

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 2025, there were 535 staff members comprising 85 professional officers, 171 law clerks and 279 supporting staff. 2 Legal Aid Counsel and 17 Law Clerks were newly recruited in the year.

Training and Development

The Department is committed to developing and maintaining a highly-motivated, dynamic, and professional team that delivers quality services and safeguards access to justice for our customers. Every year, we provide a diverse portfolio of professional and general training across all levels, guaranteeing that our staff are empowered with the latest knowledge to navigate evolving challenges. The Training Unit oversees the strategic formulation and review of training and development policies to ensure our talent pool remains aligned with the Department's vision, mission and values.

National Studies, National Security-related Trainings / Visits

The Department has all along attached great importance to national studies and national security-related trainings. To strengthen staff's national identity and awareness of national security, the Department arranged visits to the National Security Exhibition Gallery and the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Hong Kong Garrison Exhibition Center at Ngong Shuen Chau Barracks with a total of 572 attendance in 2025. Furthermore, the Department has been nominating officers to participate in national studies programmes at prestigious institutions, such as the National Academy of Governance, Tsinghua University, China Foreign Affairs University, Nanjing University, Zhejiang University, Jinan University and Sun Yat-sen University to deepen their understanding of the country's latest policies and developments. Professional officers were also nominated to attend the "National Studies Programme for Government Lawyers" and "Mainland Legal Studies Course" coordinated by the Department of Justice to promote exchanges with our Mainland counterparts. Over the past five years, a total of 167 attendances were recorded at national studies seminars organised by Civil Service College (CSC).



Staff visited the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Hong Kong Garrison Exhibition Center at Ngong Shuen Chau Barracks.



Staff visited the National Security Exhibition Gallery.



Our Professional Officer not only attended national studies seminars organised by the Civil Service College, but also participated in the production of the official trailer.



Professional Training

To keep our professional officers abreast of changes and development of the laws, the Department organised 5 in-house legal talks and experience sharing session, reaching a total attendance of 210, and sponsored 5 professional officers to attend external seminars on topics related to Artificial Intelligence, Mediation and Data Protection in 2025.

Customer Service and Communication Training

The Department champions a customer-focused culture across all operations. To enhance staff's skills in delivering quality service to the public, the Department organised 3 in-house customer service and communication workshops and nominated staff members to attend communication workshops organised by the Civil Service College. In 2025, the total number of attendances was 71.

Staff Well-being, Management and General Training

Our dedication to a healthy workforce was furthered this year through organising 3 workshops designed to enhance mental and physical resilience and the total number of attendances was 76. Apart from the above, the Department also organised an in-house integrity management training workshop with 41 attendance. 211 officers attended general training organised by CSC and other institutes on a wide range of topics, such as, performance management, stress management, office administration, leadership development, basic law, innovation and technology, induction training, occupational safety and health, and use of languages.

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

The Department fosters a culture of continuous development by providing an extensive library of resources tailored to both professional excellence and personal growth. Spanning strategic management to holistic well-being, our Learning Resource Centre is curated with new publications each year to provide a diverse and up-to-date repository of knowledge for all staff.

Through our departmental portal, staff enjoy seamless access to professional development tools and learning materials. This is complemented by the Learning Management Portal, which provides a robust suite of e-learning materials ranging from short videos to thematic articles on essential topics such as the Constitution, the Basic Law and National Security, Public Leadership and Management, International Perspectives, and Innovation and Technology, as well as core values and service culture.

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 was revamped with phase 1 launched in August 2024 and phase 2 was launched in August 2025 after satisfactory users' acceptance test. The system implementation of the related query system, known as Knowledge Support System (KSS), started in February 2025 and was smoothly completed in October 2025.

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. To achieve more unified user experiences in using government online services, enhancement was implemented to LAESP to integrate with the in-app browser on iAM Smart in August 2025. In addition, to facilitate solicitors and counsel on the Legal Aid Panel to update their profile data through electronic means more efficiently, the Department kick-started the streamlining enhancement work to LAESP and the new function is planned to launch in the second quarter of 2026.

To better support members of the public in need of legal aid services, a chatbot service, built with Artificial Intelligence and Natural Language Processing technology, was launched in February 2025 on our website to handle pre-application general enquiries in traditional Chinese, simplified Chinese or English.

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.

Support to the Legislative Council Election

Legislative Council is one of the key pillars in the governance structure of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. In November, the Director of Legal Aid, together with the senior directorate officers, joined the Chief Secretary for Administration, the Director of Administration and their colleagues to shoot a video clip, calling on everyone to support and cast their votes in the "2025 Legislative Council Election". Furthermore, our staff have helped distribute promotional leaflets and souvenirs of the Ballot Box Family mascots to their families and friends with a view to boosting the electoral atmosphere in society and raising public awareness of the election. On the polling day on 7 December 2025, apart from fulfilling civil rights by casting votes, many of our staff have assisted in the operation of the Polling Stations, as well as the dedicated Coordination and Support Centre set up for the election.



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 2025. A bowling competition, a series of stretching programmes, a coffee making workshop and a board game activity were held during the year. Staff members also participated in a basketball competition organised by the Hong Kong Bar Association.



Basketball competition



Bowling competition

During the year, the Department actively participated in various volunteer services and fund raising activities such as the Hong Kong Marathon 2025 and the 15th National Games Hong Kong SAR Volunteer Scheme, Skip Lunch Day, Green Low Carbon Day, Dress Casual Day, Orbis World Sight Day, Médecins Sans Frontières Day and Oxfam Rice Event.



Hong Kong Marathon 2025



National Games

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 "recycling" 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 2025 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 internal control on handling of clients' properties by the Official Solicitor's Office, review of payments to experts and other non-aided parties, and review of internal control on approval of transfer journals. 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 members who are not connected in any way with the practice of law. 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 provided by the Department. The Council may formulate policies

governing the provision of services by the Department and give advice on policy direction of the Department.

The Council reviews the work of the Department regularly. Regular progress reports on various aspects of the provision of legal aid services and plans for development of the Department 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.

The Ombudsman's Award 2025

Miss Carol Chow, Senior Law Clerk I, has served in the Information and Application Services Unit (IASU) of the Application and Processing Division since 2024. As the customer service officer of IASU, Miss Chow consistently leads her team to provide quality service to the general public. With excellent interpersonal skills and a customer-oriented mindset, Miss Chow provides timely, sincere and respectful responses when handling enquiries, complaints and requests for assistance from members of the public.



In recognition of Miss Chow's efforts and contribution to delivering quality customer service to the general public, she was awarded The Ombudsman's Awards 2025 for Officers of Public Organisations.