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CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

There is, allegedly, a Chinese curse which is along the lines of "May you live in interesting times". I say allegedly because there is no evidence that it ever was a Chinese curse – the nearest that the Chinese get, apparently, is the proverb "It's better to be a dog in a peaceful time than be a man in a chaotic period", and the alleged curse can only be traced back to Robert F Kennedy speaking in Cape Town in 1966.

The SAS offers solicitors and their staff a lifeline by putting them in contact with a fellow practitioner who will listen and, where appropriate, provide advice and assistance.

Whatever its roots, however, it is nevertheless true that interesting times are not always the easiest to live through, and for the Solicitors' Assistance Scheme this year has certainly been interesting – in every sense of the word.

To contact the Solicitors' Assistance Scheme you can:

Telephone
020 7320 5795

Email
help@solicitorsassistancescheme.org

Visit our web site
www.solicitorsassistancescheme.org

You will all, I am sure, be aware of the turmoil currently affecting both the profession and the Law Society. Turmoil caused by Home Information Packs, the Carter Review, "Tesco" law and legislation in relation to age

discrimination, to name but a few. However, by far the most fundamental change for the Solicitors' Assistance Scheme this year has been the changes at the Law Society and the effect which these are likely to have upon the way in which the Scheme is likely to be administered in the future.

The Solicitors' Assistance Scheme has been in existence now for 34 years and during much of that time has been administered from within the Professional Ethics Unit of the Law Society. This has been extremely beneficial to the Scheme since it has meant that we have had a close working relationship with those on the regulatory side of the Society, have been able to "pick up" matters of a legal nature when the Ethics Guidance Team felt unable to advise and we have had a useful two-way exchange of information with Ethics Advisers.

In recent months, however, plans to restructure the Law Society have meant that a degree of uncertainty has arisen as to how administration of the Scheme will be undertaken in the new "divided" Law Society, with the possibility of that administration moving to Representation and being dealt with alongside the pastoral care services which the Society provides. This is something which has concerned the Committee over the past 9 to 12 months since it was felt that there could be, as a result, a weakening of regulatory links and diminution in the level of advice and support provided to the profession.

I and the other members of the SAS Committee have been keen to try and ensure that any effects of Law Society reorganisation have the least possible impact upon the work of, and benefits to be derived from, the SAS. To that end we have been having frank and, I have to say, extremely constructive discussions with the President of the Law Society, Fiona Woolf, and with the Chief Executive, Des Hudson, both of whom have expressed their full support for the work of the

Scheme and their commitment to ensuring the continued functioning of it.

The point I would like to stress is that the profession want and need an organisation like the SAS. It is not simply a useful addition to practice. Neither is it merely a recourse for those who simply cannot cope as well as others. What it is, is a valuable, relevant, up-to-date, timely, caring and, above all, effective way for those of us who have problems to obtain advice and assistance in order to deal more appropriately with the slings and arrows that modern-day practice can throw our way.

It is easy to forget that for many solicitors, legal practice can be a lonely place – not just for those who are in sole practice but also for those who may be having problems with partners or employers, or who don't feel able to talk to those closest to them in case it damages their reputations or causes personal embarrassment. For these solicitors, the SAS is a lifeline, and in many cases the only one which the system is likely to throw to them.

The Scheme helps over 800 solicitors a year with a range of problems including disciplinary matters, criminal charges, employment issues, financial difficulties and drug and alcohol addiction. More recently it has started to work closely with the Forensic Investigation Unit in Regulation to help firms to avoid the administrative and financial penalties associated with interventions.

There is so much more that the Scheme could do and, we believe, so many more solicitors whom it could assist were it able to involve itself more proactively, and promote itself more widely, than at present. That is why it is vital that, whatever the changes which occur within the Law Society, whatever the pressures and problems which confront the Profession, the Solicitors' Assistance Scheme continues to thrive, continues to be at the forefront of providing help and guidance to solicitors and continues to be valued, funded and

managed. We have the further assurances of the Law Society that they are happy to work with the SAS in investigating and assessing opportunities to extend the services of the Scheme and to provide an enhanced level of support to the Profession, now it is down to us as members of it to ensure that those enhanced benefits arise.

