

# LCQ15: Manpower of Mainland offices and liaison units of Government

Following is a question by the Hon Kenneth Leung and a written reply by the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Erick Tsang Kwok-wai, in the Legislative Council today (May 24):

Question:

Regarding the manpower of the Mainland offices and liaison units of the Government, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the number, the staffing establishment and the number of locally engaged staff of the Mainland offices in each of the past 10 years; of the average length of stay of civil servants who were posted to work on the Mainland;
- (2) of the number of recruitment activities for postings outside Hong Kong conducted by the Government in the Civil Service, the number of applications received and, among them, the proportion of applications for posting to the Mainland offices, in the past five years;
- (3) as it is learnt that there are still positions left vacant in quite a number of Mainland offices at present, whether the Government will step up efforts in recruiting civil servants to work on the Mainland and increase the support for civil servants working in the Mainland offices; if so, of the details;
- (4) whether the Civil Service College will introduce programmes in the future to train civil servants to familiarise themselves with Mainland affairs and have an understanding of national strategic alignment, and introduce the Mainland authorities' ways of handling various official, financial and legal responsibilities, thereby enabling more civil servants to have the qualifications for being posted to work in the Mainland offices; and
- (5) as there are views pointing out that with increasingly frequent exchanges between Hong Kong and the Mainland, the division of functions mainly by investment promotion, economic and trade liaison and immigration matters among the staff of the Mainland offices may no longer suffice, whether the Government will review if the civil service establishment of the Mainland offices is sufficient to meet the current and future needs; if it will, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

At present, the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative

Region (HKSAR) has established a total of five offices and 11 liaison units in the Mainland. With service areas covering various provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions in the Mainland, the Mainland offices are responsible for strengthening communication and liaison between Hong Kong and the Mainland. Their functions include strengthening communication and liaison between the HKSAR Government and the Mainland authorities, fostering and cementing economic and trade relations between the HKSAR and Mainland provinces and municipalities, taking forward mutual exchanges and co-operation, boosting investment, promoting Hong Kong and supporting Hong Kong people and businessmen in the areas, etc.

Having consulted the Civil Service Bureau and the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau, response to the Hon Kenneth Leung's questions is set out below:

(1) The number of Mainland offices, their liaison units and staff establishment in the past 10 years are set out in the table below:

| Year    | Total number of Mainland offices and their liaison units | Staff establishment |
|---------|--|---------------------|
| 2013-14 | 7  | 51                  |
| 2014-15 | 9  | 62                  |
| 2015-16 | 10   | 62                  |
| 2016-17 | 13   | 73                  |
| 2017-18 | 16   | 81                  |
| 2018-19 | 16   | 81                  |
| 2019-20 | 16   | 82                  |
| 2020-21 | 16   | 82                  |
| 2021-22 | 16   | 82                  |
| 2022-23 | 16   | 81                  |

The total number of locally-engaged staff in the Mainland offices and their liaison units increased from 90 in 2013-14 to 152 in 2022-23. In general, civil servants deployed to the Mainland offices and their liaison units serve a term of around two to three years.

(2) The staff establishment of the Government of the HKSAR in the Mainland offices and overseas Economic and Trade Offices (ETOs) involves different grades. Each grade will select appropriate staff for deployments in the Mainland offices and overseas ETOs taking into account the actual circumstances and different considerations. At present, there are a total of 81 and 60 civil service posts in the Mainland offices, including their liaison units, and overseas ETOs respectively. In the past five years, the Mainland offices and overseas ETOs conducted recruitment activities for around 190 civil service posts, of which the Mainland offices accounted for

around 60 per cent. We do not maintain the number of applications received.

(3) At present, there are only two posts to be filled in the Mainland offices and their liaison units. Each grade will deploy staff to take up the relevant posts in accordance with the actual circumstances as soon as possible. To carry out their work efficiently and reduce staff pressure, the Mainland offices and their liaison units will flexibly allocate their work and their manpower will be flexibly redeployed when necessary.

