

Fraudulent websites and social media pages related to DBS Bank (Hong Kong) Limited

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) wishes to alert members of the public to a press release issued by DBS Bank (Hong Kong) Limited relating to fraudulent websites and social media pages, which have been reported to the HKMA. A hyperlink to the press release is available on the [HKMA website](#).

The HKMA wishes to remind the public that banks will not send SMS or emails with embedded hyperlinks which direct them to the banks' websites to carry out transactions. They will not ask customers for sensitive personal information, such as login passwords or one-time password, by phone, email or SMS (including via embedded hyperlinks).

Anyone who has provided his or her personal information, or who has conducted any financial transactions, through or in response to the websites or social media pages concerned, should contact the bank using the contact information provided in the press release, and report the matter to the Police by contacting the Crime Wing Information Centre of the Hong Kong Police Force at 2860 5012.

Fraudulent websites and internet banking login screens related to China Construction Bank (Asia) Corporation Limited

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) wishes to alert members of the public to a press release issued by China Construction Bank (Asia) Corporation Limited relating to fraudulent websites and internet banking login screens, which have been reported to the HKMA. A hyperlink to the press release is available on the [HKMA website](#).

The HKMA wishes to remind the public that banks will not send SMS or emails with embedded hyperlinks which direct them to the banks' websites to carry out transactions. They will not ask customers for sensitive personal

information, such as login passwords or one-time password, by phone, email or SMS (including via embedded hyperlinks).

Anyone who has provided his or her personal information, or who has conducted any financial transactions, through or in response to the websites or login screens concerned, should contact the bank using the contact information provided in the press release, and report the matter to the Police by contacting the Crime Wing Information Centre of the Hong Kong Police Force at 2860 5012.

[LCQ2: Kwu Tung North/Fanling North New Development Areas](#)

Following is a question by the Hon Louis Loong and a reply by the Secretary for Development, Ms Bernadette Linn, in the Legislative Council today (March 19):

Question:

The Kwu Tung North and Fanling North New Development Area (NDA) project is the first NDA project in the Northern Metropolis to enter construction stage. The Government invoked the relevant legislation in 2019 and 2024 successively for the resumption of private lots for implementing the development of the NDAs. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the number and hectare of private lots resumed so far;
- (2) among the private lots resumed, of the respective numbers of lots for which compensation has been and has not yet been paid by the Government to the landowners; and
- (3) given that the Government is required by the relevant legislation to pay the interest that shall be borne from the date of reversion of private lot to the Government until the date of the compensation payment, whether it has estimated, in respect of the private lots which have been resumed but for which compensation has not yet been paid, the total interest expenses to be involved in the payment of compensation by the Government?

Reply:

President,

The Kwu Tung North/Fanling North New Development Area (KTN/FLN NDA) is the first NDA in the Northern Metropolis to enter the construction stage. It

is being implemented in two phases where land has gradually been developed.

To implement the project, the Government resumed privately owned land in 2019 and 2024 in phases according to the Lands Resumption Ordinance and other relevant ordinances, and is required by law to pay statutory compensation to landowners. As an alternative to statutory compensation, the Government has introduced ex-gratia compensation which is administrative in nature and processed in a more simplified and speedier manner, in accordance with the policy.

When the Government resumes private land for a public purpose, a notice will first be gazetted specifying that the relevant lot will revert to the Government after a specified date, in general three months after a notice is published. According to the present mechanism and performance pledge, the Lands Department will within four weeks of gazetting the resumption notice issue an ex-gratia compensation offer to the landowner, and mention that the relevant person may submit a claim for statutory compensation if the offer is not accepted. If both parties cannot reach an agreement on the amount of statutory compensation, either party may refer the claim to the Lands Tribunal for final determination of the compensation. Upon receipt of the letter of acceptance from the landowner and after checking and confirming the land title, the Lands Department will issue the ex-gratia compensation. According to the above mechanism, if a landowner does not accept the ex-gratia compensation offer and opts for making a statutory compensation claim, or may not be able to provide the required documents in a timely manner to prove its title, it will take longer time to process such cases.

In response to the respective parts raised by the Hon Loong, my reply is as follows:

(1) The KTN/FLN NDA requires the resumption of 2 498 private lots in total, involving a total area of about 178 hectares (ha). The Government resumed 784 private lots for the first phase development in December 2019 with an area of around 68 ha; and resumed 1 714 private lots for the remaining phase development in April and October last year with an area of around 110 ha.

(2) As of end February 2025, the Government has already paid compensation to landowners of over 90 per cent and 20 per cent of the land resumed for the first phase and remaining phase development respectively, with an amount of around \$10.7 billion and \$3.6 billion respectively, totalling around \$14.3 billion (interest included). While it is our goal to disburse the compensation as soon as possible after the land reverts to the Government, as mentioned above, the general circumstances of each case will also depend on factors such as whether and when the landowner accepts the compensation offer, whether land title checking can be smoothly conducted. According to the performance pledge of the Lands Department for issuing compensation, cheques would be made available for collection by the landowner within four weeks following the acceptance of proof of legal title or execution of compensation agreements. In the past two year, all of the cases met the performance pledge.

