



法律援助署
Legal Aid Department

2024 法律援助署年報 LEGAL AID DEPARTMENT ANNUAL REPORT

Our Vision

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



Our Mission

- 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



Foreword

2024 was another challenging yet fruitful year. It is my pleasure to present to you the Annual Report 2024 of the Legal Aid Department which summarises the major work done and events organised in the year through the hard work and unwavering commitment of our colleagues to delivering quality public service. I hope you will enjoy reading this Report.



Chris Y.T. Chong, SBS, JP
Director of Legal Aid

Serving the Community

For the furtherance of our mission to ensure that no one who qualifies for legal aid is denied access to justice because of lack of means, we endeavour to actively promote our legal aid services to various sectors of the community via different platforms and channels. Throughout the year, our professional officers delivered a number of talks to social workers and frontline staff of the Social Welfare Department, Hospital Authority, non-governmental organisations and trade unions who had frequent and direct contacts with people that may be in need of legal aid services. We are delighted that these well-received talks, covering various topics such as employees' compensation, personal injuries at

work, common issues encountered in matrimonial cases, as well as procedures and eligibility criteria for legal aid application, could enhance the understanding of those frontline staff of the work and services of the Department.

We have also continued to make use of different opportunities to reach out to members of the general public directly. For instance, we hosted a talk at a community hall in August 2024, sharing with over 120 attendees how our services could facilitate access to justice for people in need. Another talk for newly arrived ethnic minorities was held in October 2024 to enhance their understanding of the legal aid services in Hong Kong. We also warmly received several groups of secondary school students from different backgrounds under the school visit programme during the year. Through the briefing given by our colleagues, not only could the students learn more about the availability of legal aid services provided by the Department, but they could also have a glimpse of the career opportunities in the area of legal aid service. Between February and May 2024, we actively participated in three rounds of "Free Legal Advice Programme" of the "Law Week" organised by the Law Society of Hong Kong, with enquiry booth set up in different districts to reach out to the locals.

Furthermore, we have continued to maintain a close relationship with our various stakeholders and strive to promote our work, while also exchanging with them views on matters of common interest from time to time. For instance, our two directorate officers served as speakers in a seminar on legal aid schemes organised by the Hong Kong Academy of Law in September 2024 to enhance the understanding of our legal aid services by legal practitioners and the general

public. Apart from the legal sector, we had further our continuous contacts with the Hong Kong Federation of Insurers to combat fraudulent claims and explore ways that could facilitate us in conducting thorough investigation into accidents when processing applications for legal aid. For protection of first charge payable to the Director of Legal Aid, the Federation has also assisted in drawing its members' attention to the need to pay damages and costs to our Department direct.

Exchanging Views with Parties outside Hong Kong

We treasure every opportunity to introduce and exchange views on our legal aid services with officials and visitors from places outside Hong Kong despite the differences in our legal systems. In September 2024, we received a delegation of 14 officials from the Chinese Mainland (hereafter referred to as "Mainland") under the Cooperation Agreements with the Mainland Justice Bureaux/Departments organised by the Department of Justice and introduced to them the work and services of the Department. We gave a briefing to another group of Mainland officials from the Department of Justice of Zhejiang Province during their visit to our Department in November 2024. During the year, training opportunities were also provided to a total of eight Mainland officials placed to the Department on a short-term attachment programme organised by the Department of Justice, familiarising them with the provision of legal aid in a different legal system. Our two directorate officers also met with some officials from Japan Central Authority under the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction in March 2024 to exchange views on legal aid services in Hong Kong.

Quality Service to the Public

The Department is committed to providing professional and quality legal aid services to those who qualify for legal aid. To further enhance the public's access to legal aid, the financial eligibility limits for the Ordinary Legal Aid Scheme and the Supplementary Legal Aid Scheme were adjusted upwards to \$449,620 and \$2,248,110 respectively with effect from 13 December 2024.



We also strive to deliver our services in an efficient, effective and customer-oriented manner. Recognising the urgent needs of applicants involving in domestic violence cases, a Task Force led by our senior directorate officers was formed to review the processing of such kind of legal aid applications. Following the review, new guidelines with various improvement measures were introduced in July 2024, including the unified handling of domestic violence cases by dedicated officers and the discretionary exemption given to applicants from providing medical reports and police statements. With the implementation of these new measures, the average processing time for such kind of applications has been substantially reduced from about 20 days to 8 days. In addition, the Faster Payment System (FPS) was introduced to the Shroff Offices of the Department as a new payment means in March 2024. With FPS,

payers could now use any supporting mobile banking application or e-wallet to scan the FPS QR code to make payments at the Shroff Offices conveniently.

Enhancement of Information Systems

Acknowledging the benefits and impacts that information technology could bring to our operational efficiency and services provided to the public, we embrace a transformative mindset in exploring different digitalisation options where practicable. In the year, we continued to press ahead the revamp of the Case Management and Case Accounting System, which is the major information system critical to our core businesses, aiming to have it been rolled out by the third quarter of 2025. In addition, we kick started the development of a Legal Aid Virtual Assistant Chatbot named "Aidie" with the plan to launch it by the first quarter of 2025. Built with Artificial Intelligence and Natural Language Processing technology, the Chatbot could handle legal aid pre-application general enquiries in traditional Chinese, simplified Chinese and English. The Department also compiled a three-year action plan for digitalising our legal aid services, including a proposal to develop an online platform for easier completion of the customer service questionnaires by members of the public. We believe that the implementation of such e-service could encourage legal aid applicants and aided persons to provide their valuable feedback to us, thereby facilitating our further review to enhance operational efficiency and effectiveness.

Awards on our Professional Service

We attach great importance to delivering high standard and professional legal aid services. I am proud to share that we had two colleagues being awarded The Ombudsman's Awards for Officers of Public Organisations in 2024 for their efforts in handling enquiries and complaints in an expeditious, professional and impartial manner. Besides, another experienced officer with persistent exemplary performance was selected for commendation under the Secretary for the Civil Service's Commendation Award Scheme in recognition of her dedication to duty and passion for serving the public over the past years. These colleagues set outstanding examples for other colleagues of the Department as well as the civil service.

Looking Ahead

It has been a great honour for me to serve as the Director of Legal Aid and also act as the Official Solicitor since 2022. I would like to extend my utmost gratitude to all my colleagues for their staunch support to the Department as well as unwavering commitment to serving the public. Through their untiring efforts and determination in delivering quality legal aid services, we have continued to fulfill our vision of being a cornerstone of the rule of law in Hong Kong. I trust that with our unfaltering dedication to ensuring access to justice for those in need, we will continue to be able to surf through ever-changing challenges in the years to come. Finally, on behalf of the Department, I would also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the Legal Aid Services Council, the

Chief Secretary for Administration's Office, the two legal professional bodies and our stakeholders for their invaluable advice and unfailing support for the work of the Department in the past years.

Chris Y.T. Chong, SBS, JP
Director of Legal Aid

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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.

Implementation of the Strategic Plan in 2024

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. Following the feasibility study completed in October 2020 which recommended that the CM&CAS and related query system should be revamped to 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, the Department obtained 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 to commence the revamp project of the CM&CAS in the third quarter of 2022. The first phase of the system development has started in May 2023 after collection of user requirements in the system analysis and design stage in mid 2023. With relevant user acceptance test under phase 1 satisfactorily completed, phase 1 of the system was launched in August 2024. The second phase of the system development commenced thereafter and is planned to roll out in the latter half of 2025.

Participation in the Judiciary's iCMS

We were one of the key participants in the pilot run of the Judiciary's integrated court case management system (iCMS), which had been launched by stages since May 2022. At present, the iCMS covers Personal Injuries Actions, tax claim proceedings, civil action proceedings and employees' compensation cases in the District Court as well as summons cases in the Magistrates' courts and bulk claims in the Small Claims Tribunal. It will incrementally be extended to other levels of court. 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. The Legal Aid Electronic Services Portal (LAESP) was upgraded so that legal aid applicants may accept legal aid offer electronically with iAM Smart+, as an alternative to the traditional paper submission, with effect from October 2024.

Enabling more means of electronic payment

In response to the growing availability of different means of electronic payment, the CM&CAS and LAESP were enhanced so that legal aid applicants and aided persons etc. could make payment of bills using Faster Payment System (FPS) at the shroff offices and remotely through the Internet, starting from March and September 2024 respectively.

Customer Services

Chatbot on the departmental website

To better support members of the public in need of information related to legal aid services and application and to take advantage of the artificial intelligence technology, a chatbot would be constructed on the departmental website in order to handle pre-application enquiries in a real-time and interactive manner. The project was commenced in May 2024 and targeted to be rolled out in the first quarter of 2025.



(Front row from left)

Mr Jason Chan Mau-kwan, Mr Ben Li Chi-keung, Mr Steve Wong Yiu-fai, Mr Chris Chong Yan-tung, Ms Juliana Chan Oi-yung, Ms Nancy Keung Mei-chuen, Ms Amy Lee Ngar-ling

(Rear row from left)

Mr Ted Lee Tak-lei, Mr David Chow Wai-hung, Mr Simon Lau Ca-chun, Ms Lee Kwok-ming, Ms Jenny Leung Ping-ching, Ms Rita Chin Kong-kong, Miss Emily Ho Wai-han, Miss Ada Wong Yiu-ming

Publicity

The Department placed great emphasis on promoting legal aid services. Legal aid in relation to common legal proceedings like employees' compensation, personal injuries, matrimonial proceedings, and topics such as application for legal aid, choice of lawyers etc. are identified for promotion via different channels. Videos and media interviews are lined up, and talks and seminars are arranged for schools, NGOs and other bodies to introduce our services. Inaccurate media reports were responded to proactively and in a timely manner.

We will continue our efforts to promote and positively reinforce the image of the Department, and to correct misconception and biased opinion and to convey positive and accurate information to the public. The Department will strive to strengthen publicity and promote public confidence in our work.

