



SCOTTISH LEGAL AID BOARD
Person Specification and Job description for applicants

**Criminal Defence Solicitor
Solicitor Contact Line**

Primarily Edinburgh/Central Belt

Starting salary from £31,510
Pro rata if part-time

We are currently recruiting for two Criminal Defence Solicitors Grade 5 within the Criminal Legal Services Department of our Solicitor Contact Line Directorate. Fixed term 12 months contract in full time basis and permanent role in part time basis with 18.5 hours per week (equivalent to 2.5 days per week).

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.

The Solicitor Contact Line (SCL) is a service operated by the SLAB, the public authority which administers legal aid in Scotland in terms of the Legal Aid (Scotland) Act 1986. We advise and represent clients, who are eligible for criminal legal aid, in relation to summary and solemn cases at every level and Scotland's busiest courts all over the country.

We are a highly ethical organisation, carrying out rewarding work that may have a considerable impact on clients' lives. As a business, SLAB is offering stable and secured employment and a low staff rotation ratio, likely due to the strong and stable career opportunity we are able to offer to employees. Our total reward package includes the following: flexible working hours, remote working from home, the opportunity to apply for a seasonal ticket loan for public transport, a competitive holiday entitlement of 34 days per year (inclusive of public and privilege holidays) which increasing after 5 years of continuous service, and a 6% contributory pension scheme is in operation, the terms of which are in line with public service pension schemes. In some cases, we may financially contribute to relocation expenses for roles out with the Central Belt.

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

Information about the role

The essential part of the role is to provide high quality criminal legal assistance to individuals who are seeking the services of a solicitor while in a police station and then to assist SLAB in providing an ongoing service to its clients via the Public Defence Solicitors Office (PDSO).

Main Duties and Responsibilities

1. Provide criminal legal assistance to clients who are subject to criminal investigations or criminal proceedings

Provide timely and independent advice and criminal legal assistance to persons in police custody

- Ensure that all assistance to persons in police custody is provided effectively and efficiently by such means as may be appropriate in the circumstances - this will be primarily by telephone, but also in person or by assigning another solicitor

- Act as a duty solicitor for arrested persons held in police stations in Scotland and - on occasion - other parts of the UK where a Scottish case is being dealt with
- Provide the client with fearless, vigorous and effective defence and use all proper and lawful means to secure the best outcome for the client
- Promote and work for the best interests of the client at all times
- Work with colleagues in PDSO in relation to the preparation of clients' ongoing cases to ensure that the service provided is of the highest standard

2. Apply/adhere to practices, procedures and Codes of Practice to ensure the maximum efficiency and effectiveness of the client service provided by SLAB

- Ensure own conduct complies with the Statutory Code of Practice issued by SLAB in connection with the provision of criminal legal assistance and that it complies with all other professional standards and obligations, including those
- Ensure accurate time recording of own casework
- Apply standard SLAB corporate practices and procedures at all times
- Maintain individual performance statistics as developed and provide the service manager with suggestions for improvements in service provided to clients of the service
- Work to the standards expected by the Criminal Quality Assurance Scheme
- Work constructively within a culture of continuous improvement
- Attend any training that is required

3. Represent the service at in-house meetings within SLAB and outside bodies if required

- Build, maintain and promote effective communications and relationships with other SLAB / PDSO staff and other bodies if required

4. Assist and participate in SLAB's/PDSO's provision of its services

- The training of staff within the service as required (this will mainly be in relation to any new solicitors appointed to the service)
- Carry out other administrative tasks, desk based legal tasks and other general related tasks as directed by the SCL Team Leader

Essential Criteria

You will be asked in your personal statement to provide evidence as to how you meet the essential and desirable criteria listed below:

- An in-depth working knowledge of the criminal justice system and legal aid.
- A minimum of 1 full year criminal court experience in Scots Law.
- A current valid full driving licence with immediate access to a car on an as-required basis with insurance cover for business use.
- A sound technical ability as a provider of criminal legal assistance.
- Strong Client / Customer Awareness and the ability to identify with clients and key contacts and quickly build effective rapport.
- Drive and Self-motivation to work in a purposeful way to achieve results, using own initiative to make things happen; working to high standards to produce high quality output.
- Excellent communication skills (oral and written) with the ability to influence and persuade others. Good writing skills to produce concise, high quality reports/briefs in such a way as to be clearly understood.
- Sound Judgement to evaluate information and courses of action to reach logical and objective decisions about what is most likely to lead to the desired result.
- Ability to work effectively as part of a team. Flexibility and adaptability while helping each other and successfully cooperate with other SLAB & PDSO colleagues.
- Good Planning and organising skills - able to achieve results in a qualitative, timely and cost-effective way; set priorities; plan the efficient use of resources; and monitor progress against objectives.

- Integrity and good understanding of public sector mission and culture.
- Good computer skills in operating Ms Office package (particularly Word and Excel) as well as time and case management recording.

Desirable Criteria

- Experience of advising and assisting individuals during a police investigation

All applicants must have a recent (last 12 months) criminal record check either at the application stage, or following a conditional offer of employment. For this post we are requiring Standard Disclosure Scotland. For more information about types of criminal record checks in Scotland please visit www.mygov.scot/disclosure-types/.

Qualifications

An enrolled solicitor with (*normally) a full, post-qualified and unrestricted practising certificate from the Law Society of Scotland.