I started this statement by saying that living through interesting times was a curse. Possibly, just this once, these interesting times will turn out to be a blessing. Thank you all for your continued support.

DAVID T MORGAN
Chairman

A note from the Administrator

You will have seen from the statement of the SAS Chairman, David Morgan, that this year has been one of change and uncertainty and that much about the future of the Scheme remains still to be decided.

Please do not assume, however, that this in any way indicates that the Scheme over the past twelve months has been anything other than effective. We have, as ever, helped many hundreds of solicitors and their staff and families with the usual wide range of difficulties and problems and have even started to move into new areas of help and assistance as will be seen later in the item from Andrew Blatt entitled "Voluntary Closures and Disposals of Solicitors Practices"

Working with the Solicitors Assistance Scheme can, on most days, be an extremely rewarding experience – knowing that those who have problems, or who don't know where to turn, have been pointed in the direction of a solution. It can also, it has to be said, leave one with a sense of sadness about our profession and in particular at the way in which it treats those who are often most vulnerable, namely trainees and newly qualified solicitors.

Too often I receive phone calls from those who are being bullied or harassed by partners and line managers; who are being treated as what amounts to little more than slave labour or who are being brought into partnership as salaried partners simply in order to bear or absorb liability for the actions, or lack of actions, of equity partners.

Many trainees and junior solicitors find that their entry into the profession is not an easy one to begin with. Not only is there the ever growing amounts of regulation and red tape but also many are still paying off student loans whilst trying to find their feet in the profession, buy a house, start families and generally take on the usual panoply of responsibilities. To be subject to bullying, harassment or, worse still, disciplinary or negligence actions in respect of matters in which they have not been involved, is for many the final straw. They feel let down by the system and cheated of something which many will have worked very hard to achieve.

Partners and senior solicitors need to be more accountable for their actions and give greater thought to how they treat and interact with those whom they supervise and train. Staff partners need to make sure that others in the firm are not bullying and harassing employees.

Finally, trainees and junior solicitors need to be aware that partnership is not necessarily the gateway to an Eldorado of fabulous wealth. "Salaried partnerships", especially those which do not give rights to check accounts and have a say in what the firm does and how it does it, may be something to be avoided unless they are absolutely sure of their position, have safeguards in place and have fully weighed the advantages of being on the notepaper against the disadvantages of being held out as a partner.

Duncan Finlyson
Scheme Administrator

SAS Web Site

The SAS web site, which has now been in existence for over a year, is proving to be an increasingly popular source of information about the Scheme and those whose services are available under it. Members continue to receive enquiries and referrals from those who have visited it and it has become readily accessible through search engines such as Google and Yahoo.

Towards the end of last year we were forced to change the web address to www.solicitorsassistancescheme.org.uk (effectively adding a .uk to the end of the previous address) as we were unable to persuade the company through whom the previous address was registered to transfer the address to new providers. Fortunately we have not had any problems in relation to this reported to us.

Over the course of the coming year we would like to make the web site ever more informative and useful and we would welcome contributions from those involved with the Scheme, or who may feel that they have something to offer others through the Scheme, to let us have articles or items which we could include. Whilst we do not have the funds to reimburse financially those who supply materials, we are always happy to give credit to the authors and/or their firms or companies.

Voluntary Closures and Disposals of Solicitors Practices

There are a number of situations in which solicitors need to close their practices without having a natural succession either through sale or existing partners. Regrettably, owing to the successor practice rules contained in solicitors' professional indemnity insurance (PII) policies it is almost impossible to transfer the goodwill and files of the closing practice to another firm, even at a peppercorn

The most common situations which lead to the need to dispose of or close a practice are:

- retirement of a solicitor (usually in cases where the solicitor is a sole practitioner);
- illness of a sole practitioner or a partner in a small partnership;
- imminent threat of intervention by the Law Society;
- crystallisation of prohibitive practicing certificate conditions;
- the likely suspension or striking off of a solicitor (usually a sole practitioner).

