

# Chapter 1

## Departmental Strategic Plan



The Department's strategic plan sets out our objectives and describes how the objectives can be achieved. The strategic plan provides a rational basis upon which priorities are determined and is regularly updated to ensure that resources are well targeted and used effectively having regard to the changing needs of society.

The Department's strategic plan can also be viewed at the Department's website.

## Implementation of the Strategic Plan in 2022

### Information System

#### *Revamp of CM&CAS*

The Case Management and Case Accounting System (CM&CAS), which was developed in August 2003, is a core information system heavily relied upon by the Department in its daily operation. A major revamp was considered necessary in the feasibility study completed in October 2020 whereby limitations of the existing CM&CAS and the related query system, Knowledge Support System (KSS) were identified in the design, operational and technical aspects. The revamped CM&CAS and KSS will bring about improvement in processing of legal aid applications, assignment of cases, monitoring of assigned-out cases, costs assessment, payments by the Department and automatic alerts / validation, data search, retrieval and analysis, and system security.

Following the endorsement of the Panel on Administration of Justice and Legal Services and the funding support from the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council in 2021, the revamp project of the CM&CAS was kicked off in the third quarter of 2022. The project contractor has been collecting user requirements in the system analysis and design stage since September 2022. System development and user acceptance tests will follow before live run by phases. The revamped systems are expected to be fully implemented by the third quarter of 2025.

#### *Participation in the Judiciary's iCMS*

The Department has been actively involved in the Judiciary's Information Strategy Plan (ITSP) as an important stakeholder. We were one of the key participants in the pilot run of the Judiciary's integrated case management system (iCMS), which had been launched by stages since May 2022. At present, the iCMS covers Personal Injuries Actions in the District Court



and the Department has in suitable cases utilised the system by e-filing court documents and linking up some existing cases with the Court.

### **Enhancement of LAESP enabling use of iAM Smart**

The government-wide “iAM Smart” Platform is a one-stop personalised digital services platform, launched in December 2020, which enables users to log in and use online services by their personal mobile phones in a smart and convenient way. By early 2023, the Legal Aid Electronic Services Portal (LAESP) was enhanced enabling legal practitioners to submit Legal Aid Panel Entry Forms electronically by using “iAM Smart+” account. Panel lawyers can submit prescribed e-reports and e-forms through LAESP by using User ID and password or “iAM Smart”.

## **Customer Services**

### **SMS service**

To enhance communication with legal aid applicants and aided persons, the Department has rolled out SMS service since September 2022. Civil legal aid applicants and aided persons would receive notification by SMS (a) acknowledging receipt of their pre-application forms and documents received by post; (b) requesting them to contact our staff by phone; and (c) informing them of the result of their legal aid applications.



(From left)  
**Ms Juliana Chan Oi-yung, Mr Chris Chong Yan-tung, Mr Steve Wong Yiu-fai**





*(From left)*  
**Mr Steve Wong Yiu-fai,  
Mr Chris Chong Yan-tung,  
Mr Jason Chan Mau-kwan**



*(Front row from left)*  
**Mr Steve Wong Yiu-fai,  
Mr Ben Li Chi-keung**  
*(Rear row)*  
**Ms Christina Cheung Ying-man**



*(From left)*  
**Ms Jenny Leung Ping-ching,  
Ms Amy Lee Ngar-ling,  
Ms Juliana Chan Oi-yung,  
Ms Doris Lui Wai-lan,  
Miss Ada Wong Yiu-ming**



*(From left)*  
**Ms Nancy Keung Mei-chuen,  
Miss Emily Ho Wai-han**



## Publicity

In January, a talk was hosted online for the Po Leung Kuk Tsui Lam Centre to introduce our services especially in the context of divorce, maintenance and custody and other ancillary family matters. Since then, the epidemic situation of Hong Kong had undergone drastic changes and the Government tightened social distancing measures to the most stringent level. With the social distancing measures in place, the Department had suspended all visits, talks or seminars with other bodies or organisations. Starting from the second quarter of 2022, the epidemic situation had substantially alleviated in a continuous manner and the Department gradually resumed reaching out to host talks to other organisations to introduce our services to the public. In July, we delivered a talk hosted by the Hong Kong Federation of Insurers to their members on legal aid services related to employees' compensation and personal injuries. In September, our colleague gave a career talk to a group of law students in the University of Hong Kong. In October, a talk was delivered for the Social Welfare Department and the Hospital Authority and another was delivered to the frontline staff and social security officers of the Social Welfare Department and NGOs. In the same month, at the invitation of the Hong Kong Academy of Law, a talk was delivered via webinar to legal practitioners on the legal aid schemes of Hong Kong. We received very positive feedback and all these talks were very well received.

The Department also engaged with stakeholders to promote public understanding of legal aid services. Our colleagues participated in the Free Legal Advice Programme in the Law Week organised by the Law Society of Hong Kong in November 2022. Professional officers manned booths and answered queries from the public on issues related to legal aid. Another professional officer also took part in the production of a one-minute video clip on means and merits tests to facilitate a better understanding of our services.

The Department worked closely with the Legal Aid Services Council in the promotion of our services. In the 2022, information charts designed in collaboration with the Council on legal aid services were posted on our Facebook. Updated information, feeds and other materials were uploaded from time to time, with a view to engaging the public and promoting the services of the Department.