

LCQ4: Manpower of Police

Following is a question by Dr the Hon So Cheung-wing and a reply by the Secretary for Security, Mr Tang Ping-keung, in the Legislative Council today (May 28):

Question:

It is learnt that the vacancy situation of the Police remains serious. As at March 31 this year, while the establishment of police officers was 33 090, the strength was 27 325. There was still a shortfall of 5 765 police officers, representing a vacancy rate of 17.4 per cent. Some members of the public are worried that the relevant situation will affect the law enforcement efficiency and the law and order situation of Hong Kong in the long run. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the specific vacancy situation of various ranks in the Police at present, and the target numbers of recruitment of police officers of various ranks this year; when all the vacancies are expected to be filled;

(2) whether it has studied the reasons why the Police are currently unable to recruit sufficient manpower, and the impact of the reduction in the civil service establishment proposed in the Budget for this financial year on the manpower of the Police; whether it has assessed the actual impact of the manpower shortage on police duties (such as frontline patrol); and

(3) whether the Police have explored the use of the latest technologies, such as artificial intelligence and automated equipment, to assist in the police work, thereby reducing the manpower demand; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

To attract more high calibre candidates who have the competence to become a police officer, the affection for the Motherland and Hong Kong, and the passion to serve the public, to join the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF), the HKPF has adopted proactive and multi-pronged recruitment strategies. By removing institutional barriers and expanding the recruitment network, the HKPF is continuously and proactively attracting talents to join the Force to serve the community. Meanwhile, the HKPF is actively promoting smart policing by leveraging the latest technologies to enhance the efficiency of police work.

My reply to the Member's question is as follows:

(1) As at March 31, 2025, the numbers of vacancies for the grades of rank and file, inspectorate officers and gazetted officers (i.e. Superintendents and above) in the HKPF were 5 500, 236 and 29 respectively. The overall number of vacancies was 5 765, representing a vacancy rate of about 17.4 per cent,

which is similar to the figures over the past three years.

In setting the recruitment targets, the HKPF will review its manpower deployment, operational needs and training resources, and will take into account factors such as the overall environment of the community and the labour market. For the 2025-26 financial year, the HKPF has the target of recruiting 130 probationary inspectors and 1 140 police constables.

To enhance the effectiveness of recruitment, the HKPF has adopted a multi-pronged approach. In addition to conducting recruitment exercises throughout the year, the HKPF organises and participates in various recruitment activities on a regular basis. Furthermore, the HKPF strives to optimise the application and selection mechanism. The "2-in-1 Express" for police constables, launched in September 2024, allows candidates with outstanding performance in group interviews to attend the final interview on the same day, thereby shortening the interview process.

In addition, the HKPF has expanded its recruitment network by conducting recruitment exercises at universities worldwide. The Police University Recruitment Express (PURE) is organised at 12 local universities to provide application information and conduct on-site recruitment selection procedures for students. In recent years, PURE has been extended to Mainland universities. The HKPF visited places including Beijing, Guangdong and Shanghai to recruit Hong Kong students studying on the Mainland. In December last year, PURE was further extended to overseas universities. One-stop comprehensive selection procedures are arranged for Hong Kong students studying overseas during their vacation in Hong Kong.

The Police Cadet Training Programme was launched in 2024. Collaborating with three post-secondary institutions, the HKPF has launched a full-time one-year programme of "Diploma of Applied Education – Police Cadet Training". The programme has been designed as a seamless bridging course for graduates to proceed to the Recruit Police Constable foundation training programme.

(2) According to the Report on 2023 Manpower Projection published by the Government in November 2024, there will be serious manpower shortages in Hong Kong in the next five years. Facing changes in Hong Kong's total labour force, all industries are trawling for talents and the HKPF is of no exception. The HKPF focuses on quality over quantity in recruitment. This ensures that every prospective member joining the HKPF shares the Force's values and embodies the Force's motto of "Serving Hong Kong with Honour, Duty and Loyalty." In fact, we notice a rise in the number of people applying to join the HKPF in recent years, showing that the recruitment strategies mentioned above are effective.

The HKPF will tie in with the Government's requirement to reduce the civil service establishment by 2 per cent each in 2026-27 and 2027-28, while continuing to review and assess the effectiveness of using different resources. By re-establishing work priorities, appropriately redeploying staff and using technologies for handling police work to enhance operational effectiveness, the HKPF will ensure that the adjustment in establishment will not affect the efficiency and provision of services, and that it will

continue to provide the public with high quality and efficient policing services.

