

LCQ19: Regulation of veterinary surgeons and veterinary clinics

Following is a question by the Hon Adrian Ho and a written reply by the Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Mr Tse Chin-wan, in the Legislative Council today (June 7):

Question:

The Veterinary Surgeons Board of Hong Kong (VSB) is a statutory body established under the Veterinary Surgeons Registration Ordinance (Cap. 529) which is responsible for the regulation of the practice of veterinary surgery in Hong Kong. Regarding the regulation of veterinary surgeons and veterinary clinics, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of veterinary surgeons registered under Cap. 529 in each of the past five years;

(2) of the number of complaints about veterinary surgeons and veterinary clinics received by VSB in each of the past five years, and the subject matters of such complaints; among such complaints, the respective numbers of those which required the conduct of disciplinary inquiries and those in which a conviction of a disciplinary offence was obtained; the orders made by the Inquiry Committee against the veterinary surgeons convicted of disciplinary offences;

(3) of the average time taken by VSB to complete the investigation of each case in the past five years; the longest time taken for investigating the cases and the reasons for that;

(4) whether the authorities have regularly deployed staff to conduct inspections on various veterinary clinics across the territory; if so, of the timetable of the inspections conducted by the authorities in the past five years; if not, the reasons for that; and

(5) as there are views that there is insufficient transparency in VSB's current practices of only publishing on its website the orders of the disciplinary inquiries made by the Inquiry Committee within one year and publishing on an anonymous basis the records of disciplinary inquiries held in the recent three years, whether the Government will recommend or request that VSB set out clearly the information of all non-compliant veterinary surgeons and the names of veterinary clinics involved, so as to ensure the public's right to know?

Reply:

President,

The Veterinary Surgeons Board (VSB) is a statutory body established under the Veterinary Surgeons Registration Ordinance (Cap. 529) (the Ordinance), and is responsible for the regulation, registration and disciplinary control of veterinary surgeons, to ensure a high standard of veterinary services in Hong Kong. All veterinary surgeons must obtain the qualifications for registration specified under the Ordinance before practising in Hong Kong. They should also comply with the Ordinance and Code of Practice for the Guidance of Registered Veterinary Surgeons (the Code) promulgated by the VSB. The Code provides veterinary surgeons with guidelines on conduct, in various aspects including professional ethics, clinic premises and equipment, advertising and other operational details etc. If a veterinary surgeon breaches the Code, the VSB may take disciplinary actions against the surgeon.

If a complaint is received, the VSB must conduct investigation and follow up on the case according to the procedures laid down in the Ordinance and Rules of the Veterinary Surgeons Board (Disciplinary Proceedings) (the Rules). Every case should first be investigated by a Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC) of the VSB, to decide if it should be referred to an Inquiry Committee (IC) established under the Ordinance for disciplinary inquiries.

On the questions raised by the Hon Adrian Ho, we would like to reply as follows:

(1) In the past five years, the number of veterinary surgeons registered with the VSB under the Ordinance are as follows:

Year	Number of registered veterinary surgeons
2018	988
2019	1 049
2020	1 075
2021	1 090
2022	1 104

(2) In the past five years, the number of complaints received by the VSB, cases referred to IC for disciplinary inquiry after preliminary investigation and complaints found substantiated upon inquiry are tabulated as follows:

Year	Number of complaints received (Note 1)	Number of complaints not referred to IC after preliminary investigation	Number of complaints received that year that are still under preliminary investigation	Number of cases referred to IC after preliminary investigation	Number of inquiries completed (Note 2)	Number of complaints found substantiated

2018	51	44	2	5	8	7
2019 (Note 3)	41	36	2	3	2	1
2020 (Note 3)	42	33	7	2	2	2
2021	40	33	7	0	14	11
2022	59	33	26	0	8	6

Note 1: PICs are still investigating some of the complaints.

Note 2: Including cases received and referred for disciplinary inquiry before that year.

Note 3: To complement the holding of the first Election of VSB Members in 2020 in accordance with the Veterinary Surgeons Registration (Amendment) Ordinance 2015, disciplinary inquiry hearings were suspended from the second half of 2019 to the first half of 2020. Subsequent to the commencement of the amendments to the Ordinance on October 1, 2020, the VSB resumed disciplinary inquiry hearings in November 2020. In addition, inquiry hearings of some cases were repeatedly deferred due to the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic.

