



glasgow bar association
established 1959

Room 1.29,
Glasgow Sheriff Court

5TH May 2020

Neil Stevenson
Chief Executive
Scottish Legal Complaints Commission

BY E -MAIL

Dear Mr. Stevenson

SLCC BUDGET

We write on behalf of the membership of the Glasgow Bar Association in relation to the SLCC budget proposal to be laid before the Scottish Parliament for 2020/2021. This represents an increase in the levy for every practicing solicitor by 3% and matches what was proposed by the SLCC in January before this global pandemic. It is unbelievable that in these gravest of times for practitioners the SLCC seeks to increase the levy rather than reduce it. The SLCC proposal flies in the face of the efforts of other institutions and bodies such as the Scottish Government and local authorities in doing all that they can to help those in business survive this crisis. For instance, our own body, the Law Society of Scotland has introduced savings to members of some 2.2 million to relieve the burden on the profession and it is anticipated will shortly be announcing a package of further financial measures.

We represent around 400 members of the profession. Our membership consists almost entirely of small to medium businesses together with sole practitioners and assistants. It is absolutely clear that the vast majority of our membership are struggling at this time. Due to the present crisis some members have no work whatsoever and others barely the minimum. Some of our members have been made redundant and many anticipate they could lose their livelihood. For our membership every penny counts in the struggle to survive with little or no income. The SLCC levy is a substantial contribution from members in normal times but these are obviously not normal times. Far from increasing the levy the SLCC should be proposing a significant decrease or suspension at this time. To actually be proposing an increase is incredible.

We call on the SLCC to re-consider their position in the light of all that is going on around them. It is the only reasonable thing to do in the circumstances. We agree entirely with the Law Society of Scotland statement that the SLCC.... "is tone – deaf to the scale and seriousness of the emergency before us, increasing fees on solicitors when they are least able to pay". It is not too

late to listen to reason and drastically amend this budget to reflect the reality of what the legal profession is facing at this time.

We look forward to your response as soon as possible.

Yours Faithfully

Billy Lavelle
President, Glasgow Bar Association