

LCQ21: Adoption of children

Following is a question by the Hon Yung Hoi-yan and a written reply by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun, in the Legislative Council today (June 21):

Question:

Regarding the adoption of children, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) as it is learnt that the criteria for vetting and approving applications for becoming foster parents and adoptive parents are different, of the relevant details; the criteria based on which the Government decides to provide foster care service or adoption service for children in need;

(2) as there are views reflecting that it will be easier and faster to adopt a child successfully if there is a foreign family member in the family waiting to adopt a child, (i) of the current number of families waiting to adopt children, (ii) the current number of adoptive families with foreign family members, and (iii) whether it has gained an understanding of the causes of such phenomenon; and

(3) whether it will consider and study dispensing with the need for the Social Welfare Department to suspend the foster care service originally provided by foster parents after they have applied for adoption of the children concerned; if so, of the relevant requirements; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

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

(1) The purpose of adoption service is to identify and secure permanent and stable homes for children whose parents are unable or unwilling to take care of them. Once the adoption order is granted by court, adoptees enjoy the rights and status legally as if they are biological children of the family, and the adoptive parents have all rights, duties, obligations and liabilities in relation to the custody, maintenance and education of the adoptees.

Foster care service is a temporary care arrangement and only provides temporary residential family care service for children whose parents cannot adequately take care of them due to special family circumstances.

It can thus be seen that adoption and foster care services are of a very different nature. The rights and responsibilities borne by the concerned families also differ considerably, hence the matching mechanisms of the two services are distinct. There are different criteria, scope and standard of assessment from the Social Welfare Department (SWD) on the applicants for the

two services, such as financial and education requirements, commitments to life-long care, criminal record check, health assessment, etc.

Generally, when the parents or legal guardians of a child encounter difficulties in child care, the SWD will assess their family conditions and assist them in providing intensive counselling and formulating the most suitable and feasible child welfare plan. The SWD will arrange foster care service for the child if he/she cannot live with his/her birth family and meanwhile render continuous counselling for the family with a view to achieving family reunion under possible circumstances. If adoption is ultimately assessed to be in the best interest of the child, the SWD will make the arrangement in accordance with the Adoption Ordinance (Cap. 290), so as to provide the child with a permanent family at the soonest possible time.

(2) As at end-March 2023, there are 122 approved prospective adoptive families, amongst which 61 per cent are Chinese and 39 per cent are non-Chinese or mixed families with Chinese and different ethnicities. In 2022-23, out of the 42 cases where adoption orders are granted by the local court, 62 per cent are Chinese families whereas 38 per cent are non-Chinese or mixed families with Chinese and different ethnicities. The figures reflect that the success rate of adoption application is not relevant to the ethnicity of family members.

(3) Under the existing arrangement, when foster families are undergoing adoption application, the SWD will not cease their foster care service. However, if it is found that the foster family has purposefully exerted negative influence on the child's views towards adoption, hindered the fairness of matching for adoption, disrupted or obstructed the long-term welfare plan for the child, etc, the Director of Social Welfare as the legal guardian of the child concerned can take appropriate actions, such as arranging alternative placement for the child, in order to safeguard the child's best interest.

Adjustment in ceiling prices for dedicated LPG filling stations in July 2023

The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) today (June 21) announced an adjustment to the auto-LPG (liquefied petroleum gas) ceiling prices for dedicated LPG filling stations from July 1 to July 31, 2023, in accordance with the terms and conditions of the contracts of the dedicated LPG filling stations.

A department spokesman said that the adjustment on July 1, 2023, would reflect the movement of the LPG international prices in June 2023 and the new

LPG operating price adjustment mechanism adopted after renovation of dedicated LPG filling stations. The overall adjusted auto-LPG ceiling prices for dedicated LPG filling stations would range from \$2.91 to \$3.78 per litre.

The spokesman said that the auto-LPG ceiling prices were adjusted according to a specified pricing formula. The formula comprises two elements – the LPG international price and the LPG operating price. The LPG international price refers to the LPG international price of the preceding month. The LPG operating price under the new adjustment mechanism is adjusted on February 1 and June 1 annually according to the average movement of the Composite Consumer Price Index and the Nominal Wage Index. The latest year-on-year rates of change of the Composite Consumer Price Index and the Nominal Wage Index are +1.9 per cent and +2.2 per cent respectively.

The auto-LPG ceiling prices for respective dedicated LPG filling stations in July 2023 are as follows:

Location of Dedicated LPG Filling Station	Auto-LPG Ceiling Price in July 2023 (HK\$/litre)	Auto-LPG Ceiling Price in June 2023 (HK\$/litre)
Kwai On Road, Kwai Chung	2.91	3.76
Sham Mong Road, Mei Foo	2.97	3.79
Wai Lok Street, Kwun Tong	3.03	3.71
Cheung Yip Street, Kowloon Bay	3.07	3.76
Ngo Cheung Road, West Kowloon	3.08	4.14
Yuen Chau Tsai, Tai Po	3.13	3.71
Tak Yip Street, Yuen Long	3.23	3.56
Hang Yiu Street, Ma On Shan	3.25	3.56
Marsh Road, Wan Chai	3.26	3.78
Fung Mat Road, Sheung Wan	3.29	3.71

Yip Wong Road, Tuen Mun	3.38	3.79
Fung Yip Street, Chai Wan	3.78	4.14

The spokesman said that the details of the LPG international price and the auto-LPG ceiling price for each dedicated LPG filling station had been uploaded to the EMSD website (www.emsd.gov.hk) and posted at dedicated LPG filling stations to enable the trades to monitor the price adjustment.

