



FACULTY OF ADVOCATES

23 February 2023

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

Dear Mr Stevenson

SLCC draft operating plan and budget for 2023-24

Thank you for your letter of 26 January addressed to the Dean of Faculty. He has asked me to respond to you in my capacity as Treasurer.

Thank you for the opportunity to make our views known and also the time taken to meet with us on 15 February.

Faculty values its relationship with SLCC and the regular dialogue that takes place both at executive and operational level. SLCC fulfils a critical function in the Scottish legal landscape and I should say at the outset that Faculty is supportive of the SLCC's place in that landscape. I also recognise that the SLCC is currently funded through the levy arrangements. That said, those arrangements require to be justified and proportionate.

In that respect, I note that the levy for Advocates of plus three years and in the first three years is set to increase by approximately 9%. As far as I can tell from your consultation document this is the same percentage increase as that applied to solicitors.

A significant part of the rationale for the increase is the growing number of complaints overall with a prediction of a 5% increase in the budget year.

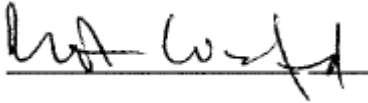
However, the number of complaints in relation to Advocates continues to be very low. In your last full year, you handled 20 complaints of which 6 were eligible. In the first half of this year, you have handled 11 complaints only 1 of which was eligible. Extrapolating that on a full year basis shows a 66% reduction in eligible complaints. Even if complaints were to increase by 5% in line with your assumptions the impact of that would be *de minimis* in terms of the SLCC overall budget and in reality

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be extremely unlikely to have any impact on operating costs.

Whilst I appreciate that in cash terms for an individual Advocate the increase is not material, I do think it is important to record that in principle we do not agree to a levy increase which appears to be driven in large part by a significant increase in complaints handling as a result of complaints raised against other legal professionals. That would not justify the proposed increase in levy for Advocates, and would not be proportionate.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ruth Crawford', written over a horizontal line.

Ruth Crawford
Treasurer