Submission from Paul Faris for the Legal Profession and Legal Aid (Scotland) Bill

It is my view that one of the strengths of the current system that is in danger of being lost is the input of a large number of Reporters. There are both solicitor reporters and non-solicitor reporters. This ensures that legal points and common sense are kept in balance as well as enabling the legal profession to gain valuable input from best practice in other areas of customer service (gained from non-solicitor reporters). Reporters have a wide range of experience both in the legal profession and more widely in community and in business. As many reporters work on the Client Relations Committee they have the opportunity to both input to the pool of knowledge and learn from it as well as preparing reports on specific cases. The committees are made up of both lawyers and non-lawyers and each learns from the other.

If everything is dealt with by a Commission there is likely to be a much smaller team of full time case handlers which may well deprive the legal profession of a currently available valuable input.

I also feel that the whole exercise is likely to result in many small High St solicitors who provide a valuable service to people in their small(ish) towns deciding to give up on “general practice”. This will mean that people in places like the Borders will end up having to go to Edinburgh for legal advice instead of being able to obtain it locally where the solicitor will be more aware of local circumstances.