

LCQ3: 1823 Contact Centre

Following is a question by the Hon Joephy Chan and a reply by the Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry, Professor Sun Dong, in the Legislative Council today (June 11):

Question:

Last year, the Government optimised the services of the 1823 Contact Centre by fully introducing artificial intelligence (AI) technology to enhance its effectiveness. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the current respective ratios of application of AI technology in the various service aspects of the 1823 Contact Centre, such as case triage, automated responses and handling of citizens' voicemail messages and enquiries;

(2) of the respective numbers and proportions of cases in which the handling was directly completed by the 1823 AI chatbot and those which required referral to staff for handling in the past 12 months; the respective numbers and proportions of citizens who opted for the 1823 self-service options (e.g. AI chatbot service) and those who chose to contact hotline staff directly in the past 12 months; whether a survey has been conducted on citizens' overall satisfaction with the 1823 AI chatbot service; and

(3) as it is learnt that Beijing has deepened its reform of immediate public complaint processing in order to implement the people-centred concept by adopting a "precise classification and intelligent assignment" mechanism to enhance the overall capacity of the Beijing 12345 citizen hotline for processing public complaints, whether the Government will draw upon such experience to further utilise technologies such as big data to optimise 1823 services and extend their application to non-telephone channels such as email and mobile applications, so as to comprehensively enhance service efficiency and address livelihood issues, thereby strengthening citizens' sense of fulfilment, happiness and security; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

My consolidated reply to the question raised by the Hon Joephy Chan is as follows:

Operated by the Digital Policy Office, the 1823 one-stop platform provides 24-hour cross-departmental customer service to help answer public enquiries about the services of 23 government bureaux/departments (B/Ds), and receive complaints and service requests for all B/Ds. In addition to telephone hotline, citizens can now use 1823 service through channels such as

mobile app, website, email and e-form. In 2024, the total usage volume of 1823 reached 7.55 million.

Generally speaking, upon receipt of public enquiries or complaints from various channels, 1823 will classify them into two broad types for processing. For public enquiries concerning participating B/Ds, 1823 will answer them directly; for complaints regarding government services, 1823 will refer them to the relevant B/Ds for relevant follow-up.

Currently, 1823 has widely adopted artificial intelligence (AI) and other innovative technologies in various service areas to make its work process more automated and smart. These measures include:

(1) At the case triage stage, 1823 employs AI speech recognition technology and algorithms to analyse the content of citizens' incoming calls and written submissions, automatically assigning cases to staff familiar with the respective subject matter, thereby enhancing work efficiency. For cases that require referral to other departments, 1823 also uses a business rule engine integrated with the Lands Department's geographic information platform to swiftly refer cases to designated units of relevant departments based on factors such as case nature, time and location;

(2) For written enquiries handled directly by 1823, we use generative AI technology to assist 1823 staff in drafting responses, thereby enhancing the case processing speed;

(3) 1823 adopts AI speech-to-text technology to transcribe voice messages into text and thus expedite the work process; and

(4) Since 2023, 1823 has progressively introduced and enhanced self-service channels, including an AI chatbot, a smart interactive voice response system, and online self-service enquiry service. These channels handle citizens' general or common enquiries in real time, while allowing resources to be focused on more complicated cases.

The above measures demonstrate that we have integrated AI into the major operational areas of 1823 to enhance the efficiency of case intake, triage, referral, handling and resolution. The proportion of citizens using the related smart services has also increased.

In 2023, the usage volume of 1823 digital self-services was nearly 3.9 million, surpassing traditional manual services (i.e. calls, emails, e-forms, text messages, etc, that require manual processing) for the first time. The usage volume of self-services continued to increase by 10 per cent to 4.26 million times in 2024, which accounted for about 56 per cent of total. Taking the 1823 AI chatbot as an example, it now handles over 10 000 enquiries monthly, which is a two-fold increase compared to 2023, with a resolution rate of over 90 per cent.

The effectiveness of technological applications in enhancing 1823 service performance is also reflected in our customer satisfaction survey. On a five-point scale, the 1823's overall customer satisfaction score in 2024

was 4.60, up from 4.56 in 2023 and 4.52 in 2022.

The enhancement of 1823 service will continue. We will further strengthen the 1823 mechanisms for case classification, triage and referral, focusing on operational data analysis and case handling process. In addition, we will further expand the use or trial of AI in different service areas and interfaces. For example, we will use AI to capture case information from emails for inputting to the case management system; provide digital self-service for case progress tracking; and enhance the question-answering capabilities of chatbot, etc, to improve operational efficiency and user experience.

Thank you, President.