

ICAC Complaints Committee annual report tabled in LegCo

The 2020 Annual Report of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) Complaints Committee was tabled in the Legislative Council today (July 7). The report gives a summary of the Committee's work in 2020.

The Committee is tasked with the responsibility of monitoring the handling of non-criminal complaints against the ICAC and its officers. The Committee takes an independent view on the ICAC's investigation findings on the complaints received, reviews the ICAC's procedures which may lead to complaints, and makes recommendations for improvement.

In 2020, the Committee received 12 complaints involving 26 allegations against the ICAC or its officers. Among the allegations registered in 2020, 57 per cent were related to neglect of duties by ICAC officers, 27 per cent to misconduct, and eight per cent to abuse of power. The remaining eight per cent were related to inadequacies of ICAC procedures.

The ICAC submits investigation reports to the Committee after conducting full investigations on complaint cases, while assessment reports are submitted for complaints which do not warrant full investigation. During 2020, the Committee considered the investigation reports of 11 complaint cases received in 2019 or 2020. These complaints contained a total of 21 allegations. Three allegations in three of these complaints were found to be substantiated concerning a total of four ICAC officers. As a result, one officer was given a written warning, two officers were given verbal warnings and one officer was given advice by senior officers. During the year, the Committee also considered and endorsed one assessment report. A preliminary assessment showed that the complainant repeated a complaint previously disposed of through the Committee, and the Committee agreed that no further investigative actions should be taken.

In the course of considering the complaints, both the Committee and the ICAC have scrutinised the internal procedures, guidelines and practices of the ICAC. After careful examination of the issues identified in the investigation reports considered during 2020, the ICAC had organised a number of briefing sessions and strengthened the training programmes for frontline officers to enhance their professionalism and vigilance in discharging their duties. ICAC officers were advised to inform complainants of the investigation outcomes of their reports as soon as practicable, treat members of the public and government counterparts with courtesy and respect, and handle properties seized during search operations with great care. Furthermore, arising from the Committee's concern over certain investigation practices, the ICAC had reminded frontline officers to be more prudent in picking the appropriate time of the day to make contact with complainants regarding their reports and explain clearly to witnesses invited for interviews their roles in relevant investigations in order to avoid

misunderstandings.

The annual report of the Committee is available on the Administration Wing's website (www.admwing.gov.hk/eng/links/icac.htm) and also at the ICAC's regional offices.