

LCQ14: Family-friendly facilities in public and private premises

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Ngan Man-yu and a written reply by the Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, in the Legislative Council today (June 18):

Question:

It is learnt that the research team of the Equal Opportunities Commission has conducted an access audit of babycare and lactation (B&L) facilities in shopping malls and government premises in Hong Kong, with the findings revealing that some shopping malls and government premises has not yet provided B&L rooms, and some existing babycare areas do not comply with the suggested size set out in the Buildings Department's Practice Note on "Provision of Babycare Rooms and Lactation Rooms in Commercial Buildings" (Practice Note). As regards family-friendly facilities in public and private premises, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it knows the number, distribution and floor area ratio of B&L facilities in public and private premises, and the proportion of such facilities that complies with the suggested size in the Practice Note, together with a breakdown of such figures by the 18 districts across the territory;

(2) whether it has already commenced a study on measures to promote the provision of B&L facilities in public premises, including introducing mandatory requirements for newly-built public facilities (e.g. libraries, parks, beaches, sports venues) to provide B&L facilities, and motivating existing public facilities to renovate and retrofit B&L facilities as appropriate; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether, in addition to providing floor area ratio concessions, it has considered implementing policy incentives to encourage private premises to provide B&L facilities and family-friendly parking spaces, as well as using administrative measures or legislation to promote the development of such facilities in the long term; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

International literature and researches showed that breastmilk is the ideal food for infants. Breastmilk is safe, clean and contains antibodies which can help prevent many common childhood illnesses. Breastfed children perform better in intelligence tests, are less likely to be overweight or obese, and are less prone to have diabetes later in life.

The Government has all along been promoting, protecting and supporting

breastfeeding through a multi-pronged approach. The Government has set up a Committee on Promotion of Breastfeeding in 2014. Members include representatives from relevant professional healthcare bodies, academia as well as representatives of the organisations that have participated in the promotion of breastfeeding. The Committee provides specific recommendations on strategies and action plans to strengthen the promotion, protection and support for breastfeeding. Its objectives are to enhance the sustainability of breastfeeding and promote breastfeeding as the norm for baby care widely accepted by the general public. In addition to fostering the establishment of Breastfeeding Friendly Premises in public places such that breastfeeding mothers can breastfeed their children or express milk anytime, the Government also implements the Baby-Friendly Health Facility accreditation in the Maternal and Child Health Centres (MCHCs) and public hospitals to enhance the professional support to breastfeeding mothers after discharge from hospitals. At present, a total of 15 MCHCs have been accredited as Baby-Friendly Health Facilities. Besides, all eight public hospitals with obstetrics departments and one private hospital were accredited as Baby-Friendly Hospitals.

In consultation with the Department of Health (DH), the Hospital Authority (HA), as well as relevant policy bureaux and government departments, the consolidated reply to the question raised by Dr the Hon Ngan Man-yu is as follows:

(1) According to the DH's record, as at June 15, 2025, there were a total of 422 baby care rooms in the premises of government departments or public organisations (a breakdown of the numbers are at Annexes 1 and 2), which include various types of venues, such as hospitals, MCHCs, cultural and recreational facilities, community halls and shopping centres of housing estates.

To promote the provision of baby care rooms in private commercial buildings, the Buildings Department (BD) issued the Practice Note on the Provision of Baby Care Rooms in Commercial Buildings in February 2009 and had made further updates in November 2018 to encourage the provision of baby care rooms for the public and lactation rooms for staff in private commercial buildings. In June 2024, the BD updated the requirements for Building Environmental Assessment Method Plus certification and gross floor area (GFA) concessions to allow development projects seeking certification to secure the points and GFA concession through the provision of baby care rooms and breastfeeding rooms.

(2) and (3) The Government has been actively promoting the provision of more baby care and breastfeeding facilities in both public and private premises through various policy measures.

The Government developed the Advisory Guidelines on Baby Care Facilities in August 2008 to encourage the provision of baby care rooms in public venues managed by the Government. To enhance the provision of baby care and breastfeeding facilities, the Government mandated the provision of baby care and breastfeeding facilities in the newly completed government premises since early 2019. Regarding the public facilities mentioned in part 2 of the question, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department has included baby care

rooms as a standard provision in accordance with relevant requirements, and will provide babycare facilities in planning for new major cultural and recreational facilities, as well as venue renovation works.

Additionally, since 2017, the Government has included requirements for the provision of babycare rooms and/or lactation rooms in the Conditions of Sale of new commercial land sale sites (excluding land designated for hotel use only). The Conditions of Sale specify detailed requirements, including the area and number of babycare rooms and/or lactation rooms that shall be provided in these commercial development projects. As at the end of May 2025, the Government incorporated these requirements in the Conditions of Sale of eight new commercial sites.

Meanwhile, the Government will continue to work closely with various sectors of the society to strengthen the professional support for breastfeeding mothers in the healthcare sector while stepping up publicity on breastfeeding in the community through various channels, with a view to fostering a proactive culture of support for breastfeeding in the community and creating a friendly environment conducive to breastfeeding. Key initiatives include –

(i) among the 29 MCHCs currently providing services under the DH, 15 of them have been accredited as Baby-Friendly Health Facilities. Accreditation procedures have also commenced gradually for the remaining MCHCs. The MCHCs will formulate infant feeding policies and action plans, provide training for staff members, continue monitoring the implementation of breastfeeding support measures, etc. The DH will continue to expedite the accreditation of Baby-Friendly Health Facilities for MCHCs to strengthen the professional support offered by the healthcare institutions and staff members to breastfeeding mothers;

(ii) continuing to follow up on the relevant work with the working group under the Committee on Promotion of Breastfeeding to enhance and reinforce the breastfeeding-friendly measures at hospitals with obstetrics departments (including public and private hospitals);

(iii) encouraging the implementation of the Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace policy with guidelines issued for employers and employees with specific advice on supporting breastfeeding to support working mothers to continue breastfeeding after returning to work; and

(iv) stepping up publicity and advocacy for breastfeeding through mass media, social media platforms, large-scale events, etc. Among others, the DH, in collaboration with the HA, the Hong Kong Private Hospitals Association, the Hong Kong Committee for United Nations Children's Fund, and the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative Hong Kong Association, organised the large-scale Breastfeeding Symposium in November 2024, which brought together local and overseas experts to share with representatives of the public and private healthcare sectors, healthcare professionals and other stakeholders the various issues related to breastfeeding, including policies and professional support.

To further support breastfeeding, the Government put forward in the Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address the establishment of a breast milk bank and the related mechanism for breast milk donation in 2025. Such arrangement aims to provide breast milk for infants and young children who cannot be breastfed by their biological mothers, and especially, to minimise the chance of severe illness in premature and severely-ill babies. The Hong Kong Breast Milk Bank, located at the Hong Kong Children's Hospital, commenced operations on January 6, 2025, obtained ISO 22000 certification in April of the same year, and began supplying pasturised donor breast milk to all nine public hospitals in Hong Kong with neonatal intensive care units in March 2025. Currently, there are more than 230 registered breast milk donors. Over 900 litres of breast milk have been collected, providing optimal nutrition for extremely premature and severely-ill newborn babies. Meanwhile, neonatal intensive care units in public hospitals have already distributed pasturised donor breast milk to 120 infants with clinical needs.

Meanwhile, having consulted the relevant policy bureaux and government departments, the Government currently does not have any relevant definitions and measures on the use of parking spaces as family-friendly facilities.