In the past five years, the nature of complaint cases received by the VSB involving registered veterinary surgeons and veterinary clinics are as follows:

Nature of complaints	Percentage
Disregard of professional responsibility to animals	71%
Communication with clients	11%
Medical records	5%
Charges	5%
Others	8%

In the past five years, ICs completed 34 inquiries, 27 of which were found substantiated, involving 30 veterinary surgeons having committed a disciplinary offence. Orders made by ICs in respect of these veterinary surgeons are tabulated as follows:

Relevant Order	Number of persons
Removal of name(s) of relevant veterinary surgeon(s) from the register for three months, reprimand in writing and compulsory participation in continuing professional development programme or professional seminar	1

Reprimand in writing and compulsory participation in continuing professional development programme or professional seminar	18
Reprimand in writing	11
Total	30

(3) Amongst the inquiry cases received and completed in the past five years, the average processing time was around 10 months and the longest one was about 37 months. The investigation and collection of required information and supporting evidence often take time. Processing times of complaints also depend on a number of factors, including the time required by relevant parties (the complainant and the veterinary surgeon being complained of, etc.) to provide necessary information and the complexity of the cases (e.g. whether multiple veterinary surgeons or other law enforcement agencies are involved, etc.).

Upon the reconstitution of the VSB in 2020, the membership increased from 10 to 19 and a panel of 18 assessors was set up. These members and assessors can join PICs and ICs, thus helping expedite the processing of complaints.

(4) The VSB has clear requirements and guidelines on the conduct of registered veterinary surgeons in Hong Kong. The VSB publishes the Code, leaflet and complaint form on its website, to provide the public with information about lodging complaints against veterinary surgeons with suspected professional misconduct or negligence. In addition, veterinary surgeons must hold a valid practising certificate issued by the VSB in order to provide veterinary services. The certificate must be renewed annually, and when applying for renewal, the veterinary surgeon must declare whether he has been convicted of professional misconduct in Hong Kong or elsewhere.

Currently, the VSB mainly acts on complaints and does not conduct proactive inspections. If a registered veterinary surgeon is suspected of committing a disciplinary offence, the VSB will handle the complaint seriously in accordance with the complaint mechanism and disciplinary proceedings stipulated in the Ordinance and Rules.

(5) Such arrangement was decided by the VSB after its review on publications of disciplinary orders. The Government has earlier on recommended the VSB to review the current arrangement, with reference to practices of other professional bodies, to further enhance transparency.

Speech by CE at Bauhinia Culture Forum (English only) (with photos/video)

Following is the speech by the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, at the Bauhinia Culture Forum today (June 7):

Commissioner Liu Guangyuan (Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region), Mr Wen Hongwu (General Manager of the Bauhinia Culture Group), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. I'm delighted to have this welcome opportunity to speak to you today at the Bauhinia Culture Forum.

As some of you may recall, I addressed this high-profile international gathering last June, in my capacity then as Chief Executive-elect.

A year ago, we were celebrating the 25th anniversary of both the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and the implementation of "one country, two systems", the unique principle that has been guiding our progress since Hong Kong's return to the motherland in 1997. The principle has bestowed upon us the strong support of national strategies, as well as an unparalleled connectivity with the world.

On this day, thanks to our organiser, the Bauhinia Culture Group, I'm pleased to speak to you on the occasion of the Belt and Road Initiative's 10th anniversary.

Since President Xi Jinping announced the vision of the Belt and Road in 2013, this all-embracing global initiative has inspired regional and international collaboration in policy, infrastructure, trade, finance, people-to-people bonds and much more.

Today, more than 150 countries and over 30 international organisations have signed Belt and Road agreements with our country. Together, they account for about 40 per cent of global GDP (gross domestic product) and 45 per cent of the world's merchandise trade.

The Belt and Road has now become a big, important impetus in forging ties among countries, regions and peoples. It has enabled co-operation with numerous regional and country-based development strategies, including Indonesia's Global Maritime Fulcrum, Saudi Vision 2030, and the African Union Agenda 2063, to name but a few.