In all cases the Law Society, unless satisfied that the practice will close in an orderly fashion, will usually have no choice but to consider intervention. Even then, in cases where there are concerns as to the dishonest conduct of a solicitor or a partnership, intervention will be the likely event even if the practice represents it is closing.

The Law Society has a duty to make sure that the public and the profession are protected against breaches of the Solicitors' Practice Rules or the Solicitors' Accounts Rules.

The costs of intervention are high. Over the last two years the Law Society has spent between £5m and £6m per annum on intervention agents fees. This puts the average cost of an intervention at between £100,000 and £150,000. When combined with PII run off cover, this is often sufficient to bankrupt the principal or partners of a small practice.

The other effects of intervention are well documented and no matter how efficient the intervening solicitors are, it is a destructive process and client matters do suffer. Costs to the profession are high, as the often inevitable insolvency of the principal or partners means that the profession contributes significantly to the costs of the intervention and run off cover through its practicing certificate fees. Apart from monetary

loss there is also the damage to the reputation of the profession as a whole in the eyes of the public.

The Law Society has always been concerned to ensure that practices that are in “difficulties” do not close without supervision. Until recently intervention has been the only option open to the Law Society.

Now, however, some members of the SAS, principally Murdochs Solicitors, have agreed an arrangement with the Law Society in which the Law Society will reserve its position on intervention if an orderly and supervised disposal takes place. The benefits to the practice, the public and the profession are obvious.

It is submitted that the reason that the Law Society have taken such a radical stance is because of the respect, trust and relationships that has been built up with members of the SAS.

If a voluntary closure is planned then the matter ought to be reported to the Law Society. A caseworker for the practice will be appointed if one is not already appointed, e.g. if disciplinary investigations are being or have taken place

Although the closure procedures will vary from practice to practice, there are a number of essential issues that need to be addressed include:

- contacting the clients in all “live” matters and advising them that the practice is to close at a particular date. They will be advised to choose an alternative practice to complete their matters. They will be asked to sign a letter of authority so that their file (subject to any third party consents e.g. mortgagees or LSC) with any balance less costs can be transferred to the new solicitor;
- making sure that all balances on “dead” matters are considered with the “dead” file and if appropriate sent to pay a

disbursement, costs or returned with the file to the client;

- returning all “dead” and archived files to clients, subject to any third party consents;
- arranging the writing up of all client ledgers, reconciliations and preparation of the closing S.34 report (if necessary by extending the date of the current S34 report deadline);
- dealing with the formalities at the Law Society e.g. records;
- arranging for all future correspondence, emails and telephone calls to be redirected to the appropriate third party;
- advising the indemnity insurers.

In particular the caseworker appointed by the Law Society needs constantly to be updated. Initially this may be several times a day but will slow down as the closure progresses. This is essential if the Law Society is to remain confident that the closure is taking place professionally and under supervision.

The costs of the supervision have to be met by the client solicitor. The costs are inevitably considerably cheaper than an intervention. The solicitor client also benefits by having the responsibility of the closure mostly taken away from him at a time of particular thus relieving him of some of the stress generated by worry about the intervention or the need to close the practice.

Murdochs have assisted with the voluntary closure of four firms in the last twelve months. Presently it is assisting with the closure of a further two. In all cases the benefits to the solicitors, the public and the profession have been clear.

The Law Society have expressed a desire to see the expansion of the scheme and it is hoped that protocols with the SRA can be agreed in the future.

If any member of the scheme wishes to discuss the practicalities of voluntary closures then they are free to contact Andrew Blatt, details below.

