

Integrated Mediation Office (West Kowloon) of Judiciary to be launched

The event titled The Launch of the Integrated Mediation Office (West Kowloon) of the Judiciary, co-organised by the Department of Justice (DoJ) and the Judiciary, was successfully held today (May 5). This event is one of the thematic events of Mediation Week 2022.

The Small Claims Mediation Pilot Scheme commenced operation in the West Kowloon Mediation Centre (WKMC) in November 2018 and has been supervised by the WKMC Supervisory Committee established under the Steering Committee on Mediation chaired by the Secretary for Justice. Since then, suitable cases have been referred by small claims adjudicators to the WKMC to facilitate parties' consideration on the use of mediation to resolve their disputes. The Pilot Scheme was a great success with around 50 per cent of cases settled after mediation. The Pilot Scheme will end on June 30, 2022.

The Judiciary will take over the premises from early July 2022 to facilitate the greater use of mediation services for dispute settlement instead of resorting to litigation in court. The new centre will be named as Integrated Mediation Office (West Kowloon) (IMO (WK)). This will be an extension of the Judiciary's existing office at the Wanchai Law Court Building for promoting and facilitating mediation services for various levels of court. Adjudicators of the Small Claims Tribunal will continue to identify suitable cases for mediation and such cases can be referred to IMO (WK) for mediation services.

Speaking at the opening remarks of the event, Permanent Judge of the Court of Final Appeal, Mr Justice Johnson Lam, said, "We believe that mediation can resolve disputes more effectively than litigation in suitable cases. The parties take an adversarial approach in litigation, whereas mediation focuses on facilitating the parties to reach agreement, which may sometimes bring about a more satisfactory solution to the disputes."

The event was then followed by insightful sharing sessions on small claims mediation by Acting Principal Adjudicator of the Small Claims Tribunal, Mr Lawrence Yip, and Adjudicator of the Small Claims Tribunal, Mr Bryan Lung.

The event was well received by the audience. It is hoped that this event will give the public and the legal and mediation sectors a better understanding of the services and operation of the new IMO (WK), and that parties to Small Claims Tribunal cases will be more willing to attempt mediation in future.

For more information about this event and other events of Mediation Week 2022, please visit the [dedicated website](#).