

For information

Paper for LegCo Panel on
Administration of Justice and Legal Services

Legal Aid for Victims in Family Violence Cases

In response to the letter from the Panel on 16 December 2005 seeking information on the number of applications for legal aid to obtain injunction order by victims in family violence cases, the Department's reply to the specific requests made in the letter is as follows:

- (a) & (b) During the three-years period from 2002 to 2004 , there were a total of 342 legal aid applications where the applicants had indicated an intention to seek injunctive relief. The injunction sought could be for different purposes, such as prohibiting the disposal of matrimonial property or the removal of children of the family from Hong Kong. Our computerized information system does not contain a breakdown on the nature of injunctions sought. Manual trawl of the records of all 342 cases to compile the statistics requested will take some time. LAD will supply the Panel with the requisite information as soon as it is available.
- (c) LAD fully recognizes the need to deal with legal aid applications that involve family violence with care and speed. Hence, we treat all applications to seek injunction by victims of family violence as urgent ones, and will process them expeditiously. Provided the applicant satisfies the means and merits tests, legal aid will be granted.

Furthermore, posters by various NGOs offering shelter and/or marital counseling and mediation services are displayed in the reception area of LAD's offices. In appropriate cases, LAD staff would also give out to applicants a pocket-size information card published by a NGO about police assistance with a few commonly asked questions and answers on what to do when applicants are subject to family violence. The card also contains the 24 hours hotline telephone number of that NGO which also offers shelter services to victims of family violence as well as that of the SWD. These should help applicants in seeking advice and other forms of assistance as necessary.

Legal Aid Department

Date : 30 December 2005

Ref.: LA/ADM/115/54 (Pt.12)