

Hospital Authority launches mobile application "HA Go" (with photos)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

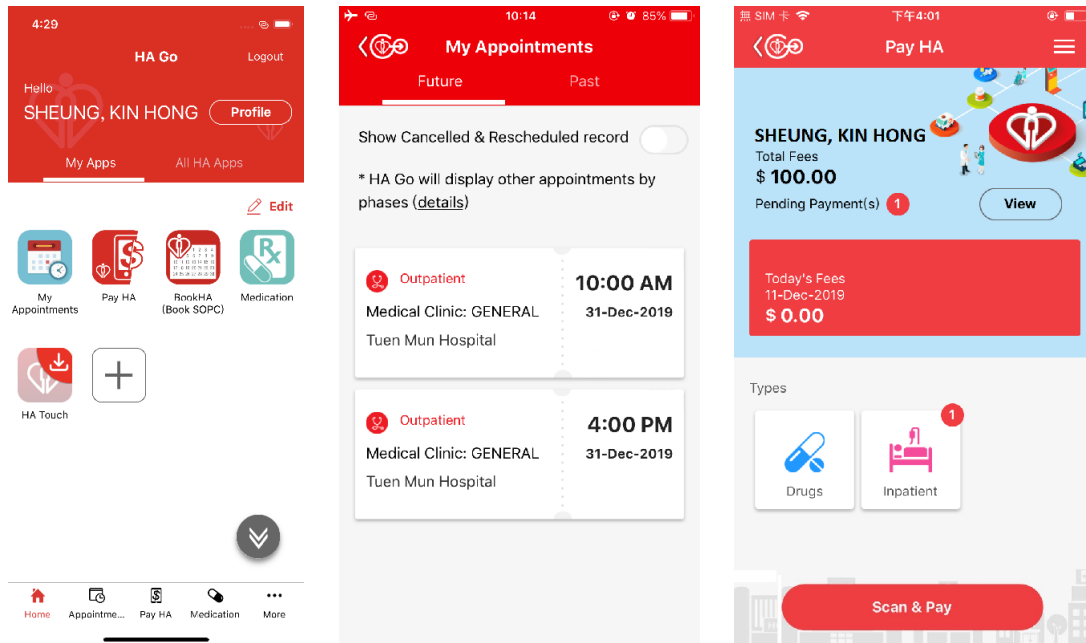
The Hospital Authority (HA) launched the mobile application "HA Go" today (December 12) to improve patients' experience when using public hospital services and assist in the management of their own health. With the app, members of the public can view their scheduled appointments at any time, pay hospital bills without queuing and access their dispensing records, drug information and allergy records.

In safeguarding patient data privacy, "HA Go" has adopted a real-name registration system. After downloading the app and input of the required personal information, the user is required to activate the account in person at a hospital with his or her Hong Kong identity card and the 2D barcode issued by "HA Go" for identity verification. Activation counters with the "HA Go" logo have been set up in most public hospitals (see appended list). Public hospital patients can choose to complete the activation during their coming visits to hospitals for appointments.

The spokesperson for the HA said that the newly developed "HA Go" has added new features besides integrating several HA apps currently in use. The range of functions now includes specialist outpatient clinic (SOPC) new case booking service and management of booked appointments. Patients can view their scheduled appointments, in the past year and upcoming ones, for SOPCs, general outpatient clinics, radiology examinations and allied health, nursing and pharmacist clinics. Patients can also save time in queuing by paying hospital bills and standard drug charges with the app. Patients can also access their dispensing records for the past two years, drug information and allergy records.

In addition, "HA Go" also provides multimedia rehabilitation programmes through videos and games for patients. Following assessment by healthcare staff, these prescribed programmes help patients systemically exercise at home or in the community for their rehabilitation.

Currently, Hong Kong identity card holders aged 18 or above may register as "HA Go" members. The HA will continue to develop and enhance "HA Go" by adding new features and collecting opinions from users of the app. "HA Go" supports mobile devices with iOS or Android operating systems, and can be downloaded free of charge. It is available in traditional Chinese and English. Members of the public can visit the website www3.ha.org.hk/hago/ for more information on "HA Go".



Kowloon West Region concludes operation against illegal driving of electric mobility devices

Police conducted an operation in Kowloon West Region between December 4 and 11 to combat illegal driving of electric mobility devices.

