

## CHP investigates two additional confirmed cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 0.00am, May 12, the CHP was investigating two additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 11 815 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 11 814 confirmed cases and one probable case).

Among the newly reported cases announced, one is an imported case and one is epidemiologically linked with a local case.

The newly reported case with an epidemiological link with a local case involves a 42-year-old man (case number: 11815) who was one of the close contacts of case 11672. One of the household contacts of case 11815 tested positive for immunoglobulin G, indicating that she had a recent infection with COVID-19 as announced by the CHP yesterday. Both case 11815 and the close contact had attended family gatherings on April 13 and 18 with case 11672 at Fung Hing House of Hing Wah (II) Estate in Chai Wan, and 37 Fuk Wing Street in Sham Shui Po, respectively.

Subsequent to the announcement by the CHP on the updated quarantine arrangements of local COVID-19 cases with the N501Y mutant strain, the CHP reminded that persons who resided or worked within the same building as the residence of relevant cases and had been released from the quarantine centres will be subject to compulsory testing on days 3, 7, 12 and 19 following the announcement of the relevant confirmed cases by the Department of Health. A Compulsory Testing Notice (CTN) was issued on May 7 ([www.gld.gov.hk/egazette/pdf/202125124e/egn202125124278.pdf](http://www.gld.gov.hk/egazette/pdf/202125124e/egn202125124278.pdf)). They will also be required to undergo self-monitoring until the 21st day.

Specified persons in relation to the following specified premises are reminded to undergo compulsory testing in accordance with the CTN tomorrow (May 13):

- Fung Hing House, Hing Wah (II) Estate, 18 Wan Tsui Road, Chai Wan.

Members of the public can check the deadlines of compulsory testing for respective specified premises as stipulated in the aforementioned CTN on the Government's website ([www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/CTN\\_Specified\\_premises\\_and\\_Dates\\_of\\_Testing.pdf](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/CTN_Specified_premises_and_Dates_of_Testing.pdf)).

A total of 64 cases have been reported in the past 14 days (April 28 to May 11), including eight local cases of which one is from unknown sources.

The CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the confirmed cases are ongoing. For case details and contact tracing information, please see the Annex or the list of buildings with confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the past 14 days and the latest local situation of COVID-19 available on the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website"

([www.coronavirus.gov.hk](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk)).

Meanwhile, the CHP reminded those who had visited specified venues under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to receive COVID-19 nucleic acid testing according to the compulsory testing notice. The Regulation also requires all household members of close contacts of confirmed cases to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test within a specified period according to compulsory testing notices published in the Gazette. The public are also urged to seek medical attention early if symptoms develop and undergo testing as soon as possible.

The Government has launched the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme. Members of the public are encouraged to get vaccinated. Details of the programme can be found at the designated website ([www.covidvaccine.gov.hk](http://www.covidvaccine.gov.hk)).

The CHP called on members of the public to avoid going out, having social contact and dining out. They should put on a surgical mask and maintain stringent hand hygiene when they need to go out. The CHP strongly urged the elderly to stay home as far as possible and avoid going out. They should consider asking their family and friends to help with everyday tasks such as shopping for basic necessities.

The spokesman said, "Given that the situation of COVID-19 infection remains severe and that there is a continuous increase in the number of cases reported around the world, members of the public are strongly urged to avoid all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong.

"The CHP also strongly urges the public to maintain at all times strict personal and environmental hygiene, which is key to personal protection against infection and prevention of the spread of the disease in the community. On a personal level, members of the public should wear a surgical mask when having respiratory symptoms, taking public transport or staying in crowded places. They should also perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes.

"As for household environmental hygiene, members of the public are advised to maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly pour water into drain outlets (U-traps). After using the toilet, they should put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs."

Moreover, the Government has launched the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" ([www.coronavirus.gov.hk](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk)) for announcing the latest updates on various news on COVID-19 infection and health advice to help the public understand the latest updates. Members of the public may also gain access to information via the COVID-19 WhatsApp Helpline launched by the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer. Simply by saving 9617 1823 in their phone contacts or clicking the link [wa.me/85296171823?text=hi](https://wa.me/85296171823?text=hi), they will be able to obtain information on COVID-19 as well as the "StayHomeSafe" mobile app and wristband via WhatsApp.

To prevent pneumonia and respiratory tract infections, members of the public should always maintain good personal and environmental hygiene. They

are advised to:

- Wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places. It is important to wear a mask properly, including performing hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask;
- Perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, after touching public installations such as handrails or doorknobs, or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing;
- Maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly (about once a week) pour about half a litre of water into each drain outlet (U-trap) to ensure environmental hygiene;
- After using the toilet, put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water, and rub for at least 20 seconds. Then rinse with water and dry with a disposable paper towel. If hand washing facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled, performing hand hygiene with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub is an effective alternative;
- Cover your mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash hands thoroughly; and
- When having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending class at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly.

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household contact subsequently attended another gathering at 37 Fuk Wing Street in Sham Shui Po on April 18, which was also attended by three cases involving the N501Y mutant strain confirmed earlier, i.e. cases 11773, 11793 and 11797.

