

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**CSO007**

**(Question Serial No. 1842)**

Head: (94) Legal Aid Department  
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified  
Programme: (-) Not Specified  
Controlling Officer: Director of Legal Aid (C. M. CHAN)  
Director of Bureau: Director of Administration

Question:

In the estimate for 2026 for the Legal Aid Department, the number of active civil cases as at end of year, whether the cases are monitored ones assigned to private practitioners or for in-house litigation, remains at a relatively high level similar to the previous year, totalling 11 570 cases and 1 045 cases respectively. Does the Government have any plans to reduce the number of cases?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hiu-fung, Nick (LegCo internal reference no.: 11)

Reply:

The active civil cases as at end of year handled by the Legal Aid Department (LAD) include all those civil legal aid cases undergoing litigation and those where litigation has been completed but the cases remain not closed and accounts yet to be finalised because of reasons including, among others, recovery actions and enforcement of the Director of Legal Aid's First Charge. The number of such cases each year varies, depending on factors such as the number of new cases assigned and the litigation progress of individual cases.

With respect to monitoring of cases assigned to private practitioners, LAD recorded an average of approximately 16 000 active civil cases as at end of each year from 2019 up to the onset of pandemic in 2020. The number of such cases has continued to decline over the past 5 years to around 11 570 last year. LAD will continue to strengthen monitoring of assigned out cases to ensure satisfactory progress.

With respect to cases for in-house litigation, the number of active civil cases as at end of year varies, depending mainly on the number of new cases taken up during the year. Since the number of new cases taken up in-house this year is similar to last year, the number of active civil cases as at end of year will then remain at a level similar to the previous year.