

## LCQ22: Repair and maintenance of recreational facilities in public rental housing estates

Following is a question by the Hon Wilson Or and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (May 29):

Question:

Some residents of public rental housing (PRH) estates have complained that it has often been the case that the repair/replacement of recreational facilities (e.g. slides, health walkers and table tennis tables) in the estates has yet to be completed long after they were out of order or damaged, and individual facilities have been out of use for periods of time spanning years. Regarding the repair and maintenance of recreational facilities in PRH estates, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the current arrangements for the repair and maintenance of recreational facilities; the number of contractors to which the Housing Department has currently outsourced such work;
- (2) of (i) the number and percentage of recreational facilities that were out of use because they were out of order or had been damaged, and (ii) the average time taken for repairing/replacing such facilities, in each of the past three financial years; and
- (3) whether it has set any target completion time or performance pledge in respect of the repair/replacement work for recreational facilities that are out of order or damaged; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

My consolidated reply to Hon Wilson Or's question is as follows:

Under the concept of "communal play areas", the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) provides recreational facilities in its Public Rental Housing (PRH) estates to provide a comfortable, healthy and safe living environment for PRH residents of different age groups.

The installation and repair works of the play/fitness equipment in PRH estates are conducted by agents in the HA's Play/Fitness Equipment Agents Reference List (Reference List). At present, there are five qualified agents in the Reference List. The HA requires the agents to provide safety certificates and warranty periods for the facilities installed by them to ensure that they satisfy the international safety standards. In order to avoid affecting the existing safety certificates of the play/fitness

equipment, the HA adopts "repairing by original agents" strategy in which repair works are done by the original agents to ensure that the equipment can meet the safety standard of the original design, safeguarding the safety of the residents. Apart from regular inspection of the play/fitness equipment, the HA also engages independent safety consultant to carry out inspections every two years and submit reports and recommendations to the HA to ensure proper maintenance and repair of the play/fitness equipment.

The HA has been closely monitoring the performance of all play/fitness equipment agents. In the past three years (i.e. 2016, 2017 and 2018), there were 418, 446 and 500 works conducted to repair the play/fitness equipments respectively. The average time required for the repair works were 34, 24 and 36 days respectively. In case the defective situation of the above-mentioned equipment may affect the safety of the users, the HA would fence off those play/fitness equipment before commencing the repair work. Since the HA does not keep statistics on temporary suspension of equipment, we are not able to provide the percentage of suspension due to defects.

Separately, when some of the old types of equipment are seriously damaged and beyond repair, the HA will replace them, and invite agents in the Reference List to submit initial designs. The HA will conduct the tendering exercise after consulting the residents through the Estate Management Advisory Committees. The HA will also request the awarded agents to complete the works as soon as possible. As it takes time to go through the stages of design, consultation, tendering and installation, the time required to install new equipment is longer than that of normal repair work of existing equipment.

There are many different types of play/fitness equipment and their scale vary, the scope of repair works and the required spare parts are also different. Therefore, the HA is not able to establish a pledge time for the repair works of the play/fitness equipment. However, once the repair proposals have been confirmed by the agents, the HA will require the agents to put up notices to clearly indicate the scope of the repair works, the expected completion date and contact number for enquiries. Most of the repair works could be completed before the expected completion date.

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## **LCQ17: Preventing sexual harassment at universities**

Following is a question by the Hon Jimmy Ng and a written reply by the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (May 29):

Question:

The findings of a study conducted last year by the Equal Opportunities Commission revealed that, among the university students surveyed, 15.6 per cent (i.e. 2 259 persons) indicated that they had been sexually harassed on campus, and among them, 4.4 per cent (i.e. 98 persons) indicated that the perpetrators were tutors, lecturers or professors. In addition, among the university students who had been sexually harassed on campus, off campus by fellow students or teaching staff, or online, only 2.5 per cent (i.e. 84 persons) said that they had lodged complaints with the university to which they belonged. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it will request the various universities to (i) examine the mechanism for handling sexual harassment complaints, and (ii) review and improve the policy on prevention of sexual harassment; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) whether it will request the various universities to establish a committee to be headed by a Pro-Vice-Chancellor/Vice-President dedicated to taking forward the university's policy and initiatives on gender equality and prevention of sexual harassment on campus; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(3) given that only a small number of university students who had been sexually harassed had lodged complaints with the university to which they belonged, whether the Government will request the various universities to set up an online complaint and reporting platform which guarantees information confidentiality and anonymity for students who have been sexually harassed to lodge complaints and for witnesses to provide information, with a view to encouraging victims to make reports and protecting them from being discriminated against; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(4) whether it will allocate additional resources to the various universities to enable them to step up efforts in spreading to university students via social media the message that they should be alert to sexual harassment; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(5) whether it will request the various universities to provide training to all newly recruited teaching staff on prevention of sexual harassment; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

All universities in Hong Kong are independent and autonomous bodies. According to Section 39(2) of the Sex Discrimination Ordinance (Cap 480), it is unlawful for a person who is a member of the staff of an educational establishment to sexually harass a person who is seeking to be, or who is, a student of the establishment. As an employer, an educational establishment must take "reasonably practicable steps" to prevent its employees from committing an act of sexual harassment. As such, universities are obliged to take reasonable and practical measures to prevent sexual harassment on campus, including laying down the relevant policy in writing and setting up a

mechanism to handle complaints about sexual harassment.