Over the last decade, trade has expanded tremendously along the Belt and Road. The Mainland's trade in goods with Belt and Road-related countries has doubled, from just over US\$1 trillion in 2013 to more than US\$2 trillion in 2022, with an enviable average annual growth rate of 8 per cent. By the end

of 2022, Chinese enterprises had invested more than US\$57 billion in the economic and trade co-operation zones of Belt and Road-related countries.

With the pandemic easing, and the world largely back to normal, the future of the Belt and Road is all the more promising.

And that, ladies and gentlemen, is good news for Hong Kong, a functional platform for the Belt and Road Initiative. With our many compelling advantages under the "one country, two systems" principle, we are the Belt and Road's pivotal gateway. We make things happen.

At last year's Belt and Road Summit held here in Hong Kong, the then Vice Premier Han Zheng reaffirmed Hong Kong's role as a participant, contributor and beneficiary of the Belt and Road.

As a leading international financial centre, and the world's largest offshore Renminbi business hub, Hong Kong is committed to supporting the financing needs of Belt and Road companies and their wide-ranging projects and investments.

Beyond capital, Hong Kong is blessed with world-class professional services – from feasibility studies, project management and architectural and engineering design, to risk management, insurance, legal and arbitration services and more. Everything, in short, the Belt and Road needs to flourish.

And, of course, as the business bridge between the Mainland and the rest of the world, Hong Kong is a natural base from which to expand into thriving markets throughout the Asian region and beyond.

To seize the vast opportunities ahead, the Hong Kong SAR Government is busy renewing, and building, our links with Belt and Road countries and regions.

I am determined to pursue rewarding collaboration, between Hong Kong and economies along the Belt and Road, in trade and investment, innovation and technology, infrastructure development and a whole lot more.

In February, I led a high-level business delegation to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The Middle East region is important to the Belt and Road and its future. And I'm confident it will become increasingly important to Hong Kong and our future.

During our visit, a total of 13 MOUs (memoranda of understanding) and co-operation letters of intent were signed between Hong Kong and Middle East organisations. We also learnt the encouraging news that the Dubai International Chamber would open a new representative office in Hong Kong. Different Hong Kong companies that accompanied me on the visit are now closing in on business deals in the Middle East.

I would say that it was a great start. And we haven't stopped since then, not for a moment. A number of potential investors from the Middle East

have visited Hong Kong since our February trip, and I personally met a lot of them. They include key decision makers from family offices. Many of them have shown keen interest in investing in Hong Kong during our meetings.

Just over a week ago, the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, led by its Chief Executive Eddie Yue, and the Central Bank of the UAE, met in Abu Dhabi. The two central banks came away agreeing to boost co-operation in three significant areas: financial infrastructure, financial market connectivity, and virtual asset regulations and development.

They also held a seminar focused on key opportunities between Hong Kong and the UAE, and a panel discussion attended by some 80 senior representatives from more than 50 UAE financial institutions and corporations. The heads of major Hong Kong banks also took part.

I am pleased to note, as well, that different Hong Kong business delegations have visited the Middle East to boost our economic co-operation, and explored opportunities with some of the first countries to join the Belt and Road Initiative.

Ladies and gentlemen, when I spoke to you this time last year, I promised that my governing team would be results-driven, with a strong team spirit of collaboration and unity.

A year on, we remain committed to realising our goal – of making a decidedly positive difference for the economy, and the people, of Hong Kong.

My team and I look forward to promoting Hong Kong to other Belt and Road countries and regions. They include our close trading partners, the 10 member states of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations). They also include countries in Central Asia, Eastern Europe, Africa and all the other economies looking to do business with Hong Kong, our country and the flourishing Asian region.

For those of you looking for the right partners to capitalise on Belt and Road opportunities, join us here in Hong Kong at the eighth Belt and Road Summit, on September 13 and 14.

Jointly organised by the Hong Kong SAR Government and the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, the Belt and Road Summit is renowned as one of the largest and most important Belt and Road business and investment platforms for enterprises from Hong Kong, the Mainland and overseas.

The past seven editions of the Summit have attracted over 3 800 business-matching sessions, and attracted around 33 000 participants and sign-ups from over 80 countries and regions.

Connectivity is at the heart of the Belt and Road Initiative. With the unwavering support of our country, and the manifold advantages we can offer, Hong Kong will continue to do what Hong Kong does best: connecting countries and economies, companies and people everywhere, to drive the high-quality

development of our country and the world.

