



If You are Dissatisfied with Our Service

Each year we handled over 20 000 applications for civil and criminal legal aid. With such a large volume of work, sometimes things may go wrong. If they do, we will use our best endeavours to resolve the situation quickly and prevent it arising in the future.

We take all complaints seriously and will address any complaint about our performance promptly and effectively, through well-defined channels.

If you are unhappy about the standard of our service and wish to make a complaint, you may contact our Customer Service Officer of the respective section by telephone or in person.

You may also write to the Departmental Complaints Officer, Legal Aid Department, 27/F, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong.

The Departmental Complaints Officer will arrange for the Section Head or such officer as may be appointed by the Director of Legal Aid or his deputy to investigate your complaint and reply to you with an explanation and where applicable information on what we have done to rectify the matter.

If you are still not satisfied with the response and wish to pursue your complaint further, you should let the Departmental Complaints Officer know. We shall arrange for a more senior officer to investigate your complaint and to reply to you.

Refusal, Discharge or Revocation of Legal Aid

If you are dissatisfied with our refusal, discharge or revocation of legal aid in your case or the requirement for you to pay a contribution, the above complaint procedure is not applicable.

In respect of a civil case, the appropriate course of action is to appeal against that decision. The letter notifying you of the decision about your legal aid application will tell you if and how you can appeal. Your application will then be reviewed by the Registrar of the High Court, or in respect of cases before the Court of Final Appeal, by a Committee of Review.

In respect of a criminal case, if your legal aid application is refused, you may apply to the court or judge for legal aid to be granted to you, and/or, if you are charged with an offence endangering national security the maximum penalty for which is life imprisonment, murder or an offence under section 19 of the Crimes Ordinance (piracy with violence), for payment of a contribution to be exempted. Except in respect of cases before the Court of Final Appeal, you cannot appeal against our decision.

If you are dissatisfied with our grant of legal aid

If legal aid has been granted to someone you think is not entitled to it, you should write to the Customer Service Officer, Administration Division, Legal Aid Department, 27/F, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong. To facilitate consideration of your representation, your letter should provide us with as much information as possible about why you think legal aid should not have been granted. Not all representations will be investigated as some may be based on a lack of understanding of the operation of the legal aid scheme. We are less likely to investigate a representation if no sufficient information has been provided to justify an investigation or if the representation appears to be unfounded or misconceived. It is advisable for you to find out more about our services or the legal aid scheme by visiting our website or studying our service leaflets before considering to make a representation.

Complaints Against a Private Legal Practitioner Assigned to Act for You

If you have concerns about the service provided by the solicitor or barrister assigned to your case, you should write to the solicitor direct. If you are not happy with your solicitor's response, then you may write either to the Legal Aid Department's monitoring officer who may be contacted at the telephone number shown on our case reference card, or to the Law Society of Hong Kong or the Hong Kong Bar Association which are responsible for investigating allegations of professional misconduct about solicitors and barristers respectively. Their addresses are shown below:

The Law Society of Hong Kong 3/F, Wing On House 71 Des Voeux Road Central, Hong Kong Tel: 2846 0500	Hong Kong Bar Association LG2 Floor, The High Court 38 Queensway, Hong Kong Tel: 2869 0210
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The Ombudsman

If you feel you have sustained injustice because of maladministration on our part, you may make a complaint to the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman will consider whether to investigate your complaint and recommend any action to rectify the situation.

The address of the Ombudsman is:

30/F, China Merchants Tower
Shun Tak Centre
168-200 Connaught Road Central
Hong Kong
Tel: 2629 0555

Give Us Your Opinion

In order to give the best possible service to our customers, we are committed to a process of continuous improvement. Your comments and suggestions on the way in which our services are provided will be valuable to us. We will use your feedback to improve our services. If you have any comments or suggestions to make in this respect, you can either make use of the suggestion boxes at the reception areas of our offices, or fill in the questionnaire which is sent to you in the course of our service and return it to us.

If you are pleased with the service you have received from the Legal Aid Department, then we would like to know. Any positive feedback or constructive suggestion will be a welcome encouragement to our staff and helps us build upon our successes.

