

Missing woman in Kwai Chung located

A woman who went missing in Kwai Chung has been located.

Hung On-shui, aged 58, went missing after she was last seen in a care home on Wo Tong Tsui Street on February 18 afternoon. The staff of the care home made a report to Police on the same day.

The woman was located in North Point MTR station this morning (February 20). She sustained no injuries and no suspicious circumstances were detected.

LCQ15: Home and community care services for the elderly and persons with disabilities

Following is a question by the Dr Hon Fernando Cheung and a written reply by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, in the Legislative Council today (February 20):

Question:

Despite a pledge, made by the Chief Executive (CE) in her speech in delivering her Policy Address in October 2017, to reduce to zero the waiting time for home and community care services, frail elderly persons, persons with disabilities (PWDs) and needy people currently have to wait for a long time for such services. In the past two years, a number of tragedies occurred one after another in which carers, owing to the excessive pressure in single-handedly taking care of their chronically ill family members at home, killed the family members and themselves. With the population of Hong Kong ageing continuously, it is anticipated that there will be increasing demands for the Integrated Home Care Services, which target at elderly persons, PWDs and other needy people (Category 1 services), and the Enhanced Home and Community Care Services, which target at frail elderly persons (Category 2 services). In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the following details regarding the Ordinary Cases under Category 1 services in each of the past 10 years: (i) number of persons receiving the services, (ii) unit cost, (iii) number of persons waiting for the services, (iv) average waiting time, (v) number of persons who stopped waiting due to deterioration in health conditions or deaths, and (vi) number of persons who stopped waiting due to other reasons (with a tabulated breakdown by the three

types of service targets, namely elderly persons, PWDs and other needy people);

(2) of the following details regarding the Frail Cases under Category 1 services in each of the past 10 years: (i) number of persons receiving the services, (ii) unit cost, (iii) number of persons waiting for the services, (iv) average waiting time, (v) number of persons who stopped waiting due to deterioration in health conditions or deaths, and (vi) number of persons who stopped waiting due to other reasons (with a tabulated breakdown by the two types of service targets, namely elderly persons and PWDs);

(3) of the following details regarding Category 2 services in each of the past 10 years: (i) number of persons receiving the services, (ii) unit cost, (iii) number of persons waiting for the services, (iv) average waiting time, (v) number of persons who stopped waiting due to deterioration in health conditions or deaths, and (vi) number of persons who stopped waiting due to other reasons (set out in a table);

(4) in respect of the service teams for the two categories of services respectively, of the average (i) staffing establishment and, among them, the respective numbers of full-time and part-time staff members, (ii) ratios of manpower to cases handled, (iii) payroll expenses, and (iv) year-end vacancy rates, in each of the past 10 years (set out in a table); if such information is not available, of the basis on which CE made a remark at a Question and Answer Session of this Council early last month that community care services were facing a shortage of manpower;

(5) whether it has gained an understanding of the office spaces needed by the service teams for the two categories of services, and the criteria adopted for calculating such space requirements, and whether it proactively looked for, in the past 10 years, suitable spaces in idle government lands/properties in various districts for accommodating these service teams; if not, of the justifications for CE to make a remark at the aforesaid Question and Answer Session that community care services were facing a shortage of lands; and

(6) whether it has assessed the demands for the two categories of services in the coming 10 years, taking into account the ageing population of Hong Kong; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; whether it has plans to set up additional service teams in various districts to cope with the demands; if so, of the details (including the districts in which additional service teams will be set up, and the specific criteria adopted for determining the districts concerned and the division of labour); regarding those districts in which no additional service teams will be set up, of the specific plans (e.g. increasing manpower and providing more vehicles for transportation) to cope with the ever-increasing demands through enhancing the existing service teams, and the criteria adopted for formulating such plans?