During the operation, Police arrested five males and one female, aged between 30 and 41. The devices involved were three electric scooters, two electric bicycles and one electric hoverboard. Offences included driving an unlicensed vehicle, using a motor vehicle without third party insurance, driving without a valid license and driving motorcycle without protective helmet.

Police reiterate that electric mobility devices should not be used on roads with ordinary vehicles and are not suitable for use on pavements or cycling tracks. It is an offence for any person to use unregistered and unlicensed electric mobility devices on roads, pavements or cycling tracks. Police urge the public not to drive electric mobility devices illegally.

Office of The Ombudsman announces results of direct investigation into Allocation Mechanism of Ward Offices under Housing Department

The following is issued on behalf of the Office of The Ombudsman:

The Ombudsman, Ms Winnie Chiu, today (December 12) announced the completion of a direct investigation into the Allocation Mechanism of Ward Offices under the Housing Department (HD).

The HD currently provides suitable non-domestic premises in its public rental housing (PRH)/residential estates for lease to District Council (DC) and Legislative Council (LegCo) Members as offices (ward offices). As at December 31, 2018, there were 334 ward offices in 189 PRH/residential estates under the HD, and as at May 31, 2019, the leasing rate of the HD's ward offices exceeded 96 per cent, and there were still 13 vacant ward offices available for lease by Council Members.

Under the current allocation mechanism, the HD allocates ward offices according to the following order of priority: 1) elected DC Member of the constituency concerned; 2) other DC Members of the district; 3) LegCo Members returned by the geographical constituency concerned; and 4) LegCo Members returned by functional constituencies.

The Office of The Ombudsman has in the past received comments from individual Council Members, criticising the HD's current allocation mechanism as being unfair. While some Council Members have not been allocated any ward office, some other Council Members who are already sitting tenants can still lease an additional ward office by virtue of their higher priority status. As a result, Council Members in lower priority categories may find it difficult to be allocated a ward office.

Figures provided by the HD show that, for the current terms of the DCs and LegCo, the successful allocation rates of ward offices for the Council Members of all the four priority categories were as high as 80 per cent or above (in terms of number of Council Members who had applied for leasing a ward office). Even for LegCo Members returned by functional constituencies, who were given the lowest priority under the allocation mechanism, the successful allocation rate was over 90 per cent. This reflects that the current allocation mechanism has not kept LegCo Members returned by functional constituencies from leasing the HD's ward offices.

Individual Council Members opined that the HD should consider allocating vacant ward offices first to those Council Members who have not been allocated any ward office. On this proposal, the HD had sought separately the

views of LegCo Members and DC Members of different political parties. The views collected, however, unanimously objected to the proposal. This shows a lack of consensus among Council Members in that regard.

On the other hand, the Office has received complaints from Council Members about unfairness of the joint tenancy arrangement for ward offices, as it allows the original Council Member tenant to, before terminating his or her tenancy of a ward office, circumvent the HD's allocation mechanism by adding another Council Member as a joint tenant of the ward office, thus resulting in de facto "inheritance of tenancy". The Office is glad to note that in response to its recommendations, the HD has revised the joint tenancy arrangement for ward offices to plug the loophole.

Overall, the Office considers that the HD's existing allocation mechanism of ward offices has already taken into account the needs and limitations of Council Members of different priority categories, and the allocation arrangements are, by and large, appropriate. That said, the HD should continue to review in a timely manner the arrangements for allocating ward offices and make revisions where necessary.

The Office understands that Council Members of different priority categories hope to set up ward offices in PRH/residential estates under the HD to serve the public. However, the HD only added 21 new ward offices in its PRH/residential estates in the past four years. In the long run, the HD should continue to study ways to increase the supply of ward offices as far as practicable so that more Council Members can set up service points in the HD's PRH/residential estates.

Furthermore, the HD should continue to review regularly the situation of vacant ward offices, and actively study the feasibility of putting the ward offices found to have been vacant for a long period to other uses for better utilisation of resources.

The full investigation report has been uploaded to the website of the Office of The Ombudsman at www.ombudsman.hk for public information.