On that note, I wish you all a rewarding Forum and the best of business, and health, in the coming year. Thank you very much.



LCQ13: Hong Kong Dollar-Renminbi Dual Counter Model

Following is a question by the Hon Rock Chen and a written reply by the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr Christopher Hui, in the Legislative Council today (June 7):

Question:

It has been reported that the Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited (HKEX) has arranged to conduct testing for the Hong Kong Dollar – Renminbi Dual Counter Model (the Model) between May and June this year, but a number of securities brokers have relayed that the testing was unsatisfactory (e.g. the technical backwardness of the relevant system and its inability to do automatic conversion for day-trade clearing, as well as inadequate support provided by the HKEX). In this connection, will the Government inform this Council if it knows:

- (1) the latest progress and preliminary results of the aforesaid testing;
- (2) whether the HKEX has explored solutions to address the aforesaid issues; and
- (3) the current number of listed companies that have applied for the setting up of an additional Renminbi stock counter under the Model?

Reply:

President,

To complement the new development paradigm of our country and cater for the escalating demands from global investors for Renminbi (RMB) asset allocation, the Government, together with financial regulators and the Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited (HKEX), has been actively promoting the issuance and trading of RMB securities in Hong Kong, as well as increasing the use of offshore RMB for investment purposes. This further consolidates Hong Kong's status as a global offshore RMB business hub, while at the same time contributing to RMB internationalisation in a gradual manner.

The HKEX announced on May 19 this year its plan to launch the "Hong Kong Dollar (HKD)-RMB Dual Counter Model" (dual-counter model) on June 19 for specified securities subject to market readiness, so that investors can trade securities of the same issuer in both HKD and RMB, and transact across HKD and RMB counters. The HKEX will also introduce the "Dual Counter Market Maker" (DCMM) regime on the same day, under which buy and sell quotes will be offered by the RMB counter to promote the liquidity of RMB-denominated stocks. Meanwhile, market makers can also conduct arbitrage transactions across the two currency counters of the same stock, so as to minimise the price discrepancies between the two. The Government has earlier exempted the stamp duty payable for specified transactions by market makers through the Stamp Duty (Amendment) Ordinance 2023. The HKEX is also processing and reviewing applications from market makers.

Having consulted the Securities and Futures Commission (SFC) and the HKEX, the consolidated reply to the various parts of the question is as follows:

(1) and (2) The HKEX has since 2010 established the mechanism to allow the trading and settlement of securities at RMB counters. The arrangements are similar to those for the HKD securities counters, and are widely adopted for exchange-traded funds. As regards connecting brokers' systems to the HKEX's trading terminal, the dual-counter model does not require new technical upgrades. In other words, if brokers concerned are currently offering trading services for RMB-denominated securities, they should have technically and operationally met the basic requirements to provide dual-counter trading. Some 200 brokers have participated in the trading of RMB-denominated securities over the past 18 months, accounting for about 90 per cent of the market share.

To familiarise the market with dual-counter model trading, the HKEX arranged a one-month voluntary end-to-end testing session for exchange participants from May 2, and completed two market rehearsals (including cross-counter settlement testing) on May 27 and June 3 respectively. A substantial number of brokers, including all institutions interested in becoming market makers, had verified that their systems could operate smoothly under the dual-counter model during the testing. This seeks to ensure the smooth implementation of the dual-counter model and DCMM regime when launched.

Participation in trading at RMB counters, especially cross-counter trading and relevant testing, is not a mandatory requirement. Since market makers will enjoy stamp duty exemption for specified transactions, the HKEX expects that market makers will be the main participants of cross-counter trading at its inception. Brokers yet to activate relevant functions can make appropriate plans and arrange relevant system upgrades according to their individual business needs. The HKEX will continue to support their preparatory work and provide technical support as necessary.

(3) At present, more than 20 listed companies stocks are designated as dual-counter securities by the HKEX, accounting for about 40 per cent of the daily turnover for equity securities. Various preparations are being carried out in an orderly manner. The HKEX already announced the first batch of DCMMs, and confirmed the formal launch date. The HKEX, the SFC and the Hong Kong Monetary Authority will continue to maintain close liaison with market participants, and launch a series of market promotion and investor education activities. With the launch of the dual-counter model and DCMM regime, we are confident that investors will be provided with more diversified trading options, thereby further enriching our RMB investment product suite in the offshore market and enhancing the competitiveness of the securities market in Hong Kong.