(3) The HKPF effectively utilises advanced technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI) and automated equipment, to provide better services for the public, as well as enhance efficiency and reduce manpower requirements. Examples include the following:

(i) The HKPF has implemented the "SmartView", under which closed circuit televisions are installed in phases at various locations across the territory where crime rate and pedestrian flow are higher. This initiative makes use of technologies to enhance the effectiveness in preventing and fighting crime. As at end-April 2025, "SmartView" has assisted the HKPF in detecting 282 criminal cases and arresting 513 persons. The HKPF utilised the "Crowd Size Analysis System" for the first time during the 2024 Halloween events in Lan Kwai Fong. The system used AI and video analytic functions to perform real-time crowd density assessments.

(ii) The HKPF will start issuing eTraffic Tickets from June 15. In the long run, physical penalty tickets will be cancelled and replaced by a paperless penalty ticket system. This will effectively enhance the enforcement procedures and efficiency, so that manpower can be deployed for other traffic management and traffic enforcement work.

(iii) The Smart Traffic Management System has been developed and a pilot scheme is expected to roll out in the second half of 2025. The system will collect real-time traffic data, such as traffic flow and the driving and parking habits of drivers, in the business area in Kwun Tong. Based on AI analytics, the system will make recommendations on precise allocation of Police resources, thus enabling the HKPF to take targeted and prioritised enforcement actions at critical locations and deploy manpower effectively.

(iv) The HKPF has implemented the pilot scheme for "Drones Policing" in the Border District and Kowloon West Region on May 23. Drones are used for patrolling and autonomous execution of missions to enhance patrol efficiency. For example, the infrared detection system is used to detect the presence of suspicious persons lingering or hiding at places remotely located or at difficult terrains.

Looking forward, the HKPF will continue to optimise and develop smart policing and will actively leverage technologies to enhance operational efficiency and effectiveness in police work, with a view to providing better services for the public and reduce manpower requirements.

Thank you, President.

Temporary closure of Yuen Long Swimming Pool

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible and repeat it at regular intervals:

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (May 28) that, due to suspension of water supply resulting from a water pipe burst in the vicinity, Yuen Long Swimming Pool in Yuen Long District has been temporarily closed until further notice.

LCQ8: A dedicated "technology enterprises channel"

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Tan Yueheng and a written reply by the Acting Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr Joseph Chan, in the Legislative Council today (May 28):

Question:

The Securities and Futures Commission and the Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited (HKEX) jointly established a dedicated "technology enterprises channel" (TECH) to facilitate the listing application of specialist technology companies and biotechnology companies, as well as allowing them to submit listing applications on a confidential basis. There are views that the establishment of TECH is a key measure for Hong Kong to consolidate its position as a global hub for capital of technology and innovation, effectively highlighting the advantages of listing in Hong Kong. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether it knows the expected outcomes of TECH;
- (2) whether it knows the differences between TECH and the original listing mechanism for technology enterprises, and how HKEX will strengthen the co-ordinated operation of the two;
- (3) whether it knows how HKEX will optimise the structure and vetting procedures of its Listing Division to cope with the large number of service applications upon establishment of TECH, thereby enhancing the attractiveness of the relevant policies; and

(4) as TECH allows submission of listing applications by technology enterprises on a confidential basis so as to reduce the risks associated with premature disclosure of their specialist technology, whether the Government knows how HKEX will strike a balance between protecting the intellectual property rights of technology companies and maintaining market transparency?

Reply:

President,

Hong Kong has always been committed to attracting high-quality companies from around the world to list in Hong Kong. To further assist specialist technology (Note) and biotechnology companies in raising funds and developing their businesses, the 2025-26 Budget announced that the Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited (HKEX) will take forward the establishment of a dedicated "technology enterprises channel" (TECH) to facilitate relevant enterprises to prepare for listing applications. The Securities and Futures Commission (SFC) will also facilitate for a smoother application process. In consultation with HKEX and the SFC, the reply to the four parts of the question is as follows:

(1) to (3) The main purpose of launching TECH is to provide tailored guidance to specialist technology companies and biotechnology companies before they submit their listing applications, thereby providing support to these prospective issuers in their listing preparation process. HKEX and the SFC formally launched TECH on May 6, 2025. The market response has been enthusiastic, with HKEX receiving a large number of enquiries, achieving the anticipated result.

