

LCQ14: Remuneration of Hospital Authority staff

Following is a question by the Dr Hon Priscilla Leung and a written reply by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, in the Legislative Council today (May 8):

Question:

Some members of the public have relayed to me that although the Hospital Authority (HA) recorded operating deficits for two consecutive years, its senior executives were still given pay rises. Also, there has been a case of "fattening the top and slimming the bottom". In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it knows the number of senior executives in HA, with a breakdown by the group (in bands of \$500,000 apart) to which their annual salary belonged, and the average annual pay increment of such executives, in each of the past three years;

(2) whether it knows the criteria and factors based on which HA determines the pay level and the magnitude of pay adjustment for its senior executives; whether those criteria and factors include the financial position, staff wastage rate and service quality of HA; if they are not included, whether HA will take into account such factors in future; if they are included, of the overall wastage rate of HA's full-time staff and the wastage rate of full-time staff in each healthcare grade, and whether there were cases in which HA ran an operating deficit with its staff wastage rate standing high and patients' waiting time for services being long and yet its senior executives were given a pay rise, in each of the past three years; and

(3) whether it will allocate additional resources to HA so that the cash allowance for staff appointed in or after April 1998 can be linked to their basic salary to align with the entitlements of those staff appointed prior to such time, with a view to reducing the wastage of healthcare workers?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the various parts of the question raised by the Dr Hon Priscilla Leung is as follows:

(1) The manpower situation and remuneration of the key management personnel of the Hospital Authority (HA) in 2016-17 and 2017-18 are set out in the table below:

Rank	2016-17		2017-18		Increase (per cent)
	No. of personnel	Remuneration	No. of personnel	Remuneration	
Chief Executive	1	\$6.00 million	1	\$6.02 million	0.3 per cent
Directors, Heads and Cluster Chief Executives	14	\$64.84 million	14	\$66.98 million	3.3 per cent

Note:

(i) Remuneration includes basic salaries, other short-term employee benefits and post-employment benefits.

(ii) The actual expenditure for 2018-19 will only be available after completion of the Annual Financial Statements

(2) In general, the HA will take factors such as internal relativities, pay level in the market and affordability of the organisation into account in determining the remuneration of its senior executives. Their remuneration is also subject to annual adjustments in accordance with prevailing human resources policy on salary increment.

(3) The differences in the terms of appointment and remuneration packages of staff members joining the HA at different times are due to organisational development and other background factors. The Government and the HA strive to attract, develop and retain healthcare manpower to ensure the quality of public healthcare services. In the 2019-20 Budget, the Government announced the provision of additional recurrent funding of \$721 million for the HA to implement enhancement measures to boost staff morale and retain talent. With the dedicated resources, the HA is working out the details of the enhancement measures, with a view to striving for their early implementation in 2019-20 to benefit frontline staff. The measures include:

- (1) continuation of the Special Retired and Rehire Scheme for doctors, nurses and allied health staff;
- (2) enhancement of the Fixed Rate Honorarium for doctors;
- (3) enhancement of promotion prospects for nurses (increasing the number of Advanced Practice Nurse posts to enhance senior coverage and nursing supervision in wards at night);
- (4) implementation of Specialty Nurse Increment for registered nurses with the required qualifications;
- (5) enhancement of promotion prospects for allied health professionals and pharmacists;
- (6) measures to attract and retain supporting staff (pay enhancement for supporting staff and recruitment of additional Executive Assistants in wards); and
- (7) measures for alleviating service demand during winter surges (further

uplift of the rate of the Special Honorarium Scheme allowance so as to encourage staff participation).

The HA will also continue to formulate and implement other human resources measures, including hiring full-time and part-time healthcare professionals and agency nurses, rehiring suitable retired healthcare staff and increasing the number of training places for Resident Trainees. The Government will continue to provide the HA with appropriate resources to attract and retain staff.