(4) Civil Service College (CSC) makes on-going efforts to provide training programmes in Hong Kong and in the Mainland for civil servants with different ranks, with the aim of enhancing their understanding about the systems and developments, as well as the social and economic situation in the Mainland, and to keep abreast of the national strategies and their implications for Hong Kong, so as to meet their actual operational needs, and equip officers who have opportunity to be posted to offices in the Mainland well. For example, since September 2022, CSC and Peking University have launched the two-year Master's Degree in Public Policy Programme and arranged senior civil servants with potential nominated by their departments to take part in the programme. Participants have to attend the programme on a full-time basis at Peking University in the first year and conduct social research and studies. Besides, CSC provides sponsorship for senior civil servants to attend the Executive Master of Public Administration Programme for the Project of Hong Kong Public Administrative Talents at Tsinghua University. In addition, CSC arranges civil servants to attend national studies training and thematic visits in the Mainland at different stages of their career to gain first-hand experience about the country's latest development. As regards national studies training, CSC currently collaborates with nine Mainland institutions (including the National Academy of Governance, Tsinghua University, Peking University, China Foreign Affairs University, Zhejiang University, Nanjing University, Wuhan University, Jinan University and Sun Yat-sen University) in running national studies programmes.

In 2023, CSC will collaborate with Peking University to launch a new training programme to enhance civil servants' understanding of "One Country, Two Systems" and various aspects of the country's development including Chinese society, economy, technology and so on. CSC will also continue to run a series of talks on our country's foreign affairs in collaboration with the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the HKSAR, so as to deepen civil servants' understanding of the international scene and the country's foreign policies.

In addition, under the Civil Service Staff Exchange Programme jointly organised by the HKSAR and the Mainland, officers from Hong Kong and the Mainland are attached to each other's side to share experience and expertise, better understand each other's structure, policy and operation, and foster networking and communication. The programme will first be launched with the Mainland municipalities in the Greater Bay Area (GBA) in 2023. The initial target is to extend the staff exchange period from four weeks in the past to about three months, so that our civil servants will have opportunities to stay longer in the Mainland to experience more deeply the development of the

GBA municipalities.

To encourage civil servants' continuous learning of national affairs, CSC provides rich e-learning resources through the online learning platform of Cyber Learning Centre Plus (CLC Plus). For example, we have provided, through the "Tsinghua Lecture Series", a series of pre-recorded lectures for civil servants on national policies and the latest developments in the Mainland. In 2023, we plan to offer a series of new lectures delivered by experts and scholars from Tsinghua University, covering topics such as the spirit of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, innovation and technology, green finance and social development. Besides, CLC Plus contains a number of dedicated webpages including the Basic Law Portal, Safeguarding National Security Theme Page, National Studies Portal, GBA Theme Page, and the National 14th Five-Year Plan Theme Page, etc. These dedicated webpages provide multi-media learning resources, which include web courses, video clips, podcasts, and seminars' recording, etc. For instance, we have compiled a series of seminar highlights, covering major city clusters in the Mainland, including Yangtze River Delta, Chengdu-Chongqing region, Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region and GBA as online learning resources, so as to enable civil servants to stay abreast of the country's latest developments.

(5) The Government of the HKSAR reviews the manpower in each Mainland office and their liaison units from time to time and flexibly deploy manpower in accordance with the actual circumstances to meet operational needs, such as by engaging local staff in the Mainland to ensure sufficient manpower to cope with the workload. Besides, the Mainland offices have always been maintaining close liaison with and actively listening to the opinions from Hong Kong people and businessmen in the areas in order to adjust their services to improve service quality. The Mainland offices will apply for the increase of manpower to meet their operational needs in accordance with the established procedures if necessary.

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## **General out-patient clinic service arrangements on Birthday of Buddha**

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority (HA) spokesman today (May 24) announced that 14 general out-patient clinics (GOPCs) will provide public holiday GOPC services on the Birthday of the Buddha (May 26) (see table below). Patients may book an appointment either through the telephone appointment system or the "Book GOPC" function of the "HA Go" mobile app.