Chapter 2

Legal Aid Services

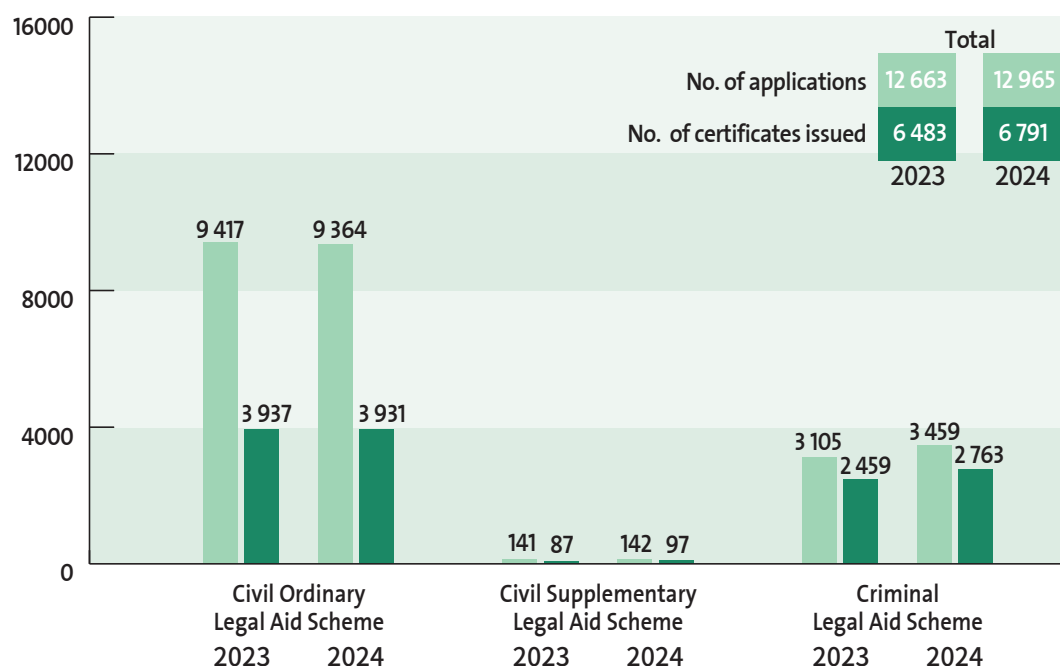


Legal aid business is conducted in the following service areas:

- Receiving and processing of legal aid applications;
- Assignments and monitoring of legal aid cases;
- Litigation services; and
- Related supporting legal services.

Application and Processing Services

In 2024, a total of 12 965 applications for legal aid were received and 6 791 legal aid certificates were issued:



Legal Aid in Civil Cases

Civil legal aid applications are handled by the Application and Processing Division.

Ordinary Legal Aid Scheme

Applicants whose financial resources are within the statutory limit of \$449,620 (w.e.f 13.12.2024) may apply for legal aid under the Ordinary Legal Aid Scheme (OLAS). OLAS covers many different types of civil cases which are closely related to the daily lives of the general public, such as family disputes, employees' compensation claims, personal injuries claims, immigration matters and other miscellaneous proceedings in the District Court, the Court of First Instance, the Court of Appeal and the Court of Final Appeal. It also covers applications to the Mental Health Review Tribunal, and death inquests if the Director is of the opinion that the interests of public justice require legal aid be given.

In 2024, there were 9 364 OLAS applications and 3 931 legal aid certificates were issued under OLAS.

Supplementary Legal Aid Scheme

Applicants whose financial resources exceed the statutory limit of OLAS of \$449,620 (w.e.f 13.12.2024) but not exceeding \$2,248,110 (w.e.f 13.12.2024) may apply for legal aid under the Supplementary Legal Aid Scheme (SLAS). The scope of SLAS covers employees' compensation claims and representation for employees in appeals against awards made by the Labour Tribunal irrespective of the amount of the claim. It also covers the following types of cases where the claim is likely to exceed \$75,000:

- personal injuries or death, medical, dental or legal professional negligence;
- professional negligence claims against certified public accountants (practising), registered architects, registered professional engineers, registered professional surveyors, registered professional planners, authorised land surveyors, registered landscape architects and estate agents;
- negligence claims against insurers or their intermediaries in respect of the taking out of personal insurance products;
- monetary claims against vendors in the sale of completed or uncompleted first-hand residential properties;
- professional negligence claims against financial intermediaries licensed or registered for Type 1 (dealing in securities), Type 2 (dealing in futures contracts) or Type 8 (securities margin financing) regulated activities within the meaning of the Securities and Futures Ordinance (Cap.571); and
- monetary claims in respect of derivatives of securities, currency futures or other futures contracts on the basis that the person was induced to deal in those derivatives, futures or contracts by fraud, deception or misrepresentation.

In 2024, there were 142 SLAS applications and 97 legal aid certificates were issued under SLAS.

SLAS is a self-financing scheme and is funded by contributions paid by the applicants upon acceptance of legal aid and contributions from monies recovered in the aided proceedings. The rates of contribution for personal injuries and employees' compensation claims and the provision of legal representation to employees for appeals against awards made by the Labour Tribunal range from 6% to 10%. For the remaining types of proceedings, the contribution rates range from 15% to 20%.

For the year ended 30 September 2024, a deficit of \$2.5 million was recorded as compared with a surplus of \$0.5 million in the year ended 30 September 2023 in the Supplementary Legal Aid Fund. As at 30 September 2024, the Fund had a balance of \$213.0 million. For details, please refer to [Appendix 1](#).

Distribution of Civil Legal Aid Applications Received in 2023-2024

Case Types	No. of Applications for Civil Legal Aid		
	2023	2024	% Change
Personal Injuries Claims	4 073	3 897	-4%
Matrimonial Cases	3 601	3 500	-3%
Land and Tenancy Disputes	338	340	1%
Employment Disputes	41	34	-17%
Immigration Matters	27	35	30%
Others	1 478	1 700	15%
Total	9 558	9 506	-1%

Distribution of Civil Legal Aid Certificates Issued in 2023-2024

Case Types	No. of Certificates for Civil Legal Aid		
	2023	2024	% Change
Personal Injuries Claims	2 076	1 890	-9%
Matrimonial Cases	1 641	1 760	7%
Land and Tenancy Disputes	66	96	45%
Employment Disputes	11	8	-27%
Immigration Matters	0	0	N.A.
Others	230	274	19%
Total	4 024	4 028	0%

To facilitate the public to apply for legal aid, the Application and Processing Division provides an information and enquiry service through the Information and Application Services Unit. The Unit deals with enquiries from the public on matters such as the scope of legal aid, financial eligibility limits and application procedures.

In 2024, the Unit received a total of 27 467 enquiries.

Eligibility for Legal Aid

Regardless of their nationality or residence, applicants who pass both the means and merits tests will be granted legal aid. They are given the services of solicitors and, if necessary, counsel to represent them in legal proceedings conducted in Hong Kong courts.

Take-up Rate for Civil Legal Aid in 2023-2024

Certificates
4 024

Take-up Rate
(as a % of offers)
93%



Certificates
4 028

Take-up Rate
(as a % of offers)
94%



Legal Aid Applications for Judicial Review Received and Certificates Granted by Categories

Calendar Year	Government policies and related matters		Immigration matters including non-refoulement claims		Others			
					Decisions of government and related organisations		Decisions of non-government related organisations	
	Applications received	Certificates granted	Applications received	Certificates granted	Applications received	Certificates granted	Applications received	Certificates granted
2023	36	2	369	74	40	2	9	2
2024	59	6	393	87	100	7	7	0

Refusal of Legal Aid

An applicant who is refused legal aid in civil matters may appeal to the Registrar of the High Court. In respect of the Court of Final Appeal cases, the applicant may appeal to a Review Committee comprising the Registrar of the High Court, a barrister and a solicitor appointed by the Chairman of the Hong Kong Bar Association and the President of the Law Society of Hong Kong respectively. The decision of the Registrar or the Review Committee is final.

Refusal Rate of Civil Legal Aid Applications in 2023-2024

Refusals

(a) on merits

3 656

Refusal Rate

(as a % of applications)

38%



(b) on means

674

Refusal Rate

(as a % of applications)

7%

Refusals

(a) on merits

3 588

Refusal Rate

(as a % of applications)

38%



(b) on means

630

Refusal Rate

(as a % of applications)

7%

Outcome of Civil Legal Aid Appeals in 2023-2024

Appeals Allowed

36

Success Rate

(as a % of appeals)

4.5%



Appeals Allowed

33

Success Rate

(as a % of appeals)

4%



Note: *The figures do not include appeals withdrawn.

Civil Legal Aid Applications by Refusals and Outcomes of Legal Aid Appeals

Calendar Year	Civil Legal Aid Applications	Refusal		Legal Aid Appeals	
		on Merits*	on Means*	Heard	Allowed
2022	9 480	3 851	660	701	41
2023	9 558	3 656	674	799	36
2024	9 506	3 588	630	754	33

* Refusal on both Merits and Means is included in Refusal "on Merits" as well as Refusal "on Means".

Legal Aid Applications for Judicial Review by Refusals and Outcomes of Legal Aid Appeals

Calendar Year	Applications	Refusal		Legal Aid Appeals	
		on Merits*	on Means*	Heard	Allowed
2022	487	367	6	115	3
2023	454	377	6	128	1
2024	559	354	5	136	3

* Refusal on both Merits and Means is included in Refusal "on Merits" as well as Refusal "on Means".

Note: The statistics in the above tables are year based. A refusal or legal aid appeal may be related to a civil legal aid application made in the previous year. According to section 10(3) of the Legal Aid Ordinance, a person shall not be granted legal aid in connection with any proceedings unless he shows that he has reasonable grounds for taking, defending, opposing or continuing such proceedings or being a party thereto and may also refused legal aid where it appears to the Director of Legal Aid that it is unreasonable to grant legal aid. Regarding the legal merits test, the court does not have to be satisfied that it is more probable than not that the issue of fact will be decided in the legal aid applicant's favour. But it has to be satisfied that the applicant has shown that there is a reasonable, as opposed to a fanciful, chance of the court at the trial deciding that issue of fact in his favour.

Outcome of Civil Cases Closed in 2024

Case Type	Relief Obtained	Relief Not Obtained	Withdrawn	Total
Matrimonial Cases	82% (82%)	6% (7%)	12% (11%)	100%

Case Type	In Favour	Not in Favour	Discharged / Revoked prior to Proceedings	Discharged at Aided Person's Request during Proceedings	Discharged / Revoked during Proceedings	Total
Personal Injuries Claims	91% (90%)	2% (3%)	1% (1%)	2% (2%)	4% (4%)	100%
<i>Employees' Compensation Claims</i>	94% (93%)	1% (2%)	1% (1%)	1% (2%)	3% (2%)	100%
<i>Personal Injuries</i>	87% (88%)	4% (3%)	2% (2%)	2% (2%)	5% (5%)	100%
<i>Running Down</i>	92% (92%)	2% (1%)	1% (1%)	1% (2%)	4% (4%)	100%
Medical / Dental / Professional Negligence	71% (71%)	10% (14%)	3% (2%)	0% (4%)	16% (9%)	100%
Miscellaneous	42% (46%)	38% (25%)	6% (6%)	2% (6%)	12% (17%)	100%
Overall	81% (80%)	9% (8%)	2% (2%)	2% (3%)	6% (7%)	100%

(2023 figures in bracket)

Legal Aid in Criminal Cases

Criminal legal aid applications are processed by the Crime Section of the Litigation Division.

Distribution of Criminal Legal Aid Applications Received in 2023-2024

Case Types	No. of Applications for Criminal Legal Aid		
	2023	2024	% Change
Committal Proceedings in the Magistrates' Courts	523	585	12%
District Court Trials	1 463	1 731	18%
Court of First Instance Trials	442	494	12%
Magistrates' Court Appeals to the Court of First Instance	216	217	0%
District Court Appeals to the Court of Appeal	250	218	-13%
Court of First Instance Appeals to the Court of Appeal	115	127	10%
Appeals in the Court of Final Appeal	54	54	0%
Others	42	33	-21%
Total	3 105	3 459	11%

Applicants whose means exceed the statutory limit may be granted legal aid if the Director of Legal Aid is satisfied that it is desirable in the interests of justice to grant legal aid.