LCQ15: Principles for redevelopment of public rental housing estates

Following is a question by the Hon Kwok Wai-keung and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (May 8):

Question :

In considering whether or not to redevelop individual aged public rental housing (PRH) estates, the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) will, based on the directions set out in the Long Term Housing Strategy and with reference to the four basic principles under the "Refined Policy on Redevelopment of Aged PRH Estates" (i.e. structural conditions of buildings, cost-effectiveness of repair works, availability of suitable rehousing resources in the vicinity of the estates to be redeveloped, and build-back potential upon redevelopment), prudently consider the matter in accordance with the actual circumstances. Although HA completed in 2013 a review of the redevelopment potential of 22 non-divested aged estates, it has so far announced the redevelopment directions of only three estates. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the proposals and timetables for redevelopment of the 22 estates, and the timing for announcing the relevant details; the respective weightings of the aforesaid four principles when HA considers whether or not to redevelop an individual estate;
- (2) of the total amount of expenditure incurred by HA for carrying out repair and maintenance as well as improvement works for its estates in each of the past five years, and the amount of which incurred for the 22 estates;
- (3) of the number of PRH tenants affected by the redevelopment projects in each of the past five years, with a breakdown by their accommodation situation after moving out (including being accommodated in another PRH flat allocated to them, in a unit acquired under the various subsidized home

ownership schemes, and in self-arranged accommodation);

(4) as some PRH tenants currently affected by the redevelopment projects have relayed that while they may acquire a subsidised sale flat in the capacity of clearerees, HA conducted only one round of sale activity per year under the Green Form Subsidised Home Ownership Scheme (GSH) and the Home Ownership Scheme respectively in recent years, rendering them unable to acquire a housing unit in time, whether HA will review the relevant arrangements;

(5) given that the pre-sale periods for two GSH projects planned to be launched for sale by HA by the end of this year will be as long as three to four years, whether "seamless removal" arrangements will be made for PRH tenants who are affected by redevelopment projects and have acquired a GSH flat concerned, i.e. they will be requested to move out and surrender their PRH flat only when their GSH flat is ready for intake; and

(6) whether HA will expeditiously set up a committee which is tasked to study and coordinate the redevelopment of estates, including following up the progress of redevelopment projects, as well as reviewing the redevelopment potential of aged estates other than the 22 estates; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The consolidated reply to the Hon Kwok Wai-keung's question is as follows:

The Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) has all along been conducting various technical studies with a view to exploring how to make better use of new and existing housing resources. The list of 22 aged public rental housing (PRH) estates mentioned in the question originated from a technical review conducted in 2013. While the review has certain reference value, in considering whether to redevelop individual aged PRH estates, HA will, in a prudent manner, take into account the actual circumstances according to the four basic principles (namely, structural conditions of buildings, cost-effectiveness of repair works, availability of suitable rehousing resources in the vicinity of the estates to be redeveloped and build-back potential upon redevelopment) under HA's "Refined Policy on Redevelopment of Aged Public Rental Housing Estates" formulated in 2011.

The Long Term Housing Strategy (LTHS) published by the Government in December 2014 has analysed the issue of redevelopment of aged PRH estates. It has pointed out that while redevelopment may increase PRH supply over the long term, it will, in the short term, reduce PRH stock available for allocation. This will inevitably add further pressure on HA's target in maintaining the average waiting time (AWT) at about three years. The net gain in flat supply from redevelopment will take a long time to realise, very often towards the latter if not the last phase of the redevelopment. Therefore, redevelopment of aged PRH estates can only play a subsidiary role

in increasing PRH supply. With the persistently strong demand for PRH, a massive redevelopment programme will freeze a large number of PRH units that may otherwise be allocated to households in need, causing an instant adverse effect on the AWT. Hence, it is not a desirable option.

HA will continue to implement various programmes and measures to maintain and improve the building conditions of the aged PRH estates so as to provide residents with a safe and comfortable living environment. HA launched the Comprehensive Structural Investigation Programme (CSIP) in 2005 to ascertain the structural safety of PRH estates with building age at about 40 or above, and assess the repair works needed for sustaining such estates for at least 15 years and their cost-effectiveness. The 22 non-divested aged PRH estates were among the 42 PRH estates under the first cycle of CSIP completed in 2018. The investigation results reveal that these estates are structurally safe and the required repair works are cost-effective. HA will, once every 15 years, investigate again the structural conditions of PRH estates that have undergone structural investigation and been decided to be retained so as to ensure that the buildings are structurally safe and financially sustainable.

There are many factors affecting the maintenance expenditure of PRH estates, including building age, design, structural condition, location, maintenance status, etc., hence it is not appropriate to make direct comparison on the expenditure solely among individual PRH estates or based on the building age. The total expenditure for maintenance and improvement works in the past five years (i.e. 2013/14 to 2017/18) for all HA's PRH properties was about \$15.3 billion, of which \$1.75 billion was for the 22 PRH estates mentioned in the question.