Reply:

President,

My reply to Dr Hon Cheung's question is as follows:

(1) According to the Social Welfare Department (SWD)'s information, the respective annual number of cases served and number of persons on the waiting list under the Integrated Home Care Services (Ordinary Cases) (IHCS(OC)) for elderly persons, persons with disabilities, and individuals and families with social needs, and the unit cost of the Integrated Home Care Services (Ordinary Cases and Frail Cases) (IHCS(OC and FC)) in the past five years are set out in the table below:

Financial year	Annual number of cases served			Number of persons on the waiting list (Note 1)			Average monthly cost per case (\$)
	Elderly persons	Persons with disabilities	Individuals and families with social needs	Elderly persons	Persons with disabilities	Individuals and families with social needs	IHCS(OC and FC) (Note 2)
2013-14	23 356	1 951	431	4 971	271	95	1,597
2014-15	23 483	1 780	424	4 372	252	86	1,745
2015-16	23 255	1 629	390	3 670	204	79	1,838
2016-17	23 448	1 535	376	3 759	167	72	1,904
2017-18	23 338	1 374	367	4 029	198	96	1,939 (Revised Estimate)
2018-19 (as at end-September 2018)	19 880	1 233	290	2 964	178	99	2,070 (Estimate)

(Note 1) The waiting list for IHCS(OC) is kept and managed by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) operating the service.

(Note 2) The SWD does not keep the average monthly cost per case of IHCS(OC) and the Integrated Home Care Services (Frail Cases) (IHCS(FC)) separately.

The SWD does not have information on the average waiting time for IHCS(OC) and the number of persons who ceased waiting for IHCS(OC) due to deterioration in health conditions, deaths or other reasons.

(2) and (3) According to the SWD's information, the respective annual number of cases served, number of persons on the waiting list, average waiting time and number of elderly persons who passed away while waiting for services under IHCS(FC) and the Enhanced Home and Community Care Services (EHCCS), and the unit cost of EHCCS in the past five years are set out in the table below:

Financial year	Annual number of cases served		Number of persons on the waiting list (Note 4) (Note 5)	Average waiting time (in months) (based on the average of the past three months) (Note 4) (Note 5)	Number of elderly persons who passed away while waiting for the services (Note 4)	Average monthly cost per case (\$)
	IHCS(FC) (Note 3)	EHCCS				EHCCS (Note 6)
2013-14	1 455	7 552	2 185	7	33	3,687
2014-15	1 441	8 077	2 698	9	33	3,875
2015-16	1 466	9 806	2 840	7	44	4,471
2016-17	1 461	9 562	4 504	11	37	4,533
2017-18	1 436	9 721	5 819	15	36	4,641 (Revised Estimate)
2018-19 (as at end-September 2018)	1 290	8 373	7 351	16	21	5,483 (Estimate)

(Note 3) The number of cases served under IHCS(FC) includes cases of elderly persons and persons with disabilities.

(Note 4) Frail elderly persons who have been confirmed as moderately or severely impaired under the Standardised Care Need Assessment Mechanism for Elderly Services could wait for IHCS(FC) and/or EHCCS.

(Note 5) Number of persons on the waiting list for IHCS(FC) and EHCCS includes cases of elderly persons and persons with disabilities.

(Note 6) The average monthly cost per case for IHCS(FC) is shown in the table in the answer for Part (1).

The above figures on the number of persons on the waiting list do not include elderly persons being classified as inactive cases because of their participation in the Pilot Scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly. In addition, the SWD does not have information on the number of persons with disabilities who passed away while waiting for IHCS(FC), and the number of persons who ceased waiting for IHCS(FC) and EHCCS due to deterioration in health conditions or other reasons.

(4) Under the Lump Sum Grant Subvention System, NGOs operating IHCS have the flexibility to deploy the subvention obtained and arrange suitable staffing, as long as they ensure service quality and achieve the service output standards and outcome requirements as stipulated in the Funding and Service Agreements. On the other hand, according to the contract terms for EHCCS, NGOs operating the service have the flexibility to deploy the allocated

resources in arranging suitable staffing, including social workers, nurses, occupational therapists and other supporting staff, to ensure service quality and meet service needs.

