



Scottish Legal Aid Board

# Principal Legal Adviser

Candidate Recruitment Pack  
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**LHH**





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A photograph showing two women sitting at a desk. One woman with curly hair is pointing at a document, and the other with short blonde hair is looking at it. There are papers, a laptop, and a pen on the desk.

# Welcome from Colin Lancaster, Chief Executive.

## Thank you for your interest in the role of Principal Legal Adviser of the Scottish Legal Aid Board.

This exciting opportunity has arisen due to the impending retirement of our valued and trusted colleague, Ian Dickson. I am immensely grateful to Ian for all he has achieved, and I look forward to building a successful professional relationship with his successor.

At the Scottish Legal Aid Board, we are committed to delivering a legal aid system that provides accessible, high-quality legal aid services that make a real difference to the lives of individuals and communities across Scotland. Our work is ever evolving, and we are driving legal aid reform to ensure legally aided services are accessible, innovative and responsive to the needs of those we serve.

As our most senior lawyer, this is a key technical and strategic role, delivering sound legal advice and support to the organisation both on the effective discharge of its current functions and options for future reform.

This is a pivotal moment for legal aid and our organisation, and this role is critical to how we shape our future delivery and reshape the current legal aid system, designed in the 1950s, to reflect what is needed in current times. Collaborating with Scottish Government, the legal profession and other stakeholders the Principal Legal Adviser will play a crucial role in the development of proposals for a reformed legal aid system and their implementation in legislation and practice.

We are looking for a forward-thinking leader with a passion for access to justice, where those who require publicly funded legal services can secure them where and when they are needed.

Working closely with operational and policy colleagues, you will be instrumental in the development of our advice for Scottish Ministers on the reshaping of legal aid and how this can be translated into legislation and supporting policies and guidance.

This is a fantastic opportunity to join an organisation that values collaboration, continuous improvement and the delivery of meaningful impact. You will join our Executive team and work closely with me and our team of talented professionals who share a commitment to our purpose and vision. By fulfilling our strategic objectives, both we and legal aid will better contribute to the achievement of Scottish Government aims, an efficient justice system and improved outcomes for those who need services supported by legal aid.

If you are an experienced legal professional with the skills and expertise to make a significant contribution to the Scottish Legal Aid Board, and who can truly understand why we do what we do, I encourage you to apply for this exciting position. We are looking for individuals who are not only technically proficient but also motivated by the opportunity to drive positive change within a highly respected public sector organisation.

I look forward to receiving your application and learning more about how your experience and vision align with our goals.

**Colin Lancaster**  
Chief Executive

Scottish Legal Aid Board





# Advertisement – Principal Legal Adviser

Location – Edinburgh (Hybrid)

Salary – £96,350 – £108,270

The Scottish Legal Aid Board (SLAB) was set up in 1987 to manage legal aid in Scotland. We are a non-departmental public body responsible to the Scottish Government. Our main purpose is to fund, deliver and advise on services that enable people to exercise their rights and live in a fair society that respects the rule of law.

We are seeking to appoint a Principal Legal Adviser who, as SLAB's senior solicitor, will provide legal support and guidance to the Chief Executive, Executive Team, Board and Committees, via legal advice and support on both specific technical aspects of legal aid legislation and wider matters of Scots Law.

This is a pivotal moment for our organisation and this role is critical to the re-shaping of the current legal aid system, designed in the 1950's, to reflect what is needed in current times.

As part of the Executive Team, you will provide robust and reliable legal advice, support and services across the organisation, working to drive SLAB forward to effectively discharge its functions, meet its obligations and deliver its corporate objectives. This is an important role that will influence and engage across the sector, which will include leading legal engagement with the sponsor division of the Scottish Government in relation to legislative and regulatory development and reform, and the preparation of new legislative instruments.

The Principal Legal Adviser will be an enrolled solicitor with a non-restricted practising certificate and substantial knowledge of the Scottish justice system, and will bring an appetite for tackling complex issues and expertise in providing sound technical and strategic advice and guidance to senior stakeholders.

The Scottish Legal Aid Board is a high-impact organisation, committed to making a real difference to the lives of individuals across Scotland. If you are an experienced legal professional with a passion for leadership and access to justice, we would like to hear from you.

Applications in the form of a tailored CV and a covering letter (no longer than two pages), highlighting your skills and experience pertinent to the role, should arrive no later than **Wednesday 14 January, 2026**. For a confidential, informal discussion about the role, or to request a Candidate Information Pack, please contact LHH directly on **+44 (0)141 220 6460** or email [ScotlandExecutive@LHH.com](mailto:ScotlandExecutive@LHH.com)



# Scottish Legal Aid Board: Our Organisation

The Scottish Legal Aid Board (SLAB) was set up in 1987 to manage legal aid in Scotland.

