



SCOTTISH LEGAL AID BOARD

Person Specification and Job description for applicants

Criminal Defence Solicitor

PUBLIC DEFENCE SOLICITORS' OFFICE (PDSO)

Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Central belt, Scotland

£35,110 - £55,010 depending on expertise, plus £5k allowance

Brief Outline

Due to recent employee turnover and movements we are currently recruiting for Criminal Defence Solicitors within the Public Defence Solicitors' Office. We are likely to have a mix of permanent and temporary/fixed term positions on a full time basis over the coming six months in our new office in Aberdeen, and in offices across the central belt in Scotland, including Edinburgh.

Further information about the Scottish Legal Aid Board, including who we are and what we do, can be found at www.slab.org.uk Further information about the PDSO can be found at www.pdso.org.uk

If you are applying, please indicate which office locations you would be interested in and if applying on a part time basis (less than 37 hours per week), please give details of the number of hours and pattern of part-time work you would prefer.

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 Public Defence Solicitors' Office (PDSO) is a national network of publicly funded solicitors operating from seven offices across Scotland providing criminal legal assistance. Operating as a direct service of the SLAB, we advise and represent clients, who are eligible for criminal legal aid, in relation to summary and solemn cases at every level and in Scotland's busiest courts all over the country.

As an organisation we carry out rewarding work that may have a considerable impact on clients' lives. As a business we have 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: contributory defined benefit pension scheme with 6% employee contribution, flexible working hours, generous annual leave, interest free travel season ticket loan for public transport, cycle to work scheme, comprehensive access to learning and development opportunities and well-being support. In some cases, we may financially contribute to relocation expenses for roles out with the Central Belt. All employees' salaries are subject to Scottish Public Sector Pay Policy (more information in '*Starting salary*' section).

Further information is supplied for applicants on our website <http://www.slab.org.uk/recruitment>, Note that this information is provided for guidance only and does not form part of the conditions of employment.

Successful candidates will be subject to the Scottish Legal Aid Board's standard security checks which include the requirement for a current Standard Disclosure from Disclosure Scotland due to the nature of this post.

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The Job

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

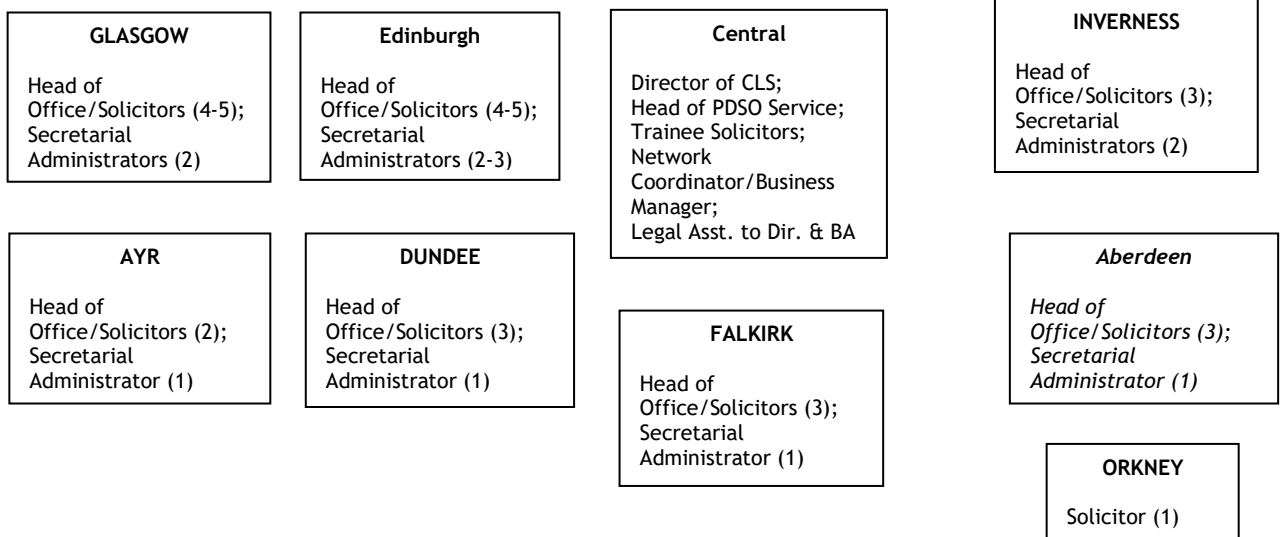
(i) Within the PDSO

- 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



Competencies and Experience Required

You will be asked in your personal statement to provide evidence as to how you meet the essential and desirable criteria. These are key to performing the job successfully listed below:

Essential Criteria

- 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 years' experience of advising and assisting suspects in police detention
- 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

Desirable Criteria

- Computer literate in Word, Excel, time and case recording

Qualifications/Standards

- 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
- A recent (last 12 months) criminal record check either at the application stage, or following a conditional offer of employment. For this post we require a Standard Disclosure from Disclosure Scotland. For more information about types of criminal record checks in Scotland please visit www.mygov.scot/disclosure-types/
- A current, valid driving licence and immediate access to a car

Additional Competencies

In addition to the competencies and experience detailed above, the following competencies are also required to perform the job successfully:-

Customer Service

- Strong client and customer awareness - able to identify with clients and key contacts and build effective relationships to help develop the PDSO caseload
- Take responsibility to measure and continuously improve your performance
- Seek and listen to feedback from your clients, justice and Board colleagues

- Be helpful, friendly and professional with clients, justice and Board colleague

Team working

- The team can rely on you to meet your agreed objectives and work targets
- Understand and fulfil your own responsibilities and be aware of how your work attendance and hours of work, affects other members of your team
- Build and maintain good working relationships with colleagues
- Share knowledge and experience and offer practical help to colleagues in your own and other departments when necessary
- Value the contribution of other team members and be open to different points of view
- Provide and accept constructive feedback and make a contribution to improve the performance of the team

Self Management

- Be aware of your own strengths and abilities
- Take control of your personal and professional development
- Act as a role model for those around you, demonstrating energy, commitment and confidence
- Take personal responsibility for your own actions
- Contribute to and accept and embrace change
- Be aware of your personal impact on others

Project, Programme & Operational Management

- Present ideas in a clear and positive way
- Identify, engage and maintain relationships with all internal and external stakeholders
- Be aware of the wider political and sectoral environment

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, 6 or 7 depending on whether or not the successful candidate has the post qualifying expertise and relevant to the role coupled with specialist expertise in an area that could be used to develop the role and the PDSO Service as a whole.

Salary scales at April 2021:

	Grade 5 (NQ Solicitor)	Grade 6 (Solicitor)	Grade 7 (Senior Solicitor)
Max-4	-	£39,360	£47,290
Max-3	-	£40,340	£48,940
Max-2	£35,110	£41,750	£51,150
Max-1	£36,510	£43,380	£53,160
Maximum	£37,760	£44,910	£55,010

Starting salary in any grade 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 5 years.

The Board's current pay agreement with the Union covers a 1 year period from 1 April 2021. Thereafter, any salary increases would be subject to public sector pay policy and to the Board reaching agreement with the Union on any future pay review; and are therefore currently undetermined.

Attraction and Retention Allowance

In addition to salary, the role will include an attraction and retention allowance equivalent to £5000 a year. This allowance is paid monthly, is non-consolidated and non-pensionable. It is payable up to 31 March 2023, when the allowance will be reviewed, and may be removed at SLAB's discretion.

Working Pattern

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. You will receive the appropriate payment, travel assistance & expenses related to this out of hours work as considered appropriate by the Scottish Legal Aid Board.

Other Information

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; to attend police stations 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 the Scottish Legal Aid Board. Immediate access to a car is essential. You will need to have access to a car for and to hold and continue to hold a current valid UK driving licence, the loss of which, unless public transport is a viable option, may result in the termination of your employment.

This role is deemed an essential business service during the COVID-19 situation and you will be expected to attend work either in the office, at court or the police station as required. However, due to the current Covid-19 circumstances and government guidance on social distancing measures, you may be able to perform some work from home or from another SLAB Office temporarily until further notice.

This temporary period of remote/homeworking will be regularly reviewed and will cease when it is no longer deemed to be necessary, at SLAB's discretion, in which case you will be required to attend your permanent workplace as business needs require and with regard to SLAB's longer term policy on remote and homeworking which is yet to be determined.

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