Distribution of Criminal Legal Aid Certificates Issued in 2023-2024

Case Types	No. of Certificates for Criminal Legal Aid		
	2023	2024	% Change
Committal Proceedings in the Magistrates' Court	507	565	11%
District Court Trials	1 402	1 622	16%
Court of First Instance Trials	438	480	10%
Magistrates' Court Appeals to the Court of First Instance	24	26	8%
District Court Appeals to the Court of Appeal	24	34	42%
Court of First Instance Appeals to the Court of Appeal	41	24	-41%
Appeals in the Court of Final Appeal	10	3	-70%
Others	13	9	-31%
Total	2 459	2 763	12%

Take-up Rate for Criminal Legal Aid in 2023-2024

Certificates
2 459

Take-up Rate
(as a % of offers)
98%



Certificates
2 763

Take-up Rate
(as a % of offers)
98%



Refusal of Criminal Legal Aid

If an applicant is refused criminal legal aid on merits, he can apply to the judge who may grant legal aid on his own initiative provided the applicant is eligible on means.

In 2024, there were 26 refusals on means, 16 of which were also refusals on merits. 45 applications were refused because the applicants concerned failed to supply the Director with the necessary information to conduct the means test. The Director exercised discretion and granted legal aid in 25 cases even though the means of the applicants exceeded the financial eligibility limit.

For refusal in respect of an appeal to the Court of Final Appeal, the applicant may appeal to a Review Committee chaired by the Registrar of the High Court and comprising a barrister and a solicitor appointed by the Chairman of the Hong Kong Bar Association and by the President of the Law Society of Hong Kong respectively. The decision of the Committee is final. In 2024, 2 appeals were made to the Review Committee.

Refusal Rate of Criminal Legal Aid Applications in 2023-2024

Refusal on Merits

518

(Appeal cases)

(500)

(Other cases)

(18)



Refusal Rate

(as a % of applications)

17%

Legal aid granted by judges notwithstanding the Director of Legal Aid's refusal

7

Refusal on Means

(including refusals where applicants failed to provide necessary information on means)

63 (41)

Refusal Rate

(as a % of applications)

2%

Refusal on Merits

520

(Appeal cases)

(494)

(Other cases)

(26)



Refusal Rate

(as a % of applications)

15%

Legal aid granted by judges notwithstanding the Director of Legal Aid's refusal

12

Refusal on Means

(including refusals where applicants failed to provide necessary information on means)

71 (45)

Refusal Rate

(as a % of applications)

2%

Legal Aid Electronic Services Portal

Civil legal aid applicants of the age of 18 and over and all criminal legal aid applicants can access the Legal Aid Electronic Services Portal (LAESP) to submit pre-application information forms online for non-urgent civil or criminal cases as a first step towards making an application for legal aid.

The LAESP also has a means test calculator, which allows members of the public to conduct a preliminary assessment of their eligibility on means if they apply for legal aid. Members of the public can visit the departmental website at <https://www.lad.gov.hk> or the mobile phone version to access the means test calculator. In 2024, the means test calculator and its mobile version received 6 360 and 6 864 hits respectively.

Legal Aid Assignments and Monitoring

Assignments

When assigning legal aid cases, interest of the legally aided persons is the paramount consideration. Hence, legal aid work is not distributed to counsel or solicitors on the Legal Aid Panel equally. Counsel or solicitors are selected having regard to their level of experience and expertise, the nature and complexity of the particular case, with reference to established guidelines and criteria, which include, amongst others, minimum experience requirements, past performance records and the limit on assignments of legal aid work.

Distribution of Civil and Criminal Assignments to Solicitors / Counsel in 2024

No. of Assignments	No. of Counsel			
	*Below 3 Years	*3-5 Years	*6-10 Years	*Over 10 Years
1-4	3	27	49	121
5-15	0	5	25	201
16-30	0	0	3	53
31-50	0	0	0	2
Over 50	0	0	0	0
Total	3	32	77	377

* Years of post-call experience

No. of Assignments	No. of Solicitors			
	*Below 3 Years	*3-5 Years	*6-10 Years	*Over 10 Years
1-4	0	30	59	405
5-15	0	6	39	303
16-30	0	1	12	91
31-50	0	0	2	8
Over 50	0	0	0	0
Total	0	37	112	807

* Years of post-admission experience

The Department set up the Departmental Committee on Monitoring Assignments to Counsel and Solicitors to ensure that cases are assigned in accordance with the established assignment criteria and guidelines. The Committee is chaired by the Director of Legal Aid and comprises directorate officers of the Department. It considers reports on the unsatisfactory performance / conduct of assigned lawyers.

In 2024, on the advice of the Committee, 15 solicitors were put on the Record of Unsatisfactory Performance / Conduct.

Since the assignment of legal aid cases is based on the experience of Panel lawyers in the past three years, the Department regularly updates Panel lawyers' experience to maintain the integrity of the legal aid assignment system. Panel lawyers are reminded to submit Data Update Form before the expiry of the three-year period so that their personal particulars, experience and expertise can be updated regularly.

Mediation in Legal Aid Cases

Legal aid covers mediators' fees and related expenses incurred by aided persons undergoing mediation in the course of the aided proceedings. In 2024, funding for mediation was approved in 612 assigned out cases, out of which 167 were matrimonial cases.

Litigation Services

In-house Civil Litigation

The Civil Litigation Section (CLS) of the Litigation Division undertakes civil litigation for aided persons whose cases have been assigned in-house.

Personal Injury Litigation

In 2024, Civil Litigation (1) of CLS took up 165 personal injuries cases and seamen wages claims. Personal injuries cases including employees' compensation claims, traffic accident claims and negligence claims. Damages over \$1 million were recovered for aided persons in 4 cases. The total amount of damages recovered was about \$29 million.

Legal costs recovered for the professional litigation work done by Civil Litigation (1) of CLS were about \$5.4 million.

Family Litigation

In 2024, Civil Litigation (2) of CLS took up a total of 494 family cases including divorce, maintenance, custody and property disputes. It also handled enforcement proceedings for the recovery of outstanding maintenance and costs in family cases litigated in-house.

In-house Criminal Litigation

In addition to processing legal aid applications for criminal cases, in-house lawyers in the Crime Section of the Litigation Division also represent legally aided persons at committal proceedings in the Magistrates' Court, plea day hearings in the District Court, listing hearings in the Court of First Instance as well as bail applications at all levels of court. They also act as instructing solicitors in cases in the Court of First Instance, the Court of Appeal and the Court of Final Appeal.

In 2024, 83% of all criminal cases in the District Court in Hong Kong were legally aided, as were 87% of criminal cases in the Court of First Instance.

In 2024, the Crime Section handled 1 264 cases in-house:

Court of First Instance of High Court Trials & Appeals

18 (1.4%)

District Court-Plea Day Hearings

795 (62.9%)

Committal Proceedings & Others

451 (35.7%)

Total

1 264 (100.0%)

(as a % of total cases handled in-house)

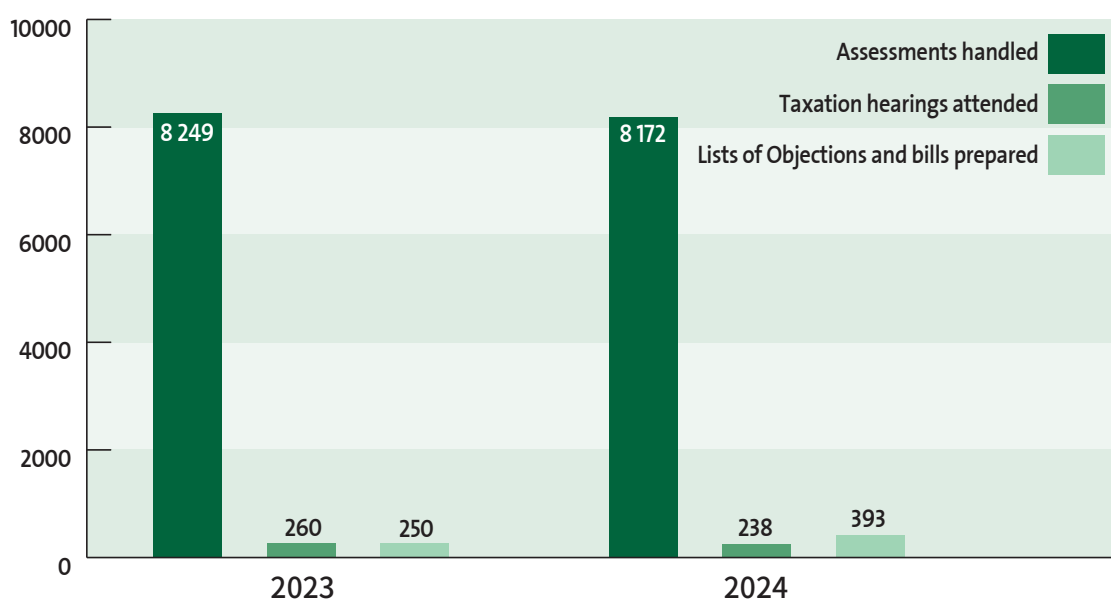


Related Legal Support Services

Costing

The Department's Costing Unit assesses bills of costs submitted by assigned solicitors and opposite parties in civil cases, including preparing lists of objections and attending taxation hearings.

Cases Handled by the Costing Unit in 2023-2024



Enforcement

The Department's Enforcement Unit (EU) handles enforcement proceedings for the recovery of judgment debts and costs in legally aided cases. In 2024, a total of 115 cases were assigned to the EU.

Upon receipt of a new assignment, EU obtained instructions from the judgment creditor and issued demand letter to the judgment debtor. The table below shows the time taken for issuing the first demand letter to the judgment debtor from the date of assignment:

Within 1 month	Within 2 months	Within 3 months	More than 3 months	Total no. of cases
35 (50.72%)	17 (24.64%)	4 (5.80%)	13 (18.84%)	69 (100%)

If the judgment debtor failed to fully settle the judgment debts and/or costs as demanded or where no settlement agreement could be reached between the parties, EU commenced appropriate enforcement proceedings as the circumstances of the case required.

In 72 cases, enforcement proceedings were instituted. About 9.7% of the proceedings were instituted within 1 month from the date when the cases were assigned to the handling professional officers. The table below shows the time taken for enforcement proceedings to be commenced from the date of assignment:

Time Taken for the Commencement of Enforcement Proceedings in 2024:

Within 1 month	Within 2 months	Within 3 months	More than 3 months	Total no. of cases
7 (16)	13 (23)	11 (11)	41 (13)	72 (63)
9.7% (25%)	18% (37%)	15.3% (17%)	57% (21%)	100% (100%)

(2023 figures in bracket)

Some of these cases were settled prior to the commencement of or during the enforcement proceedings where the judgment debtors undertook, through negotiation and production of supporting documents, to pay the outstanding amount by installments.