**Office of The Ombudsman announces
results of direct investigation into
Leisure and Cultural Services
Department's arrangements for**

depositing layout plans of public pleasure grounds in Land Registry (with photo)

The following is issued on behalf of the Office of The Ombudsman:

The Ombudsman, Ms Winnie Chiu, today (December 12) announced the completion of a direct investigation into the arrangements for depositing layout plans of public pleasure grounds (PPGs) in the Land Registry (LR) by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD). The investigation report has been uploaded to the website of the Office of The Ombudsman (www.ombudsman.hk) for public information.

Earlier on, there were media reports about the LCSD's failure to deposit the layout plans of some 450 (subsequently confirmed to be 583) PPGs in the LR in accordance with the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance. As a result, the legal basis for enforcement actions by its staff and the Tobacco and Alcohol Control Office under the Department of Health in the PPGs concerned was questioned.

The Office's investigation has revealed that before the omissions were discovered, the LCSD had neither drawn up clear guidelines on depositing layout plans of PPGs nor actively monitored the progress of such work and kept records. Moreover, there was a lack of effective communication and collaboration between the LCSD and the Lands Department (LandsD). Consequently, when some PPGs were opened to the public, their layout plans were not yet deposited. The Office has also found that, although the LCSD has reviewed the arrangements and revised the guidelines after depositing all the missing layout plans, it is still possible that deposit procedures are yet to be completed at the time a venue is opened for public use.

In respect of the inadequacies on the part of the LCSD, The Ombudsman has made seven improvement recommendations, which include urging the LCSD to take the lead and further review the current procedures for depositing layout plans proactively with the LandsD in order to resolve the issue completely.



Labour Department enhances Youth Employment and Training Programme to support youth employment

The Labour Department (LD) launched measures to enhance the Youth Employment and Training Programme (YETP) today (December 12) with the aim of improving the employability of young people and assisting their entry into the labour market.

The enhancement measures include doubling the trainee quota and increasing the subsidy payable to participating non-governmental organisations (NGOs) under the Career Kick-start employment project of the YETP, raising the amount of workplace attachment training allowance payable to trainees under the YETP, proactively canvassing paid on-the-job training vacancies and collaborating with employers in organising thematic job fairs to help young people with little or no work experience in searching for suitable jobs.

Career Kick-start offers 12-month paid on-the-job training to young people with special employment difficulties, including those with low educational attainment, emotional or behavioural problems, learning difficulties and prolonged unemployment, through placements in NGOs with a view to enhancing their employability.

A new phase of Career Kick-start will be open for participating NGOs to nominate from tomorrow (December 13) to February 3, 2020, suitable young people to join the project. Under this new phase, the amount of monthly subsidy payable to the relevant organisations will be increased from \$8,300 to \$9,000 per trainee to encourage NGOs in making nominations. Moreover, the current trainee quota of 100 will be doubled to 200 for the new phase to benefit more young people.

A spokesman for the LD said, "The LD has been collaborating with different private enterprises, public organisations, government departments and social services organisations in providing workplace attachment training opportunities for young people under the YETP."

The training allowance for trainees who participate in one-month workplace attachment training on or after January 1, 2020, with an attendance rate of 80 per cent or above will be raised from the existing amount of \$4,500 to \$5,800. The enhancement aims to further encourage young people to undergo workplace attachment training in order to acquire practical work experience, explore their potential and gain employment opportunities.

The spokesman added, "We will also proactively canvass suitable and attractive paid on-the-job training vacancies and collaborate with employers

in organising thematic job fairs so as to provide young people with diversified employment opportunities and assist employers in recruiting talent."

The YETP provides a comprehensive job search platform with one-stop and diversified pre-employment and on-the-job training for young school leavers aged 15 to 24 with educational attainment at sub-degree level or below. The programme enables young people to better understand themselves and their work aptitudes while enriching their job skills and experience for better employability.

Enrolment for the YETP is free of charge on a year-round basis, without minimum academic qualification requirements. The services provided by the YETP include pre-employment training, one-month workplace attachment training, on-the-job salaried training for six to 12 months and an off-the-job vocational training allowance, as well as 12-month case management services provided by registered social workers. Trainees will be provided with personalised career guidance, job search assistance and employment support. All eligible young people are welcome to apply.

For details, please visit the YETP's website at www.yes.labour.gov.hk. The LD has also set up a Youth Employment Services hotline at 2112 9932 to provide a one-stop enquiry service on the programme and receive training vacancies from employers.