As regards the rehousing of the households affected by redevelopment/estate clearance, in the past five years (i.e. 2013/14 to 2017/18), HA rehoused a total of 912 households affected by completed clearance projects, of which 904 households accepted allocation at PRH units, two households opted for cash allowance in lieu of rehousing, three households moved out from their units voluntarily, three households were not eligible for rehousing since they breached the tenancy agreements and had their tenancies terminated and PRH units recovered. As regards the on-going redevelopment/estate clearance projects (including Blocks 9, 10, 11 and 13 of Pak Tin Estate and Mei Tung House and Mei Po House of Mei Tung Estate), there are 2 914 households needed to be rehoused.

In general, HA announces the redevelopment project officially three years prior to the commencement of the clearance operation. Rehousing of households affected by the clearance of estate will commence 30 months before the final evacuation. Before the target clearance date, affected households will have opportunities to participate in the sale exercises of subsidised sale flats (SSFs) (including Home Ownership Scheme and Green Form Subsidised Home Ownership Scheme) with green form and priority in flat selection. All eligible households will be allocated PRH units if they have not accepted other rehousing arrangements, including the purchase of SSF before the final relocation deadline. The HA believe that the above arrangements have allowed

the households sufficient time to arrange for relocation.

In addition, if the occupation date of a pre-sold SSF is later than the final relocation deadline of the project, the affected households will be required to move out of their PRH units and arrange accommodation on their own. HA will grant Domestic Removal Allowance to these households. The HA trust that the above arrangement is appropriate.

LCQ11: Windows provided for units of transitional housing

Following is a question by the Hon Jeremy Tam and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (May 8):

Question:

Section 30 of the Building (Planning) Regulations (Cap. 123 sub. leg. F) provides that every room used for habitation shall be provided with natural lighting and ventilation by means of one or more windows which shall be so constructed that the percentage of the aggregate superficial area of glass in the window or windows facing directly into the external air is not less than 10 per cent of the area of the floor of the room (window area/floor area ratio). On the other hand, the Government indicated, in reply to a question raised by a Member of this Council on March 20 this year, that it would support and facilitate the implementation of various short-term initiatives put forward and carried out by community groups to increase the supply of transitional housing, including considering waiving some requirements for the provision in the living areas of windows that conform to the specification requirements. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council of the total number of transitional housing units in Hong Kong which were occupied or were ready for occupation as at February 28 this year, and set out in the table below the respective numbers and percentages of such units whose window area/floor area ratio belonged to the ratio ranges set out in the table?

Window area/floor area ratio (Rounded to the nearest 0.01 per cent)	Number and percentage of units
0 per cent	
0.01 per cent to 2.5 per cent	
2.51 per cent to 5 per cent	
5.01 per cent to 7.5 per cent	

7.51 per cent to 10 per cent	
10.01 per cent or above	

Reply:

President,

The Task Force on Transitional Housing has, over a period of time in the past, facilitated the implementation of a number of transitional housing projects initiated by the community. As at February 2019, a total of nine major non-profit making community organisations/social enterprises provided about 610 transitional housing units, of which about 220 were launched under the "Community Housing Movement" of Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS). Details of these projects are set out below:

Service Operators	Project	Number of Units
Light Be	Light Home Light Housing	70 40
Society for Community Organization	Prior Community Social Housing Community Joy's To Gather Rooms for Rent	14 39* 4*
Lok Sin Tong	Lok Sin Tong Social Housing Scheme	20* 55
St. James' Settlement	James' House	14*
Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Welfare Council	Good Homes	60*
The Aberdeen Kai-fong Welfare Association Social Service	Best Neighbour Walk Together	16*
The Salvation Army	Home Plus	53*
Hong Kong Housing Society	Transitional Rental Housing Scheme – Yue Kwong Chuen	217
Yan Oi Tong	Green Garden	11*
Total number of Units		613

* Units launched under the "Community Housing Movement" operated by HKCSS.

According to the Circular Letter to the industry issued on October 25, 2018, Buildings Department (BD) taking into consideration of the planning and design limitations in the old-style domestic buildings, will grant some "Modifications" or "Exemptions" concerning the provision of transitional housing units inside old-style domestic buildings. The provision of compensatory measures will be required at the same time, so as to ensure the

"Modifications" or "Exemptions" granted will not affect the safety and hygiene standards including the natural lighting requirement for the habitable areas, as stipulated in the Building Ordinance. Generally speaking, the related "Modifications" or "Exemptions" applications only involve parts of the transitional housing units. The aforesaid Circular Letter has stipulated the compensatory measures needed which include the annual inspection and submission of the inspection report by an Authorized Person to ascertain the relevant compensatory measures and the conditions imposed in the "Modifications" or "Exemptions" Permits were complied.