LCQ10: Provision of support for elderly singletons and carers

Following is a question by the Hon Shang Hailong and a written reply by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun, in the Legislative Council today (June 7):

Question:

The editorial of a newspaper has pointed out that recently, tragedies resulting from elderly singletons and carers with disabilities lacking support have happened one after another in Hong Kong. Such situations are worrying and have also highlighted the necessity for the authorities to step up support work. Regarding the provision of support for elderly singletons and carers, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) as there are currently no emergency support services targeted at carers in Hong Kong, and if carers fall ill, they cannot entrust their family members who need to be looked after to the care of others, whether the Government will consider setting up one-stop centres for carers in various districts to provide emergency support services;

(2) whether it will consider, in collaboration with social welfare organisations, encouraging kaifongs to care for their elderly singleton

neighbours and motivating elderly singletons to participate more in community activities through work such as organising talks and setting up street counters in different locations, as well as conducting publicity door to door in buildings, thereby strengthening the spirit of neighbourliness, and co-building a harmonious and friendly society;

(3) whether it will strengthen co-operation with social welfare organisations and non-governmental organisations to make every effort to enhance the work of identifying "hidden elderly singletons" and "hidden carers"; and

(4) whether it will leverage district organisations and District Services and Community Care Teams to strengthen the outreach work in support of elderly singletons and carers (e.g. distributing promotional leaflets door to door in public housing estates, and even delivering meals to elderly singletons), so as to build up district networks and assist in finding out more hidden elderly singletons and hidden carers?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the question raised by the Member is as follows:

(1) The Government provides subsidy for non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to operate respite services to provide short-term residential or day care services for elderly persons and persons with disabilities living in the community who require personal care assistance from family members or relatives and to reduce the pressure of carers. Moreover, the Government provides home-based support services (including home respite service) for elderly persons and persons with disabilities through the Integrated Home Care Services (Frail Cases), the Enhanced Home and Community Care Services, the Home Care Service for Persons with Severe Disabilities and the Integrated Support Service for Persons with Severe Physical Disabilities.

Respite service users are not required to undergo the Standardised Care Need Assessment Mechanism and may directly approach service units for enquiry and application. Persons in need may also be referred by Integrated Family Service Centres (IFSCs)/Integrated Service Centres (ISCs), Medical Social Services Units (MSSUs), elderly service units, special schools or rehabilitation service units. If elderly persons or persons with disabilities have urgent short-term residential care needs, they or their carers can search for the vacancy situation of the designated respite service places provided by residential care homes (RCHs) under the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme or the Bought Place Scheme for Private Residential Care Homes for Persons with Disabilities through the "Vacancy Enquiry System for Residential Respite Service for Persons with Disabilities, Residential Respite Service for the Elderly and Emergency Placement for the Elderly" of the Social Welfare Department (SWD). They or their carers may approach the relevant RCHs directly to confirm the vacant places and arrange for admission. If they have other service needs, the RCHs will, after admitting the elderly persons or persons with disabilities, refer them to the relevant service units for follow-up.

Besides, the SWD provides various community support services for elderly persons, persons with disabilities, patients who are chronically ill as well as their carers directly or through subvented NGOs. The service units include IFSCs/ISCs, MSSUs, District Elderly Community Centres (DECCs), Neighbourhood Elderly Centres (NECs), District Support Centres for Persons with Disabilities, Integrated Community Centres for Mental Wellness, Parents/Relatives Resource Centres, Support Centres for Persons with Autism, home care services, etc. These service units provide a series of prevention and support services, such as case management, counselling, outreaching service, referral service, mutual aid groups, carer skills training, stress relieving groups and recreational activities, with a view to providing comprehensive support to carers and enhancing their caregiving abilities and quality of life.

(2) There are currently 213 subvented DECCs and NECs (Elderly Centres) providing a range of support services for elderly persons at the community level, including counselling, referral, assistance in applying for long-term care services, emotional support and carer training, etc to facilitate elderly persons to age in place. The Elderly Centres also collaborate with community support service units in the district to make more effective use of community resources in building an elderly-friendly community.