Compared to general applications, TECH can address key matters of these companies at the initial stage of listing preparation and help them better understand the applicable Listing Rules, enabling them to prepare listing materials more effectively. Specifically, TECH includes the following measures:

(a) a specialised team of HKEX to provide concrete guidance on the eligibility and suitability for listing, such as acceptable sectors for specialist technology industries, requirements for core products, criteria for acceptance of other biotech products or clinical trials conducted under the regulation of different authorities, as well as considerations for accepting new sectors or industries outside the current scope as specialist technology industries;

(b) to proactively approach prospective applicants to gain a better understanding of the company's business and facilitate their comprehension of the Listing Rules' requirements; and

(c) to discuss with applicants on other Listing Rules-related questions and provide preliminary guidance.

Depending on the number of applications, HKEX and the SFC will flexibly

deploy their manpower to meet the demand for vetting applications and other services, ensuring that other applications are not affected.

At the same time, HKEX and the SFC are taking forward enhancements to the listing regime, including reviewing specific requirements for primary listing, secondary listing and dual primary listing as well as post-listing regulatory mechanism, improving the overall vetting regulation for enterprises seeking to list in Hong Kong, with a view to enhancing the vitality, competitiveness and resilience of Hong Kong's listing platform. The relevant measures will be announced with market consultation to be conducted as appropriate once they are ready.

(4) Compared to other industries, specialist technology companies and biotechnology companies are typically companies that are in their early stage of development or have yet to commercially launch their products. Premature and prolonged disclosure of information on these companies' operational strategies, proprietary technologies, and listing plans may pose substantial commercial risks to these companies. To assist these companies in mitigating relevant risks, HKEX allows applicants seeking a listing under Chapters 18C (i.e. specialist technology companies) and 18A (i.e. biotechnology companies) of the Listing Rules to submit their applications confidentially.

To maintain transparency and assist investors in considering the subscription of relevant shares, the applicants concerned are still required to publish relevant information of the company after the hearing of the Listing Committee, which includes post-hearing information packs and overall co-ordinator announcement, covering the company's organisation, business operations, directors and senior management, major shareholders, share capital, financial reports, etc. The measure aims to promote market development, respond to the practical needs of issuers, and adapt to global market changes, while ensuring that the listing regime safeguards the interests of investors.

Note: The specialist technology industries includes next-generation information technology, advanced hardware and software, advance materials, new energy and environmental protection, and new food and agriculture technologies.

LCQ5: Construction of a new acute hospital

Following is a question by the Hon Yang Wing-kit and a reply by the Acting Secretary for Health, Dr Libby Lee, in the Legislative Council today (May 28):

Question:

In the reply to my question raised when examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2025-2026, the Government has indicated that in further planning for the Second Hospital Development Plan, the redevelopment or expansion of existing hospitals and the construction of new hospitals to meet demand, including the feasibility of identifying a site for construction of a new acute hospital in Wong Tai Sin, will be options considered by the authorities. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the latest progress in identifying a site for construction of a new acute hospital in Wong Tai Sin; whether it has studied the feasibility of the establishment of an acute hospital, in the form of a cluster of hospital buildings, in the context of the expansion of the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals Wong Tai Sin Hospital, the vacant land made available after the relocation of the Diamond Hill Service Reservoirs, together with Our Lady of Maryknoll Hospital; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) whether it has studied the feasibility of construction of an acute hospital at other sites (including the recreation ground at Heng Lam Street, Lok Fu); if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) as it is learnt that there is a shortage of healthcare manpower in Hong Kong, whether the Government has assessed the time frame for having sufficient healthcare manpower to meet the needs of a new acute hospital, and whether it will expedite the introduction of non-locally trained healthcare personnel?

Reply:

President,

Having consulted the Hospital Authority (HA), the consolidated reply to the question raised by the Hon Yang Wing-kit is as follows:

(1) and (2) The HA plans and develops various public healthcare services on a cluster basis, taking into account a number of factors, including the increase in service demand as a result of population growth and demographic changes, rising prevalence of chronic diseases, technology advancement, manpower availability as well as service arrangement of the clusters.

At present, Wong Tai Sin is within the catchment area of the Kowloon Central Cluster (KCC). There are nine hospitals/healthcare institutions in the KCC providing healthcare services to the residents of the district, including the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) and the Kwong Wah Hospital (KWH) which are both equipped with Accident and Emergency (A&E) departments. In future, A&E services for the district will be provided by the New Acute Hospital at the Kai Tak Development Area (NAH) and the KWH. A service network with other extended care hospitals in the cluster will be formed to provide comprehensive healthcare services continuously to the catchment population of the KCC, including the residents of Wong Tai Sin.

