

**Scottish Legal Complaints Commission**  
The Stamp Office  
10 – 14 Waterloo Place  
Edinburgh, EH1 3EG  
**Tel 0131 201 2130**  
Fax 0131 201 2131  
[www.scottishlegalcomplaints.org.uk](http://www.scottishlegalcomplaints.org.uk)  
Legal Post, 86, Edinburgh 2



Mr Gordon Jackson QC  
Vice Dean  
The Faculty of Advocates  
**LP3 – EDINBURGH 10**

18 March 2015

Dear Mr Jackson

### **Consultation on the Operating Plan and 2015/16 Budget for the SLCC**

Thank you for your letter of 13 March in response to the consultation on the SLCC's operating plan and budget for 2015/16. You will remember that we corresponded in similar terms last year when I referred to my letter of 25 February 2013 written in response to the Faculty's comments about the 2013/14 Budget. A cost per service complaint is a misleading measure.

Our responsibilities are broader than service complaints. Our functions also encompass oversight of the complaint handling processes used by the Faculty of Advocates and our work in improving standards of complaint handling through trends, guidance and training.

As we noted in the annual report, two handling reports were issued on the Faculty's handling of cases in 2013/14 and in both of them we identified a need for further investigation and awarded compensation to the complainer. Since then the Faculty has acted on recommendations which we made around the rules and the website, which should increase public confidence in the system. This openness to our suggestions has also been demonstrated in the Faculty's commitment to working with us on a number of training sessions over recent years.

There has been a slight increase both in the number of complaints made to us about advocates and the number of those which we have assessed as eligible. Whilst they are not commonplace, there are occasions when the service provided by individual advocates, or their conduct, may be open to question. The SLCC provides public reassurance as an independent and impartial body that complaints are dealt with appropriately.

Our budget recognises that the volume of complaints about members of the Faculty is low: advocates pay less than half as much as solicitors on an individual basis. This is the second consecutive year in which we have reduced the levy for advocates. The reduction proposed this year of almost 6% in the amount which each advocate pays is substantial.

This year, for the first time, we will be recognising money raised from the complaint levy in setting our budget. We expect that over time the relative contribution made to the budget from the complaint levy will increase, allowing us to reduce the general levy. The effect of this will be that a higher proportion of the costs of the SLCC will be met by members of the

profession who have complaints upheld against them. I am sure this is a trend which you will welcome.

As in previous years, the levy has been set taking all of these considerations into account.

Yours sincerely

**Matthew Vickers**  
**Chief Executive Officer**