



News release

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Wednesday 30 November 2016

SCOTTISH LEGAL AID BOARD PUBLISHES ANNUAL REPORT 2015-2016

The Scottish Legal Aid Board (SLAB) has published its Annual Report showing activity in the last year.

The total cost to the taxpayer of legal assistance in Scotland was £137.8m in 2015-16, compared to £138.6 million in 2014-15.

The Annual Report was laid before the Scottish Parliament and covers the period from April 2015 to March 2016.

Colin Lancaster, Chief Executive of the Scottish Legal Aid Board, said:

“SLAB has a strong track record of effectively administering the legal aid system and delivering an increasing range of priorities for Scottish Ministers.

“Good performance in 2015-16 has been evidenced through the delivery of a range of key activities set out in this Annual Report and Accounts along with the full achievement of our current suite of key performance indicators (KPIs).

“Through our effective consideration of legal aid applications and accounts, we have delivered our key function of managing the legal aid system.

“I took up post as chief executive in September 2015. I believe that any change in leadership brings an opportunity to look at things afresh.

“My focus to date has been, and will continue to be, SLAB’s development as an effective and responsive organisation that continually improves its delivery of an efficient and high quality legal aid system and its provision of sound, evidence-based advice to Ministers on how to further develop the system to ensure it meets the needs of the people of Scotland.”

Principal activities of the Scottish Legal Aid Board are:

- advising Scottish Ministers on the operation of legal aid, and ways to develop it in terms of providing cost effective access to justice and in supporting the operation of the justice system
- managing the Legal Aid Fund
- deciding whether to grant applications for legal aid
- determining if people have to pay towards the cost of legal assistance, then collecting the amounts due to SLAB
- assessing solicitors’ and advocates’ accounts for legal aid work, and paying them for the work they have done

- investigating and minimising fraud and abuse of legal aid
- developing networks of SLAB employed solicitors offering criminal legal assistance through the Public Defence Solicitors' Office (PDSO) and civil legal assistance through the Civil Legal Assistance Office (CLAO)
- monitoring and reporting to Scottish Ministers on the availability and accessibility of legal services in Scotland
- providing grant funding for targeted legal advice and other services.

The annual report and additional documents, including key statistics, are available on our [website](#).