Both the Transport and Housing Bureau and the BD had not prepared the statistics of the total glazing area of external facing windows in relation to the floor area of the transitional housing units.

Special traffic arrangements for race meeting in Sha Tin

Police advise motorists that special traffic arrangements will be implemented in Sha Tin to facilitate the race meeting today (May 8).

The arrangements will come into effect two hours before the start of the first race and will last until the crowds have dispersed after the race meeting.

Appropriate traffic signs will be put up and police will be on hand to guide motorists.

The Police also appeal to people going to Sha Tin Racecourse for the race meeting and to Happy Valley Racecourse for cross betting to make maximum use of public transport.

Parking spaces at the two racecourses are available only to holders of appropriate permits issued by Hong Kong Jockey Club and any vehicles illegally parked will be towed away.

LCQ1: Employment benefits for non-skilled workers engaged under the

Government's outsourced service contracts

Following is a question by the Hon Poon Siu-ping and a written reply by the Acting Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr Joseph Chan, in the Legislative Council today (May 8):

Question:

On October 10 last year, the Government announced a number of measures to enhance the employment benefits for non-skilled workers engaged under the Government's outsourced service contracts (outsourced workers) tendered on or after April 1 this year (enhancement measures). As for those service contracts which (i) were under the tendering stage during the transitional period from October 10 last year to March 31 this year and (ii) had been awarded under the old terms, the Government would make transitional arrangements in the hope that more outsourced workers could be benefited. On the other hand, the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) has, in recent years, awarded outsourced service contracts through tenders with a validity period of six years, during which the contracts with the relevant contractors may be renewed once every two or three years (renewable contract arrangement). Some workers engaged by such contractors have relayed that they have not benefited from the enhancement measures. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the government departments which currently adopt, when outsourcing services, tender conditions that include the renewable contract arrangement;

(2) whether those outsourced service contracts awarded under the renewable contract arrangement are covered by the enhancement measures; if so, whether HA and the relevant government departments will discuss with the contractors concerned the expeditious implementation of such measures; if not, of the reasons for that, and whether there are initiatives to enable the workers concerned to benefit from the enhancement measures; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) of the respective current numbers of outsourced service contracts, awarded under the renewable contract arrangement (a) within the transitional period and (b) after April 1 this year, which were not covered by the enhancement measures, and set out in a table the following details of each contract:

(i) type of service(s) (e.g. cleansing, security or property management),
(ii) name of the procuring government department (e.g. the Housing Department),
(iii) name of contractor,
(iv) service district,
(v) number of outsourced workers, and

(vi) the commencement and expiry dates of the contract and the tender?

Reply:

President,

Having consulted the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) and relevant procuring departments, the consolidated reply is as follows:

According to the information provided by the relevant procuring departments, currently all of the service contracts that rely heavily on the deployment of non-skilled workers (non-skilled worker contracts) awarded by tender have not incorporated the special provisions adopted by the HA for contract renewal arrangement. Departments should, upon contract expiry, award new contracts through tendering with new measures incorporated to protect the employment benefits of non-skilled workers.

The HA, with the Housing Department as its executive arm, is a statutory body responsible for developing and implementing public housing programmes. The HA is not subject to government procurement regulations. That said, it will make reference to government practices and adopt applicable principles and practices in its own system and regulations.

To protect non-skilled workers, the HA, in awarding non-skilled worker contracts, requires service contractors to adopt the Standard Employment Contract (SEC) promulgated by the Labour Department. To tie in with the Government's new measures to protect the benefits of non-skilled workers, the HA will adopt the newly revised SEC in all relevant contracts and make reference to the transitional arrangements announced by the Government, where appropriate.

According to the HA, most of its existing non-skilled worker contracts have a duration of two to three years, with special provisions incorporated whereby service contractors fulfilling the requirements of contract renewal may, subject to mutual agreement upon contract expiry, have their contracts extended for one to two times in the original terms (unless otherwise specified), while the period of extension will depend on the contract terms. To protect non-skilled workers, the HA will also require service contractors to sign the new SEC with their non-skilled workers when relevant contracts are extended under the special provisions.