

**For information
20 October 2011**

**Legislative Council Panel on
Administration of Justice and Legal Services**

Policy Initiatives of Home Affairs Bureau

Introduction

This paper highlights the new policy initiatives concerning legal aid under the Home Affairs Bureau.

Free Legal Advice Service

2. The Government currently provides subvention for the Duty Lawyer Service to implement the “Free Legal Advice Scheme” to provide free preliminary legal advice to members of the public. At the Panel meeting held on 19 April 2011, we briefed Members on the measures the Administration had implemented and intended to implement to improve the provision of free legal advice service to the public (vide LC Paper No. CB(2)1480/10-11(06)).

3. The Administration places high regard to the noble spirit of the legal profession in its tireless and staunch support for the provision of pro bono legal services to the community. To encourage more legal professionals to volunteer to provide more free legal service to members of the public, we have launched the “Home Affairs Bureau’s Recognition Scheme for Provision of Pro Bono Legal Services” (the Scheme). The pro bono legal services recognised under the Scheme should be performed within the period from 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012. Awardees will be given a certificate of appreciation. We hope that legal professionals will actively participate in the Scheme to promote the pro bono culture.

Proposed Scheme to Provide Legal Advice for Litigants In Person (LIPs)

4. In recent years, the number of LIPs has increased. As only a few LIPs have adequate knowledge about the rules and procedures, this causes the LIPs and the court much difficulty in progressing and trying

the case. Under the circumstances, we intend to launch a two-year pilot scheme to assist LIPs in the form of advice on the rules and procedures relating to court proceedings. Our preliminary ideas were put forth to Members at our briefing to the Panel in April 2011 (vide LC Paper No. CB(2)1480/10-11(06)). We plan to consult Members further at the Panel meeting in November 2011.

Expansion of the Supplementary Legal Aid Scheme

5. At the Panel meeting held in March 2011, the Bureau briefed Members on the proposed expansion of the Supplementary Legal Aid Scheme (vide LC Paper No. CB(2)1320/10-11(01)).

6. We are now in the process of drafting the legislation concerned, and intend to report progress to Members at the Panel meeting in December 2011.

Home Affairs Bureau
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