In view of the healthcare services demand of Kowloon region, the HA commenced the refurbishment project of Hong Kong Buddhist Hospital in 2015 and completed all works in 2019, which provided 130 additional convalescence and rehabilitation inpatient beds as well as other medical facilities. The HA is also implementing various hospital development projects in the three Kowloon clusters under the First Hospital Development Plan (HDP). Among the projects, the new Phase 1 Building of the redevelopment project of the KWH was completed at the end of 2022, providing a construction floor area of about 145 000 square metres. As compared to the old KWH, four operating theatres, one cardiac catheterisation room, four endoscopy rooms, one magnetic resonance imaging room and a one-stop ambulatory care centre are provided additionally. For the new A&E department, which is approximately three times the size of the old one, it has an additional Emergency Medicine Ward with 40 beds, isolation areas for infection control and other supporting facilities. With the commissioning of the new A&E department, the average waiting time for patients who, after treatment at the A&E department of the KWH, need to wait before being admitted to the hospital has dropped by about 24 per cent in the third and fourth quarters of 2024 as compared with the same period in 2023. In addition, the NAH will replace the role of the QEH as an acute hospital upon completion and provide 2 400 beds and 37 operating theatres, which are more than the existing about 1 940 acute and extended care beds and 24 operating theatres in the QEH. The gross floor area of the A&E department of the NAH is about thrice the current area of that of the QEH.

When planning A&E services, the HA will ensure that the A&E department is located within a reasonable distance from its catchment areas. For example, after the commissioning of the NAH, the driving distance and time from major housing estates in Wong Tai Sin District to the NAH will be shorter than for those to the QEH currently.

The Government announced in 2018 that it has invited the HA to commence planning for the Second HDP, which was to be implemented to meet the service demand up to 2036. With the changes in the planning and development situation in Hong Kong, for example, its territory-wide and regional planning and development strategies, the latest corresponding change in population projections, etc., the Health Bureau and the HA are currently reviewing the Second HDP by adopting a planning horizon of up to 2041 and beyond, and to project the healthcare services demand and consider the supply and conditions of the land required (including the feasibility of constructing a hospital and the associated supporting facilities on the site concerned), for optimising the Second HDP. The Government also considers factors such as the construction and development need of individual hospitals and its cost-effectiveness, and the convenience of public access to healthcare services under various major transport infrastructure development plans for determining the distribution, scale and priority, etc. of various hospital development projects under the Second HDP. As for the Second HDP, we would prudently consider various factors including whether to continue with the redevelopment or expansion of the existing hospital(s) in Kowloon, or to construct new hospital(s) for meeting the demand of healthcare services. The

consideration of building a new acute hospital in Wong Tai Sin is subject to the availability of suitable site(s) and feasibility study(ies).

After the completion of the review of the Second HDP, the Government will announce the details of the hospital development projects, including those in the Kowloon region, in due course.

(3) In the course of planning and implementing the HDPs, the HA will forecast future service demand and corresponding healthcare manpower requirements and make corresponding assessments and planning, with a view to flexibly deploying manpower and recruiting additional staff in a timely manner according to service plans during the commissioning of new hospital facilities and phased introduction of services to meet service demands. The HA will also make good use of the revised legal framework to attract non-locally trained healthcare talent from different regions to work in Hong Kong, thereby expanding the talent pool of Hong Kong's public healthcare system to meet the increasing service demands.

Regarding the overall healthcare manpower of Hong Kong, the Government conducts a healthcare manpower projection exercise every three years to update, on a regular basis, the supply and demand figures of the 13 healthcare professionals which are subject to statutory registration, in step with the triennial planning cycle of the University Grants Committee, which provides an important reference for the Government to determine the training quotas for various healthcare professions. The results of the last round of Healthcare Manpower Projection 2023 were announced in July 2024 and a new round of the projection exercise has also commenced. As put forward explicitly in the Chief Executive's 2024 Policy Address, the Government will promote the use of the legislation passed earlier to proactively admit more non-*'*local doctors and nurses, etc. to enhance manpower. The Government has also introduced bill to the Legislative Council to make amendments to the relevant legislation on the admission of qualified non-*'*locally trained supplementary medical professionals.

Thank you, President.

