

SFH visits North District (with photo)

The Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, today (March 13) visited North District. She visited North District Hospital (NDH) and Luen Wo Hui Market to get a better understanding of healthcare and municipal services in the district and met with members of the North District Council (NDC).

Accompanied by the Chairman of the NDC, Mr So Sai-chi, and the District Officer (North), Mr Chong Wing-wun, Professor Chan visited NDH to learn about the development plan of the hospital and take the opportunity to exchange views with front-line healthcare professionals.

The expansion of NDH is one of the projects in the first 10-year Hospital Development Plan. The scope of the works comprises the construction of a new hospital building and renovation and redevelopment of the existing building, which is expected to provide around 1 500 additional in-patient and day beds as well as extra space, with a view to meeting the operational needs and service development.

"We hope the project can improve the situation of insufficient space of hospital buildings and outdated designs as well as strengthen the services of the Accident and Emergency Department, rehabilitation and the infirmary to cope with the long-term healthcare needs of residents in New Territories East," she said.

In addition, Professor Chan visited Luen Wo Hui Market and was briefed by staff of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) on the improvement works of the market including improving the ventilation system and overhauling the restrooms and the false ceiling of the Cooked Food Centre.

"The Government has been enhancing the environment of public markets with appropriate measures. Apart from carrying out routine maintenance, the FEHD has gradually commenced improvement works for a number of existing public markets, aiming at enhancing the facilities and providing a pleasant shopping experience for the public."

Professor Chan also met with NDC members to exchange views on medical and environmental hygiene issues in the district.



Housing Authority's Estate Management Services Contractors Awards promotes delivery of quality estate management services (with photo)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Housing Authority:

The Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) today (March 13) hosted the Estate Management Services Contractors Awards 2018 presentation ceremony at Domain. A total of 41 awards were presented to services contractors, estate managers and frontline staff in recognition of their outstanding performance in managing HA properties in the past year.

Officiating at the presentation ceremony, the Deputy Director of Housing (Estate Management), Miss Rosaline Wong, said, "The Housing Authority attaches great importance to the quality and performance of estate management services contractors with a view to providing a pleasant, tidy and safe living environment for our tenants.

"We strive to raise the level of service of our management services contractors and ensure the provision of quality services through effective contract management and close monitoring of the performance of the services contractors."

The Estate Management Services Contractors Awards is held annually to give due recognition to those services contractors with excellent performance.

Miss Wong added that the annual award presentation serves to encourage services contractors to constantly improve the services in different sectors, thereby meeting the rising needs of the residents.

The awards of 2018 went to 12 property, cleansing and security services contractors and carpark operators, seven estate managers and 14 front-line

staff. The estates managed by the winners of Best Public Rental Housing Estate (Property Services) include Shek Lei (II) Estate, Cheung Ching Estate, Choi Yuen Estate, Po Heung Estate, Fu Tung Estate and Sheung Lok Estate (Please see the attached table for details). The award winners were determined based on the combined scores given by the assessment panel, the Housing Department's supervisory teams, the Management Assessment Scores, feedback from the Estate Management Advisory Committees and the results of random surveys conducted among the residents.

The HA has a stringent tendering system and an effective contract management mechanism to ensure quality and reliable services. To enhance the quality of service provided by services contractors, the HA recently reviewed the Management Assessment Scores by introducing new assessment items. The evaluation of the overall performance of the services contractors has thus become more specific, objective and comprehensive.

The HA maintains close ties with services contractors. Seminars are held regularly to foster good communications and view exchanges, as well as to provide opportunities for high-performing services contractors to share their valuable experience.

Currently, the management of more than half of the HA's public rental housing estates is outsourced to property services agents, and many major maintenance tasks in HA estates are being carried out by contractors. By leveraging the private sector's resources and experience in managing private properties, the HA seeks to raise the level of its estate management services and to enhance the living environment for its tenants.



[Government welcomes EU's removal of Hong Kong from watchlist on tax co-operation](#)

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government today (March 13) welcomed the decision of the European Union (EU) to remove Hong Kong from its watchlist on tax co-operation in recognition of the efforts made by Hong Kong on the international tax co-operation front.

The Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr James Lau,

said, "As an international financial centre, Hong Kong has all along proactively supported and facilitated the efforts of the international community in enhancing tax transparency and combating cross-border tax evasion. Since 2018, Hong Kong has implemented various initiatives relating to international tax co-operation and fulfilled the commitments made to the EU.

"The latest decision of the EU shows that Hong Kong's compliance with the standards of international tax co-operation is recognised by the international community," he said.

The initiatives implemented by Hong Kong include the Multilateral Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters, which entered into force on September 1, 2018 to allow Hong Kong to effectively implement the automatic exchange of financial account information in tax matters (AEOI) and the Base Erosion and Profit Shifting package promulgated by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. The first exchanges under the AEOI with the relevant jurisdictions were smoothly conducted in September and October 2018.

Furthermore, the Inland Revenue (Amendment) (No. 6) Bill 2017 and the Inland Revenue (Profits Tax Exemption for Funds) (Amendment) Bill 2018, which were passed in July 2018 and February 2019 respectively, amend the tax regimes in respect of corporate treasury centres, professional reinsurance, captive insurance, offshore funds and offshore private equity funds by extending the coverage of the relevant tax concessions from non-domestic transactions to domestic transactions so as to comply with international requirements.

In 2017 and 2018, the EU had put 68 tax jurisdictions including Hong Kong on the watchlist, and monitored the progress of the relevant jurisdictions in implementing the requirements of international tax co-operation.

Correctional officers stop fighting among remand persons in custody

Correctional officers at Lai Chi Kok Reception Centre stopped a fight among remand persons in custody today (March 13).

At 6.45am, two male remand persons in custody, aged 34 and 40, engaged in a fight inside a cell. Officers at the scene immediately stopped the fight and called for reinforcement.

During the incident, one of the persons in custody sustained injuries on his head. After examination and treatment by the institution Medical Officer,

he was referred to a public hospital for further treatment. The other person in custody sustained injury to his face but did not need to be sent to a public hospital after receiving treatment.

The case has been reported to the Police for investigation.

The two remand persons in custody were remanded for the offences of attempted theft and passing or tendering a counterfeit currency note.

CHP investigates influenza A outbreak at kindergarten in Causeway Bay

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (March 13) investigating an influenza A outbreak at a kindergarten in Causeway Bay, and again reminded the public to maintain strict personal and environmental hygiene against influenza.

The outbreak involves 13 boys and 10 girls aged 3 to 6 who have developed fever, cough and sore throat since February 17. Twenty of them sought medical attention but none required hospitalisation. All patients are in a stable condition. The respiratory specimens of two students tested positive for influenza A upon laboratory testing.

Officers of the CHP have conducted a site visit and advised the school to adopt necessary infection control measures against respiratory tract infections. The school has been placed under medical surveillance.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "To prevent outbreaks of influenza and other respiratory infections, it is of prime importance that students with fever, regardless of the presence of respiratory symptoms, should not be allowed to attend school. They should seek medical advice and avoid school till 48 hours after the fever has subsided. Schools should also measure and record students' body temperature properly."

Schools are reminded to follow the [Guidelines on Prevention of Communicable Diseases](#) on preventive and control measures as well as management of outbreaks, which should be reported to the CHP for prompt follow-up.

"The latest surveillance data showed that the local influenza activity has continued to decrease from the peak level in January but remained above the baseline threshold. We urge the community to continue heightening its vigilance against seasonal influenza. As young children are particularly affected in this influenza season, we appeal to parents who have not yet arranged vaccination for their children in this season to do so as soon as possible to strengthen their personal protection," the spokesman said.

Apart from children, people aged 50 to 64 years, the elderly and those with underlying illnesses who have not yet received influenza vaccination this season are also urged to get vaccinated as early as possible to prevent seasonal influenza as it takes about two weeks for antibodies to develop in the body after vaccination. Medical advice should be sought promptly if influenza-like symptoms develop so that appropriate treatment can be initiated as early as possible to prevent potential complications. Parents and carers are reminded to render assistance in prevention, care and control for vulnerable people.

Besides receiving seasonal influenza vaccination as early as possible for personal protection, the public should maintain good personal and environmental hygiene for protection against influenza and other respiratory illnesses. For more information, please visit the CHP's [influenza page](#) and weekly [Flu Express](#).