The Government noted that all universities have put in place policies on the prevention and handling of sexual harassment, as well as complaint mechanisms and procedures, to ensure that every case is dealt with a serious and impartial manner. Besides, these policies and mechanisms are subject to timely review. According to universities' policies, a member, employee or student of the university shall not sexually harass any other members, employees or students of the university or any other persons who have dealings with the university. The universities will definitely not condone or tolerate any form of sexual harassment and are committed to eliminating and preventing sexual harassment. Disciplinary actions will be taken against those who are found to have committed sexual harassment as and when necessary.

All universities have open policies on the prevention of sexual harassment and mechanisms for handling related complaints. They also provide support for those who are concerned about sexual harassment, have worries about being sexually harassed or have lodged sexual harassment complaints, and offer advice on the mechanisms and ways of handling allegations or complaints of sexual harassment. No one should circumvent such policies and mechanisms or prevent any persons involved from exercising their rights to complain, or else they may be deemed to have abused office and breached the code of practice for staff, and hence liable for disciplinary actions. Similarly, staff of the committees and secretariats responsible for handling sexual harassment complaints should follow the established procedures and deal with every case properly in accordance with the mechanism on confidentiality, with a view to ensuring confidentiality of the process and protecting the privacy of all parties concerned. Otherwise, they may also be considered to have neglected their duties and subject to disciplinary actions. As for potential sexual harassment cases that are not brought about by formal written complaints but come to the knowledge of the universities nevertheless, the universities will take appropriate follow-up actions with due regard to the wishes of the alleged victims, including initiating complaint and investigation procedures and providing support and assistance to them. Depending on the nature and evidence of the case, the university will also consider whether to follow up on individual anonymous complaints. Besides, apart from complaining to the institutions, alleged victims of sexual harassment may lodge a complaint direct with the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) or bring civil proceedings in court. The internal complaint mechanisms of the institutions will in no way affect the alleged victims' rights to complain or litigate outside the institutions. For cases involving criminal offences, they will be referred to the police by the institutions concerned for further investigation.

The management of the universities will handle sexual harassment complaints carefully in deference to the established policies of the universities and the principles of fairness and impartiality. At present, the universities regularly arrange for their heads, deans, management, staff and students to attend training courses, seminars and talks on how to prevent and handle sexual harassment, and invite the training officers of the EOC to

deliver talks on campus. The general education programmes offered by the universities have included modules or elements of sex education in general. Taking into account the actual circumstances on their campuses, the universities have also widely promoted their policies and measures for the prevention of sexual harassment through effective channels (including social media) by launching regular publicity and education activities on campus.

Following the release of the report "Break the Silence: Territory-wide Study on Sexual Harassment of University Students in Hong Kong" in January 2019, the EOC respectively met with the Chairman of the University Grants Committee (UGC), the Convenor of the Heads of Universities Committee (HUCOM) and Presidents and/or Vice-Presidents of individual universities to discuss possible measures for addressing sexual harassment in universities. Responses from the management of the universities were positive. The HUCOM is proactively exploring the follow-up actions to be taken, including proposals on commissioning the EOC to conduct a follow-up survey in three to five years' time and produce training materials for the universities, as well as creating the post of equal opportunities officer in university. The UGC will actively consider providing the funding required having regard to the outcomes of the discussions between the HUCOM and the EOC and the proposals raised. Besides, some universities indicated that they would require all new students to attend a compulsory general education course on sexual harassment or explore mandatory online training for all staff.

The Education Bureau will continue to support the work of the EOC, and follow up with the UGC and the HUCOM on the progress achieved by universities in the continuous enhancement of their policies on the prevention and handling of sexual harassment and the complaint mechanisms.

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## **LCQ14: Determining English names for public places and facilities, streets and government buildings**

Following is a question by the Hon Andrew Wan and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Lau Kong-wah, in the Legislative Council today (May 29):

Question:

The West Kowloon Cultural District Authority (WKCDA) has earlier determined the English name for the newly completed "戲院" which is situated in the West Kowloon Cultural District as "Xiqu Centre". Instead of adopting the commonly used term "opera" to refer to "戲院", the term "Xiqu" (Hanyu Pinyin for "戲院") is used in that English name. However, quite a

number of visitors to Hong Kong, as well as local people who are ethnic Chinese and those who are non-ethnic Chinese, have relayed to me that they have no idea of what "Xiqu Centre" means. Some members of the public have pointed out that the naming of "Xiqu Centre" has deviated from the Government's established practice for determining the English names for streets and buildings in Hong Kong, i.e. using the Cantonese transliterations of their Chinese names or English terms with the same meaning. Besides, the term "ä,åæ<æ^²æ>²" has been invariably translated as "Chinese Opera" on a number of webpages of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department and on the printed materials for activities and exhibitions held by it. On the other hand, the term "opera" is widely used in the Chinese communities. For instances, the term "æ^²æ>²" is translated as "opera" by the relevant organisations in places such as Beijing and Singapore. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that it is uncommon to see English names of local buildings comprising Hanyu Pinyin, whether it knows the specific reasons for WKCDA to adopt "Xiqu Centre" as the English name for "æ^²æ>²ä,åíf";