For this development area, the remaining compensation of around \$16.9 billion not yet paid mainly involves land resumed last year for the remaining phase development. Among the cases with compensation not yet disbursed, around half are due to land title not yet fully proven, incomplete land title documents and time required for title checking; while the other half are due to landowners being not contactable or not in Hong Kong.

(3) The Lands Resumption Ordinance and relevant ordinances stipulate that interest shall be awarded for the compensation payable for the period running from the reversion of land to the Government to the payment of compensation, and that the relevant interest rate is set at one-month Hong Kong Dollar Interest Settlement Rates (HIBOR). Under the current approval mechanism, the time required for disbursement of compensation for cases with no land title checking problem would generally be around three to six months from the date of reversion of land to the Government. In other words, payment of interest is expected for resumption and compensation work, and is also reasonable to both the Government and the affected landowners under the current mechanism.

In the context of KTN/FLN NDA, cases with payment of compensation completed totaled around \$14.3 billion as mentioned above, and this includes interest payment of over \$49 million. As the interest rate fluctuates and the processing time of each case differs, the Government is unable to provide an estimate of the interest expense for the compensation amounts not yet paid.

In order to speed up the processing of cases, the Lands Department has introduced a range of streamlining measures since November 2023 to enhance the clarity and transparency of the title checking processes, which will be further streamlined to enable compensation to be issued as early as possible to landowners who have accepted the compensation amount.

Thank you, President.

Government to introduce Supplementary Medical Professions (Amendment) Bill 2025 into LegCo

The Government announced today (March 19) that the Supplementary Medical Professions (Amendment) Bill 2025 (the Bill) will be gazetted this Friday (March 21), with the First Reading at the Legislative Council scheduled for March 26.

€€€€€€In recent years, supplementary medical professions have been playing increasingly important roles in the healthcare system, particularly in primary healthcare development. To recognise their professional status and

promote cross-disciplinary collaboration, the Bill proposes to rename "supplementary medical professions" as "allied health professions"; remove obsolete restrictions while providing a legal framework to facilitate cross-disciplinary collaborations, include allowing patients to accept physiotherapy and occupational therapy services without a doctor's referral under specified circumstances, and enable allied health professionals to accept referrals from Chinese medicine practitioners (CMPs). In addition, to further enhance the manpower resources of allied health professions, the Bill introduces a new pathway to admit qualified non-locally trained allied health professionals to practise in designated institutions in order to address the manpower shortage of specific allied health professions within the public healthcare system. The Bill also introduces continuing professional development (CPD) as a mandatory requirement for all allied health professionals, with a view to ensuring the overall professional standard of allied health professions. To promote the development of allied health professions, the Bill proposes to enhance the composition and structure of the Supplementary Medical Professions Council (to be renamed as the Allied Health Professions Council) (the Council) and its five constituent Boards to ensure better performance of their regulatory roles, and further enhancing representativeness and credibility.

Renaming "supplementary medical professions" as "allied health professions"

Since the enactment of the Supplementary Medical Professions Ordinance (Cap. 359) (the Ordinance) in 1980, the term "supplementary medical professions" has been used for over 40 years. In view of the increasingly important and specialised roles played by these five professions under the Ordinance in Hong Kong's healthcare system, the Bill will rename "supplementary medical professions" as "allied health professions" to reflect their important function and enhanced professional status within the healthcare system, particularly primary healthcare.

Accepting physiotherapy and occupational therapy services without a doctor's referral

At present, physiotherapists (PTs) and occupational therapists (OTs) may only provide services to patients upon a doctor's referral, except in emergency or other specified situations. To address the new challenges to the healthcare system posed by an ageing population and the increasing prevalence of chronic diseases, the Government is committed to developing primary healthcare, encouraging members of the public to seek early medical intervention in the community for common illnesses. Allowing patients to access physiotherapy and occupational therapy direct under specified conditions for early treatment is one of the key elements.

The healthcare sector generally agrees that, on the premise of ensuring patient safety and enhancing risk management, allowing patients to seek assistance directly from PTs and OTs can expand access to primary healthcare by members of the public, thereby achieving the goals of streamlining processes and reducing costs, and further promoting the development of primary healthcare. The Bill sets out three circumstances under which

patients may seek physiotherapy and occupational therapy services directly without a doctor's referral:

(1) Clinical protocol or cross-disciplinary collaboration arrangement

Citizens may seek services directly from PTs or OTs for health conditions covered by recognised clinical protocols. PTs and OTs must adhere to the recognised clinical protocols at all times, including timely referral of patients to doctors for diagnosis and treatment if specific "red-flag" symptoms are detected. Regarding cross-disciplinary collaboration arrangements, PTs and OTs registered under the future Primary Care Register will be allowed to provide direct services to patients under the arrangements of the Primary Healthcare Commission (PHC Commission). They must record the patient's condition and, if necessary, notify the patient's registered family doctor via the Electronic Health Record Sharing System (eHealth) to ensure that patients can receive timely follow-up treatment when needed.