Details of the pricing adjustment mechanism for dedicated LPG filling stations can also be viewed under the "What's New" section of the EMSD website at www.emsd.gov.hk/en/what_s_new/current/index.html.

[Applications selected for 48th personalised vehicle registration marks exercise](#)

The Transport Department (TD) announced today (June 21) that the application numbers of the 1 500 personalised vehicle registration mark (PVRM) applications selected by lot for the 48th exercise have been published on its website (www.td.gov.hk/en/public_services/vehicle_registration_mark/pvrms_application/index.html) and posted on the notice boards of the TD's licensing offices.

"The applicants have already been sent an acknowledgement of receipt bearing an application number. They may check the list to see whether their applications have been selected. Applicants will also be notified of the ballot results by post in batches," a department spokesman said.

The department will later check the proposed PVRMs selected against the basic combination requirements. If, among the selected applications, more than one applicant proposes the same PVRM, only the one on which the lot falls first out of those applications will be further processed.

If the selected PVRMs meet the basic requirements, the department will send notices by registered mail to the applicants in batches, requiring them to pay a deposit of \$5,000 within the period specified in the notice. If an applicant fails to pay the deposit within that period, his or her application will be cancelled automatically and will not be further processed.

Upon receipt of the deposit, the Commissioner for Transport will

determine, with the assistance of a vetting committee, whether an application should be approved or rejected. PVRMs approved in the 48th exercise will be put up for auction in batches. Auction details will be published in newspapers and on the TD's website in due course.

For enquiries, applicants can call the TD hotline at 2804 2600.

Red flag hoisted at Hung Shing Yeh Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (June 21) that due to big waves, the red flag has been hoisted at Hung Shing Yeh Beach in Islands District. Beachgoers are advised not to swim at the beach.

Auctions of traditional vehicle registration marks to be held on July 8 and 9

The Transport Department (TD) today (June 21) announced that two auctions of traditional vehicle registration marks will be held on July 8 (Saturday) and 9 (Sunday), in Meeting Room S421, L4, Old Wing, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, Wan Chai.

"A total of 340 vehicle registration marks will be put up for public sale at each auction. The lists of marks have been uploaded to the department's website, www.td.gov.hk/en/public_services/vehicle_registration_mark/index.html," a department spokesman said.

Applicants who have paid a deposit of \$1,000 to reserve a mark for auction should also participate in the bidding (including the first bid at the reserve price of \$1,000). Otherwise, the mark concerned may be sold to another bidder at the reserve price.

People who wish to participate in the bidding at the auction should take note of the following important points:

(1) Successful bidders are required to produce the following documents for completion of registration and payment procedures immediately after the successful bidding:

(i) the identity document of the successful bidder;

(ii) the identity document of the purchaser if it is different from the successful bidder;

(iii) a copy of the Certificate of Incorporation if the purchaser is a body corporate; and

(iv) a crossed cheque made payable to "The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region" or "The Government of the HKSAR". (For an auctioned mark paid for by cheque, the first three working days after the date of auction will be required for cheque clearance confirmation before processing of the application for mark assignment can be completed.)

Successful bidders can also pay through the Easy Pay System (EPS). Payment by post-dated cheques, cash or other methods will not be accepted.

(2) Purchasers must make payment of the purchase price through EPS or by crossed cheque and complete the Memorandum of Sale of Registration Mark immediately after the bidding. Subsequent alteration of the particulars in the memorandum will not be permitted.

(3) A vehicle registration mark can only be assigned to a motor vehicle which is registered in the name of the purchaser. The Certificate of Incorporation must be produced immediately by the purchaser if a vehicle registration mark purchased is to be registered under the name of a body corporate.

(4) Special registration marks are non-transferable. Where the ownership of a motor vehicle with a special registration mark is transferred, the allocation of the special registration mark shall be cancelled.

(5) The purchaser shall, within 12 months after the date of auction, apply to the Commissioner for Transport for the registration mark to be assigned to a motor vehicle registered in the name of the purchaser. If the purchaser fails to assign the registration mark within 12 months, allocation of the mark will be cancelled and arranged for reallocation in accordance with the statutory provision without prior notice to the purchaser.

For other auction details, please refer to the Guidance Notes – Auction of Traditional Vehicle Registration Marks, which can be downloaded from the department's website,

www.td.gov.hk/en/public_services/vehicle_registration_mark/tvrm_auction/index.html.