

# Transcript of remarks by SFH at media session

Following is the transcript of remarks made by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, at a media session at the Legislative Council Complex today (January 17):

Reporter: With the run-up to the Chinese New Year, there may be more tourists coming in and out of Hong Kong, would you consider like requesting them to declare their health status to the authorities? You said you had meeting yesterday, could you give us a brief recap?

Secretary for Food and Health: Regarding the latest development of the Wuhan pneumonia with this new novel coronavirus, I have convened a Steering Committee meeting in accordance with the Serious Response Level under the Preparedness and Response Plan for Novel Infectious Disease of Public Health Significance yesterday. During this meeting, I alerted all participating departments and bureaux in view of the latest situation and the latest risk assessment. Everybody has to be in high vigilance and on guard in case we have a confirmed case in Hong Kong. Given the latest situation that confirmed cases are found in Japan and in Thailand, as well as the latest information from Wuhan, although there is no evidence of human-to-human transmission, they cannot rule out that there is some form of limited human-to-human transmission. Therefore, we have to be on guard and maintain high vigilance, not only our health department and the Hospital Authority (HA) but also everybody in Hong Kong. The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) has expanded the scope of surveillance to include not only those who come back from Wuhan but those who have visited hospitals in the Mainland. This is a new reporting criteria. The DH had already sent letters to all private doctors, private hospitals and Chinese medicine practitioners. The HA is also aware of this latest reporting criteria. As far as the control measures adopted at the boundary is concerned, we have already strengthened all measures at the boundary checkpoints including temperature screenings on all incoming travellers, in particular at the arrival gate in the airport where the passenger from Wuhan arrived as well as the Express Rail Link station. Everyone who comes from Wuhan would have their temperature checked by handheld infrared thermometers. Other than temperature checks, we have also made in-flight announcements as well as at the lobby of Express Rail Link station and also gave out pamphlets to remind travellers of the situation and health advice. Finally, it is also important for everyone in Hong Kong to be on high alert. In case there is a confirmed case in Hong Kong, the Government will be able to respond quickly and swiftly.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

---

## Grading of beach water quality released

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (January 17) released the latest grading of water quality for four gazetted beaches that are open all year round for swimming.

Four beaches were rated as Good (Grade 1).

Grade 1 beaches are:

Clear Water Bay Second Beach  
Deep Water Bay Beach  
Golden Beach  
Silverstrand Beach

Compared with the grading released last week, there was no change in the grading for these beaches.

Under the present grading system, beaches are classified into four grades, namely Good (Grade 1), Fair (Grade 2), Poor (Grade 3) and Very Poor (Grade 4), according to the level of E. coli in the water. Grades are calculated on the basis of the geometric mean of the E. coli counts on the five most recent sampling occasions.

While the ratings represent the general water quality at the beaches, an EPD spokesman reminded members of the public that water quality could be temporarily affected during and after periods of heavy rain. Bathers should avoid swimming at beaches for up to three days after a storm or heavy rainfall.

A summary of beach grades is published weekly before the weekend. The latest beach grades based on the most current data may be obtained from the department's website on Beach Water Quality ([www.epd.gov.hk/epd/beach](http://www.epd.gov.hk/epd/beach)) or the beach hotline, 2511 6666.

---

## Appeal for information on missing woman in Tsuen Wan (with photo)

Police today (January 17) appealed to the public for information on a

woman who went missing in Tsuen Wan.

Tsang Sze-man, aged 47, went missing after she left her residence in Sam Tung Uk Village on January 10. Her family made a report to Police on January 12.

She is about 1.65 metres tall, 44 kilograms in weight and of thin build. She has a long face with yellow complexion and straight black hair. She was last seen wearing a black shirt, dark trousers and a dark bag.

Anyone who knows the whereabouts of the missing woman or may have seen her is urged to contact the Regional Missing Person Unit of New Territories South on 3661 1173, 6099 3830 or email to [rmpu-nts-2@police.gov.hk](mailto:rmpu-nts-2@police.gov.hk), or contact any police station.



---

## Post-office employment for former official under special appointment Mr Chan Kin-ping

The Advisory Committee on Post-office Employment for Former Chief Executives and Politically Appointed Officials has advised on former official under special appointment Mr Chan Kin-ping's proposed employment after his departure from the Government on May 12, 2018.

The Advisory Committee considers that, subject to the observance of certain restrictions it has advised, Mr Chan's proposed employment would not

give rise to any potential conflict of interest. The Advisory Committee also does not anticipate adverse public perception to arise from the proposed employment.

The Advisory Committee considers and advises on the post-office employment, appointments and other engagements for former officials under special appointment. In considering each case, the Advisory Committee has regard to the information provided by the former official under special appointment concerned, the assessments by relevant government bureaux or offices, and the criteria for advice as stipulated in the "Guidance Note on Post-office Employment for Officials under Special Appointment".

Details of the above-mentioned case are available at the Advisory Committee's website ([www.ceo.gov.hk/poo/eng/index.htm](http://www.ceo.gov.hk/poo/eng/index.htm)).

The membership of the Advisory Committee is as follows:

Professor Liu Pak-wai (Chairman)  
Ms Susanna Chiu Lai-kuen  
Mr Simon Ip Sik-on  
Mrs Margaret Leung Ko May-yee  
Mr Thomas Brian Stevenson

---

## Composite interest rate: end of December 2019

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) announced today (January 17) the composite interest rate at the end of December 2019 (note 1).

The composite interest rate, which is a measure of the average cost of funds of banks, increased by 5 basis points to 1.09 per cent at the end of December 2019, from 1.04 per cent at the end of November 2019 (see Chart 1 in the Annex). The increase in composite interest rate reflected increases in the weighted funding cost for both deposits and interbank funds 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 December 2019 are available in the Monthly Statistical Bulletin on the HKMA website ([www.hkma.gov.hk](http://www.hkma.gov.hk)). The next data release is scheduled for February 19, 2020 and will provide the composite interest rate at the end of January 2020.

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.