The costs and damages recovery ratio for cases with enforcement actions handled by the Department and finalised in 2024 is as shown in the chart below:

Amount recovered
43%

Amount not recovered
57%



Top 20 Solicitors in terms of Civil Case Assignments in 2024 by Case Types and Percentage Shares in the Total Number of Civil Case Assignments to Solicitors

(From 1.1.2024 to 31.12.2024)

Rank by order Share	No. of Assignments by Case Types#						% Share
	PI-related	JR	MIM	MAT	Others	Total	
1	27	0	0	0	0	27	0.8%
2	11	0	0	13	3	27	0.8%
3	26	0	0	0	0	26	0.7%
4	26	0	0	0	0	26	0.7%
5	25	0	0	0	0	25	0.7%
6	23	0	0	1	1	25	0.7%
7	24	0	0	1	0	25	0.7%
8	21	0	0	0	4	25	0.7%
9	25	0	0	0	0	25	0.7%
10	1	3	0	16	5	25	0.7%
11	23	0	0	2	0	25	0.7%
12	25	0	0	0	0	25	0.7%
13	14	0	0	10	1	25	0.7%
14	1	0	0	2	22	25	0.7%
15	6	0	0	11	7	24	0.7%
16	21	0	0	1	2	24	0.7%
17	21	0	0	0	3	24	0.7%
18	23	0	0	0	1	24	0.7%
19	24	0	0	0	0	24	0.7%
20	15	0	0	9	0	24	0.7%
Subtotal for Top 20	382	3	0	66	49	500	13.9%
Total no. of assignments to solicitors in civil cases	1955	97	0	1303	235	3590	100.0%

Note: The civil assignment limit for panel solicitor is 30 cases within the past 12 months; and for judicial review - related cases is 5 cases within the past 12 months.

Figures may not add up to total due to rounding.

Case types:

PI related – Employees' Compensation, Damages for Assault, Dental Negligence, Medical Negligence, Personal Injuries, Traffic Accident, SLAS Employees' Compensation, SLAS Medical Negligence, SLAS Running Down and SLAS Personal Injuries

JR – Judicial Review

MIM – Immigration

MAT – Matrimonial

Others – Miscellaneous and Land or Tenancy Disputes, Contract of Employment, SLAS Property Disputes and Property Disputes

Chapter 3

Cases of Public Interest or Concern



HKSAR v TSIM SUM KIT, ADA

(FACC No. 1 of 2024)

This case arose from a family dispute over the division of the estate of the Appellant's grandmother. On 26 June 2018, the Appellant (a former bodyguard) shot and killed two relatives (her aunt and uncle) and injured two others (her other aunt and uncle) with a pistol in Quarry Bay Park after a family lunch. She was charged with two counts of murder and two counts of shooting with intent to do grievous bodily harm.

The Court of First Instance

(HCCC 272/2019)

The Appellant was granted legal aid to defend her case. She elected not to testify and put forward the partial defence of "diminished responsibility" in respect of the murder charges, arguing that her mental conditions significantly impaired her responsibility for the killings.

Under section 3 of the Homicide Ordinance (Cap 339) (HO), a person shall not be convicted of murder if he/she was suffering from a mental condition that substantially impaired his/her responsibility for the act. Section 3(2) further states that it shall be the defendant's duty to establish proof of this partial defence. If successfully proved, the defendant will be convicted of manslaughter instead.

At trial, both the prosecution and the defence called expert psychiatric evidence regarding the Appellant's mental condition at the time of the offences. Senior

Counsel for the Appellant acknowledged that the law placed a legal burden on the Appellant to establish, on a balance of probabilities, that she was suffering from diminished responsibility. After a jury trial, the Appellant was convicted of all four charges. She was sentenced to life imprisonment for the murders and 18 years' imprisonment for the shooting offences.

The Court of Appeal (CACC 153/2021)

The Appellant was granted legal aid in her appeal against conviction to the Court of Appeal (CA). Counsel (who did not appear for the Appellant at trial) for the Appellant argued, amongst other things, that the legal burden placed on the Appellant to prove diminished responsibility was an unfair and unjustified derogation of the presumption of innocence under Article 11(1) of the Hong Kong Bill of Rights and Article 87(2) of the Basic Law. In other words, the Appellant challenged the constitutionality of section 3(2) of the HO in placing the burden of proof on a defendant to prove the defence of diminished responsibility.

The CA ruled that the legal burden imposed by section 3(2) of the HO did not violate the presumption of innocence. Even if it did, it was a proportionate and justifiable derogation from that right. The Appellant's appeal was therefore dismissed by the CA.

Court of Final Appeal (FACC No.1 of 2024)

With the assistance of legal aid, the Appellant further appealed against her conviction to the Court of Final Appeal (CFA). On 18 December 2023, the Appeal Committee granted leave for the Appellant to appeal to CFA and certified the following question as involving a point of law of great and general importance:

"Does section 3(2) of the Homicide Ordinance unjustifiably derogate from the Appellant's right of presumption of innocence under Article 87(2) of the Basic Law and Article 11(1) of the Hong Kong Bill of Rights, and if so, should section 3(2) be read down as imposing only an evidential burden?"

Having heard arguments from the parties, the CFA answered the above question in the negative, and unanimously dismissed the Appellant's appeal. In particular, the CFA held that:

1. The presumption of innocence reflects the fundamental common law rule that it is the prosecution which must prove the accused's guilt of the offence charged beyond reasonable doubt.
2. The presumption of innocence is only engaged where the reverse burden provision requires the defendant to disprove an essential ingredient of the offence charged, thus relieving the prosecution of the usual burden of proving that ingredient beyond reasonable doubt. This question is one of substance rather than form. The elements of the offence would be the logical starting point.

and focus when analysing whether the presumption of innocence is engaged and derogated from in any given case. It does not matter whether the essential ingredient is contained in the definition of the offence or is cast as a defence issue.

3. Applying these principles, it is concluded that section 3(2) of HO does not engage or derogate from the presumption of innocence. The question of diminished responsibility only arises after the prosecution has successfully proved that the defendant killed the victim unlawfully with the requisite intent. The partial defence does not affect the constituent elements of murder, but instead is an extenuating mitigating circumstance that operates to reduce the mandatory sentence for murder. Therefore, the defendant is not someone presumed innocent at the point of invoking the partial defence of diminished responsibility. He or she will already have had the benefit of the presumption of innocence requiring the prosecution to prove the elements of murder before seeking to establish the partial defence.
4. Further, section 3(2) of the HO has the legitimate aim of alleviating the prosecution from an unworkable burden arising from the practical difficulties of proving a matter so personal to the accused. This is rationally connected to the restriction imposed, is proportionate, and also strikes a fair balance between the individual's right to be presumed innocent and the societal benefits of the restriction. A number of factors also support this conclusion, namely: the intrinsically subjective nature of the defence; the fact mental disorders and their effects are not part of ordinary life experience of a jury; the fact an accused cannot be compelled to be subject to medical examination by the prosecution; and the disparity in the respective disclosure obligations of the prosecution and defence.

5. As such, CFA concludes that even if the presumption of innocence is engaged, the reverse onus placed by the partial defence of diminished responsibility is proportionate and therefore justified.

This case examines the standard of proof for the partial defence of "diminished responsibility" and clarifies its compatibility with the constitutionally guaranteed presumption of innocence. This will serve as a useful precedent for similar cases in the future.

Infinger Nick, Li Yik Ho v The Hong Kong Housing Authority

(FACV 2, 3 & 4/2024)

With the assistance of legal aid, the Applicants successfully challenged by way of judicial reviews, the policies of the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) for excluding same-sex couples from the eligibility criteria for rented public housing and for registering as an authorised occupant in a Home Ownership Scheme Unit and for the transfer of such unit without the payment of a premium (FACV 2 & 3/2024).

The Applicant, Mr. Li also challenged the Home Ownership Scheme policy in excluding same-sex couples from the definitions of "husband", "wife" and "valid marriage" under the Intestates' Estates Ordinance Cap 73 (IEO) and the Inheritance (Provision for Family and Dependants) Ordinance Cap 481 (IPO). The Secretary for Justice (SJ) was the Respondent in that challenge (FACV 4/2024).

In the three cases, the Applicants succeeded in the Court of First Instance (CFI) and upon HA's and SJ's respective appeals, at the Court of Appeal (CA). HA and SJ appealed to the Court of Final Appeal (CFA) respectively.

Background and Proceedings in the Courts Below

In the cases against HA, the Applicant, Mr. Nick Infinger married his husband in Canada in January 2018. With his husband as his only family member, he applied for a shared rented public housing flat. HA rejected his application under the public housing policy.

Another Applicant, Mr. Li Yik Ho married Mr. Ng Hon Lam Edgar in the United Kingdom in 2017. Mr. Ng purchased a flat under the Home Ownership Scheme in his own name, and wished to add Mr. Li as a registered occupant and joint owner without payment of a premium. These were not permitted under the Home Ownership Scheme policies, unlike for opposite-sex spouses.

The Applicants brought separate judicial reviews to challenge these policies (Mr. Li was substituted for Mr. Ng following his death to continue with the proceedings). The Courts below held that the policies discriminated against same-sex couples (lawfully married overseas) and were therefore unlawful and unconstitutional. HA appealed to CFA.

In the case against SJ, the Courts below agreed, and declared the challenged provisions unconstitutional for being discriminatory against same-sex couples lawfully married overseas. SJ appealed to CFA.

CFA's Determination (FACV 2 & 3/2024)

In CFA, HA argued that same-sex and opposite-sex married couples were not comparable in the rented public housing and Home Ownership Scheme context, as only opposite-sex married couples had reproductive capabilities and potential which supported the government's objective of promoting population growth.

CFA rejected this argument and stated that HA's primary objective was to meet the housing needs of the underprivileged. Even if HA policies were designed to support population growth, this only concerned whether the measures were justified, and

not whether same-sex and opposite-sex married couples were comparable. HA's own policies did not differentiate amongst opposite-sex married couples in terms of whether they had or were planning to have children, or were capable of having children; and had accepted familial relationships with no procreative potential for application purposes.

HA also sought to argue in CFA that Article 36 of the Basic Law was constitutionally entrenching pre-1997 social welfare rights, overriding the equality provisions in Article 25 of the Basic Law and Article 22 of the Hong Kong Bill of Rights. It therefore guaranteed opposite-sex married couples' pre-1997 exclusive entitlements to apply under the rented public housing policy and Home Ownership Scheme policies, and immunised the policies from the equality provisions. These entitlements would be diluted by allowing same-sex married couples to apply.

CFA rejected this argument, holding that Article 36 was not engaged. Opposite-sex married couples never had exclusive entitlements to apply. Their rights to apply were non-exclusive, and their applications joined the same queue as those based on other eligible familial relationships.

CFA further held that Article 36 does not displace the application of the equality provisions. HA's argument was not supported by an examination of the nature of social welfare benefits, the importance of the right to equality, the drafting history of Article 36, and the government's obligation to develop and improve the social welfare system under Article 145 of the Basic Law.