The spokesman reminded the public that the number of COVID-19 cases is increasing recently. Members of the public are advised to maintain personal

and environmental hygiene to prevent infection. The public should seek medical advice early if respiratory symptoms are developed.

GOPC service arrangements on the Birthday of the Buddha (May 26)

| Region           | List of GOPCs   | Address   | Telephone number for booking | General enquiries |
|------------------|---|---|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Hong Kong Island | Aberdeen Jockey Club General Out-patient Clinic       | 10 Aberdeen Reservoir Road, Aberdeen  | 3543 5011                    | 2555 0381         |
|                  | Shau Kei Wan Jockey Club General Out-patient Clinic   | 1/F, 8 Chai Wan Road, Shau Kei Wan  | 3157 0077                    | 2560 0211         |
|                  | Violet Peel General Out-patient Clinic                | LG, Tang Shiu Kin Hospital Community Ambulatory Care Centre, 282 Queen's Road East, Wanchai | 3157 0000                    | 3553 3116         |
| Kowloon          | Kwun Tong Community Health Centre                     | UG/F, 60 Hip Wo Street, Kwun Tong   | 3157 0687                    | 2389 0331         |
|                  | Our Lady of Maryknoll Hospital Family Medicine Clinic | G/F, Out-patient Block, Our Lady of Maryknoll Hospital, 118 Shatin Pass Road, Wong Tai Sin  | 3157 0118                    | 2354 2267         |
|                  | Robert Black General Out-patient Clinic               | 600 Prince Edward Road East, San Po Kong  | 3157 0113                    | 2383 3311         |
|                  | Yau Ma Tei Jockey Club General Out-patient Clinic     | 1/F, 145 Battery Street, Yau Ma Tei   | 3157 0880                    | 2272 2400         |

|                 |   |   |           |           |
|-----------------|---|---|-----------|-----------|
| New Territories | Lady Trench General Out-patient Clinic                  | 213 Sha Tsui Road, Tsuen Wan                            | 3157 0107 | 2614 4789 |
|                 | Lek Yuen General Out-patient Clinic                     | G/F, 9 Lek Yuen Street, Sha Tin                         | 3157 0972 | 2692 8730 |
|                 | Shek Wu Hui Jockey Club General Out-patient Clinic      | G/F, 108-130 Jockey Club Road, Shek Wu Hui, Sheung Shui | 3157 0965 | 2670 0211 |
|                 | Tai Po Jockey Club General Out-patient Clinic           | G/F, 37 Ting Kok Road, Tai Po                           | 3157 0906 | 2664 2039 |
|                 | Tseung Kwan O (Po Ning Road) General Out-patient Clinic | G/F, 28 Po Ning Road, Tseung Kwan O                     | 3157 0660 | 2191 1083 |
|                 | Tuen Mun Clinic   | 11 Tsing Yin Street, San Hui, Tuen Mun                  | 3543 0886 | 2452 9111 |
|                 | Yuen Long Jockey Club Health Centre                     | 269 Castle Peak Road, Yuen Long                         | 3543 5007 | 2443 8511 |

Service hours:

9am to 1pm and 2pm to 5pm

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## [LCQ20: Combating crimes involving deliberately staged traffic accidents](#)

Following is a question by the Hon Frankie Yick and a written reply by the Acting Secretary for Security, Mr Michael Cheuk, in the Legislative Council today (May 24):

Question:

Some commercial vehicle organisations have complained that in recent years, an increasing number of lawbreakers have deliberately staged traffic accidents (such as running off the road and pretending to be knocked down by vehicles, and intentionally slamming into vehicles) during night time to claim compensation from the motorists concerned, and some of the motorists can only give in to settle the matter and avoid troubles. Furthermore, some of these lawbreakers have even, by falsely claiming to have been injured in the accidents concerned, been given sick leave certificates issued by registered doctors, so that they can apply for the Traffic Accident Victims Assistance Scheme under the Social Welfare Department or even make fraudulent insurance claims. These lawbreakers have not only abused the use of public money and social resources, but also led to an incessant surge in the premiums of relevant insurance. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether it has compiled statistics on the number of reports and requests for assistance received by the authorities in the past three years regarding suspected frauds in relation to deliberately staged traffic accidents, and of the related number of prosecutions instituted and the penalties imposed on those convicted;
- (2) of the measures in place to assist motorists in avoiding incurring pecuniary losses arising from encountering the aforesaid frauds; and
- (3) whether the Police will set up a dedicated department to follow up on cases involving the aforesaid frauds, so as to stop such undesirable trend from spreading?

Reply:

President,

In consultation with the Police and the Labour and Welfare Bureau, the reply to the Member's question is as follows:

(1) Fraudulent acts involving deliberately created traffic accidents, depending on the actual circumstances of each case, may involve offences such as "theft", "fraud" or "obtaining property by deception" under the Theft Ordinance (Cap. 210), and/or the common law offence of "conspiracy to defraud", with maximum penalties of imprisonment from 10 to 14 years.

The Police do not maintain statistical breakdown of suspected fraudulent acts involving deliberately created traffic accidents.

(2) and (3) Deception is a serious offence. The Police take any forms of deception case seriously. Regardless of how it is committed, as long as there are illegal activities involved, the Police adopt a zero tolerance policy and vigorously combat such crimes on all fronts. For suspected cases of fraud

relating to traffic accidents, members of the public should seek assistance from the Police immediately. If the Police find any illegal acts, they will immediately take serious and proactive follow up actions, and send dedicated personnel to conduct criminal investigation.

The Police have been conducting professional investigation into insurance fraud by, among others, establishing a task force under the Commercial Crime Bureau to monitor emerging trends and conduct targeted investigation and analysis. Police districts will also send professionally trained criminal investigation units to investigate relevant fraud cases. The Police have also maintained close liaison with other government departments, the Insurance Authority and stakeholders (such as the Hong Kong Federation of Insurers), and have enhanced intelligence gathering for intelligence-led operations.

With regard to the Traffic Accident Victims Assistance Scheme mentioned in the question, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) has put in place a series of measures to guard against abuse and fraud. These measures include seeking written confirmation from the Police on whether traffic accident is involved for every application received, and explaining clearly to the applicants during the application process that obtaining assistance payment by deception is a criminal offence. The SWD also maintains close liaison with the Hospital Authority and the Department of Health to ensure that the injuries sustained by the applicants are related to the traffic accidents concerned. Suspected cases will be referred to the Police for investigation. Any person (including insurance companies) who possesses information about improper or illegal activities by any person in applying for assistance under the Scheme may lodge a report to the SWD or the Police.

The Police will continue to pay close attention to deception cases related to traffic accidents and monitor the trends of fraud.

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## **LCQ1: Promoting development of hydrogen transport**

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Siu-hung and a reply by the Acting Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Miss Diane Wong, in the Legislative Council today (May 24):

Question:

It is learnt that the first hydrogen fuel cell bus and the first hydrogen refuelling station in Hong Kong are expected to be put into operation this year. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that the existing legislation does not allow hydrogen fuel cell vehicles to run on roads, whether the Government will expedite the establishment of a legal framework for the use of such vehicles, and improve the relevant laws and regulations, standards and technical guidelines; if so, of the legislative timetable; if not, how it promotes the development of hydrogen transport without the support of laws and regulations;

(2) whether the Government will expedite the exploration of the feasibility of installing hydrogen refuelling facilities at petrol filling stations or appropriate locations across the territory; if so, of the details; if not, the measures in place to enhance the supporting infrastructure facilities for hydrogen transport to expedite the promotion of the extensive use of hydrogen fuel cell vehicles in Hong Kong; and

