Submission from Jane Gallagher for the Legal Profession and Legal Aid (Scotland) Bill

I am writing as a Scottish solicitor to express concern that the new complaints handling system proposed in the bill will be far more expensive to run than the present system. The increased costs will be born by solicitors.

There is already a real problem in making rural solicitors firms sufficiently viable to attract younger solicitors. Many rural solicitors cannot get qualified solicitors to apply. As the present partners retire there will be no-one to take over and so rural firms are likely to amalgamate or close down in large numbers in the near future. This will lead to big gaps in access to justice.

Anything which increases the costs of running a solicitors business will be detrimental to firms in rural locations trying to attract new solicitors. The ultimate losers will be local communities.