



glasgow bar association
established 1959

Room1.29
Glasgow Sheriff Court
1 Carlton Place,
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G5 9DA

28th October 2020

Dear Justice Committee,

Financial Support for the Legal Aid Practitioners of Scotland

We note that following the Law Society of Scotland meeting with representatives of the Scottish Government and the Scottish Legal Aid Board yesterday, despite what has now been months of consideration of the profession's proposals, no decision has been finalised in respect of a package of financial support for legal aid firms, despite our correspondence from June 2020 about the impact the current pandemic is having upon the administration of justice and the sustainability of legal aid provision.

We are aware the Law Society of Scotland has put forward compelling evidence to both Scottish Government and the Scottish legal Aid Board regarding the desperate financial situation of legal aid practitioners arising from the impact of the pandemic. The Law Society of Scotland has made detailed proposals of a comprehensive and costed package to preserve and promote the administration of justice and to preserve access to legal aid provision for the people of Scotland. Our members have waited patiently for the Scottish Government to provide them a support package recognising the essential role these practitioners undertake in the justice partnership.

Our membership consists of the small to medium enterprises that the Government stated at the outset they wished to help. We are astonished and deeply concerned that the Scottish Government has still not provided an offer, despite months of discussions having taken place. Our members have worked for seven months of lockdown in the most fraught circumstances, showing flexibility, working on holidays and adapting to new ways of

undertaking Court representation to ensure that the Court process continues. The promise to come back to the profession 'as soon as possible' is simply not good enough.

Our members need to know immediately what the Government's proposals to the profession are.

We would invite you to make every effort to ensure a prompt response is now received.

Yours sincerely,

The Office Bearers of the Executive Committee of the Glasgow Bar Association