

LCSD follows up suspected improper access to public library registered users' online accounts

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) today (June 6) announced that a staff member of an outsourced service contractor of the Hong Kong Public Libraries (HKPL), which is under the department's management, is suspected to have obtained some HKPL registered users' account information without authorisation for reporting loss of library cards or changes of account passwords. The staff member involved, who was responsible for handling returned library materials from readers at Tseung Kwan O Public Library, has resigned.

The LCSD has reported the incident to the Police and informed the Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data and suspected affected users, of which 86 users were successfully contacted. The resigned staff member involved has been arrested by the Police.

"The LCSD is very concerned about the incident and would like to apologise to the affected users. The department will fully assist in the police investigation and has set up a task force led by an Assistant Director to fully review the security measures concerning the management of HKPL registered users' personal data and to enhance the monitoring mechanism on HKPL outsourced service contractors' performance to prevent recurrence of similar incidents," the spokesman emphasised.

The spokesman said that the HKPL recently received enquiries from registered users regarding unsuccessful access to their online accounts. Having found the incidents to be abnormal, the HKPL conducted investigations accordingly. The findings showed that these users' accounts were suspected to have been improperly accessed, and 129 of the accounts reported loss of a library card or change of the account password, resulting in the account holders' inability to use online library services.

The spokesman appealed to HKPL registered users to change their online accounts' preset passwords as soon as possible if they have never done so to protect their personal data. The LCSD has set up a hotline for HKPL registered users who can call 2601 8218 or 2601 7348 during office hours (9am to 1pm and 2pm to 5pm from Mondays to Fridays, except public holidays) for enquiries.