficient early diagnosis of legal problems at crisis point where service users initially seek help
2. The application clearly describes what the project will do - describing the intervention(s) to be implemented by the lead and partner applicants and the stage in the advice process it will be used
3. The application must explain the referral processes where it is anticipated that work will fall out with the scope of the project - including for circumstances where work would fall under the scope of the civil legal aid scheme
4. The application sets out clearly why the proposed intervention is identified as achieving improvement to the issue. Improvement sought from the intervention(s) is clearly described with measurable improved justice outcomes for users, support agencies and legal firms identified
5. The applicant evidences that the project development plan and implementation timescales are achievable within the time period of the grant

6. The applicant can demonstrate relevant experience and expertise in delivering this type of project.
7. The applicant can demonstrate that the organisations within the proposal are working in compliance with professional standards and obligations.
8. Applicants must demonstrate a commitment to equality and will promote equality, accessibility and diversity. All applicants involved in the project must provide a current equality and diversity policy to be considered for funding which covers both employment and also service delivery. The applicant should;
  - a. Include where relevant whether the intervention could, either in the test or in any subsequent scaling up of the intervention, address improving access for one or more equality group(s)
  - b. Address if and how any reasonable adjustments/accessibility features, including those designed to reduce language barriers, would be built into the project.

In addition the applicant must demonstrate that:  
The budget is appropriate and relevant financial controls are in place.