(3) as this year's Budget has proposed earmarking \$200 million under the New Energy Transport Fund for commencing trials of hydrogen fuel cell electric double-deck buses and heavy vehicles, whether the Government has assessed if the amount is adequate for promoting the development of hydrogen transport; if it is not adequate, whether it will consider deploying additional resources for establishing a dedicated fund to assist in promoting hydrogen transport, as well as researching and developing hydrogen fuel cell vehicles jointly with the Mainland cities of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, so as to accelerate the pace of decarbonisation of green transport in Hong Kong; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

To align with the national "dual carbon" targets, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) strives to achieve carbon neutrality before 2050 and reduce the total carbon emissions from the 2005 level by half before 2035. The HKSAR Government announced the Hong Kong Roadmap on Popularisation of Electric Vehicles, Clean Air Plan for Hong Kong 2035, and Hong Kong's Climate Action Plan 2050 successively in March, June and October 2021. It is a global trend to promote development of new energy transport to reduce carbon emissions from the transport sector. The abovementioned blueprints and roadmap covered policy directions and future targets in various areas promoting the adoption of new energy transport technologies, so as to guide Hong Kong towards zero vehicular emissions before 2050.

The process of converting hydrogen energy into mechanical or electrical energy does not emit greenhouse gases or other air pollutants. If combined with the use of green hydrogen produced by renewable energy, it is possible to meet with the benchmark of emitting no greenhouse gas or other air pollutants from production to use. Further studies are required to explore ways to reduce the production and transportation costs of green hydrogen as well as the loss of energy in its production process. At present, hydrogen fuel cell (HFC) vehicles are still at an early stage of development, resources are mainly being invested in research and development, operational

trials and supporting facilities worldwide.

The Chief Executive's 2022 Policy Address mentioned to progressively commence trials of HFC double-deckers and heavy vehicles in 2023, and formulate the long-term strategies for the application of hydrogen energy in road transport by 2025. To keep pace with the development trend of hydrogen fuel adoption, the HKSAR Government set up the Inter-departmental Working Group on Using Hydrogen as Fuel (the Working Group) in 2022, to coordinate preparation works of bureaux/departments for using hydrogen as fuel locally, with a view to encouraging local adoption of hydrogen energy. The Working Group comprises the Environment and Ecology Bureau, Transport and Logistics Bureau, Development Bureau, Security Bureau, Environmental Protection Department, Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD), Fire Services Department, Transport Department, Marine Department, Planning Department, Lands Department, Buildings Department and Architectural Services Department.

The first key task of the Working Group is to progressively commence the trials of HFC double-deckers and heavy vehicles in phases, taking local circumstances into account. The Working Group will review and assess applications of trial projects, and advise on aspects such as safety and planning, in order to aid the relevant trades to commence their trials early. Its tasks also include conducting risk assessments on hydrogen refilling stations, the arrangements of hydrogen supply, and HFC vehicles on road, as well as reviewing relevant regulations, standards and technical guidelines of different places for the formulation of an operational safety framework for the use of hydrogen fuel in the transport sector locally in the long run.

The Working Group has given agreements-in-principle to a first batch of three applications of trial projects, involving trials for setting up a hydrogen refuelling facility at a bus depot, one HFC double-decker and a hydrogen extraction facility at plant of the Hong Kong and China Gas Company. In addition, the Working Group is planning to test HFC heavy vehicles for refuse collection or street cleansing. We expect that the trial of the first HFC double-decker can be commenced within this year, and that of heavy vehicles in next year.

In consultation with the Transport and Logistics Bureau and the EMSD, I would like to reply to the question raised by the Hon Chan Siu-hung as follows:

