

Summary of Annual Report of The Ombudsman 2024/25



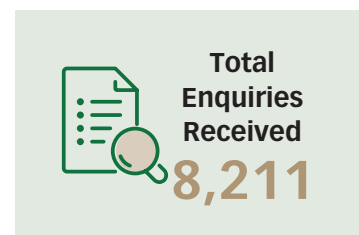
HONG KONG HAS A CLEAR MIRROR

Summary of Annual Report 2024/25

Office of The Ombudsman, Hong Kong, China

Complaints and Enquiries

In the year 2024/25, we received 4,402 cases of complaints, which is about the same as last year. Together with 582 cases brought forward from last year, we had a total of 4,984 complaint cases for processing this year. We completed 4,664 of them, i.e., 93.6% of all for processing this year, and 320 cases were carried forward for handling next year. Among the complaints processed, 1,655 were pursued and concluded. As a result of our vigorous efforts, the number of cases handled by mediation soared as compared with last year, accounting for 33.5% of the cases pursued. The remaining 3,009 cases were closed after assessment.



The distribution of cases pursued and concluded by mode of handling was as follows:



1,060
(64.1%)

By Inquiry



40

(2.4%)

**By Full
Investigation**



555

(33.5%)

By Mediation



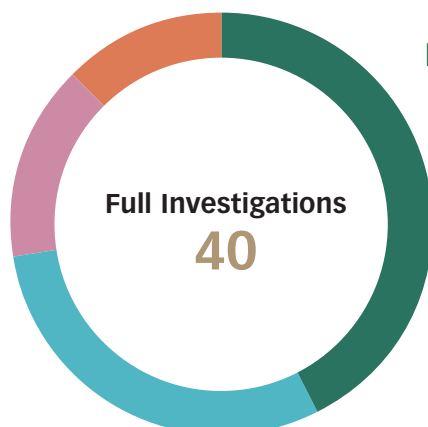
1,655

(100%)

**Complaints Pursued
and Concluded in Total**

Outcome of Investigations and Inquiries

In the year, we completed 40 full investigations. Of the complaints concluded by full investigation, 57.5% were substantiated, partially substantiated or unsubstantiated but with other inadequacies found. Among the 1,060 inquiry cases concluded, inadequacies were found in 159 (15%).



Results of Complaints Concluded by Full Investigation

42.5%  Unsubstantiated

30.0%  Partially substantiated

15.0%  Substantiated

12.5%  Unsubstantiated but other inadequacies found

Mediation

We achieved unprecedented results this year, with an all-time high of 555 cases resolved by mediation, nearly tripling the number of the previous year and accounting for 33.5% of the cases pursued. By conducting mediation, the problems and complaints raised by complainants could be resolved amicably within a short period of time. In 2024/25, the average time taken to resolve a complaint by way of mediation was 10.87 days.

Direct Investigation Operations

During the year we completed eight direct investigation operations:

DI/464	Government's Regulation of Occupational Safety and Health in Construction Industry
DI/468	Government's Work in Combating Abuse of Public Housing Resources
DI/473	Government's Arrangements for Recovery, Refurbishment and Reallocation of Public Rental Housing Flats
DI/478	Housing Department's Management of Public Housing Estates: Illegal Parking
DI/469	Transport Department's Arrangements for Driving Tests
DI/472	Government's Provision of Public Services Relating to the After-death Arrangements
DI/470	Enforcement by Planning Department and Lands Department against Unauthorised Land Developments
DI/475	Leisure and Cultural Services Department's Handling of Obstructions to Passageways by Bicycles Owned by Operators of Bicycle Rental Services

Recommendations and Observations

The figures of our observations and recommendations made for this year are set out below:



Total number
of observations
made
106



Total number of
recommendations
made
254



Recommendations
accepted for
implementation
100%

Re-assessment and Review of Cases

During the year, we re-assessed 197 cases, with 85 cases subsequently re-opened. Moreover, we reviewed 53 cases. Conclusions were upheld for all these cases.

Achievement of Performance Pledges

All our targets in handling enquiries, complaints, re-assessment and review of complaints were exceeded in the year.

Complaints	Service Standard	Target	Achievement
Acknowledge receipt of a complaint	Within 5 working days	99%	100% (exceed target)
Close a complaint case which is outside our statutory purview after initial assessment	Within 10 working days	90%	99.9% (exceed target)
	Within 15 working days	99%	100% (exceed target)
Conclude a complaint case	Within 3 months	80%	91.1% (exceed target)
	Within 6 months	99%	100% (exceed target)

Enquiries	Service Standard	Target	Achievement
Reply to a written enquiry	Within 5 working days	95%	100% (exceed target)
	Within 10 working days	99%	100% (exceed target)

Re-assessment and Review of Complaints	Service Standard	Target	Achievement
Complete re-assessment of a complaint case	Within 1 month	95%	99.5% (exceed target)
	Within 2 months	99%	100% (exceed target)
Complete review of a complaint case	Within 3 months	70%	86.8% (exceed target)
	Within 6 months	90%	100% (exceed target)



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Promoting Positive Complaint Culture and Spreading Our Message

To foster positive interaction and connection with stakeholders, we employ a diverse range of communication channels. We held six press conferences and issued two press releases to announce the results of eight direct investigation operations completed during the year, including the improvement recommendations made to departments or organisations. We also declared the launch of five direct investigation operations, inviting stakeholders and the public to submit their views. In addition, we have introduced a new series featuring stories of good people and good deeds. These real-life cases showcase successful mediation and inter-departmental collaboration and highlight the tangible improvements in people's livelihood brought about by our work.