We are a non-departmental public body responsible to the Scottish Government. Our main purpose is to manage and improve continuously, publicly funded legal assistance and to advise Scottish Ministers on its strategic development for the benefit of society.

## Our Purpose

To fund, deliver and advise on services that enable people to exercise their rights and live in a fair society that respects the rule of law.

## Our Vision

Our values, principles and clarity of purpose empower our people to deliver and shape a legal aid system that supports a just, safe and resilient Scotland.

## Our Values

- **Transparency:** this means we are clear about rules and criteria that apply to any work we do, and take responsibility for making sure it is understandable.
- **Impartiality:** this means that in all our work we focus on objective criteria and avoid conscious or unconscious bias.
- **Trust/Respect:** this means that we value working with others, and act with honesty and integrity on the basis that others do too, unless there is evidence to the contrary.

- **Accountability:** this means that we can demonstrate that we work within our stated policies and procedures and apply them accurately and consistently.
- **Proportionality:** this means that we are mindful of the impact on ourselves and others of what we do and how we do it and strive to find the balance between efficiency, accessibility, and effective management of risk.
- **Responsiveness:** this means that – as a learning organisation – we reflect on how our work affects others, encourage the identification of opportunities for change and innovate using established design principles that embody our values.

If you wish to learn more about the Scottish Legal Aid Board (SLAB) and our other direct services, please visit the [SLAB website](#)

# Scottish Legal Aid Board: The Team





# Principal Legal Adviser, Scottish Legal Aid Board – The Role



## Job Purpose

To provide robust and reliable legal advice, support and services to the Chief Executive, the Executive Team, the Board and its Committees, and senior staff within a range of client departments within SLAB.

## Key Accountabilities

- To provide legal support and guidance to the Chief Executive and Executive Team, the Board and its Committees, via legal advice and support on both specific technical aspects of legal aid legislation and wider matters of Scots Law
- To oversee and monitor the operation of existing legislation and regulations relating to legal aid within SLAB
- To lead legal engagement with the sponsor division of Scottish Government in relation to legislative and regulatory development and reform, and the preparation of new legislative instruments.
- As a member of SLAB's Executive Team to contribute to overall strategic and corporate planning and development, and operational oversight
- To provide legal oversight of SLAB's information management and data protection regime, and legal support for the Data Protection Officer
- To provide legal oversight of SLAB's compliance and investigations functions, the statutory measures of de-registration and exclusion of solicitors and advocates, including the design of associated processes and the conduct of formal regulatory proceedings

- To lead the Legal Services Department and its support of other operational client departments within SLAB, including leading on the development of systems, quality assurance and value.
- As SLAB's senior solicitor to provide the top level of professional support and guidance to the range of solicitors employed in different roles throughout SLAB
- To provide support and legal advice in relation to media inquiries, reputation management and communications issues
- To oversee and instruct work in connection with commercial property matters/leasing
- To provide and lead legal representation for SLAB before courts, tribunals and auditors of court, etc.
- To represent SLAB externally as relevant
- To contribute to the production and revision of SLAB guidance and maintenance of online legislation resources
- To manage the Legal Services budget and necessary procurement of specialist legal support

## Person Specification

### Qualifications

- Enrolled solicitor with unrestricted practising certificate

## Essential Criteria

- Excellent advocacy and presentational skills
- Substantial experience of the justice system in Scotland
- Excellent knowledge and experience of public law, freedom of information law and data protection law
- Experience and knowledge of wider legal issues
- Ability to produce clear and concise legal opinions, reports and briefings of the highest standard
- A high level of computer literacy
- Ability to self generate work of the highest output quality for legal and other use
- Excellent judgement and tactical awareness
- The highest levels of discretion and confidentiality
- Strong analytical and problem solving skills
- Ability to grasp complex issues easily and to precis detailed information
- Excellent interpersonal skills
- Ability to influence others, and ensure priorities and deadlines are met
- Adaptability to rapidly changing circumstances and priorities
- Sound planning and organisation skills
- Innovative but pragmatic thinking

# Principal Legal Adviser, Scottish Legal Aid Board – The Role

## Desirable Criteria

- Extended rights of audience
- Detailed knowledge and experience of legal aid legislation and practice

## Additional context on the responsibilities of the role Communication

The Principal Legal Adviser is required to communicate

- (internally) with the Chief Executive, Directors, senior managers and other SLAB departments and staff, and Board Chair, Board, Board Committees
- (externally) frequently with Scottish Government, less frequently with legal aid practitioners, professional and regulatory bodies, judiciary, other public authorities

The content of communication is often complex and can be challenging, highly sensitive or controversial.

The Principal Legal Adviser **represents the organisation externally** as follows:

- Lead legal engagement with sponsor division of Scottish Government in relation to legislative and regulatory development and reform, and the preparation of new legislative instruments.

