



# SCOTTISH LEGAL AID BOARD

## Person Specification and Job description for applicants



### Criminal Defence Solicitor Public Defence Solicitors' Office (PDSO)

Inverness

Grade 6 - 5

**For Grade 6 Starting salary from £38,970**

**For Grade 5 starting salary from £32,150**

*(Newly or recently qualified applicants will be placed on G5 of the salary scale)*

We are currently recruiting for a Criminal Defence Solicitor (Grade 6 or 5) within the Public Defence Solicitors' Office (PDSO) based in Inverness.

This post is fixed term for 12 months on a full-time basis. The additional benefit of a relocation package might be available for applicants relocating to Inverness from other areas. The details of this allowance will be reviewed individually with eligible candidates upon request.

Further information is supplied in the 'General Information for Applicants' document.

#### **Our organisation**

The Scottish Legal Aid Board (SLAB) was set up in 1987 to manage legal aid in Scotland. As a non-departmental public body responsible to the Scottish Government, our primary purpose is to manage and continuously improve publicly funded legal assistance and advise Scottish Ministers on its strategic development for the benefit of society.

We are a highly ethical organisation, carrying out rewarding work that may have a considerable impact on clients' lives. With a low staff rotation ratio, as a business, SLAB can offer a stable and secure employment package. Our total reward package includes the following: flexible working hours, occasional remote working, a competitive holiday entitlement of 34 days per year (inclusive of public and privilege holidays) increasing after five years of continuous service, and a 6% contributory pension scheme. In some cases, we may financially contribute to relocation expenses for roles out with the Central Belt.

We welcome and encourage applications from diverse backgrounds, including groups currently underrepresented in our workforce. We pride ourselves as being an employer of choice.

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 defence services in the summary and solemn courts; and at police stations - both as a nominated solicitor and duty solicitor.

## Main Duties and Responsibilities

1. Provide advice and representation to clients who are subject to criminal investigations or criminal proceedings
  - Provide proper, appropriate, timely and independent advice and representation. Ensure that all representation and assistance is provided effectively and efficiently
  - Act as a duty solicitor at Sheriff Courts and police stations
  - Participate in the PDSO and duty solicitor on-call service for police station advice both by telephone and by attending police stations as required
  - Promote and work for the best interests of the client at all times
  - Provide the client with fearless, vigorous and effective defence and to use all proper and lawful means to secure the best outcome for the client
  - Investigate and assist with the investigation of clients' cases to ensure that all matters are prepared to the highest standards.
2. Apply/adhere to practices, procedures and Codes of Practice to ensure the maximum efficiency and effectiveness of the PDSO
  - Ensure own conduct complies with the Statutory Code of Practice issued by the Board in connection with the provision of criminal legal assistance and complies with all other professional standards and obligations
  - Ensure accurate time recording of own casework
  - Apply standard PDSO practices and procedures at all times
  - Maintain individual performance statistics as developed; and provide the Head of office and/or Director of PDSO with suggestions for improvements in the operation of the PDSO
  - Work to the standards expected by the Criminal Quality Assurance Scheme
  - Attend any training that is required
3. Build/maintain a client base within the area
  - Build effective relationships with clients and key contacts through appropriate contact; identifying with their issues; maintaining an efficient and professional service at all times; and helping to raise/maintain the profile of PDSO in the area
4. Represent the PDSO in its relationship with outside bodies as required
  - Build, maintain and promote effective relationships with other help agencies such as those in the advice sector and local support agencies
5. Assist and participate in the training of staff within the PDSO, as required
  - This will mainly be in relation to any trainee solicitors appointed within the office

## Contacts

### a) Staff/support

- Daily informal contact to discuss the allocation of cases and particular issues or queries

### b) Management

- Formal contact to look at particular cases and policies. Informal contact as required for discussion, guidance and approval.

