

CJRB 3/2007

**Bills Committee on
Civil Justice (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2007**

Resource Centre for Unrepresented Litigants

Purpose

This paper provides Members with information concerning the Resource Centre for Unrepresented Litigants (“the Resource Centre”).

Background

2. At the Bills Committee meeting on 15 May 2007, Members asked the Judiciary Administration to provide the following information:

- (a) results of the user satisfaction survey conducted by the Judiciary Administration on the Resource Centre; and
- (b) nature of questions/information frequently asked/sought by users of the Resource Centre.

The Resource Centre

3. The Resource Centre was set up by the Judiciary on 22 December 2003 to provide unrepresented litigants with advice on court rules and procedural matters in civil proceedings in the High Court and the District Court. Given the importance of maintaining the impartiality and neutrality of the Judiciary, the Resource Centre does not provide legal advice. As regards procedural matters relating to matrimonial, lands, employees’ compensation and probate matters, assistance will continue to be provided by the staff of the respective registries.

User Satisfaction Survey

4. In the summer of 2005, the Judiciary Administration conducted a user satisfaction survey (“the survey”) to gauge feedback and

views from the users of the Resource Centre. Face-to-face interviews with the users of the Resource Centre were carried out throughout the month of July 2005. The same questionnaire was also posted on the website of the Resource Centre for online completion. There were 185 respondents. Among them, 171 were users of the Resource Centre and 14 were online responses.

5. The key findings of the survey are as follows:

(a) Regarding services provided by the Resource Centre:

- (i) Over 90% of the respondents were satisfied with the services provided by the Resource Centre;
- (ii) Over 95% of the respondents were satisfied with the performance of the staff of the Resource Centre; and
- (iii) Over 70% of the respondents found the information provided in the pamphlets in the Resource Centre useful.

(b) Regarding demand for extended scope and services:

- (i) A majority of the respondents considered that it would be helpful if assistance could be provided by social workers or law students to help them understand what happened during the court proceedings; and
- (ii) A majority of the respondents also suggested that free legal advice and Duty Lawyers Service should be made available at the Resource Centre.

6. The survey results were examined by the Consultative Committee on the Resource Centre for Unrepresented Litigants, which was appointed by the Chief Justice to consider firstly the extent to which the Resource Centre had achieved its objectives and secondly what further improvements could be made. A report is being compiled for submission to the Chief Justice in the third quarter of the year.

Usage of Facilities and Services

7. Since the establishment of the Resource Centre, the usage of its facilities and services has been increasing steadily. The following statistics are relevant:

Facility / Service	No. of Users		
	2004	2005	2006
General Counter enquiries	4 268	3 877	4 784
Collection of brochures on civil proceedings	517	265	347
Collection of court forms	884	963	1 863
Computer facilities for legal information	90	190	617
Viewing of videos on court procedure	74	27	31
Photocopying service	6 609 pages	5 974 pages	10 396 pages
Telephone enquiries	2 591	2 746	2 979
Access to website	174 968 hits	154 404 hits	266 866 hits

8. Based on experience, the Resource Centre has drawn up a set of frequently asked questions (at the **Annex**) raised by the users. Such questions, with brief answers, are uploaded to the Resource Centre website for general information.

**Frequently Asked Questions
Raised by Users of the Resource Centre
for Unrepresented Litigants**

- Q1: Do I have to appear in Court if I apply for default judgment?
- Q2: If I lost the case, is it necessary for me to pay the solicitors fee of the other side? If yes, how much?
- Q3: My claim is allowed by the Labour Tribunal, but my employer has not paid the wages due for work done or made the payment. I have already got a Certificate of Award from the Labour Tribunal and I am required to pay a fee when I register the certificate with the District Court. I want to know for what purpose such a fee is paid and whether I am required to pay an additional fee on application for a writ of execution (a writ of fieri facias).
- Q4: What steps have to be taken if I want to have a stay of execution of the judgment/order pending appeal in the Court of Appeal?
- Q5: Why does the judgment creditor still enforce the judgment/order entered against me when I have already lodged an appeal against it?
- Q6: What would happen if the Bailiff is denied admittance to a building or if no person answers or is in the building in respect of which he has a warrant to distrain?
- Q7: If the bailiff finds the premises in respect of which he has a warrant to distrain is deserted, can the landlord regain possession of the premises?
- Q8: Can I appeal against the decision of the Registrar of the High Court on an appeal from the refusal of [legal aid](#) ?
- Q9: Can I appeal to the Court of Appeal against the refusal of leave to appeal against the award of the Labour/Small Claims Tribunal?
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