- Represent SLAB on external committees, e.g. Scottish Civil Justice Council Committees
- Represent SLAB on external engagement, project, reference or special interest groups
- Participate in the delivery of training by SLAB to third parties
- Dealings with professional bodies

The jobholder has ultimate responsibility for providing legal advice and legal representation on behalf of the organisation. Representation can either be in pursuing claims or disputes on behalf of SLAB or defending claims made against it, perhaps most commonly actions for judicial review of SLAB decision making.

For high level decisions where SLAB is the client, and it is appropriate for the Chief Executive (or other Directors where the matter is at a high level within their Directorate) to direct which of alternative courses should be followed, then the Principal Legal Adviser will take instructions from the Chief Executive or Director.

Beyond that the Principal Legal Adviser has authority to take decisions in relation to legal steps and action. They have authority to enter into contracts on behalf of SLAB within the delegated authority matrix, and to sign formal legal documents on behalf of SLAB as its authorised legal signatory.

The Principal Legal Adviser has the authority to consider, guide, direct, and if necessary override, the views of other solicitors within the organisation if there was a difference of views.



The Principal Legal Adviser is fully responsible for when and how workload is addressed and scheduled, and the timescales. These are constrained and dictated largely by constantly changing prioritisation which is a feature of the nature of the work of the post.

## Decision Making, Analytical thinking and Problem Solving

Legal aid is an extremely complex area governed by a raft of legislative provisions which do not necessarily sit consistently with each other. There is considerable scope for areas of uncertainty or dispute to become the subject of challenges where third parties (primarily other lawyers) raise very complicated, technical and significant arguments which require expert consideration and response.

Responding to such arguments involves detailed knowledge of both the legal aid legislation, and the wider law, as well as analytical thinking in relation to the breaking down and consideration of a position presented to SLAB and the construction and assessment of options.

This often requires regard to additional factors such as equalities law, data protection law, administrative law, or other extraneous factors such as professional practice considerations, or political considerations.





# Conditions & Remuneration

## Salary

£96,354 - £108,000

## Location

Edinburgh (Hybrid)

At SLAB, we have adopted a Hybrid approach to working, which grants individuals the flexibility to choose their work location based on suitability, business requirements, and job roles.

There is a requirement for the Principal Legal Adviser to have a regular on site presence combined with the flexibility to work from home. We recognise the importance in supporting our employees in maintaining a healthy work-life balance, and we are dedicated to providing flexible working arrangements that facilitate this goal

## Timescales

Applications closing midnight **Wednesday 14th January 2026**

Interviews with SLAB w/c **2nd February 2026**

## Benefits

- A competitive salary with potential for pay progression
- Flexible working arrangements and a great holiday entitlement of 34 days per year (inclusive of public and privilege holidays) increasing after two years of continuous service
- A final salary defined benefit pension scheme with a 6% employee contribution
- Job security in a stable environment for long term career progression
- Support from colleagues within a rewarding, positive work culture
- Opportunities for learning and development while making a difference with challenging tasks for ultimate job satisfaction.

To find out more about working with SLAB and our benefits, please visit [www.slab.org.uk](http://www.slab.org.uk)

# How to Apply

Please send a tailored CV and covering letter to [ScotlandExecutive@LHH.com](mailto:ScotlandExecutive@LHH.com)

To apply for this post, please send your tailored CV and a cover letter no longer than two pages by email, highlighting in the subject heading 'Principal Legal Adviser', to [ScotlandExecutive@LHH.com](mailto:ScotlandExecutive@LHH.com) no later than midnight **Wednesday 14th January 2026**.

If you would like a confidential, informal discussion about the role then please contact LLH on **+44 (0) 141 220 6460** or send an email to the above-mentioned address.

Should you require any modifications or wish to speak with a member of our team to discuss any particular circumstances, please email the above address.

SLAB is committed to equality of opportunity and to no discrimination on the grounds of race, religion or belief, age, sex, marital or civil partnership status, disability, sexual orientation, transgender status, pregnancy or maternity. We are constantly reviewing our approach to ensuring equality and diversity in our applications and would be pleased if you could complete the Equalities Monitoring Form.

[Equalities Monitoring Form - Scottish Legal Aid Board](#)





**LHH Recruitment, formerly Badenoch + Clark, is Scotland's leading Executive Search team. We connect Scotland's top businesses with exceptional candidates – and we do it really well.**

We count innovators, creatives and leaders among the professionals we work with, and our clients and candidates span a diverse range of sectors and functions. From procurement and supply chain, medical, engineering, project management, accountancy, legal, transport and business transformation, to banking, the arts, government, technology, marketing and communications, not-for-profit and HR, our expertise is wide-reaching and our reach unparalleled.

We pride ourselves on our ability to give clients and candidates a competitive edge while making the recruitment process smooth, straightforward and – dare we say it – enjoyable. Whether you're taking the next step on the career ladder or building a bespoke and targeted recruitment strategy, our Scottish team will work hard to deliver a first-class service that meets your exact requirements.

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