### c) Other Contacts

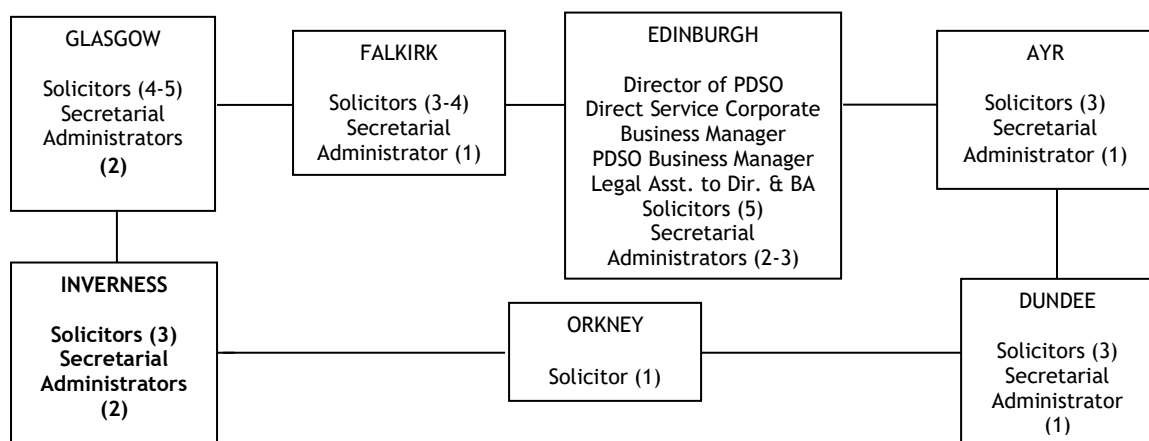
#### *(i) Within the PDSO*

- Daily contact with the legal profession, in particular criminal defence solicitors
- Contact with the staff of the Scottish Legal Aid Board concerning applications for legal aid

#### *(ii) Outside the PDSO*

- Solicitor/client relationship with members of the public
- Daily contact with the Courts, Procurator Fiscal's Office and the police in the normal course of acting as a criminal defence solicitor

### Organisation chart



### 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:*

- A sound technical ability as a criminal court practitioner
- An in-depth working knowledge of the criminal justice system and legal aid
- A minimum of 1 full year's criminal court experience in Scots Law
- A minimum of 1 full year's experience of advising and assisting suspects in police detention
- A current, valid driving licence
- Drive / Self-motivation - ability 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 presentation skills with well-developed communication skills (written and oral) - able to influence and persuade others, verbally and in writing, in such a way as to be clearly understood
- Sound Judgement - able to evaluate information and courses of action to reach logical and objective decisions about what is most likely to lead to the desired result
- 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
- Flexibility and adaptability
- Tenacity
- Integrity
- Innovative but pragmatic thinking
- Good computer skills and knowledge of Ms Package

## **Desirable Criteria**

- Experience/knowledge central or local government, non-departmental public body or voluntary sector.

## **Criminal record check**

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

## **Qualifications**

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

## **Competency required**

*In addition to the Essential criteria listed above, the following competencies for Grade 6 roles are also required and all SLAB's applicants will be tested against these during the interview or assessment centre.*

### **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**

- Engaged and credible with stakeholders, connected to a range of internal and external networks
- Communicates clear and creative ideas that meet the needs of a range of audiences, ensuring objectives and 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, controlling 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
- Engage with analytical specialists at appropriate stages of policy and programme development
- Interrogate analytical and management information to draw out key messages and findings to support decisions
- Organise and collate 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 and applies the principles of Budgeting, Financial Management and 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. Following current government guidance on social distancing, the interview will most likely be arranged online using video conferencing tools.

### **Starting Salary**

The job is graded as Grade 6 which currently has a starting salary of £38,970 and maximum of £44,460. Starting salary in grade 6 will normally be the bottom of the pay band. Providing your performance is good you will progress to the top of the pay band within approximately 4-5 years.

Candidates with less developed expertise may be appointed at Grade 5. The Grade 5 salary band has a scale minimum of £32,150 and a maximum salary of £37,380. If sufficient skills and expertise are developed, consideration may be given to straight-through re-grading to Grade 6 after 2-3 years (if applicable).

These figures are based on SLAB's current pay position which covers a one year pay period from 1 April 2021. Any future salary increases after 31 March 2022, either as a result of pay progression within Grade 5 and 6 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.

### **Other information**

The standard working week is 37 hours in total with an unpaid lunch break of 36 minutes each day during PDSO opening hours. However, due to the nature of these positions, solicitors will be required to work such hours as the business dictates for the proper performance of their duties. This will include attendance at police stations outside normal business hours (9am and 5pm) and out-of-hours telephone advice to PDSO clients, potential PDSO clients and help agencies, on a rota basis as directed by the line manager. No additional pay or time off will be permitted for this necessary work.

All Public Defence Solicitors, as part of their role, will be required to travel by car (or public transport where appropriate) on an occasional to regular basis, as a result of duty plans and to attend a number of courts or to visit other PDSO offices throughout Scotland, in which case they will receive the appropriate travel assistance & expenses related to this as considered appropriate by SLAB.

Depending on office location, some Public Defence Solicitors will be required to travel frequently to a number of courts, in which case access to a car may be provided. However, this provision does not form part of the contract of employment.

For information regarding pre-employment checks and other relevant information, please review all documents attached to this job advert, available on our recruitment website. Please note that this information is provided for guidance only and does not form part of the conditions of employment. For further information on who we are and what we do, visit [www.slab.org.uk](http://www.slab.org.uk).