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Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
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11 November 2026

Dear Convener,

Thank you to you and your members for meeting me and my officials on 30 September 2026 to discuss the legal aid reform consultation. During this meeting, I committed to provide further information on stakeholder engagement during the consultation period and to follow up on the question regarding the payment of legal aid trainees and the real living wage.

**Consultation update**

During the consultation period I hosted ministerial roundtables with third sector organisations, had individual meetings with organisations such as the Law Society of Scotland and the Scottish Legal Aid Board, and took the opportunity to visit Shetland. My officials also met with representatives of the legal profession and interested stakeholders to hear directly from them. Following the close of the formal public consultation period on 13 October 2026, I can provide a list of organisations that participated in these engagement activities. All feedback from these events will be carefully considered alongside the formal consultation responses as we develop our analysis of the consultation findings.

Please note that engagement remains ongoing, and we will continue to work with stakeholders to inform the development of policy and legislation. It should also be noted that, while additional stakeholders were invited to participate in engagement sessions during the consultation period, not all accepted the invitation or were able to attend.

Organisations engaged:

- Central Advocacy Partners
- Citizens Advice Scotland
- Clan Childlaw
- Dundee Women's Aid and Dundee Assist
- Edinburgh Bar Association
- Fair Justice System for Scotland
- Glasgow City Council
- Govan Law Centre
- Human Rights Consortium Scotland

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- Just Right Scotland
- Kibble SAFE Service
- Law Society of Scotland
- Legal Services Agency
- Scottish Association of Law Centres
- Scottish Child Law Centre
- Scottish Children's Reporter Administration
- Scottish Legal Aid Board
- Scottish Solicitors Bar Association
- Shared Parenting Scotland
- Shetland Women's Aid
- The Children and Young People's Commissioner
- The Compass Centre
- The Faculty of Advocates
- The Faculty of Procurators and Solicitors in Dundee
- The Royal Faculty of Procurators in Glasgow
- Trafficking Awareness Raising Alliance

**Legal Aid Traineeship Fund and the real living wage**

The Law Society of Scotland (LSS) advise that the Legal Aid Traineeship Fund (LATF) requires participating employers to pay trainees at least the LSS recommended trainee salary. In setting that recommended rate, the LSS takes account of the real living wage and bases its calculation on a standard 35-hour working week.

As a result, a trainee paid the recommended rate and working a 35-hour week will receive a salary that is slightly above the equivalent living wage level. However, the LSS advise that it is important to note that responsibility for trainee pay and working hours rests with individual firms. Nevertheless, the LSS is clear that employers must comply with all relevant statutory requirements and should review pay arrangements where trainees regularly work beyond the standard 35-hour working week to ensure they continue to meet their legal obligations.

The terms of the LATF only allow for 50% of the recommended rate to be recovered by firms.

I trust this information is helpful to you, and I look forward to providing you with a further update on the consultation findings in due course.

Yours sincerely,

**KIRSTEN OSWALD**

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