

For information

Legislative Council
Panel on Administration of Justice and Legal Services
Further Implementation of Five-day Week in the Judiciary

Purpose

This note aims to keep Members informed of the further implementation of five-day week in the Judiciary.

Background

2. In June 2006, the Judiciary informed Members of its plan to implement five-day week in three phases.

3. Phase I was implemented on 1 July 2006. It covered court sittings and back offices which have no direct interface with members of the public. Generally, no sittings are listed on Saturdays, with the exceptions of the admission of barristers and solicitors in the High Court and a special arrangement to deal with fresh remand cases in the Magistrates' Courts. Phase II was implemented on 1 January 2007. It covered mainly offices which have a public interface and the implementation of five-day week in such offices could be effected by administrative arrangements. The exception is the library in the High Court which remains open on Saturday mornings.

4. Under Phase I and II, all judges and judicial officers as well as about 740 support staff in the Judiciary Administration are now working on a five-day week.

5. Phase III is intended to cover the remaining offices that have a public interface where the implementation of five-day week would require legislative amendments to primary and/or subsidiary legislations. The timetable for implementing Phase III depends on when the relevant legislation will be amended.

Further implementation of five-day week in the Judiciary

6. As legislative amendments are required to enable the full implementation of five-day week in the Judiciary, and a number of Ordinances and Rules may be affected, the Judiciary would need to study in detail the issues and implications involved before deciding on the way forward. We will not make any proposal in this regard in the current legislative session.

7. The Judiciary Administration, after consulting staff concerned, has however launched a pilot scheme on rostering arrangements with a view to enabling more staff to enjoy five-day week in a different manner, while maintaining the provision of court support services on Saturday mornings. The pilot scheme commenced on 1 July 2007 involving nine offices and around 200 staff. The pilot scheme will be reviewed after operation for six months. Depending on the outcome of the review, the rostering arrangements may be extended to other remaining offices in the Judiciary Administration as appropriate.

Judiciary Administration
November 2007