

香港特別行政區政府  
政務司司長辦公室轄下行政署



The Government of  
The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region  
Administration Wing,  
Chief Secretary for Administration's Office

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21 January 2021

Mr Lemuel WOO  
Clerk to Panel on Administration of Justice and Legal Services  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
Legislative Council Complex  
1 Legislative Council Road  
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Mr WOO,

**Panel on Administration of Justice and Legal Services  
Letter from Hon Elizabeth QUAT**

The Secretariat wrote to the Director of Administration on 6 January 2021 inviting us to provide relevant information, for Members' reference, on parts relating to the Duty Lawyer Service ("DLS") in Hon Elizabeth QUAT's letter to the Panel Chairman dated 23 December 2020.

DLS is a non-statutory organisation subvented by the Government. It is independently managed and administered jointly by the Hong Kong Bar Association and the Law Society of Hong Kong through the Council of DLS. Among the schemes it implements, three of them are subvented by the Chief Secretary for Administration's Office, namely the Duty Lawyer Scheme, the Free Legal Advice Scheme and the Tel-Law Scheme.

DLS has its Court Liaison Office in each and every Magistrates' Court to provide legal representation by qualified lawyers in private practice to eligible defendants under the Duty Lawyer Scheme.

We have relayed the relevant matter to DLS and its response is at Annex for Members' reference.

Yours sincerely,



( Irene CHEUNG )  
for Director of Administration

c.c. Administrator of DLS

Request for follow-up of political slogan and drawing  
in Shatin Magistrates' Courts

1. Concerning the posting of political slogan and drawing in the office of the Duty Lawyer Service (“DLS”) as raised in Hon Elizabeth Quat BBS JP’s letter to the Panel on Administration of Justice and Legal Services, DLS’ reply is set out below.
2. The matter was brought to the DLS’ urgent attention on 8 December 2020 at 17:08 arising from an enquiry from a Sub Editor in Chief of a local media organisation that a political inspired drawing and a slogan (“Hong Kong People Add Oil”) were found displaying in DLS Shatin Court Liaison Office (situated inside the Shatin Law Court Building) which were captured in a screenshot and circulated in some Internet social networks on that afternoon.
3. Upon urgent enquiry on that same afternoon of 8 December 2020, the head office and the Administrator of DLS were given to understand that a drawing and a slogan were pinned to a notice board inside an individual officer’s room partitioned by solid wall in our Shatin Court Liaison Office. The concerned officer had been severely reprimanded and the drawing together with the slogan had since immediately been taken down.
4. The concerned officer explained that she thought the drawing was a very creative artwork and beautiful. She said that she had no intention at all to promote any Hong Kong independence nor political stance and the slogan on the face of it “Hong Kong People Add Oil” was neutral and non-political in its original context. The drawing and slogan were immediately taken down after the incident and she had been severely reprimanded. She said she was very sorry and regretful.



5. The matter was first reported to the DLS Council<sup>1</sup> on 9 December 2020. A virtual face-to-face meeting was held by the DLS Council on 17 December 2020 to fully discuss the matter. After careful deliberation, the Council considered that the officer involved was not politically acute but just insufficiently sensitive.
6. The Council resolved that since the media had taken note of DLS' explanation and immediate action had already been taken by the Administrator on the matter, no further action was required. The Administrator had issued a circular to remind all staff of the importance of the well-established policy that, DLS being a fully subvented organisation, all DLS employees must be politically neutral and must not be involved in any form of political activities while discharging their public duty in their capacity as a staff of DLS.
7. Before the outbreak of COVID-19, a Chief Court Liaison Officer was tasked by the Administrator to conduct site inspection cum visit to all seven Court Liaison Offices to conduct site inspection, receiving briefings and offering assistance to Officers-in-Charge ("OCs") concerning their operation periodically. This practice unfortunately had temporarily been suspended due to the outbreak of COVID-19 early last year. However, since the said incident, all OCs have been instructed to make two daily rounds of inspection in their Court Liaison Office every working day.

Duty Lawyer Service  
January 2021

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<sup>1</sup> The Council of DLS consists of four members nominated by the Hong Kong Bar Association, four members nominated by the Law Society of Hong Kong and three lay members who are not in the legal profession. The Council meets regularly to oversee and direct the general operation, formulate policy and review existing policy.