

## 法律援助資訊的傳遞 Dissemination of Legal Aid Information

法援局成立了一個關於改善法律援助資訊傳遞的專責小組，檢視由法律援助署（「法援署」）提供的法援服務統計數據及相關資訊，以提高該署的運作透明度。

正如本局去年年報所述，專責小組已經開始著手研究法援署的衡量服務表現指標，並揀選了以下課題作進一步探討：

- a) 持分者的參與；及
- b) 支付大律師處理刑事法援案件費用的程序

### 持分者的參與 Engagement of Stakeholders

法援署的宣傳活動基本都是安排講座、接待參觀、播出電視宣傳短片、製作和分發宣傳單張和海報等，專責小組認為此類宣傳活動的重點過分狹窄，法援署應考慮舉辦更多方便雙向溝通的活動，以便與活動參與人士交流意見。除了繼續探討發展聊天機械人的可行性外，專責小組建議法援署可多善用社交媒體平台和科技，加強與公眾和相關持分者的溝通。

The Task Force on Dissemination of Legal Aid Information was established under the Council to review the statistics and information in relation to the legal aid services provided by the Legal Aid Department (LAD) with a view to enhancing the Department's operational transparency.

As reported in the Council's previous Annual Report, the Task Force has started the study of key performance indicators of LAD and selected the following items for further study –

- a) engagement of stakeholders; and
- b) procedure for payment of fees to counsel in criminal legal aid cases.

From the publicity programmes provided by LAD, it was noted that the activities are normally related to arranging talks, receiving visits, broadcasting of TV Announcement in Public Interests, publishing and distributing information leaflets and posters, etc. The Task Force opined that the focus of the publicity programmes was too narrow and LAD should consider arranging more activities that could allow two-way communication so as to exchange views with recipients of the programmes. Apart from the development of a "Chatbot", the feasibility of which is being explored by LAD, the Task Force suggested that the Department could make more use of the social media platforms and technology to improve communication with members of the public and the relevant stakeholders.

區議員和社工通常是需法律服務人士的第一個接觸點。現時，很多區議員或社工在法律專業人士的協助下，會為公眾提供免費法律服務。如能透過他們向公眾簡述法援制度的運作及將公眾在法律服務方面的需要反映給政府，這將對持續發展香港法援服務甚有幫助。因此，專責小組建議法援署考慮建構一個連結他們的平台，例如舉辦與區議員和社工交換意見的論壇。此舉不單顯示政府正努力收窄香港法律服務的差距，也可藉機會發出法援服務不能單靠政府提供的訊息。

香港政府一站通是一個按範疇分類連結至有關政府資訊及服務的一站式入門網站。目前該網站列出由不同持分者提供的免費法律服務。專責小組指出公眾可能會覺得該份名單不太有幫助，因為他們大多不知道該如何選擇服務或者著手進行。專責小組認為應成立一個統籌平台，幫助公眾選擇最適當的法律支援服務。法援署可考慮上載目前有提供免費法律服務的機構名單至法援署網站作為起點，同時呼籲和鼓勵更多機構參與提供免費法律服務。

另外，專責小組注意到有一些海外國家會招募法律系學生成為義工，提供法律服務。專責小組認為讓法律系學生於學

District Council members and social workers are usually the first point of contact for the people in need of legal services. At present, many District Council members or social workers, with the help of the legal profession, are providing free legal services to members of the public. If they could help briefing the public on how the legal aid system works and forward the public concerns on legal needs to the Government, it would be benefit for further developing the legal aid services of Hong Kong. Therefore, the Task Force suggested LAD to consider establishing a connection with them, such as arranging a discussion forum to exchange views with District Council members and social workers. That arrangement would not only demonstrate that the Government is making effort to narrow the gaps in legal services of Hong Kong, it would also provide an opportunity to disseminate a message that legal aid could not be provided by the Government alone.

At present, the "GovHK", which is a one-stop portal of the Government which features links to information and services categorised by subjects, is providing a list of free legal services offered by different stakeholders. The Task Force commented that people may not find the list useful, as in most cases they do not know which services should be sought and how to proceed. The Task Force opined that a coordinated platform should be established to advise people to select the most suitable legal assistance. As a start, LAD may consider uploading a list of the organisations currently engaged in the provision of free legal services onto its website and adding a remark to encourage more organisations to participate in the delivery of free legal services.

習初期在法援署服務，將會是他們一個可貴的經驗，亦可藉此鼓勵他們服務社會。因此，專責小組建議法援署可參考外國經驗，考慮安排法律系學生多參與法援服務。

Besides, the Task Force noted that some overseas countries would recruit law students to serve as volunteers in the delivery of legal services. It opined that engaging law students at the early stage of their studies to provide services in LAD should be a valuable experience for them and could encourage them to serve the community. Therefore, the Task Force suggested LAD to draw reference to the overseas experience and consider engaging law students more in the delivery of legal aid services.

## 支付大律師處理刑事法援案件費用的程序 Procedures for Payment of Fees to Counsel in Criminal Legal Aid Cases

法援署處理支付大律師費用的所需時間一直備受關注，為檢視這問題可否透過改善運作透明度得到解決，專責小組開展研究支付大律師處理刑事法援案件費用的程序。

根據法援署提供的資料顯示，超過百份之九十九的預支款項（即中期付款）及結餘款項（即最終付款）的付款所需時間都能達到服務承諾的要求。專責小組儘管認同現行程序有必要以確保制衡措施有效運作，法援署應考慮將支付款項的程序上載至其網站，以及增加與外委律師聯絡有關處理付款的進度。為表法援署改善其服務質素的決心，專責小組亦建議法援署可考慮引入更多服務承諾，和作出定期檢討以訂立更高目標。

There have been concerns over the time taken by LAD to process payment of fees to counsel. To study whether the concerns could be addressed by enhancing the operational transparency, the Task Force has started the study of the payment procedures of fees to counsel in criminal legal aid cases.

Based on the information provided by LAD, it was noted that more than 99% of the advance payments (i.e. interim payments) and balance payments (i.e. final payments) could meet the performance pledges. While the Task Force appreciated that the existing procedures were essential for ensuring the check and balance function being in place, LAD should consider uploading the payment procedures onto its website and enhance communication with the assigned lawyers on the progress of the payment processing. The Task Force also suggested that LAD may consider introducing more performance pledges and reviewing them regularly to make it at a higher level with a view to demonstrating LAD's determination to improve the quality of service.