(2) Diagnosis by a registered doctor or CMP within the past 12 months

Patients may seek direct physiotherapy or occupational therapy services for health conditions diagnosed by a registered doctor or CMP within the past 12 months without obtaining a new referral letter each time. Patients must provide proof of the diagnosis. Apart from a referral letter, the proof can also be in the form of outpatient records, follow-up consultation records, or discharge summaries.

(3) Emergency or other situations approved by the Council

PTs and OTs may provide direct services to patients without a doctor's referral in emergency or other situations (applicable to PTs and OTs) and community services (applicable to OTs) approved by the Council. The details of these designated situations will be set out in the two professional codes of practice issued by the Council.

Allowing allied health professionals to accept referrals from CMPs

Chinese medicine is an integral part of Hong Kong's healthcare system, and the Government has long been committed to strengthening its role in primary healthcare, supporting the development of Chinese medicine and integrated Chinese-Western medicine services in secondary and tertiary healthcare, and encouraging the cross-disciplinary collaboration between healthcare professions. There are practical needs for CMPs to refer patients in accordance with clinical needs for other treatments and modern diagnostic technologies, which can improve clinical diagnostic accuracy and monitor treatment effectiveness, thereby further enhancing the quality of healthcare services.

To further Chinese medicine as a constituent part of Hong Kong's healthcare system, the Bill provides a legal framework for allied health professionals to accept referrals from CMPs under suitable conditions. The Chinese medicine profession and relevant allied health professions must reach

a consensus on professional standards regarding knowledge, skills, professional competencies and conduct, in order to formulate implementation details and update the relevant codes of practice. In view of the practical clinical and operational needs of The Chinese Medicine Hospital of Hong Kong (CMHHK), the Bill also allows relevant allied health professionals to accept referrals from CMPs within the hospital, supporting the hospital's phased commencement of services from the end of this year.

Admitting non-locally trained allied health professionals

In view of the persistent manpower shortages in certain allied health professions within the public healthcare system, the Bill introduces a new limited registration pathway to admit qualified non-locally trained allied health professionals to practise in designated institutions within their specialised fields on the premise of not compromising professional standards. Applications will be subject to approval by the Council. These designated institutions include the Department of Health, the Hospital Authority, the PHC Commission, the CMHHK, and institutions offering allied health profession training programmes. The Council may impose conditions on an applicant's practice to confine them to a specific scope of practice. Allied health professionals under limited registration will not be eligible for migration to full registration.

Meanwhile, the Government also proposes a new temporary registration pathway to enable non-locally trained allied health professionals to come to Hong Kong for academic exchanges and clinical demonstrations. A temporary registration will be valid for no more than 14 days and is not renewable.

Other amendments

The Bill introduces CPD as a mandatory requirement for allied health professionals to maintain and enhance the overall professional standards of the allied health professions. It also amends the composition and structure of the Council and its five constituent Boards to better regulate the professions and promote cross-disciplinary collaboration. The Bill includes other technical amendments, such as extending the validity of the existing practising certificates to three years and adjusting various fees under the Ordinance.

Composite Interest Rate: End of February 2025

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) announced today (March 19) the

composite interest rate at the end of February 2025 (Note 1).

The composite interest rate, which is a measure of the average cost of funds of banks, decreased by 7 basis points to 2.09 per cent at the end of February 2025, from 2.16 per cent at the end of January 2025 (see Chart 1 in the Annex). The decrease in composite interest rate reflected the decreases in the weighted funding cost for deposits during the month (see Chart 2 in the Annex)(Note 2).

The historical data of the composite interest rate from the end of the fourth quarter of 2003 to the end of February 2025 are available in the Monthly Statistical Bulletin on the HKMA website (www.hkma.gov.hk).

Note 1: The composite interest rate is a weighted average interest rate of all Hong Kong dollar interest-rate-sensitive liabilities, which include deposits from customers, amounts due to banks, negotiable certificates of deposit and other debt instruments, and all other liabilities that do not involve any formal payment of interest but the values of which are sensitive to interest rate movements (such as Hong Kong dollar non-interest bearing demand deposits) on the books of banks. Data from retail banks, which account for about 90 per cent of the total customers' deposits in the banking sector, are used in the calculation. It should be noted that the composite interest rate represents only average interest expenses. There are various other costs involved in the making of a loan, such as operating costs (e.g. staff and rental expenses), credit cost and hedging cost, which are not covered by the composite interest rate.

Note 2: Since June 2019, the composite interest rate and weighted deposit rate have been calculated based on the new local "Interest rate risk in the banking book" (IRRBB) framework. As such, these figures are not strictly comparable with those of previous months.