



REGISTRY OF THE SUPREME COURT

SUPREME COURT 113 FRONT STREET HAMILTON HM 12, BERMUDA

PRESS RELEASE FROM THE SUPREME COURT OF BERMUDA ON THE PUBLICATION OF A HANDBOOK FOR CIVIL LITIGANTS IN PERSON

The Supreme Court of Bermuda has been mindful of the ever increasing number of litigants in person appearing in the Bermuda Courts and the challenges presented to litigants in person as they navigate the judicial system in Bermuda. In the Bermuda Judicial 2016 Annual Report, presented at the Special Sitting marking the opening of the 2017 Legal Year, the Chief Justice announced the plan to develop and publish of a Handbook for Civil Litigants in Person.

This Handbook has now been completed and published on the Supreme Court Website. Limited copies will become available at the Registry located on the second floor of the Government Administration Building.

The Handbook provides a general overview of the civil litigation process. The chapters are written in a summary fashion with consideration to the fact that litigants in person vary a great deal in relation to their abilities, and are intended to give a broad brush picture of the central areas of preparation and presentation of civil proceedings. It is not a legal textbook, and does not have the force or the authority of law. Civil litigants are reminded that the information in the Handbook does not constitute legal advice for any individual case, but rather provides a snapshot of the litigation process from the beginning (including various considerations before commencing proceedings) to the final hearing and enforcement proceedings.

The Chief Justice commented: *“This Handbook is intended to serve as a guide or starting point for civil litigants in person in the Supreme Court and to help to fill a void which members of the Court staff have been fulfilling on an ad hoc basis. It is hoped that this Handbook will play an important role in assisting civil litigants in person, whether pursuing claims or defending claims, as well as maintaining the judiciary’s commitment to access to justice as a right available to all.”*

The need for a specialised handbook for litigants in the family and matrimonial jurisdiction has also been identified and a similar guide is being developed for publication later in 2017.

The Registrar of the Supreme Court has expressed her gratitude for the comments received from various external sources on a draft of the Handbook, and for the excellent work performed by the Assistant Registrar (Relief) and other various members of the Court's staff in finalizing it.