Subsequent to the announcement by the CHP on the updated quarantine arrangements of local COVID-19 cases with the N501Y mutant strain, the CHP reminded that persons who resided or worked within the same building as the residence of relevant cases and had been released from the quarantine centres will be subject to compulsory testing on days 3, 7, 12 and 19 following the announcement of the relevant confirmed cases by the Department of Health. A Compulsory Testing Notice (CTN) was issued on May 7 ([www.gld.gov.hk/egazette/pdf/202125124e/egn202125124278.pdf](http://www.gld.gov.hk/egazette/pdf/202125124e/egn202125124278.pdf)). They will also be required to undergo self-monitoring until the 21st day.

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## **Import of poultry meat and products from District of Roth in State of Bayern in Germany suspended**

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (May 12) that in view of a notification from the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) about an outbreak of highly pathogenic H5N5 avian influenza in the District of Roth in State of Bayern in Germany, the CFS has instructed the trade to suspend the import of poultry meat and products (including poultry eggs) from the district with immediate effect to protect public health in Hong Kong.

A CFS spokesman said that according to the Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong imported about 180 tonnes of frozen poultry meat and about 0.53 million poultry eggs from Germany in the first three months of this year.

"The CFS has contacted the German authorities over the issue and will closely monitor information issued by the OIE and the relevant authorities on the avian influenza outbreaks. Appropriate action will be taken in response to the development of the situation," the spokesman said.

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## **US Dollar Liquidity Facility tender result**

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

US Dollar Liquidity Facility tender result:

Tender date : May 12, 2021 (Wednesday)

Settlement date	:	May 13, 2021 (Thursday)
Repayment date	:	May 20, 2021 (Thursday)
Tenor	:	Seven days
Amount applied	:	Nil
Amount allotted	:	Nil
Lowest interest rate accepted	:	Nil
Highest interest rate accepted	:	Nil

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## **LCQ4: Food assistance service**

Following is a question by the Hon Vincent Cheng and a reply by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, in the Legislative Council today (May 12):

Question:

At present, eight non-governmental organisations are subsidised by the Government for operating the Short-term Food Assistance Service Projects to provide basic food assistance to eligible individuals and families for a period of up to eight weeks (which may be extended for cases with special needs). Moreover, some organisations currently operate non-government subsidised food assistance service. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it knows, in respect of the subsidised food assistance service since January this year, the number of approved applications, the number of person-times receiving the service and the number of approved applications for extended service, as well as the rates of change of such numbers when compared with those of the same period of last year; whether it has estimated, upon the regularisation of such service in August this year, the maximum number of person-times that can receive the service and the related administrative expenses to be incurred each year, and if the number of service operators will be increased;

(2) whether it knows the current number of organisations operating non-subsidised food assistance service, as well as the scopes of their service and the numbers of cases and person-times for which they provided service last year; whether it will provide subsidies for those non-subsidised food assistance service which are currently of a considerable scale, so as to increase the number of service locations; if so, of the details; if not, the

reasons for that; and

(3) whether it has plans to review the effectiveness of the existing subsidised food assistance service and make enhancements to the service, including following the practice of the Jockey Club Food Assistance Programme in providing flexible ways for collecting food (e.g. through automated cook-chill meals dispensers and online food ordering service), specifying expressly the current practice that self-occupied properties are excluded from calculating the applicants' assets, and stepping up the publicity for the service?

Reply:

President,

Since February 2009, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) has been commissioning non-governmental organisations to operate the Short-term Food Assistance Service Projects (STFASPs) which provide one-off basic short-term food assistance for a period of up to eight weeks to help individuals and families facing immediate financial hardship cope with their daily food expenditure. Operators of the STFASPs may extend the service period beyond eight weeks, depending on the special needs of individual applicants and their families. Operators will refer the service users in need to the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme or other mainstream services to address their long-term welfare needs. Upon the completion of the existing service contracts in late July this year, the Government will regularise the STFASPs, earmarking \$415 million in recurrent expenditure.

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

(1) From January to March 2021, the number of approved applications and beneficiaries receiving the service were 5 076 and 10 708 respectively, representing increases of 40.6 per cent and 45 per cent respectively in comparison with those of the same period last year. There were 1 028 approved applications for extended service, representing an increase of 53.9 per cent compared with the same period last year. Upon regularisation, the service is expected to benefit about 60 000 to 80 000 service users each year. About 15 per cent of the provision is for administrative expenses, the main component of which is manpower cost. The number of service projects remains at eight.

(2) We do not maintain information or figures of other service projects that are not funded by the Government. In view of the territory-wide nature of the food assistance service funded by the SWD and the impending service regularisation, we do not have plans to integrate other non-governmental projects into the SWD's STFASPs.

(3) From time to time, the SWD reviews the implementation of the STFASPs and introduces enhancement measures if necessary to cater for the needs of different service users. Apart from the service regularisation, the SWD also added food coupons and hot meal coupons as additional options; extended the service period for beneficiaries from a maximum of six weeks to eight weeks; and from August 2021 onwards, provides additional special menus to meet the

dietary needs of infants and young children, pregnant women, the elderly, the chronically ill and ethnic minorities. The SWD will continue to take into account the needs of service users in order to improve the service.

Self-occupied properties of the applicants or household members are excluded from the calculation of the asset limits of the STFASPs. The Finance Committee has approved funding for relaxing the asset limits of the STFASPs for 12 months with effect from June 1 this year by pitching them to those of the Working Family Allowance Scheme (for illustration, the asset limit of a four-person household will be relaxed from \$264,000 to \$548,000), which can benefit around 120 000 additional service users.

The objective, description, eligibility criteria and application procedures of the STFASPs are available on the SWD's website. Operators also promote the STFASPs to people in need through their community networks.