(2) whether it will request WKCDA to consider changing the English name for "æ^²æ>²ä,åíf" to "Chinese Opera Centre", or adding "Chinese Opera Centre" to its English name by way of a note, so that people from different sectors can have a clearer idea about the functions of the venue;

(3) of the existing policies on as well as criteria and procedure for determining the English names for public places and facilities and government buildings; the public places and facilities as well as government buildings whose English names comprise Hanyu Pinyin; and

(4) whether it will adopt Hanyu Pinyin in determining the English names for public places and facilities, streets and government buildings in future; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that, and whether the fact that the English name for "æ^²æ>²ä,åíf" has given rise to controversies is one of the reasons?

Reply:

President,

In consultation with the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority (WKCDA), my reply to parts (1) and (2) of the Hon Andrew Wan's question is as follows:

(1) and (2) WKCDA is a statutory body established to develop the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) into an integrated arts and cultural district. Being the first major performing arts venue in the district, Xiqu Centre has the vision to be a world-class platform for the conservation, promotion and development of various forms of xiqu (Chinese traditional theatre) in Hong Kong, in particular Cantonese opera. The opening of Xiqu Centre is conducive to developing a locally-rooted xiqu network that has a regional impact with an important role in international arts development.

As far as Xiqu Centre is concerned, the naming hinged on the substance of the art form. The term "Xiqu" has been used in both the artistic and academic fields for decades. Following the report of the Performing Arts and Tourism Advisory Group under the Consultative Committee on the Core Arts and Cultural Facilities of the WKCD, WKCDA has been using the English name "Xiqu Centre" as a working title for the proposed venue for the art form concerned since its establishment in 2008.

WKCDA kept an open mind on the English naming of the venue, and it noted that different English terms have been used by different organisations when referring to this art form and there is no single universal English term for it. In the course of considering the English name of the venue, WKCDA has engaged different stakeholders, including academic and artistic professional groups through different platforms and channels. Different options had been given full consideration before settling on the current title.

During the discussion with the stakeholders, WKCDA was aware that one of the important views from academic and artistic professional groups was that the term "Xiqu" represents a unique Chinese traditional performing and theatrical art form which should be differentiated from opera or theatre in the Western culture in order to reflect the unique identity and the distinct artistic techniques including singing, recitation, acting and acrobatics in the variety of genres of the art form.

WKCDA takes the view and believes that the current English name "Xiqu Centre" is an appropriate and balanced choice to communicate the uniqueness of the xiqu art form to local and international audiences. WKCDA will establish the reputation of Xiqu Centre as a world-class performing arts venue and enhance public understanding of the rich traditional Chinese art form of xiqu in due course.

After consulting the Development Bureau, the reply to parts (3) and (4) of the question is as follows:

(3) and (4) At present, the Lands Department (LandsD) is responsible for the naming of streets pursuant to the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap 132), while the naming of geographical places is executed by the Geographical Place Names Board which is chaired by LandsD, and consists of representatives from relevant departments.

In general, when naming a new street and geographical place, the English name is normally the transliterated version of the Chinese name in Cantonese Romanisation, unless the street concerned is named after a particular place/object and there is specific Chinese/English term for that particular place/object in common use, in which case the literal translation is used.

Proposals (in Chinese and English) of street naming and geographical place naming will be circulated among relevant government departments and the District Council for their consideration and comment. Relevant District Offices will conduct local consultation among representatives of residents and local organisations on the bilingual naming proposals. A notice of the proposed bilingual geographical place name will also be posted on site and

advertised in local English and Chinese newspapers for public consultation. The accepted street name will be published in the Government Gazette and accepted geographical place name will be shown on official maps published by LandsD.

As far as government buildings are concerned, they are usually named by the project proponents taking into account the nature of individual projects, and it is hard to make generalisation.

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## **Lifesaving services suspended at Cafeteria Old Beach**

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible and repeat it at regular intervals:

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (May 29) that due to an insufficient number of lifeguards on duty, the lifesaving services at Cafeteria Old Beach in Tuen Mun District have been suspended until further notice.

First aid services will be maintained at the beach.

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## **Red flag hoisted at Cheung Chau Tung Wan Beach**

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (May 29) that due to big waves the red flag has been hoisted at Cheung Chau Tung Wan Beach in Islands District. Beach-goers are advised not to swim at the beach.