Submission from Lindsay and Kirk for the Legal Profession and Legal Aid (Scotland) Bill

We are a small firm. We have by and large chosen to do Legal Aid work. Over a considerable number of years there has been no increase in Legal Aid fees whilst costs of operating our practice rise year on year. Profit margins have declined, particularly in the provision of Civil Legal Aid, to such an extent that we are now seriously contemplating withdrawing from providing Civil Legal Aid. We understand that the complaints procedure will be self-funding. In addition to the annual general levy we are led to believe that on a complaint being made, the firm of solicitors will be requested to pay the sum of approximately £300 which is non-refundable. The cutbacks in Legal Aid are already denying many people access to justice. If the self-funding proposals are passed, then our firm will not take on clients that perhaps deserve representation, but either have the potential for making a complaint, or wish a piece of work done which economically it is not worth our while doing in case a complaint is made. This will further reduce access to justice within the Scottish population which we believe is a very backward step.

Lindsay and Kirk