CFA held that opposite-sex couples' exclusive constitutional rights to marry and obtain the legal status of marriage under Article 37 of the Basic Law did not shield the rented public housing or Home Ownership Scheme policies from scrutiny under the equality provisions as the entitlements to apply under these policies did not go to the status of marriage itself.

It was not in dispute between parties in the CFA appeal that the aim of supporting traditional family founded on opposite-sex marriage (the said aim) was legitimate. CFA accepted that the said aim was rationally connected with HA policies.

However, CFA found that the challenged policies were disproportionate and unjustified. It was necessary for HA to show the impact these exclusionary policies had on promoting the said aim and waiting times. However, HA had not adduced any evidence or empirical study on the likely effect on supply and the potential impact on opposite-sex couples if HA policies were relaxed. CFA therefore had no basis to conclude that the policies were reasonably necessary to promote the said aim, or that some less restrictive policies, such as prioritising the applications of opposite-sex married couples with small children, whilst still allowing same-sex married couples to apply, could not be reasonably pursued.

CFA also found that HA's total lack of evidence made it impossible for the Court to conclude that a reasonable balance had been struck between the societal benefits of the challenged policies and the hardship caused to same-sex married couples by excluding them from rented public housing or the Home Ownership Scheme as couples.

Further, HA's argument based on coherence between its Home Ownership Scheme purchase policy and policies on addition of occupants and transfer of ownership did not carry much weight. CFA held that it could not be right that unless and until an applicant had the standing and practical reason to challenge all discriminatory aspects of a policy framework, no integral part of it could be separately challenged, no matter how seriously the applicant might be affected by it.

CFA unanimously dismissed HA's appeals.

(FACV 4/2024)

CFA first established what amounted to unlawful discrimination, that there must first be a measure encroaching on a person's constitutional rights. Then, to find out whether there was differential treatment between comparable parties. If there was, and such a differential treatment was based on a constitutionally protected ground (such as sexual orientation as in this case), then this would amount to discrimination. If the authority could not show that the differential treatment was justified, being rationally connected to a legitimate aim and proportionate to achieving that legitimate aim, the discrimination would be unlawful.

CFA took the view that whether treatment was relevantly different such as to require justification was always context-dependent. In the context of IEO and IPO, the preferential treatment accorded to the surviving spouse of the deceased stemmed from their close inter-personal relationship with the deceased.

CFA held that a valid foreign same-sex marriage, as that between Mr. Li and Mr. Ng, went beyond a mere relationship of cohabitation. Similar to a heterosexual marriage,

a valid foreign same-sex marriage was a public undertaking regulated by statute and contained the characteristics of publicity and exclusivity. A couple in a valid foreign same-sex marriage had a comparably close inter-personal relationship as a couple in a heterosexual marriage.

SJ identified the legitimate aim of the differential treatment as that of "having consistent and coherent definitions of 'valid marriage' across legislative schemes which touch on the subject of marriage", recognising the rights of surviving same-sex spouses under the IEO and IPO would undermine such coherence.

CFA rejected this alleged coherence as a legitimate aim and found that there was no coherent definition of "valid marriage", as reflected in the wider scope of the IEO and IPO to include foreign marriages not otherwise recognised in Hong Kong. After examining various pieces of legislation on marital and family life generally, CFA reached the conclusion that marriage is to be understood in line with their respective statutory purposes. In the context of the IEO and IPO, their respective purposes differed from other pieces of matrimonial legislation. It followed that the alleged coherence did not exist. Further, the statutory purposes of the IEO and IPO did not justify the exclusion of surviving spouses of foreign same-sex marriages from statutory entitlement as spouses.

CFA concluded that as the legitimate aim identified by SJ was not established, it followed that the differential treatment challenged by Mr. Li was not rationally connected with any purported legitimate aim. As no legitimate aim had been established, there was no need for CFA to answer whether the differential treatment was proportionate to the interference with the right to equality.

CFA unanimously dismissed SJ's appeal.

Chapter 4

Customer Services



The Department is committed to developing and maintaining a highly-motivated, caring and responsive workforce and keeps finding ways to better its performance through a customer-focused approach when delivering its services.

Performance Pledges

Processing of Applications

In 2024, the Department's actual performance in meeting the various targets set for processing time is set out below:

Types of Applications	Standard Processing Time	Performance Targets	Actual Performance in 2024
Civil Legal Aid	Within 3 months from the date of application	85%	85%
Criminal Legal Aid Appeals			
- Appeal against sentence	Within 2 months from the date of application	90%	84%
- Appeal against conviction	Within 3 months from the date of application	90%	94%
Trials in the Court of First Instance of the High Court / District Court	Within 10 working days from the date of application	90%	97%
Committal proceedings	Within 8 working days from the date of application	90%	96%

Payment to Aided Persons and Service Providers

In 2024-2025, the Department paid out \$1,042.7 million to lawyers / experts / other parties and \$938.3 million to legally aided persons. During the year, the Department exceeded all performance targets on payment:

Payment Targets	Service Delivery Standard	Performance Targets	Actual Performance in 2024
Aided Persons	Interim Payment Within 1 month from receipt of monies due to the aided person and / or receipt of estimation of costs from the assigned solicitor, whichever is appropriate.	95%	99%
	Final Payment Within 6 weeks from date 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%	99%
Lawyers / Experts / Other Parties	Advance Payment Within 6 weeks from receipt of bill.	95%	99%
	Balance Payment Within 6 weeks from date of agreement of all costs and disbursements related to the case, or receipts of all monies due to the aided person and the Director of Legal Aid, whichever is later.	95%	99%

Customer Feedback

With a view to enhancing our provision of services to the public, the Department regularly conducts comprehensive surveys on customer feedback on different aspects of the legal aid services. The surveys cover application and processing procedures for legal aid and the Department's in-house litigation services. Different methodologies such as on the spot collection and mail surveys have been used depending on the points of contact and on the stages and types of services rendered to customers. The overall customer satisfaction level remained high in 2024. The charts at [Appendix 2](#) illustrate the major findings of the survey on customer feedback.

Customer Service Initiatives

Enquiries, Complaints and Representations

The Department places great importance on enquiries, complaints and representations received from our customers. Customers' concerns and suggestions are viewed by the Department as a means of improving its service and ensuring the fulfillment of its statutory functions. The Departmental Customer Service Manager, who is a senior directorate, would meet with a team of Assistant Customer Service Managers and Officers regularly to review feedback on our services and recommend follow up actions where necessary.

Complaints

The Assistant Director of Legal Aid (Policy and Development) is the designated Complaint Liaison Officer to coordinate the handling of all the complaints received. Members of the public may lodge complaints in person with the Customer Service

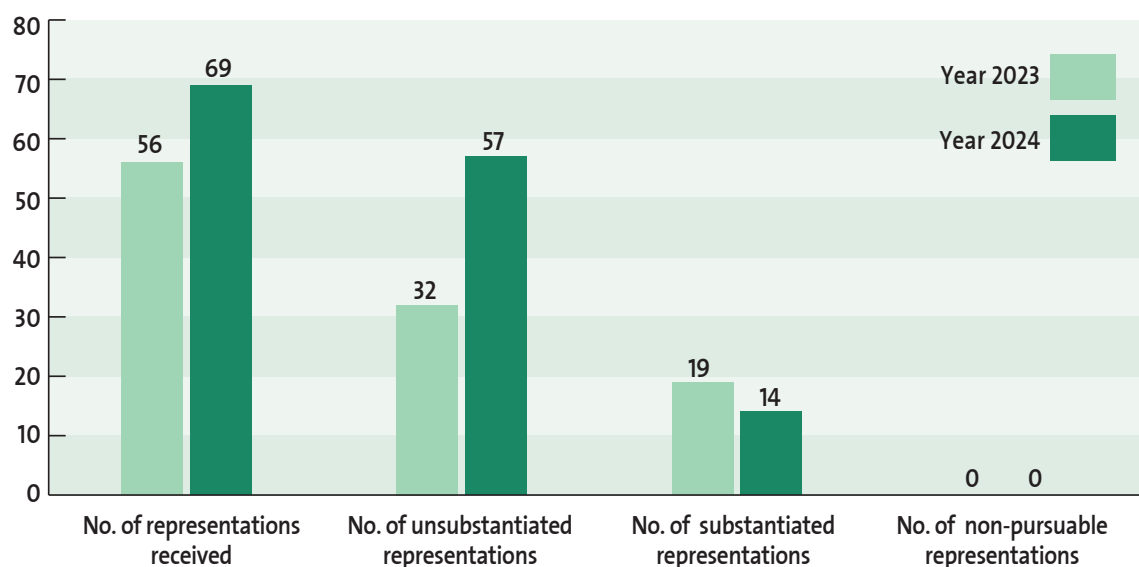
Officers of individual sections or by telephone or in writing to the Department by post, email or by fax. All complaints received will be handled according to the Department's complaint handling mechanism which is in compliance with the Government's general complaint handling guidelines. The Department will investigate and handle all complaints impartially and expeditiously. In general, an acknowledgement will be given within 10 days after the receipt of a complaint, and a substantive reply will be given within 30 days.

Representations

To qualify for legal aid, an applicant must pass both the means and merits tests. If anyone believes that a person should not have been given legal aid on means and / or merits, he can write to us and let us know the reasons. The Application and Processing Division is responsible for conducting review of representations against grants of legal aid on merits. Representations against grants of legal aid on means are handled by the Special Duties and Research Unit. The Department has published a leaflet to explain the investigation system and to address frequently asked questions. Please visit https://www.lad.gov.hk/eng/documents/ppr/publication/Not_Happy_en.pdf to view the leaflet.

In 2024, the Special Duties and Research Unit received 69 representations against grants of legal aid on means and completed investigation in 71 cases. 11 cases were referred to the police for investigation as to whether any offence was committed under Section 23 of the Legal Aid Ordinance, Cap. 91, and under Section 18A of the Theft Ordinance, Cap. 210 and / or Section 36 of Crimes Ordinance, Cap. 200.

Means Representation Received and Outcomes of Investigation Concluded in 2023 and 2024:



LAD's Hotline Service - the Interactive Voice Response System

The Department's hotline service provides a fast and convenient means for the public to learn about legal aid services. It has pre-recorded messages in Cantonese, Putonghua and English on different aspects of legal aid services. The popular ones are application procedures, eligibility criteria for civil and criminal legal aid, the aided person's liability to contribute towards the costs of aided proceedings etc. For further information, callers can speak to a staff member of the Department who will answer their enquiries during office hours.

Chapter 5

Publicity Programmes



The Department is committed to ensuring that no one who qualifies for legal aid is denied access to justice because of lack of means. Every year the Department organises or participates in various activities to enhance the public's awareness and knowledge of the legal aid services provided by the Department.

Promotional Activities

Law Week 2024

On 24 February 2024, the Director of Legal Aid, Mr Chris Chong officiated at the opening ceremony of Law Week 2024 under the theme "Law For All" organised by the Law Society of Hong Kong. Colleagues of the Legal Aid Department actively participated in the three sessions of Free Legal Advice Programme, held at Tin Shui Wai, Ma On Shan and Sham Shui Po in February, March and May respectively, by providing information on our services and answering enquiries.