The Elderly Centres also organise various activities in the districts, including seminars, carer training courses, volunteer trainings, mobile counter services, outreaching activities, etc, in order to encourage elderly persons to actively participate in community activities.

(3) and (4) The Government has been closely collaborating with various subvented NGOs and welfare organisations to provide support for elderly persons, persons with disabilities and their carers in need. The Government is progressively setting up District Services and Community Care Teams (Care Teams) in 18 districts to rally community resources and efforts. The Labour and Welfare Bureau and the SWD are actively exploring the Care Teams' participation and assistance in supporting the related work.

LCQ15: Measures to support daily lives of persons with disabilities

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 7):

Question:

Some wheelchair-bound people have relayed that the number of restaurants equipped with barrier-free facilities in Hong Kong is inadequate and quite a

number of restaurants are unable to receive wheelchair-bound people, making it difficult for them to eat out. Regarding measures to support the daily lives of persons with disabilities (PWDs), will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of complaints received by the Government in the past five years from PWDs about inadequate barrier-free facilities at venues frequented by them in their daily lives (including but not limited to restaurants, shopping malls, supermarkets, markets and banks, etc.);

(2) whether it has compiled statistics on the number of restaurants equipped with barrier-free facilities across the territory (and its proportion in the number of restaurants across the territory) as well as the number of wheelchair-friendly seats provided by such restaurants, together with a breakdown by District Council district;

(3) whether it has plans to formulate policies to encourage restaurants to provide barrier-free facilities; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(4) whether it has plans to allocate more resources to the Integrated Home Care Services under the Social Welfare Department so that eligible persons (including PWDs) can receive meal service expeditiously; if so, of the details and timetable; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Having consulted the Development Bureau, the Environment and Ecology Bureau, and the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau, I set out below a consolidated reply to the Member's question:

(1) and (2) In the past five years, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department received the following number of complaints from persons with disabilities concerning insufficient barrier-free facilities at restaurants and markets:

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Restaurants	0	1	0	0	0
Markets	1	2	1	0	0

Other than restaurants and markets, the Government does not maintain the complaint figures on insufficient barrier-free facilities in other premises. We also do not have the statistics on the number of restaurants providing barrier-free facilities.

(3) The Government strives to create a barrier-free environment for persons with disabilities, with a view to enabling them to access to premises and make use of the facilities and services therein on an equal basis with others, thereby facilitating their full integration into the community.

As far as buildings on private land are concerned, to align with the Disability Discrimination Ordinance (Cap. 487), regulation 72 of the Building (Planning) Regulations under the Buildings Ordinance (Cap. 123) prescribes design requirements for barrier-free access and facilities for persons with disabilities to ensure that reasonable barrier-free access and facilities are provided in relevant premises to cater for the needs of persons with disabilities. The regulation came into effect in 1984 and is applicable to new buildings built thereafter. If alterations and additions (A&A) works are to be carried out in existing buildings built before the regulation came into effect, such works must also comply with the requirements of the regulation. The Buildings Department has issued the "Design Manual: Barrier Free Access" to provide guidance on barrier-free access and facilities, which is subject to review from time to time. All new buildings or A&A to existing buildings, including restaurants, must comply with the design standards as set out in the latest editions of the Building (Planning) Regulations and the Design Manual, for example, the provision of appropriate access route and accessible toilet.

(4) At present, there are 61 Integrated Home Care Services (Frail Cases) (IHCS(FC)) and 31 Enhanced Home and Community Care Services (EHCCS) teams providing community care services, including meal services and personal care plans for frail elderly persons. To facilitate ageing in place, the Government increased the number of service places of the IHCS(FC) and EHCCS from about 8 000 in October 2019 to about 13 000, and shortened the average waiting time from about 20 months at the end of October 2019 to about six months at the end of March 2023.

In addition, the Integrated Home Care Services (Ordinary Cases) (IHCS(OC)) provides home support services for elderly persons and persons with disabilities in need, individuals and families with social needs. The Home Care and Support Services for Elderly Persons with Mild Impairment (HSMI), also implemented by the IHCS teams, was launched in December 2017 on a pilot basis and has been regularised by the Government since January this year. The HSMI aims to provide home care and support services to elderly persons with mild impairment who are waitlisted for IHCS(OC). The two services provide a total of about 20 000 service places, including meal service, escort service and simple nursing care.