(1) There is heavy traffic on the roads in Hong Kong. Vehicles are often required to drive through tunnels or crowded places. This coupled with the dense urban settings, we have to be cautious in exploring the application of hydrogen fuel transport technologies to ensure public safety, particularly given that the technologies are still developing. The Government will make use of the interim standards used in the trials of HFC vehicles, as well as data and field experience gathered in the trials, to formulate an operational safety framework for the use of hydrogen fuel in the transport sector locally in the long run. This includes amending the current Gas Safety Ordinance (Cap. 51), which regulates liquefied petroleum gas vehicles, to cover

hydrogen fuel, with a view to effectively regulating HFC vehicles, hydrogen fuel supply chain and the safety of HFC vehicle mechanics and repair workshops. In this process, the EMSD has appointed hydrogen fuel consultants to start specialised studies in end-November 2022. The consultants will tap into the views of various stakeholders to formulate technical guidelines related to hydrogen fuel systems, refilling stations and quantitative risk assessment. The consultants will also review the HFC vehicle trials, and explore the future regulatory frameworks for using hydrogen as fuel. The Government plans to appoint another consultant in the third quarter of 2023 to examine the details of legislative amendments and conduct a business impact assessment. Our target is to commence preparation work in 2024 and introduce the proposed legislative amendments to the Legislative Council in 2025.

(2) The Working Group is liaising closely with the applicants of the trial projects and other stakeholders to examine the feasibility of providing hydrogen refuelling facilities at different locations. This includes exploring transforming existing petrol filling stations to hydrogen refilling stations, or allowing the provision of different vehicle fuels in one station. The trial of the first hydrogen refilling station will commence this year together with the trial of HFC double-decker. Furthermore, development of new energy vehicles in the Mainland will to some extent affect Hong Kong's cross-boundary transport trade. Apart from HFC vehicles, we would not exclude the possibility to adopt other green technologies in the future, especially electric vehicles, of which the technologies are advancing rapidly. We have begun to explore ways to provide sufficient electricity charging and hydrogen refilling facilities in areas adjacent to boundary control points, with a view to supporting the future adoption of electric or HFC goods vehicles by the cross-boundary transport trade.

(3) To assist the transport trade to commence trials for hydrogen fuel transport technologies, the Government has earmarked \$200 million under the New Energy Transport Fund for subsidising relevant costs of the trial projects. Such costs include the procurement, construction or renting of HFC vehicles, establishment of hydrogen refilling facilities, operating costs (such as expenses on hydrogen fuel), etc. The funding earmarked is sufficient to subsidise trials for different types of vehicles, including double-deckers, heavy goods vehicles, heavy vehicles for refuse collection or street cleansing, etc.

The Government will take into account the experiences and research and development results of our country (including other cities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area) and other cities overseas, to consider how to adjust Hong Kong's pace in promoting adoption of HFC vehicles. We will also closely monitor the development of other new energy transport technologies, and keep pace with the global development, to work out a feasible strategy to promote green transport and carbon emission reduction in Hong Kong. Our targets by 2025 are to announce a roadmap for the promotion of electric public transport and commercial vehicles, as well as formulate the long-term strategies for the application of hydrogen energy in land transport, in order to help guide Hong Kong towards zero vehicular emissions

before 2050.

Thank you, President.

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## **Tenders invited for licence of advertising areas**

The Government Property Agency is inviting tenders for a three-year licence of the advertising areas at the Tsim Sha Tsui Interchange Subways and the Middle Road Subway, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon, Hong Kong.

The advertising areas should be used for the purposes of installation, operation, management, maintenance and control of the Advertising Display Systems (as defined in the Form of Licence Agreement) for display of advertisements only.

The tender notice was uploaded today (May 24) to the Agency's website: [www.gpa.gov.hk](http://www.gpa.gov.hk). Tender documents are available for collection at the Government Property Agency, 9/F, South Tower, West Kowloon Government Offices, 11 Hoi Ting Road, Yau Ma Tei, Kowloon, during the period from 9am to 6pm from Monday to Friday, except public holidays. The documents can also be downloaded from the Agency's website.

Interested tenderers who wish to attend a site inspection should make a prior appointment with the Government Property Agency by calling 3842 6777 on or before June 5.

Tenderers must submit their tenders by placing them in the Government Logistics Department Tender Box situated on the Ground Floor, North Point Government Offices, 333 Java Road, North Point, Hong Kong, before noon on June 14. Late tenders will not be accepted.