

PUBLIC DEFENCE SOLICITORS' OFFICE (PDSO)
Person Specification and Job description for applicants

Criminal Defence Solicitor

Inverness
From £38,200

Brief Background

We currently have a vacancy for a Criminal Defence Solicitor (Grade 6) with our PDSO office in Inverness. This is a full time (37 hours per week) role and is a fixed term maternity cover post, initially for a period of 12 months, with the possibility of extension.

Our Organisation

The Scottish Legal Aid Board (SLAB) was set up in 1987 to manage legal aid in Scotland and was responsible for setting up the PDSO. The PDSO Director reports to SLAB's Chief Executive on administrative issues and operate as a fairly independent direct service day to day. SLAB assess the applications the PDSO submit for criminal legal aid in exactly the same way as those submitted by private solicitors.

We are a highly ethical organisation, carrying out rewarding work that may have a considerable impact on clients' lives. With a low staff rotation ratio, as a business, SLAB and the PDSO can offer a stable and secured employment package. Our total reward package includes the following: flexible working hours, remote working from home, the opportunity to apply for a seasonal ticket loan for public transport, a competitive holiday entitlement of 34 days per year (inclusive of public and privilege holidays) increasing after 5 years of continuous service, and a 6% contributory pension scheme is in operation, the terms of which are in line with public service pension schemes. In some cases, we may financially contribute to relocation expenses for roles out with the Central Belt. All employees' salaries are subject to Scottish Government Public Sector Pay Policy (more information in '*Starting salary*' section).

If you wish to learn more about our organisation and our other direct services please visit the [SLAB](#) website.

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

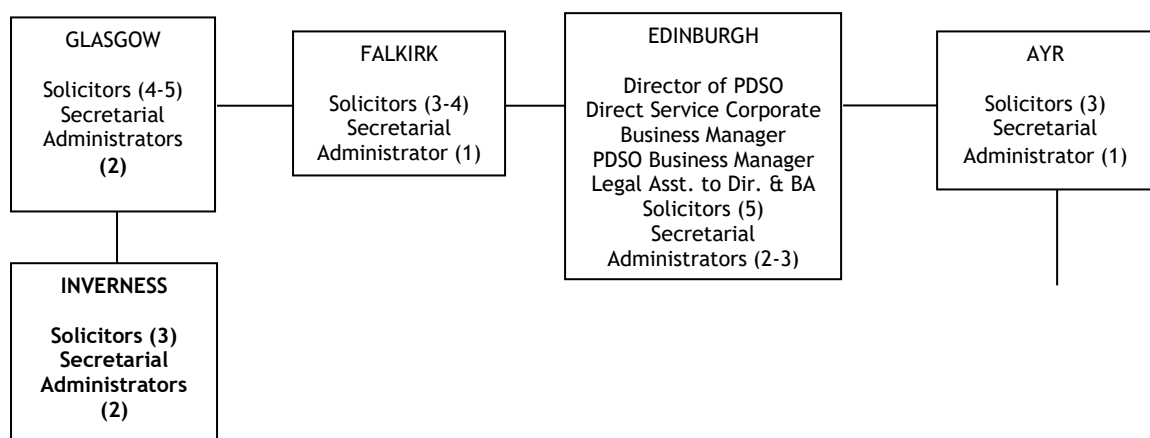
(i) Within the PDSO

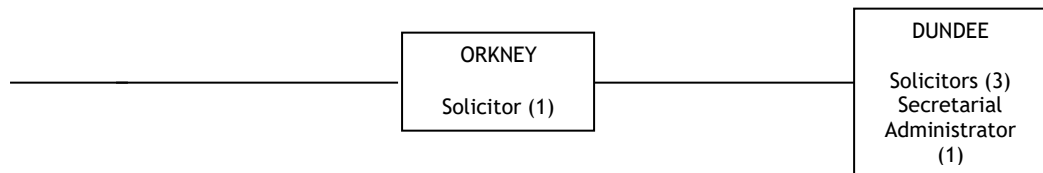
- Daily contact with the legal profession, in particular criminal defence solicitors
- Contact with the staff of the Scottish Legal Aid Board concerning applications for legal aid

(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





Essential Criteria

The following competencies and expertise are key to performing the job successfully:

- 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 year's experience of advising and assisting suspects in police detention
- A current, valid driving licence (NB may only be desirable depending on location of role)

Essential Criteria cont'd

- 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

Qualifications

- An enrolled solicitor with a full, post-qualified and unrestricted practising certificate from the Law Society of Scotland

Desirable Criteria

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

Additional Competencies

- In addition to the specific competencies listed above, the following core competencies for Grade 5 and 6 roles within SLAB are also key to performing the job successfully:-

Communications and Engagement

- Manages internal and external relationships, creating positive networks and maintaining trust and credibility
- Communicates complex information clearly, presenting strategic ideas in a clear and positive way

Improving Performance

- Uses relevant tools, techniques and skills development to facilitate continuous improvement
- Adapts quickly to fit skills and resources to changing circumstances and expectations

Analysis and Use of Evidence

- Shares knowledge and information across the wider system, to obtain best value from it across the wider public service

Team work

- Knows and understands the contribution the team makes to PDSO's performance.
- Can be relied on to deliver agreed personal objectives and is aware of how their work connects with the work of others
- Builds networks and maintains good working relationships with colleagues, valuing their diversity and contribution and is open to different points of view
- Contributes views, ideas and experience to improve the team's performance, offering and/or seeking practical help when necessary

Customer Service

- Knows and understands internal and external customers & how their role fits into SLAB and the wider public sector
- Understands customer needs and expectations and responds in a helpful and professional way
- Builds positive working relationships with customers and works to agreed time scales and standards of quality
- Takes responsibility to review and improve customer service, listening to and acting on feedback

Starting Salary

The job is graded as Grade 6 which currently has a starting salary of £38,200.

Candidates with less developed expertise may be appointed at Grade 5 level with a starting salary of £31,510. (The Grade 5 salary band has a scale minimum of £31,510 and a maximum salary of £36,640). If sufficient skills and expertise are developed, consideration may be given to straight-through re-grading to Grade 6 after 2-3 years (if applicable).

These figures are based on SLAB's current pay position which covers a one year pay period from 1 April 2020. Any future salary increases after 31 March 2021, either as a result of pay progression within grade 6 (or 5) or other increases to salary points, are subject to Public Sector Pay Policy, Scottish Government approval of an affordable pay remit, SLAB's negotiations with the Union on pay reviews and SLAB's own pay policy.

Other Information

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.

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 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 SLAB.

Depending on office location, some Public Defence Solicitors will be required to travel frequently to a number of courts, in which case access to a pool car or car allowance may be provided. However, this provision does not form part of the contract of employment.

For information regarding the pre-employment checks and other relevant information please review all documents attached to this job advert available on our recruitment website. Note that this information is provided for guidance only and does not form part of the conditions of employment. Further information about the Scottish Legal Aid Board (SLAB), including who we are and what we do, can be found at www.slab.org.uk.