The SWD does not have information on the average wage and vacancy rate of individual IHCS and EHCCS teams.

To understand the manpower situation of frontline care staff in subsidised welfare services, the SWD issued a questionnaire to 69 subvented NGOs providing elderly and/or rehabilitation services in the territory in August 2017 to collect data. According to the information provided by NGOs, as at 31 July 2017, the vacancy rate of the posts of personal care workers (PCWs), home helpers (HHs) and ward attendants (WAs) were 18.0%, 18.8% and 15.8% respectively.

Since June 2018, the SWD has provided additional recurrent resources for service units of subsidised elderly services, rehabilitation services, and family and child welfare services to enhance the remunerations of the recognised posts of frontline care staff, including PCWs, HHs and WAs, i.e. providing resources for two additional salary points on top of the existing allocations, thereby enabling these subsidised service units to recruit and retain staff more effectively. The SWD has conducted a survey to gauge NGOs' utilisation of the additional resources on increasing the remunerations of frontline care staff, and the manpower situation of frontline care staff after such increase.

(5) and (6) At present, operators of IHCS and EHCCS would set up necessary premises according to their individual needs, for example their service boundary coverage, service content, service quota, etc. These two types of services mainly provide elderly persons with home-based care and support services, for example meal services, home care services (such as personal care and simple nursing care), rehabilitation exercises, etc. Although the space requirement of their premises is normally smaller in comparison to residential care homes for the elderly and day care centres/units for the elderly, we are aware that service operators are facing certain difficulties in searching for suitable places for service provision. The SWD has all along been closely communicating with the subvented organisations operating IHCS, so as to provide appropriate assistance to the service teams in need. As regards EHCCS, NGOs must set up their premises and offices to operate the relevant services in accordance with the requirements set out in the Service Specifications. Rent and rate subsidies of the premises are included in the service fees.

In face of an ageing population, there is a huge demand for community care services, in particular home care services. To this end, the Government has all along been paying close attention to the situation and suitably increasing resources and implementing measures to meet the demand. For instance, the Government launched the Pilot Scheme on Home Care and Support for Elderly Persons with Mild Impairment in December 2017 to provide further assessments for elderly persons waitlisting for IHCS(OC) throughout the territory and offer additional service quota for those elderly persons

assessed to be of mild impairment. It is estimated that 4 000 service quota will be provided within three years under the pilot scheme.

In addition, it was announced in the Chief Executive's 2018 Policy Address that the Government planned to provide an additional 2 000 service quota under EHCCS within 2019, bringing the total number of service quota to over 9 000. The Government will arrange for distribution of the additional service quota among districts as appropriate according to such factors as the supply and demand in individual districts, service boundary coverage and operational conditions of the existing 34 service teams, the overall condition of home care services provided for frail elderly persons, etc.

Besides, the Government provided the population-based planning ratios for elderly services in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines in December 2018. This facilitates early reservation of suitable sites for provision of elderly services and facilities, including subsidised community care services, by the SWD and relevant departments (for example the Planning Department and Housing Department) in planning new residential development projects.

Government welcomes passage of Inland Revenue (Profits Tax Exemption for Funds) (Amendment) Bill 2018

The Government welcomed the passage of the Inland Revenue (Profits Tax Exemption for Funds) (Amendment) Bill 2018 by the Legislative Council today (February 20). The Bill provides profits tax exemption for eligible onshore and offshore funds operating in Hong Kong.

Under the Bill, all privately offered onshore and offshore funds operating in Hong Kong, regardless of their structure, their size or the purpose that they serve, can enjoy profits tax exemption for their transactions in specified assets subject to meeting certain conditions. An eligible fund can also enjoy profits tax exemption from its investment in both overseas and local private companies. The Bill seeks to address the concerns of the Council of the European Union over the ring-fencing features of Hong Kong's tax regimes for privately offered offshore funds and enhance the competitiveness of Hong Kong's tax regimes by creating a level playing field for all funds operating in Hong Kong.