LCQ15: Overseas training for civil servants

Following is a question by the Hon Maggie Chan and a written reply by the Secretary for the Civil Service, Mrs Ingrid Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (May 28):

Question:

In the reply to my question on the Estimates of Expenditure 2025-2026, the Government has indicated that the revised estimate of expenditure of the Civil Service College (CSC) for various training and development areas in 2024-2025 is \$81.6 million. In addition, apart from the Civil Service Bureau (CSB), individual departments or grades will also arrange for their staff to attend overseas training, duty visits, and conferences. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the estimated expenditure of the CSB on overseas training, other than exchanges in the Mainland, in the past year; and among which, the respective percentages of spending on tuition fees, round-trip travel and accommodation, as well as study grants;

(2) regarding the arrangements for civil servants to attend overseas training, duty visits, and conferences, whether the CSB has formulated detailed selection criteria in respect of the countries, institutions, courses or nature of training concerned; if so, of the details;

(3) given that individual departments or grades will arrange for civil servants to attend overseas training, of the respective percentages of the expenditure of these departments on the relevant overseas training in their total expenditure in the past year; whether various departments have adopted consistent criteria for selecting overseas training programmes, and whether the CSB has issued the relevant selection criteria to the departments;

(4) given that in reply to my question on the Estimates of Expenditure 2025-2026, the Government has indicated that the CSB does not have the relevant expenditure and participant figures in respect of the arrangements made by individual departments or grades for their staff to attend overseas training, duty visits, and conferences, whether the CSB has plans to collect or consolidate the aforesaid information and make public the information as appropriate to enable the public to have a full picture of the situation of civil service training as well as the detailed expenditure; and

(5) given that in reply to my question on the Estimates of Expenditure 2025-2026, the Government has indicated that the CSC collects feedback from the participating civil servants through questionnaires or interviews upon completion of the overseas training, and requires them to submit a study report to evaluate the effectiveness of the training, of the standards adopted for such evaluation methods; how to ensure that the outcome of the evaluation can objectively reflect the long-term effectiveness of overseas training?

Reply:

President,

The Civil Service Bureau (CSB) spares no effort in strengthening civil service training through a variety of activities to enhance civil servants' international perspectives and leadership capabilities, enabling them to support the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government in leveraging Hong Kong's strengths to connect our country with the world.

The replies to the respective parts of the question are as follows:

(1) Regarding overseas training, the CSB arranges for promising middle and senior-ranking civil servants to attend training at overseas institutions. In 2024, the CSB arranged for 29 civil servants to attend programmes on public administration, international relations, AI, and leadership in France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Switzerland, and Singapore. In 2024-25, the actual expenditure on overseas training incurred by the CSB was about \$9 million, with expenses for tuition fees, travel and accommodation expenses, and study grants accounting for 79 per cent, 19 per cent, and two per cent respectively.

(2) to (4) Apart from the CSB, individual departments/grades also arrange for their civil servants to attend training overseas. The business and staff development needs vary among departments/grades. Departmental/grade management will take into account the operation and development of the organisation in assessing their staff training needs, and consider factors such as teaching quality, trainers' qualifications, relevant experience, programme content and delivery mode, and fees, in order to select suitable training institutes and courses. Therefore, it would be inappropriate to impose uniform standards in this regard. The related training expenses are borne by the respective departments.

The CSB maintains close communication with departments/grades for an overall view of their staff training plans and implementation, providing timely advice to assist departments in continually enhancing their work on human resource development. The current approach is considered appropriate. The CSB will continue to keep the public informed of the overall situation and latest developments in civil service training through various channels, such as updates to the relevant Legislative Council Panel, websites, and social media platforms. As for overseas duty visits and conferences arranged by individual departments, since these fall within their own business scope, they have to be handled by the respective departments.

(5) Following the completion of overseas training, the Civil Service College (CSC) will collect feedback from participants through questionnaires and interviews, focusing on aspects such as course design and content, teaching methods, speakers' performance, and interactions among participants. The CSC will also require participants to submit individual study reports for a deeper understanding of their learning insights and reflections, and the application of the learning to their work. Additionally, the CSC will require participants to share their learning insights with colleagues, with a view to benefitting more civil servants and fostering a culture of continuous learning in the civil service. Furthermore, the CSC will communicate with the departmental management to understand the learning outcomes of participants in areas such as perspectives, service mindset, and work performance. Departments will also continually assess the participants' work performance, development potential, and the need for further training.