Andrew Blatt
Murdochs Solicitors
45 High St
Wanstead
London E11 2AA

0208 530 7291

07973 752 498

- **David Barton** – who advises on SDT and regulatory issues and is based in Maidstone in Kent
- **Simon Edwards** – senior partner at Aaron & Partners in Chester, Simon is also a trained mediator, an authorised insolvency practitioner and a notary and has expertise in corporate and commercial law including partnership, insolvency, commercial litigation and professional negligence.
- **Peter Blacklock** – Peter is not only a solicitor but also a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants, a member of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators and a CEDR accredited mediator. Peter is based in Brentwood in Essex and is able to advise on a wide range of financial matters including financial systems and due diligence
- **Richard Peel** – a solicitor with Dutton Gregory of Winchester, Richard is able to advise on a range of private client issues including wills, trusts, probate, charities and the elderly.
- **Sabina Rinker** – a partner in Guise solicitors of London and able to advise on issues relating to civil/commercial litigation, insolvency, director disqualification, professional negligence and costs disputes.
- **Mohammed Afzal** – a sole principal with HMA Law, based in central Birmingham and able to advise on disciplinary issues, SDT interventions and negligence.
- **David Potts** – a partner with Hacking Ashton of Newcastle under Lyme and specialising in partnership, negligence and disciplinary matters.
- **Julian Bailey** – of Urchfont, near Devizes in Wiltshire, and Honorary Secretary of the Gloucestershire and Wiltshire Law

Arrivals and departures

The past year has seen a number of long-standing members leave the Scheme. Whilst it is always sad to say goodbye, at least their places have been filled with new recruits to the Scheme.

The end of last year saw the departure of Anthony Bogan, Kenneth Merrick, Godfrey Smythe, Anthony Conway and Christian Forgaard whilst this year we have had to bid farewell to Eileen Savage and Boris Rumney, both of whom have been with the scheme for many years.

Eileen, who practices in Corbridge in Northumberland, has been with the scheme for many years providing general advice and finally left the Scheme in September 2006. Boris, who has provided assistance with counselling, stress and work related emotional problems and who has, for many years, been psychoanalytic psychotherapist, retired from practice and from the scheme at the end of December 2006.

Meanwhile, we have been joined this year by a number of new members who will bring new skills and enthusiasm to the ranks of existing members. They include:

- **Angela Deacon** – a former Council and Compliance Board member who provides advice on conveyancing, wills, probate, powers of attorney and leases and who is based in Stratford-upon-Avon

Society. Julian specialises in family, crime (especially “difficult” cases with high emotional content) and disciplinary matters.

- **David Taylor** – Law Society Council member and solicitor from south west London specialising in employment and disciplinary work.

Farewell message from Boris Rumney

I wanted to be a psychotherapist from the age of 16. I thought that to achieve this I had to go down the medical route but as I was hopeless at science subjects I made subject choices which seemed to lead inevitably to my qualifying as a solicitor in 1956. I’m not complaining, mind; I enjoyed an interesting and varied career as a lawyer but when in my mid-fifties the opportunity arose to undertake a full professional training in psychoanalytic psychotherapy, I jumped at it, qualified in 1988, retired from legal practice and have worked as a psychotherapist ever since.

Because I had worked as a solicitor in private practice for so many years I knew something about and indeed had myself experienced the stress and anxiety which the pressures of work and running a practice can cause. I thought that that the combination of my background as a legal practitioner and my better understanding of psychological processes made me especially qualified to offer help to other solicitors who were suffering from unendurable stress or who were having difficulties coping, not only with work or practice problems, but also with issues in their personal or emotional lives.

It was for this reason that I joined the ranks of SAS and I believe that over the years I have helped many solicitors who were referred to me to reach a better understanding of the underlying causes of their difficulties and consequently to take appropriate action to reduce the level of distress.

I have a note in my diary for 20th December: “End work - for ever”. Unfortunately that includes my work for SAS. I have enjoyed my working life and my time as a member of SAS, but at the age of 76 I also want to enjoy the experience of retirement before it is too late. Well, not quite retirement; I want to devote myself to my third career, writing and in particular playwriting. I have written several plays over the last three years and one of them - “Couch” - has had two public performances.