Promotion of Legal Aid Services to Legal Practitioners

The Department places great importance on working in partnership with the legal profession to deliver quality legal aid services to the public.

On 11 September 2024, Assistant Principal Legal Aid Counsel / Application & Processing, Ms Emily Ho and Assistant Principal Legal Aid Counsel / Crime, Mr Simon Lau conducted a training course for solicitors, namely "Update on Legal Aid Schemes", organised by the Hong Kong Academy of Law.

Promotion of Legal Aid Services to External Bodies / Organisations

We exchanged views with external bodies and organisations on issues of common interest and on the latest development of legal aid in Hong Kong through various exchange programmes and visits.

On 13 March 2024, Mr Hiroyasu Tanigaki and Ms Satomi Furukawa, two officials from the Hague Convention Division, Consular Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan visited the Legal Aid Department. Deputy Director of Legal Aid / Application & Processing, Ms Juliana Chan and Assistant Principal Legal Aid Counsel / Application & Processing, Ms Jenny Leung briefed them on the work and services provided by the Department.



On 22 March 2024, Legal Aid Counsel / Civil Litigation, Ms Tammy Hui briefed a group of students from a local secondary school on the work and services of the Department, and shared with them career-related information. Students also attended court hearings at the High Court for a first-hand experience of legal proceedings.



On 22 April 2024, the Chairman of China Legal Service (H.K.) Ltd, Mr Chen Junsheng; Vice-chairman cum General Manager, Mr Zhao Zhenhua; and Director of Research Department, Mr Ares Lee visited the Legal Aid Department. Director of Legal Aid, Mr Chris Chong, Assistant Director of Legal Aid / Policy & Development, Ms Amy Lee and Assistant Principal Legal Aid Counsel / Legal and

Management Support, Mr David Chow met with them and exchanged views on legal aid services.

On 8 July 2024, Legal Aid Counsel / Application & Processing, Ms Michelle Yip briefed a group of students from various secondary schools which joined the "CLAP@JC" programme on the work and services of the Department, and shared with them career-related information. Students also attended court hearings at the High Court for a first-hand experience of legal proceedings.

On 15 July 2024, Legal Aid Counsel / Crime, Mr Philip Cheng briefed a group of students from various secondary schools which joined the "CLAP@JC" programme on the work and services of the Department, and shared with them career-related information. Students also attended court hearings at the High Court for a first-hand experience of legal proceedings.



On 29 July 2024, Solicitor / Official Solicitor's Office, Ms Josephine Tang received a group of law students of the East China University of Political Science and Law from Shanghai and introduced to them the work and services of the Legal Aid Department. The visit was co-organised by the University and the Hong Kong Bar Association.

Chapter 5 Publicity Programmes

On 9 September 2024, Assistant Principal Legal Aid Counsel / Kowloon Branch Office, Ms Rita Chin received a delegation of 14 Mainland officials and introduced to them the work and services of the Department.



On 21 November 2024, Assistant Principal Legal Aid Counsel / Civil Litigation, Mr Ted Lee received four representatives from Zhejiang Provincial Department of Justice and briefed them on the work and services of the Department.

Please visit https://www.lad.gov.hk/eng/wnew/event_2024.html for the details and photos of the events.

Reaching out to the Community

On 27 January 2024, the Education Bureau together with other bureaus and departments organised the 2024 Education and Careers Expo at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre. Legal Aid Counsel / Crime, Mr James Yeung and Senior Legal Clerk II / Crime Miss Carol Chow participated in one of the Sharing Sessions in CSB's booth, introducing to the public the work and services of the Legal Aid Department. They also shared their job experience and career information on entry requirement and daily duties of Legal Aid Counsel and Law Clerk grade officers.



On 12 March 2024, Legal Aid Counsel / Application & Processing, Miss Wendy Bien hosted a talk for frontline staff and volunteers of Po Leung Kuk Tsui Lam Centre and introduced the work and services of the Department relating to family issues such as matrimonial litigation and application for restraining order.

On 31 August 2024, Senior Legal Aid Counsel / Legal and Management Support, Ms Katrina Ng delivered a talk on legal aid about employees' compensation to more than 120 members of the public at the Mei Foo Community Hall.

Chapter 5 Publicity Programmes

On 11 and 16 September and 3 October 2024, the Civil Service Bureau held Government Career Fair 2024 at the City University of Hong Kong, the University of Hong Kong and the Chinese University of Hong Kong respectively. The legal aid counsel and law clerks participated in the event and shared with university students career information and other information about the work and services of the Department.



On 23 September 2024, Senior Legal Aid Counsel / Application & Processing, Mr Felix Chiu delivered a talk for members of the Federation of Hong Kong & Kowloon Labour Unions and shared information on the services of the Department and information related to employees' compensation and personal injuries at work.

On 29 October 2024, Legal Aid Counsel/ Legal and Management Support, Mr Jet Luk, gave a talk to a group of newly arrived ethnic minorities organised by the International Social Service Hong Kong Branch. He shared information about the work and services of the Department, and provided information on the application procedures, requirements and eligibility criteria.



The Department participated in the Post-Secondary Student Summer Internship Programme. The Department also participated in the programme organised by the Civil Service Bureau to offer internship placements for students with disabilities and also for non-ethnic Chinese students. In 2024, the Department recruited 11 summer interns under the Post-Secondary Student Summer Internship Programme, 1 intern with disability and 1 non-ethnic Chinese intern.

Television Interview

The Director of Legal Aid appeared in a television interview with Now TV's current affairs programme "Now Forum" 《大鳴大放》, and shared his views and insights on the work and services of the Department.

Newspaper Interviews

Ms Sally Cheung, Senior Legal Aid Counsel, shared her experience in a media interview with the Ta Kung Pao and Wen Wei Po. Mr Eric Yung and Mr Jackson Lai, Legal Aid Counsel, shared their daily work on handling civil legal aid cases which mainly involve personal injuries and family litigation matters, in a media interview by Sing Tao Daily.

Updating of Departmental Leaflets

The Department published and updated the leaflets "Guide to Legal Aid Services", "Customer Service Standards" and "How to apply Legal Aid in Criminal Cases" to reflect on the update on offence endangering national security after the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance came into effect in March 2024. The series of leaflets "Important Notice for Legally-aided Persons" were also updated with the additional payment method of Faster Payment System (FPS) and other general information.

Other publications such as the Financial Information Sheet, which contained comprehensive information on financial eligibility, deductible personal allowances, contributions payable by an aided person towards the costs of litigation and the Director's First Charge were also revised to reflect changes implemented in 2024.

A list of publications of the Department is at [Appendix 5](#).

New Video

Mr Chris Chong, the Director of Legal Aid, casted in a short video, reminding legally aided persons to exercise caution when nominating a lawyer. They should avoid falling into traps of touting agents and firms.



New Posters

In 2024, two new posters were designed. The poster "Report on Change" reminds legally aided persons that they should report to the Department any change in their financial resources without delay. The poster "Nominating a Lawyer" reminds legally aided persons that there is no need to engage a lawyer or an agent to apply for legal aid, and that they should exercise caution in the selection of a lawyer.



Measures to Combat Improper Touting Activities

As a measure to further combat improper touting activities of claims recovery agents among injured workers and accident victims, the Department continued to arrange the broadcast of the TV API "Beware of the touting activities of recovery agents" produced by the Department of Justice at public waiting areas of the Department from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2025, including the Information & Application Services Unit (IASU) of the Application and Processing Division and Crime Section of Litigation Division on 25/F of Queensway Government Offices; as well as the IASU of Kowloon Branch Office.

A poster on anti-touting activities was designed and displayed at our offices, District Social Welfare Offices of Social Welfare Department, offices of Employees' Compensation Division of the Labour Department, Home Affairs Enquiry Centres, community centres and community halls.

Website

The Department regularly updates the contents of its website to provide comprehensive and timely information to the public and legal aid practitioners. In 2024, the Department continued enhancing the homepage to meet with the latest requirements of the Digital Policy Office.

Chapter 6

Organisation, Administration and Staffing



There are three Divisions in the Department, namely the Application and Processing Division, the Litigation Division and the Policy and Administration Division, each headed by a Deputy Director. The organisation chart can be found at the departmental website at <https://www.lad.gov.hk/eng/ginfo/oo.html>.

Staffing

As at the end of 2024, there were 532 staff members comprising 85 professional officers, 163 law clerks and 284 supporting staff. 3 Legal Aid Counsel and 6 Law Clerks were newly recruited in the year.

Training and Development

The Department is committed to developing and maintaining a highly-motivated and professional work team to provide quality services to our customers. Every year the Department arranges various general and professional training courses for staff of all levels to equip them with the latest knowledge and skills needed to face the challenges ahead. The Training Unit, which is headed by a Senior Training Officer, is responsible for formulating, implementing and reviewing the Department's training and development policies and plans to meet the operational and development needs of staff.

Professional Training

To keep our professional officers abreast of changes and development of the laws, the Department sponsored 17 professional officers to attend external seminars including Workshop on Data Protection and Data Access Request, Practical Workshop on Data Protection Law, Divorce in the Digital Age, Personal Injuries – Liability for Accidents Occurring on Public Rights of Way in Hong Kong, Personal Injuries – Practice Direction 18.1: Pre-Action Protocol, Personal Injury Litigation – Indemnity Costs Orders, Wasted Costs Orders and Enhanced Interest, The Development of Legal Aid in Hong Kong (1987-2022) – A Personal Perspective, Recent Developments in Hong Kong Family Law Practice in the Greater Bay Area and Recent Cases Update, Mental Capacity Law of Hong Kong and Related Issues Capacity Assessment, Adult Guardianship Orders, Enduring Powers of Attorney. Besides, 78 professional officers attended in-house legal talks on Personal Injury Litigation – Indemnity Costs Orders, Wasted Costs Orders and Enhanced Interest, Tips on Handling Common Landed Property Disputes, Dealing with Domestic Violence Applications, Handling EC, PI and RD Claims, Intestate and Testate Succession, delivered by external speakers.

To promote exchanges with our Mainland counterparts, 2 professional officers attended Mainland Legal Studies Course coordinated by the Department of Justice.

Management and Communication Training Courses

To strengthen staff's management and communication capability, 7 professional officers were nominated to attend management and communication training courses organised by the Civil Service College, Civil Service Bureau (CSC) including Behavioural Insights for Public Policy Making, Navigating the Media – Crisis

Management and Communication, People Management in the Public Sector, Global Trends and Best Practices of Digital Media Campaigns, Communication Skills for Executives – Speaking for Community Engagement, Driving Innovations in the Digital World, and Audience-centric Social Media.

For leadership development, 4 professional officers were nominated to attend leadership development programmes organised by CSC, namely Advanced Leadership Enhancement Programme, Leadership in Action Programme, and Innovative Leadership Programme.

Customer Service Training

The Department places great importance on nurturing a customer-focused culture. To enhance staff's skills in delivering quality service to the public, the Department organised an in-house workshop on Dealing with Difficult Customers. A total of 20 colleagues attended the workshop.

