



Neil Stevenson
Chief Executive
The Scottish Legal Complaints Commission
The Stamp Office
10-14 Waterloo Place
Edinburgh
EH1 3EG

Our Ref: KL/LJ/LB
Date: 19 March 2020

Dear Neil,

URGENT - CORONAVIRUS AND THE SCOTTISH LEGAL PROFESSION

The current spread of COVID-19, coupled with the decisions of the Scottish and UK Government, are already having a major impact on the Scottish legal profession.

The suspension and postponement of court business has financial implications for firms specialising in litigation and criminal defence work. The inevitable slowdown in the property market will have enormous consequences for conveyancers and those businesses involved in estate agency. Commercial and private client work will be affected as everyone adapts to the new reality. It affects large and small businesses and in every part of Scotland. It requires a profession wide response.

The regulatory objectives set out in the 2010 Act include protecting the interests of consumers as well as promoting a 'strong, varied and effective legal profession'. This places an obligation on us to do all we can to sustain law firms over the coming period. I am now writing to ask the Scottish Legal Complaints Commission to play its part in this effort.

I wrote to you on 9 March with the Law Society's formal response to your proposed budget and levy for 2020/21. In light of current events, we are now asking the SLCC to go further and urgently reconsider its levy plans for this year. We know the recent trend in complaints numbers has been less than last year's forecast. Similarly, this current situation is certain to impact on the numbers of new complaints coming to the SLCC over the coming six months. For these reasons, we are asking the SLCC to agree to an exceptional reduction in this year's proposed levy. This may include a use of reserves which can be rebuilt in future years if required.



We have also discussed the need for a joint approach to the Scottish Government regarding other possible emergency funding. I look forward to taking forward that work in the next few days. In the meantime, I hope the Board of the SLCC can consider this urgent request.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lorna B Jack".

Lorna Jack
Chief Executive

cc: Faculty of Advocates

ccfi: President
Vice President