*Normally a full practising certificate is required, but we may consider a restricted practising certificate depending on the circumstances surrounding these restrictions.

Competency required

In addition to the specific criteria listed above, the following competencies for Grade 5 roles are also required and all SLAB's applicants will be tested against these if are invited for the interview or assessment centre.

Team work

- Knows and understands the contribution the team makes to SLAB's performance, and Operational Plans
- Can be relied on to deliver agreed personal objectives and is aware of how their work connects with the work of others
- Builds networks and maintains good working relationships with colleagues, valuing their diversity and contribution and is open to different points of view
- Contributes views, ideas and experience to improve the team's performance, offering and/or seeking practical help when necessary

Customer Service

- Knows and understands internal and external customers & how their role fits into SLAB and the wider public sector
- Understands customer needs and expectations and responds in a helpful and professional way
- Builds positive working relationships with customers and works to agreed time scales and standards of quality
- Takes responsibility to review and improve customer service, listening to and acting on feedback

Self-awareness

- Responsible for personal behaviour and is accountable for own actions, health and wellbeing
- Aware of personal strengths and takes pride and responsibility for performance at work and is responsive to constructive feedback
- Adaptable and embraces new ways of doing things, contributing ideas and energy to continuous improvement
- Takes control of personal and professional development, actively managing own Personal Learning Plan as well as supporting the development of others when needed

People Management

- Prioritises and agrees objectives aligned with the Operational Plan to engage staff, maximise adaptability and build capacity to deliver
- Credible with staff, creating conditions to build confident effective teams that empower, value and motivate people, managing workload and equalities
- Raises performance using constructive challenge, feedback and coaching skills, seeking support and advice from HR professionals when needed
- Aware of impact on others and creates a positive environment for innovation, learning, health and wellbeing

Communications and engagement

- Engages and is credible with stake-holders and is connected to a range of internal and external networks
- Communicates clear & creative ideas that meet the needs of a range of audiences, ensuring objectives & outcomes are achieved
- Produces concise, clear, well-structured written work using SLAB guidance
- Considers and communicates the impact of decisions on wider policies and programmes

Improving Performance

- Demonstrates ongoing use of relevant performance improvement tools and techniques including skills development
- Uses Programme and Project Management Principles effectively and proportionately
- Adapts quickly to fit skills and resources to changing circumstances and expectations
- Applies risk management principles to decision making and controls opportunities and threats to achieving objectives

Analysis and Use of evidence

- Use evidence to assess measure and evaluate projects and policies, considering the impact on other policies and government outcomes
- Engages with analytical specialists at appropriate stages of policy and programme development
- Interrogates analytical and management information to draw out key messages and findings to support decisions
- Organises and collates robust information from a variety of sources in decision making, sharing knowledge and information across the wider system

Financial Management

- Uses accurate and relevant financial data to create objectives and targets relevant to budget responsibilities
- Takes responsibility for the monitoring and controlling of expenditure
- Understands & applies the principles of Budgeting, Financial Management & Resource Accounting outlined in the Scottish Public Finance Manual
- Maintains regular contact with relevant finance staff, and knows when to seek advice from audit, risk, and procurement and finance professionals

Interview Expenses

Travel and subsistence expenses during the selection process are the responsibility of the applicant.

Starting Salary

This job is graded as Grade 5 within SLAB, which currently has a starting salary of £31,510.

These figures are based on SLAB's current pay position which covers a one year pay period from 1 April 2020. Any future salary increases after 31 March 2020, either as a result of pay progression within grade 5 or other increases to salary points, are subject to Public Sector Pay Policy, Scottish

Government approval of an affordable pay remit, SLAB's negotiations with the Union on pay reviews and SLAB's own pay policy.

Working Pattern

Solicitor will work on shift for an average of 37 hours per week. Due to the nature of the work, solicitors may need to work such hours as the business dictates for the proper performance of their duties. This will include attendance at police stations, including those outside normal business hours (9am and 5pm) and out-of-hours telephone advice to individuals, PDSO clients and potential PDSO clients.

You will be required to work any day of the week including overnight and at weekends and you must be available to work different shifts, albeit that some may be available on a homeworking basis. This means that you will effectively have no 'normal' hours or pattern of work as your hours will vary on a regular basis in accordance with SLAB's requirements to cover the SCL on a 24 hour / 7 day week basis throughout the full year.

Your hours to be worked per week will be detailed in a shift rota which will set out the working patterns for the SCL throughout the coming year. The rota will be provided well in advance, bearing in mind the Health and Safety regulations relating to shift working. SLAB will also try to accommodate any preferences for working hours (within reason) in advance of the rota being finalised, in line with our flexible working ethos.

Other information

All SCL Solicitors, as part of their role, will be required to travel by car (or public transport where appropriate) on an occasional to regular basis, to attend police stations throughout Scotland (and elsewhere in the UK), in which case they will receive the appropriate travel assistance & expenses related to this as considered appropriate by the Scottish Legal Aid Board.

For information regarding the pre-employment checks and other relevant information please review all documents attached to this job advert available on our recruitment website. Note that this information is provided for guidance only and does not form part of the conditions of employment. Further information about the Scottish Legal Aid Board (SLAB), including who we are and what we do, can be found at www.slab.org.uk.