

Press Release

LCQ21: Staff handbook on handling of insolvency cases

Wednesday, February 15, 2017

Following is a question by the Hon Alice Mak and a written reply by the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Professor K C Chan, in the Legislative Council today (February 15):

Question:

The Case Management Division (CMD) of the Official Receiver's Office (ORO) is responsible for insolvency administration. Some staff association representatives of ORO have relayed to me that staff members working in CMD have encountered numerous difficulties when handling cases, such as chaotic filing system and the lack of clear working guidelines, so much so that they have to spend a lot of time on collecting relevant information when handling cases, resulting in the efficiency in case handling being affected. These representatives have also pointed out that as the content of the handbook provided by CMD for staff's reference (the handbook) is incomprehensive and outdated, it cannot help staff address the difficulties encountered at work. Although ORO assigned a senior insolvency officer in 2012 to update the handbook, so far a handbook with comprehensive and updated content has yet to be published. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) when the first edition of the handbook was drawn up;
- (2) whether ORO has updated the handbook from time to time to complement the amendments to and implementation of the relevant legislation; if ORO has, of the details and the number of updates, as well as why a handbook with comprehensive and updated content is unavailable so far; if not, whether the authorities will set the timetable for updating the handbook and increase the manpower for such task; and
- (3) whether ORO has regularly assessed the effectiveness of the handbook in enhancing the efficiency in case handling?

Reply:

President,

Below is the Official Receiver's Office (ORO)'s reply to the three parts of the question raised by the Hon Alice Mak:

(1) The existing guidelines were introduced in 1999 as a general guide for reference by staff. As the facts and circumstances of each case may vary, our staff will, in addition to making reference to the above-mentioned guidelines, also apply their professional knowledge, experience and judgment in administering individual cases.

(2) The ORO has made timely amendments to part of the case management guidelines having regard to the actual needs. Apart from the general guidelines mentioned above, ORO has issued guidelines on specific issues regularly regarding individual aspects of case management or in light of implementation of new legislation. The ORO also has set up a departmental one-stop electronic database with updated information on case management matters for reference by staff. The department conducts internal training while supervisors constantly provide guidance and coaching for staff. Staff also attend external training to enhance and update their professional knowledge.

(3) As mentioned above, apart from the general guidelines, ORO will also assist staff in case management through issuing guidelines on specific issues and providing supervisory guidance. The ORO is committed to upholding the quality of case management service.

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