In 2024, 4 staff members attended a course on Handling Confrontational Situations in Customer Service held by CSC.

Staff Well-being and General Training

The Department is committed to promoting staff well-being. In 2024, 2 in-house workshops namely, Treating Pains & Illnesses through Chinese Medicine's Approach, and Ear Acupuncture Treatment were held, with an attendance of 78 staff members. Besides, 2 staff members were nominated to attend CSC courses on well-being.

Apart from the above, 222 staff members were nominated to attend courses and seminars organised by CSC and other departments on a wide range of topics aimed at enhancing staff's work capability and career development. Topics included Basic Law, National Security, Foreign Affairs, Innovation and Technology Solution, Creative Problem Solving and Decision Making, First Aid, Automated External Defibrillators, Occupational Safety and Health, GRS Records Management, Government Financial Management, Induction Courses, Human Resources Management, Intellectual Property, Accessibility Issues, Common Law Offence of "Misconduct in Public Office", Chinese and English Official Writing and Putonghua .

Furthermore, 7 professional officers attended national studies programmes held at the National Academy of Governance, Tsinghua University, Zhejiang University and Nanjing University.

Promoting Self-Learning and Development: In-house Learning Resource Centre

To cultivate the culture of continuous self-learning, the Department maintains a comprehensive collection of books available to our staff. The collection covers a wide range of topics including management, communication, use of language, personal development, positive thinking, stress management and healthy lifestyles. Every year, new books are added to the Learning Resource Centre to further enrich the collection.

To facilitate easy access to self-learning materials by staff, resources on IT tips as well as reference materials on training courses are uploaded onto the departmental portal. Staff also have direct access to CLC Plus, the e-learning portal for civil

servants, which contains a variety of self-learning resources, toolkits and job aids on management, language, Constitution, Basic Law and national security, communication and information technology, etc.

Information Systems

The Department's Case Management and Case Accounting System (CM&CAS) supports over 500 users in handling day-to-day legal aid business processes such as processing applications, monitoring assigned out cases and handling legal aid payments. The system is now under revamp and phase 1 was launched in August 2024 and phase 2 is planned to roll out in the latter half of 2025. To provide a more convenient and reliable payment option to the public, payment of bills using Faster Payment System (FPS) at the shroff offices and payment of bills using FPS remotely through the Internet were launched in March and September 2024 respectively.

The Legal Aid Electronic Services Portal (LAESP) provides an online gateway through which members of the public and Panel lawyers can gain access to information and transact certain legal aid business with the Department online. Members of the public can access the LAESP to download and submit legal aid Pre-application Information Forms to the Department as a first step towards making an application for legal aid. The system also provides an alternative channel for legal aid applicants to accept legal aid offer electronically with iAM Smart+ effective from October 2024. To better support members of the public in need of legal aid services, a chatbot service on our website was under construction and expected to be launched in the first quarter of 2025 to handle pre-application general enquiries.

Staff Relations and Communication

The Department maintains effective communication with staff through regular meetings with various staff representative bodies such as the Departmental Consultative Committees, the Law Clerks Association and the Legal Aid Counsel Association. Resulting from the discussions at these meetings, improvements have been made concerning office accommodation, streamlining of working procedures and human resources planning, etc.

The Director of Legal Aid would visit sections throughout the year with a view to exchanging ideas with staff of all levels including professional officers and receiving their views on work arrangements and procedures for further review and improvement. Divisions / Sections continued to implement their respective internal communication strategies in consultation with staff. Informal meetings would also be held between the Deputy Director of Legal Aid (Policy and Administration) and Senior Law Clerks I and II and general grades staff regularly to collect their view on work and to explore areas for improvement.

Staff Suggestions Scheme

Staff Suggestions Scheme was launched to encourage colleagues to make suggestions to the Department. It aims to facilitate the improvement and streamlining of the Department's operation and management, promote Department's image, arouse staff morale and occupational safety, thereby enhancing work efficiency. Our colleagues provided many useful and practical suggestions such as methods supporting record retrieval to enhance work efficiency and issuing reminders to Aided Persons via Short Message Service (SMS).

Staff Welfare and Charitable Activities

The Department values the general well-being of its staff. The objective of the Staff Club is to promote staff welfare by organising a wide range of activities and to provide opportunities where staff members can meet and interact whilst engaging in relaxing and enriching activities.

To promote staff wellness, the Staff Club has organised several recreational activities in 2024. The Annual Dinner, a snowflake crisp workshop and a mahjong competition were held during the year. Staff members also participated in a basketball competition organised by the Law Society of Hong Kong.



Chapter 6 Organisation, Administration and Staffing

During the year, the Department actively participated in various volunteer services and fund raising activities such as the Community Chest 55th Anniversary Walk for Millions (Hong Kong – Zhuhai – Macao Bridge – Hong Kong Link Road), the Hong Kong Marathon 2024, Calligraphy 1000, Skip Lunch Day, Green Low Carbon Day and Dress Casual Day, Orbis World Sight Day and Oxfam Rice. In the New Year Food Drive organised by St James' Settlement, surplus Chinese New Year gifts and food were donated to the Charity.



Hong Kong Marathon 2024



Calligraphy 1000

Environmental Initiatives

The Department is committed to ensuring that its operations and activities are conducted in an environmentally responsible manner. The Department makes efforts to minimise waste, conserve energy, promote "reuse" and "recycle" of resources and enhance staff awareness and participation in protecting the environment.

The Department undertakes regular reviews to ensure that resources are used in an efficient and green manner. Details of the Department's environmental initiatives in 2024 can be found in the Department's Environmental Report at the departmental website <https://www.lad.gov.hk/eng/ppr/publication/enr.html>.

Internal Audit

The Internal Audit Section (IAS) is an independent team established to assist management to ensure that adequate control procedures and systems are in place to safeguard the Department's assets. It also carries out reviews of the various activities of the Department in order to ensure an economical, efficient and effective use of the Department's financial, human and other resources.

The major audit reviews conducted by IAS during the year were the review of engagement of interpreters and translators by the Department, review of collections through shroff offices and review of management of recruitment. IAS also carried out audits on the use of the Integrated Registration Information System provided by the Land Registry for conducting land searches in legal aid cases and performed periodic checks on means investigation reports, petty cash, imprest, etc.

Support Service to the Legal Aid Services Council

Legal Aid Services Council (the Council) is a statutory body set up in September 1996 pursuant to the Legal Aid Services Council Ordinance, Cap. 489 to supervise the provision of legal aid services in Hong Kong and to advise the Government on legal aid policy. The Council comprises barristers and solicitors, the Director of Legal Aid, and other lay members. The Chairman is not a public officer, and is also not connected in any other way directly with the practice of law. The Council meets regularly to oversee the administration of legal aid service, and to suggest improvement in the administration and operation transparency of the Department. Regular progress reports were submitted by the Department to the Council and tabled for discussion.

Regular progress reports on implementation of the enhancement measures and on various aspects of the provision of legal aid services were provided to the Council for review.

With strong support from the Council, publicity measures were stepped up to promote a positive image of our services to the public.

Appendix



Revenue

		2023-2024(\$M)	2024-2025(\$M)
1	Criminal Cases	9.2	8.9
2	Civil Cases		
	<i>In-house</i>	7.8	12.6
	<i>Assigned-out</i>	368.8	406.3
3	Official Solicitor	3.2	2.3
4	Supplementary Legal Aid Scheme		
	<i>Legal costs</i>	1.0	1.2
	<i>Administration fee</i>	3.8	4.0
	Total	393.8	435.3

Expenditure by Items

		2023-2024(\$M)	2024-2025(\$M)
1	Personal Emoluments	329.6	339.0
2	Personnel Related Expenses	26.6	29.6
3	Departmental Expenses	25.4	27.8
4	Legal Aid Costs (for both in-house and assigned-out cases)		
	<i>Civil</i>	683.2	679.6
	<i>Criminal</i>	386.7	363.1
5	Plant, Equipment and Works	0.0	0.0
	Total	1,451.5	1,439.1

Expenditure by Programmes

		2023-2024(\$M)	2024-2025(\$M)
1	Processing of Legal Aid Applications	136.0	142.9
2	Litigation Services	1,237.6	1,216.0
3	Support Services	60.7	62.0
4	Official Solicitor's Office	17.2	18.2
	Total	1,451.5	1,439.1

Analysis of Expenditure for Civil Cases by Types of Cases

Types of Cases	2023-2024	2024-2025
Matrimonial Cases	17.4%	17.6%
Misc. Personal Injuries	36.1%	34.4%
Employees' Compensation	11.4%	14.2%
Running Down	5.9%	6.4%
Immigration Matters	1.3%	1.2%
Land & Tenancy Disputes	8.0%	7.1%
Miscellaneous	19.9%	19.1%
Total	100%	100%

Analysis of Expenditure for Criminal Cases by Types of Cases

Types of Cases	2023-2024	2024-2025
Hearings in District Court	66.3%	64.4%
Hearings in Court of First Instance	29.8%	32.4%
Appeals from Magistrates' Courts	0.4%	0.5%
Appeals from District Court	0.8%	0.8%
Appeals from Court of First Instance	2.0%	1.4%
Appeals in Court of Final Appeal	0.7%	0.5%
Total	100%	100%

Analysis of Legal Aid Costs by Nature of Expenditure

Nature of Expenditure	2023-2024 (\$M)	2024-2025 (\$M)
Solicitors Costs	586.2	576.5
Counsel Fees	366.5	353.9
Doctors Fees	8.9	8.5
Opposite Party Costs	52.5	52.3
Others ^(Note)	55.8	51.5
Total	1,069.9	1,042.7

Note: These include expenses for land and company searches, court fees and taxing fees, law costs draftsman fees, expert fees, copying charges, bank charges and miscellaneous expenses.

Legal Aid Budget

Financial Year*			2023-2024	2022-2023	2021-2022
Total Approved Estimate (\$'000)		A	1,476,426	1,635,755	1,666,251
Index A (2014-15=100)			173.8	192.6	196.2
Actual Operating Expenses (\$'000) ^(Note 1)		B	381,614	370,620	361,806
Index B (2014-15=100)			135.3	131.4	128.3
Actual Legal Aid Costs (\$'000)	Civil	C	683,256	777,013	700,032
	Criminal	D	386,673	381,569	335,254
Index C+D (2014-15=100)			188.7	204.3	182.6
Capital Expenditure (\$'000)		E	0	0	0
(Over-spending) / Underspending (\$'000) ^(Note 2)		F=A-B-C-D-E	24,884	106,553	269,159
% of (Over-spending) / Underspending		F/A	2%	7%	16%

Note 1: Operating Expenses cover expenditure for personal emoluments, personnel related expenses and departmental expenses.

Note 2: Underspending will not be accumulated to carry forward to the next financial year.

*In Hong Kong, the government's financial year runs from 1 April to 31 March.