A Government spokesman said, "To minimise the risk of tax evasion, we have put in place certain anti-abuse measures, including certain requirements on a fund's investment in private companies in relation to holding of immovable property and assets, as well as holding period. Also, the current

anti-round tripping provisions for resident persons will be retained.

"The Bill would help strengthen Hong Kong's position as an international asset and wealth management centre and drive demand for the related professional services in Hong Kong. Our financial services industry will benefit as a whole. Local start-ups would also benefit as the tax disincentive for funds to invest in local private companies has been removed."

The new tax regime will come into operation on April 1, 2019.

Coconut oil sample detected with harmful contaminant benzo[a]pyrene

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (February 20) that a bottled coconut oil sample was detected to contain a harmful contaminant, benzo[a]pyrene (BaP). Members of the public are advised to stop consuming the affected batch of the product. The trade should stop using or selling the affected batch of the product should they possess it.

Product details are as follows:

Product name: Organic Refined Coconut Oil
Brand: Nutiva
Place of origin: Philippines
Distributor/importer: Eastern Zone Co Ltd
Volume: 680 millilitres/23 ounces per bottle
Best-before date: May 1, 2020

A spokesman for the CFS said, "The CFS collected the above-mentioned sample from a supermarket in Sheung Wan for testing. The test result showed that the sample contained BaP at a level of 47 micrograms per kilogram ($\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$), exceeding the action level of $10\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$ established by the CFS after consulting the Expert Committee on Food Safety."

The spokesman said that the CFS had informed the distributor/importer concerned of the irregularity and instructed it to stop sale and remove from shelves the affected batch of the product, and initiate a recall immediately. Members of the public may call the distributor/importer's hotline at 2965 6422 or 2965 6423 during office hours for enquiries about the recall.

BaP is a kind of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), which are contaminants ubiquitous in the environment. BaP is toxic to genes and can cause cancer in humans. The International Agency for Research on Cancer of

the World Health Organization has classified BaP as "carcinogenic to human". The intake of BaP should be avoided as far as practicable.

According to Section 54 of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap 132), all food for sale in Hong Kong, locally produced or imported, must be fit for human consumption. An offender is subject to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months upon conviction.

The CFS will alert the trade, continue to follow up on the incident and take appropriate action. Investigation is ongoing.

Government welcomes passage of five amendments to Inland Revenue Ordinance

The Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr James Lau, welcomed the passage of the Inland Revenue (Amendment) (No. 7) Bill 2018 by the Legislative Council today (February 20).

The new Ordinance gives effect to five amendments to the Inland Revenue Ordinance (IRO). These include aligning the tax treatment of financial instruments with their accounting treatment; allowing taxpayers the deduction of interest expenses payable to overseas export credit agencies; refining the provisions that implement the arrangement for automatic exchange of financial account information in tax matters (AEOI); avoiding double non-taxation of income of visiting teachers and researchers; and revising the meaning of the sibling relationship.

Mr Lau said, "Allowing taxpayers to elect to have their profits derived from financial instruments taxed on the same basis as that of their accounting treatment will facilitate their preparation of tax returns. Interest expenses payable to overseas export credit agencies are also made deductible to help foster trading activities between Hong Kong and other places.

"The Government has agreed in principle with the Mainland for the introduction of a teachers and researchers article in the comprehensive avoidance of double taxation arrangement with the Mainland as soon as possible so as to relieve the tax burden for Hong Kong teachers and researchers working there. The amendment to the Ordinance will help avoid double non-taxation of income of visiting teachers and researchers," Mr Lau added.

The Ordinance also includes refinements to the current AEOI regime to clarify the meanings of certain concepts while removing five categories of institutions from the list of non-reporting financial institutions. In addition, it revises the meaning of "brother and sister" under the IRO to

cover relevant cases related to adopted persons in the eligibility criteria for dependent brother or dependent sister allowance.

The Inland Revenue Department will update the Departmental Interpretation and Practice Notes as appropriate to provide information about the relevant amendments.