Further Information

You can obtain further information about our services from leaflets distributed through our offices or make enquiries through the following channels:

General Information and Enquiries

24-hour telephone enquiry hotline: 2537 7677
Facsimile no: 2869 0655
Homepage on Internet: www.lad.gov.hk
E-mail address: ladinfo@lad.gov.hk

Civil Legal Aid Application

In Person:

- Hong Kong Office
Legal Aid Department
25/F, Queensway Government Offices
66 Queensway, Hong Kong

Further Information

- Kowloon Branch Office
Legal Aid Department
G/F, Mongkok Government Offices
30 Luen Wan Street, Kowloon

- Office hours
Monday to Thursday 8:45 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
2:00 p.m. - 5:45 p.m.
Friday 8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
2:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Criminal Legal Aid Application

In Person:

- Crime Section
Legal Aid Department
25/F, Queensway Government Offices
66 Queensway, Hong Kong
- Office hours
Monday to Thursday 8:45 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
2:00 p.m. - 5:45 p.m.
Friday 8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
2:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Online (civil and criminal legal aid application)

In some cases, if you are over the age of 18, you may, as a preliminary to the making of a formal application, submit the necessary information to the Department through the Legal Aid Electronic Services Portal (LAESP). For details, you can visit the LAESP via our homepage at www.lad.gov.hk



Vision, Mission and Values

Our Vision

To be a cornerstone of the rule of law in Hong Kong by delivering quality legal aid services.

Our Mission

We are committed -

- To ensure that no one who qualifies for legal aid is denied access to justice because of lack of means.
- To maintain the highest standards of professional excellence and ethics.
- To develop and maintain a highly-motivated, dynamic well-trained and committed workforce.
- To work in partnership with the legal profession to reach our vision.
- To anticipate and meet the ever-changing needs of society.

Our Values

- Independence
- Commitment
- Efficiency and effectiveness
- Professionalism
- Teamwork
- Caring and responsive

Customer Service Standards

The Legal Aid Department has published Performance Pledges which set targets for the time in processing legal aid applications and payment in respect of legal aid cases. We have now decided to incorporate these performance pledges into a wider statement of customer service standards. These standards serve two key purposes: they inform you of the service you can expect from us; and they are important tools in monitoring and improving our performance. This is just a starting point and we will review these standards regularly with a view to continuously improving our service.



Service Standards

We have set standards to measure how quickly we deal with main areas of our work:

Applications for Legal Aid

Types of Applications Standard Processing Time Performance Targets

Types of Applications	Standard Processing Time	Performance Targets
Civil Legal Aid	Within 3 months of the application	85%

Criminal Legal Aid		
Types of Applications	Standard Processing Time	Performance Targets
Appeals		
- Appeal against sentence	Within 2 months of the application	90%
- Appeal against conviction	Within 3 months of the application	90%
Court of First Instance of the High Court / District Court	Within 10 working days of the application	90%
Committal proceedings	Within 8 working days of the application	90%

Service Standards

Payments to Clients and Service Providers

Payment Targets Standard Processing Time Performance Targets

Payment Targets	Standard Processing Time	Performance Targets
Aided persons	Interim payment Within 1 month of receipt of monies due to the aided person and/or receipt of estimation of costs from the assigned solicitor, whichever is appropriate.	95%
	Final payment Within 6 weeks of agreement of all costs and disbursements related to the case, and receipt of all monies due to the aided person and the Director of Legal Aid.	95%

Payment Targets	Standard Processing Time	Performance Targets
Lawyers / experts / other parties	Advance payments Within 6 weeks of receipt of bill.	95%
	Balance payment Within 6 weeks of agreement of all costs and disbursements related to the case, or receipt of all monies due to the aided person and the Director of Legal Aid, whichever is later.	95%

Service Standards

Correspondence

Replies to all incoming correspondence to be issued within 10 days and if this is not possible, an interim reply will be sent within this period.

Complaints

We aim to complete investigation and inform complainant of the outcome within 30 days.

Appeals (For Civil Cases only)

We will assist the applicants seeking to appeal our decision to lodge the appeal and obtain a date for the hearing. Except for urgent appeal hearings, we will provide the Registrar of the High Court or as the case may be, the Review Committee and the appellant with a copy of our written reason for refusal at least 3 working days before the hearing.

Customer Service

The Legal Aid Department is committed to providing an efficient and effective service for all our customers.

If you have any concerns about your application for legal aid or the conduct of your case, we have staff in our Customer Service Units ready to deal with your concerns. You will find the name and telephone number of the relevant contact person clearly marked on our case reference card to help with any enquiry.

Most matters can be dealt with quickly and effectively by letter or telephone. However, if you would like a meeting with the officer handling your case and this is considered helpful to resolve your concerns, it will be arranged as far as practicable.

If you wish to know more about our services, you may telephone us during office hours or our 24-hour enquiry hotline at any time (see page 11).