During the year, we organised 13 sharing sessions and seminars for government departments, public organisations and Mainland entities to brief them on our functions and scope of duties, share practical experiences in handling complaints and advocate a positive and proactive attitude in serving the public. To reach out to the younger generation and deepen their understanding of our mission and functions, we organised school talks and seminars for students and teaching staff for seven local secondary schools and six local universities.

The Presentation Ceremony of the 27th Ombudsman's Awards was held on 31 October 2024. The Grand Award went to the Fire Services Department, whereas the Social Welfare Department and the Water Supplies Department were the runners-up. Other winning organisations were the Housing Department (Award on Mediation), the Immigration Department (Customer Services Award) and the Hospital Authority (Information Technology Application and Creativity Award). Individual awards were presented to 79 public officers in recognition of their exemplary performance and professional attitude in public service.

We continue our efforts to spread our message to both local and global audiences, and strengthen ties with Mainland and overseas counterparts. Through visits, courtesy calls and international conferences and activities of ombudsman institutions, we reinforce our worldwide cooperation network facilitating experience exchange, knowledge sharing and the promoting of Hong Kong's success stories, leveraging the unique position of having strong support from the motherland and close connections to the world.

International Ombudsman Summit and The Ombudsman's 35th Anniversary

To commemorate its 35th anniversary, the Office hosted the inaugural International Ombudsman Summit 2024 on 3 December 2024 at the Hong Kong Palace Museum. The Summit was honoured by the presence of distinguished speakers, including the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Chan Kwok-ki, the Deputy Commissioner of the National Public Complaints and Proposals Administration, Mr Li Zijun, and the Director-General of International Cooperation Department, Central Commission for Discipline Inspection and National Commission of Supervision, Mr Cai Wei. In addition, the Deputy Director of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the HKSAR, Mr Liu Guangyuan, and the Deputy Commissioner of the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the HKSAR, Mr Fang Jianming, officiated at the Opening Ceremony.

Around 140 overseas and Mainland participants from about 40 countries and regions across six continents, including a multitude of ombudsmen and senior representatives of ombudsman institutions and international bodies, attended the Summit. The mega event served as a platform for insightful discussions, sharing of knowledge and experiences as well as fostering connection and cooperation at the international level.

The Office signed and exchanged a Memorandum of Understanding on Bilateral Cooperation with representatives from eight countries and regions across five continents, witnessed by the Chief Executive. They included Ontario, Canada, and Hawaii, the United States, in North America; Curaçao in South America; Slovakia in Europe; Indonesia, Korea and Macao in Asia; and Zambia in Africa. The aim was to foster professional knowledge and information exchange, build long-term partnerships, and demonstrate Hong Kong's important role as a "super connector" and "super value-adder".

Caseload

	Reporting year ¹				
	24/25	23/24	22/23	21/22	20/21
Enquiries	8,211	8,599	9,279	8,851	7,505
Complaints					
(a) For processing	4,984	4,979	5,951	5,626	30,713
– Received	4,402[53]	4,351[146]	5,357[233]	4,934[140]	29,814[25,155]
– Brought forward	582	628	594	692	899
(b) Completed	4,664[52]	4,397[151]	5,323[254]	5,032[135]	30,021[25,155]
Pursued and concluded	1,655[4]	2,053[8]	2,558[138]	2,739[102]	2,826[249]
– By inquiry ²	1,060[4]	1,771	2,112[119]	2,432[102]	2,480[246]
– By full investigation ³	40	95[7]	141[16]	92	167[3]
– By mediation ⁴	555	187[1]	305[3]	215	179
Assessed and closed	3,009[48]	2,344[143]	2,765[116]	2,293[33]	27,195[24,906]
– Insufficient grounds to pursue ⁵	1,805[32]	1,470[110]	1,787[85]	1,171[6]	1,295[203]
– Legally bound ⁶	1,204[16]	874[33]	978[31]	1,122[27]	25,900[24,703]
(c) Percentage completed = (b)/(a)	93.6%	88.3%	89.5%	89.4%	97.7%
(d) Carried forward = (a) – (b)	320	582	628	594	692
Direct investigation operations completed	8	10	9	8	9

Notes:

1. From 1 April to 31 March of the next year.
 2. Pursued under section 11A of The Ombudsman Ordinance, for general cases.
 3. Pursued under section 12 of The Ombudsman Ordinance, for complex cases possibly involving serious maladministration, systemic flaws, etc.
 4. Pursued under section 11B of The Ombudsman Ordinance, for cases involving no, or only minor, maladministration.
 5. Not pursued and closed under section 10(2) of The Ombudsman Ordinance.
 6. Outside the Office's jurisdiction under section 8 or restricted by section 10(1) of The Ombudsman Ordinance.
- [] Number of secondary topical complaints.



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