Supplementary Legal Aid Fund - Income and Expenditure Account Note 1 Note 2

	For the year ended 30 September 2023 (\$)	For the year ended 30 September 2024 (\$)
Income		
Application fees	102,894	66,000
Percentage contributions	6,270,863	4,236,999
Interest income	8,238,200	9,812,843
	14,611,957	14,115,842
Less : Expenditure		
Administration fee	3,770,786	3,969,428
Bank charges	^Δ 830	1,345
Cash transportation services charges	0	0
Electronic payment services charges	^Δ 104	139
Expenses for interpretation services	0	0
Legal costs and expenses for finalised cases		
Successful litigation		
- costs to opposite parties	475,512	1,180,501
- other disbursements	141,539	832,974
	617,051	2,013,475
Unsuccessful applications	78,330	153,066
Unsuccessful litigation		
- costs to opposite parties	4,805,025	6,714,155
- other disbursements	4,882,574	3,781,338
	9,687,599	10,495,493
	14,154,700	16,632,946
(Deficit) / Surplus for the year	457,257	(2,517,104)

Notes : 1.The financial year of the Supplementary Legal Aid Fund runs from 1 October of one year to 30 September of the following year. As at 30 September 2024, the net assets of the Supplementary Legal Aid Fund were decreased by \$2,517,104 to \$213,001,504.

2.Auditors' Report for the statement of account for the year ended 30 September 2024 has not yet been issued.

Δ The figures have been updated after publication of LAD Departmental Report 2023.

Overall Satisfaction Rate

	2023	2024
Application Services		
Application and Processing / Headquarters	99%	99%
Kowloon Branch Office	98%	98%
Crime Section	100%	100%
Litigation – Mid-Litigation Stage		
In-house Litigation of Family / Matrimonial Cases	100%	100%
In-house Litigation of Personal Injuries Cases	100%	100%
Cases handled by Assigned Solicitors	97%	98%
Litigation – Conclusion Stage		
In-house Litigation of Family / Matrimonial Cases	100%	99%
In-house Litigation of Personal Injuries Cases	100%	100%
Cases handled by Assigned Solicitors	85%	85%

(A) Application Service (Means Test and Merits Test)

	Application and Processing / Headquarters		Kowloon Branch Office		Crime Section	
	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024
Response Rate	100%	100%	98%	97%	100%	100%
Overall Satisfaction	4.54	4.60	4.56	4.52	4.53	4.64
Convenience (e.g. LAD hotline or pamphlet is easily accessible, user-friendly, etc.)	4.40	4.45	4.26	4.23	4.47	4.55
Service Manner (Staff manner)	4.65	4.70	4.72	4.65	4.68	4.73
Service Efficiency (e.g. in means / merits testing, etc.)	4.49	4.57	4.44	4.42	4.57	4.60
Clear Information (Whether information given is clear)	4.45	4.51	4.36	4.36	4.37	4.45
Procedure (Date of interview fixed)	4.49	4.53	4.39	4.40	4.58	4.60

Satisfaction level ranges from the min. 1 to max. 5 (Very satisfied = 5; Satisfied = 4; Average = 3; Dissatisfied = 2; Very Dissatisfied = 1)

Appendix 2 Findings of the Survey on Customer Feedback

(B) Litigation - Mid - Litigation Stage

	In-house Litigation of Family / Matrimonial Cases		In-house Litigation of Personal Injuries Cases		Cases handled by Assigned Solicitors	
	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024
Response Rate	100%	100%	100%	100%	27%	37%
Overall Satisfaction	4.84	4.91	4.76	4.60	4.69	4.70
Convenience (Easy to contact lawyer / staff)	4.92	4.85	4.82	4.20	4.71	4.73
Service Manner (Staff manner)	4.92	4.88	4.85	4.60	4.70	4.75
Clear Information (Whether information given is clear)	4.84	4.83	4.71	4.50	4.64	4.67
Procedure (Client informed of progress / procedure of the case)	4.88	4.85	4.71	4.20	4.62	4.68

Satisfaction level ranges from the min. 1 to max. 5 (Very satisfied = 5; Satisfied = 4; Average = 3; Dissatisfied = 2; Very Dissatisfied = 1)

(C) Litigation - Conclusion Stage

	In-house Litigation of Family / Matrimonial Cases		In-house Litigation of Personal Injuries Cases		Cases handled by Assigned Solicitors	
	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024
Response Rate	100%	100%	100%	100%	23%	29%
Overall Satisfaction	4.79	4.67	4.80	4.79	4.24	4.29
Convenience (Easy to contact lawyer / staff)	4.72	4.68	4.80	4.79	4.41	4.37
Service Manner (Staff manner)	4.87	4.76	4.87	4.89	4.35	4.41
Clear Information (Whether information given is clear)	4.72	4.65	4.73	4.77	4.31	4.19
Result (Outcome)	4.79	4.75	4.73	4.63	4.15	4.30
Procedure (Client informed of progress / procedure of the case)	4.77	4.71	4.80	4.74	4.34	4.22

Satisfaction level ranges from the min. 1 to max. 5 (Very satisfied = 5; Satisfied = 4; Average = 3; Dissatisfied = 2; Very Dissatisfied = 1)

Appendix 3 Director of Legal Aid and Section Heads

Director of Legal Aid	Mr Chris Chong Yan-tung
Deputy Director of Legal Aid (Policy and Administration)	Mr Steve Wong Yiu-fai
Deputy Director of Legal Aid (Application and Processing)	Ms Juliana Chan Oi-yung
Deputy Director of Legal Aid (Litigation)	Mr Ben Li Chi-keung
Assistant Director of Legal Aid (Application and Processing)	Mr Jason Chan Mau-kwan
Assistant Director of Legal Aid (Litigation)	Ms Nancy Keung Mei-chuen
Assistant Director of Legal Aid (Policy & Development)	Ms Amy Lee Ngar-ling
Assistant Principal Legal Aid Counsel / Application and Processing (1)	Ms Jenny Leung Ping-ching
Assistant Principal Legal Aid Counsel / Application and Processing (2)	Miss Emily Ho Wai-han
Assistant Principal Legal Aid Counsel (Kowloon Branch Office)	Ms Rita Chin Kong-kong
Assistant Principal Legal Aid Counsel (Civil Litigation 1)	Miss Ada Wong Yiu-ming
Assistant Principal Legal Aid Counsel (Civil Litigation 2)	Mr Ted Lee Tak-lei
Assistant Principal Legal Aid Counsel (Crime)	Mr Simon Lau Ca-chun
Assistant Principal Legal Aid Counsel (Legal and Management Support)	Mr David Chow Wai-hung
Departmental Secretary	Mr Wong Pak-ho
Departmental Accountant	Miss Joanna Leung Hoi-ki

Headquarters	
9/F, 23/F to 27/F Queensway Government Offices 66 Queensway Hong Kong Tel : 2537 7677 Fax: 2537 5948	• Application and processing of civil and criminal cases • Criminal litigation • Civil litigation - Personal injury litigation - Enforcement of court orders - Family litigation • Legal and management support • Policy and administrative support
Kowloon Branch Office	
G/F, 3/F & 4/F Mongkok Government Offices 30 Luen Wan Street Mongkok, Kowloon Tel: 2399 2544 Fax: 2397 7475	• Application and processing of civil cases
24-hour Telephone Enquiry Service: 2537 7677 Email: ladinfo@lad.gov.hk Website: https://www.lad.gov.hk	

1.	香港法律援助服務指南 Guide to Legal Aid Services in Hong Kong	繁 / 簡 / English
2.	顧客服務標準 Customer Service Standards	繁 / 簡 / English
3.	怎樣申請－尋求法律服務 How to Apply – Legal Services	繁 / 簡 / English
4.	怎樣申請民事訴訟的法律援助 How to Apply for Legal Aid in Civil Cases	繁 / 簡 / English
5.	怎樣申請刑事訴訟的法律援助 How to Apply for Legal Aid in Criminal Cases	繁 / 簡 / English
6.	怎樣申請法律援助輔助計劃 How to Apply for Legal Aid under the Supplementary Legal Aid Scheme	繁 / 簡 / English
7.	怎樣計算你的財務資源及分擔費 How Your Financial Resources and Contribution are Calculated	繁 / 簡 / English
8.	財務資料一覽表 Financial Information Sheet	繁 / 簡 / English
9.	法律援助訴訟的分擔訟費及法律援助署署長的第一押記 Contribution towards Costs of Legal Aid Case and Director of Legal Aid's First Charge	繁 / 簡 / English
10.	法援通訊 LAD News	繁 / English
11.	受助人須知（申請及審查科） Important Notice for Legally – Aided Persons (Application & Processing Division)	繁 / 簡 / English
12.	受助人須知（人身傷害訴訟） Important Notice for Legally – Aided Persons (Personal Injuries Litigation)	繁 / 簡 / English
13.	受助人須知（家事訴訟） Important Notice for Legally – Aided Persons (Family Litigation)	繁 / English
14.	受助人須知（刑事組） Important Notice for Legally – Aided Persons (Crime Section)	繁 / 簡 / English
15.	法援婚姻訴訟個案家事調解計劃 Mediation in Legally Aided Matrimonial Cases	
16.	民事法援案件（非婚姻訴訟）調解計劃 Mediation in Legally Aided Non – Matrimonial Civil Cases	
17.	關於離婚法律程序的資料 Information on Divorce Proceedings	
18.	離婚法律程序流程表 Flowchart for Divorce Proceedings	

19.	緊急申請須知 Urgent Applications – What You Need to Know	
20.	有關管養權聆訊的資料 Information on Custody Hearing	
21.	離婚後應注意事項 Post Divorce Matters which Warrant Attention	
22.	僱員補償申索 Employees' Compensation Claim	
23.	僱員補償個案的主要程序流程表 Flowchart of Major Steps in a Typical Employees' Compensation Claim	
24.	人身傷亡申索 Personal Injury Claim	
25.	人身傷亡個案的主要程序流程表 Flowchart of Major Steps in a Typical Personal Injury Claim	
26.	海員欠薪申索 Seamen's Wages Claim	
27.	海員欠薪個案的主要程序流程表 Flowchart of Major Steps in a Typical Seamen's Wages Claim	
28.	醫療疏忽申索 Medical Negligence Claim	
29.	醫療疏忽個案的主要程序流程表 Flowchart of Major Steps in a Typical Medical Negligence Claim	
30.	香港法律援助服務小冊子（孟加拉語、印尼語、尼泊爾語、印度語、旁遮普語、菲律賓語、泰米爾語、泰語、巴基斯坦語、越南語） Information Leaflet on Legal Aid Services in Hong Kong (Bengali, Indonesian, Nepali, Hindi, Punjabi, Tagalog, Tamil, Thai, Urdu, Vietnamese)	繁 / 簡 / English
31.	不滿某人獲批法援－可怎麼辦？ Not Happy that Someone is Given Legal Aid – Can Anything be Done?	繁 / 簡 / English

Other Publications

1.	法律援助署年報（只提供網上版本） LAD Departmental Report (web version only)	繁 / 簡 / English
2.	環保報告（只提供網上版本） Environmental Report (web version only)	繁 / English
3.	法律援助輔助計劃基金年報（只提供網上版本） Supplementary Legal Aid Fund Annual Report (web version only)	繁 / English