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Convener
Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice
Committee

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Dear Convener,

I am pleased to advise you that the Scottish Government's [Legal Aid Reform Discussion Paper](#), which sets out our strategic vision for reform of legal aid alongside immediate proposals for change, has been published today. The Paper sets out the three areas of work the Scottish Government will be undertaking to improve legal aid.

We will bring forward Regulations by the end of 2025 to simplify the regulatory framework which governs the eligibility for legal assistance and to improve the application process. This will reduce the burden both on solicitors and on those who need legal services and will ensure that funding is provided as quickly and easily as possible. We will also resume work to conduct research on legal aid fees and to implement changes informed by that research. Both of these areas of work will make it easier for solicitors to work with legal aid funding and for those who need help to obtain it.

In the longer-term we will work collaboratively with private sector law firms, third sector organisations and users of legal assistance services to develop a legal aid system that is responsive, flexible, affordable and sustainable for the future. That includes beginning to identify what primary legislation would be required to deliver it. This engagement is a commitment in the Scottish Government Three Year Delivery Plan which builds on our Vision for Justice which was published in 2022.

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

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I look forward to working with the committee both on the Regulations we will bring forward this year and on the longer-term transformation of the legal aid system which is vital to ensuring access to justice.

SIOBHIAN BROWN

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