So au revoir to all my colleagues in SAS and the best of luck to you all and to the Scheme. And anyway I’m not completely disappearing - I remain a member of the Law Society with great pride and affection.”

**Best Regards,
Boris.**

AGM Report

The Solicitors’ Assistance Scheme AGM and annual conference was held this year on the 7 November and was kindly hosted by Radcliffes Le Brasseur - Committee member Gillian Benning having kindly stepped in with the offer of her firm’s facilities when the Law Society was unable to accommodate the conference.

In this somewhat turbulent year for the Scheme we were fortunate to be able to secure the support of some high profile speakers including the Lord Chief Justice, The Rt Hon The Lord Phillips of Worth Matravers; Law Society President Fiona Woolf; Antony Townsend, the Chief Executive of Regulation; Sue Elson, Clerk to the SDT; Mike Calvert, head of Forensic Investigations and last, but not least, Bronwen Still, head of Policy in Professional Ethics. Over lunch, delegates also had the benefit of a presentation on networking by Sue Tonks of Kintish.

The conference was opened by Michael Elks, senior partner of Radcliffes LeBrasseur who spoke of the rapid rate of change within the profession

and of the growing need for an organisation such as the SAS. Quoting from French poet and critic Paul Valery, who said that “The trouble with our times is that the future is not what it used to be,” Michael commented that “more than ever the profession needs a robust, independent and effective SAS to help it through what will be, undoubtedly, troubled times”

These were themes which were taken up and expanded upon by Lord Phillips who felt that, post-Clementi, there would remain an overwhelming need for the services of an organisation such as the SAS and it was vital that the lines of contact between the Scheme and the profession remain open and accessible to everyone.

Fiona Woolf went on to praise the work of the SAS – both in relation to relieving some of the burden on regulation and as an instrument for upholding the reputation of the profession. She said that, if the SAS did not already exist then the Law Society would, in the post-Clementi world, have to invent it from scratch.

Antony Townsend gave an overview of how regulation would be effected now that the Law Society was passing that role over to the Solicitors Regulation Authority and he gave a commitment that the SRA would continue to provide the SAS with access to support and assistance in the work which it did.

Sue Elson outlined the work of the Solicitors’ Disciplinary Tribunal and in particular addressed

issues relating to the growth in areas such as secret profits, conflict and referral fees.

After a wonderful lunch, and an excellent presentation by Sue Tonks, who dealt with how to make the most of the dynamics of a meeting when networking at conferences and receptions, David Morgan, Chairman of the SAS led a discussion which dealt with issues such as:

- where the Scheme should be going in the future,
- the steps the Committee had taken to put in place alternative structures to guard against loss



Law Society President Fiona Woolf with David Morgan, Chairman of the SAS

of support from the Law Society

- how the Scheme should promote itself in the coming years
- the structure of the Scheme, and
- funding the work of the Scheme.

It was generally agreed that the Committee had done an excellent job of protecting and promoting the Scheme in what were difficult times and that the support which it had received earlier in the day clearly showed that it continued to be valued.

The afternoon continued with a presentation by Mike Calvert who spoke of current issues within Forensic Investigations including property and mortgage fraud, the advent of SOCA, the effect of decisions in the Court of Appeal and the SDT and the need for continued transparency of regulation post the establishing of the SRA.

Finally, Bronwen Still took delegates through the changes which had come into effect in relation to conflict and confidentiality and the steps which firms should be taking to put in place appropriate procedures to comply with the provisions of the newly introduced Rules 16E and 16F.

Copies of papers and presentations for many of the conference items are available upon request from the Scheme Administrator, Duncan Finlyson.

Case summaries

The following are just a selection of the more interesting cases which have affected the legal profession and the Law Society during the course of the past year. Please bear in mind that it is not an exhaustive list. If anyone is involved in cases which they would like to see mentioned in the next newsletter, please send them through to the Scheme Administrator, Duncan Finlyson.

Law Society – v - Sephton

The case of *The Law Society v Sephton & Co* [2006] UKHL 22 involved issues of limitation relating to professional negligence claims and in particular when time started to run when a purely contingent right of action was involved.

The background to the case is that Sephton & Co were auditors to a firm of solicitors and who, between 1988 and 1995, provided reports to the Law Society which indicated that the firm's books and accounts were satisfactory. This was not the case as apparently a solicitor at the firm had been misappropriating client monies.

The matter only came to light in 1996 when a client complained to the Law Society. A claim was made on the Law Society's Compensation Fund in 1996 and ultimately a payment out of £1.24m was made. The Law Society took the view that the payments came about as a result of the negligent reports made by Sephton & Co and issued proceedings against them in May 2002.

Sephton & Co countered by arguing that the claim was outside the period of limitation which would have started to run either when the misappropriation took place or when the defective report was made. The Society argued that it did not suffer damage until the Compensation Fund payment was made in 1996.

Sephton & Co succeeded at first instance but that decision was overturned by the Court of Appeal. Sephton & Co appealed to the House of Lords.

In dismissing the appeal, the House of Lords held that if an immediate and measurable loss did not occur, for example because a claim was not inevitable when the negligent act or omission occurred, the limitation period would not begin to run. It would only do so as and when the contingency was fulfilled. In this case that contingency was fulfilled only when the claim for compensation was made against the Solicitors' Compensation Fund.

See also *Howard v Fawcetts* [2006] 1 WLR 682 which addresses the issue that "actual knowledge" of negligence is not required under s 14A of the Limitation Act 1980.

Singleton - v - The Law Society

The case of *Singleton v The Law Society* [2005] EWHC 2915 (Admin) concerned conduct unbefitting a solicitor and the extent to which allegations of dishonesty should have been communicated to the solicitor prior to the hearing.

The Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal found that the charges were proved and ordered that the solicitor be struck off the roll. The solicitor appealed on the basis that there had been procedural unfairness in that he had not been given adequate notice of the allegation of dishonesty – those allegations only having been communicated to him on the morning of the Tribunal hearing.

The court held that failure to allege or particularise dishonesty in a document in advance of the hearing was a procedural flaw. The Law Society was under

a duty to ensure that notice was given of an allegation of dishonesty unless it was obvious from the offence committed that dishonesty was involved. In this instance the allegation was of “conduct unbecoming a solicitor” which could be committed with or without an element of dishonesty. For this reason, the decision of the Tribunal was held to have been unfair and should therefore be quashed.

However, in this particular case, even without dishonesty the offences committed by the solicitor were serious enough to warrant a striking off in any event and so the court, exercising its discretion to deal with the matter and not refer it back to the Tribunal, ordered that the solicitor be struck off the roll of solicitors.

Sheikh – v – The Law Society

We reported on the case of Sheikh in the last issue of the SAS newsletter when it was heard before the High Court. The case has now been to the Court of Appeal who held, allowing the appeal by the Law Society, that the judgment of Park J ordering the withdrawal of notices of intervention was flawed and that the Law Society was justified in objecting to an order for withdrawal of an intervention notice in reliance upon Park J’s decision that there was no reason to suspect dishonesty.

Chadwick LJ said in his judgment that the question for the judge was to ascertain if the suspicion of dishonesty raised in the materials relied upon by the Law Society had been dispelled by the solicitor’s oral evidence so that the notices of intervention could safely be withdrawn.

He accepted that it was in no doubt that intervention in a solicitor’s practice was likely to have serious consequences and that at the same time, a solicitor should have the benefit of a speedy process by which the court could give full consideration as to whether the intervention was fair.

However, if the Law Society took the view that an intervention was necessary in order to achieve compliance with the rules, then the court should be slow to substitute that view with its own, especially in circumstances where the expertise to make such a decision was one which the Law Society possessed.

Chadwick LJ further commented that there were concerns as to the way in which interventions were conducted and that difficulties arose from the unspecific terms in which the intervention notice was drafted. He stated that “Disclosure of reasons in those terms is calculated to make it difficult for the solicitor to know and address the real concerns which had led to the exercise of intervention powers.” He continued “The Society should give thought to the need for Panel resolutions to identify, with much more specificity than is the case, the reasons which make intervention necessary. If those reasons are not identified at an early stage, there is a danger that the solicitor will be denied the effective protection which Parliament plainly intended a summary process to provide”

Krivinskas – v - Law Society

The case of *Krivinskas v Law Society* [2006] EWHC 1808 (Admin) arose from an investigation by the Law Society into irregularities within the practice of the claimant which revealed the claimant’s involvement in financial transactions relating to loan applications. The claimant was charged with acting dishonestly in that he had introduced one client, who needed a source of loan funding, to another client, whom the claimant knew had been charged with loan fraud and that in doing so had acted dishonestly contrary to rule 1 of the Solicitors’ Practice Rules 1990.

The Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal found that Mr Krivinskas had acted dishonestly and had been guilty of conduct unbecoming a solicitor and should, therefore, be struck off the Roll. Mr Krivinskas appealed to the High Court where, amongst others, issues arose as to whether there was evidence

capable of supporting a finding of dishonesty and whether the tribunal's finding had been deficiently reasoned.

The appeal was dismissed on the basis that the tribunal was entitled to find that the claimant was guilty of dishonesty on the bare ground that he had introduced client A to client B with a view to obtaining a loan even though he knew that B was B was facing charges of loan fraud. Furthermore, it was clear from the finding and reasoning of the Tribunal why it was clear that the claimant had behaved dishonestly and also must have known that he was doing so.

Solicitor Sole Practitioners Group Funding

The Solicitors' Assistance Scheme and the Solicitor Sole Practitioners Group (SPG) has, for many years, enjoyed a close and fruitful working relationship - one which we all hope will continue into the future.

For sometime, the SPG has kindly offered financial assistance to some sole practitioners seeking assistance through the Scheme. However, they have informed us that regrettably, due to pressures on SPG funding, that they will have to suspend the availability of that financial assistance.

This is an inevitable result of the same financial pressures which are coming to bear on the SAS itself.

I am sure that everyone would wish to join us in thanking the SPG for their support over the past few years.

Solicitors Assistance Scheme

Chairman:

David Morgan

Hon Sec:

Greg Mullarkey

Committee Members:

Fay Landau
Gillian Benning
Andrew Blatt
Richard Nelson

Administrator:

Duncan Finlyson

Telephone:

020 7320 5795

Other useful numbers

LawCare: 0800 279 6888

Trainee Solicitors' Group: 08000 856131

Young Solicitors Group: 020 7320 5794

Solicitor Sole Practitioners Group: 020 7320 5801

Solicitors Benevolent Association: 020 8675 6440

Black Solicitors Network: 020 8802 6037 or 020 7275 0032

Association of Women Solicitors: 020 7320 5793

Group for Solicitors with Disabilities: 020 7320 5793

Law Society's Professional Ethics department: 0870 606 2577 (Monday-Friday 1100-1300, 1400-1600)

Areas where the SAS can help include:

Alcoholism
Conduct
Conveyancing
Corporate recovery
Costs
Crime
Disciplinary
Discrimination
Emotional problems
Employment
Financial
Fraud
Inadequate professional service
Insolvency
Insurance
Interventions
Litigation
Matrimonial
Mental health
Money laundering
Negligence
Partnership
Practising certificate conditions
Practice management
Solicitors' Disciplinary Tribunal
Stress
Tax
Voluntary arrangements
Welfare benefits

For further information or confidential help:

Telephone: **020 7320 5795**

email: help@solicitorsassistancescheme.org.uk , or

visit our web site: www.solicitorsassistancescheme.org.uk