

# Arrangements for one-off extra allowance for recipients of WFA and WITS

The Government announced today (April 20) that, after the passage of the Appropriation Bill 2021, the Working Family Allowance Office (WFAO) of the Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency will disburse a one-off extra allowance to recipients of the Working Family Allowance (WFA) and the Work Incentive Transport Subsidy (WITS) as proposed in the 2021-22 Budget. It is expected that the extra allowance would be disbursed one month after the passage of the Bill at the earliest.

Recipients who are eligible for the extra allowance are those whose WFA/WITS applications were made in the applicable period (i.e. from the first day of the month in which the Bill is passed to the date of passage of the Bill; and six calendar months before that month) and eventually approved. For applications sent by post, the date of the postmark will be taken as the application date.

New applicants or previous recipients of the WFA/WITS who have yet to submit applications in the applicable period should submit applications before the applicable period expires (i.e. on or before the date of passage of the Bill) in order to be eligible for the extra allowance.

The extra allowance is equal to half of the average monthly amount of the approved months payable to the corresponding recipients in their most recently submitted applications in the applicable period, and eventually approved. The amount varies from case to case.

In addition, if a WFA household is receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) on the date of the passage of the Bill; or an applicant and household members whose working hours have been aggregated for WFA applications submitted an WITS application during the applicable period (and is eventually approved), that household is only eligible for one single extra allowance, the amount of which is the highest the household is eligible to receive under the WFA, CSSA or the WITS Scheme. Non-WFA applicants and household members whose working hours have not been aggregated for WFA applications are not subject to the above arrangement.

For enquiries, applicants may call the WFAO's hotline (2558 3000) or visit the website of the WFAO ([www.wfsfaa.gov.hk/wfao](http://www.wfsfaa.gov.hk/wfao)).

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# CHP investigates case of invasive meningococcal infection

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (April 20) investigating a case of invasive meningococcal infection, a communicable disease transmitted by direct contact with droplets from carriers or infected persons.

The case involves a 39-year-old female with underlying illnesses, who presented with confusion on April 19. She attended the Accident and Emergency Department of Queen Elizabeth Hospital on the same day and was admitted for treatment. Her clinical diagnosis was meningitis. The patient is now in a stable condition. Her cerebrospinal fluid sample tested positive for *Neisseria meningitidis* upon laboratory testing.

Initial enquiries revealed that the patient had no recent travel history. Her home contacts have remained asymptomatic so far. The CHP's investigation is continuing.

"Meningococcal infection is caused by a bacterium known as meningococcus. It is mainly transmitted by direct contact through respiratory secretions, including droplets from the nose and throat, from infected persons. The incubation period varies from two to 10 days, and is commonly three or four days," a spokesman for the CHP said.

The clinical picture may vary. Severe illness may result when the bacteria invade the bloodstream (meningococcaemia) or the membranes that envelop the brain and spinal cord (meningococcal meningitis).

Meningococcaemia is characterised by a sudden onset of fever, intense headache, purpura, shock and even death in severe cases. Meningococcal meningitis is characterised by high fever, severe headache and stiff neck followed by drowsiness, vomiting, fear of bright light, or a rash. It can cause brain damage or even death. The brain damage may lead to intellectual impairment, mental retardation, hearing loss and electrolyte imbalance. Invasive meningococcal infection can be complicated by arthritis, inflammation of the heart muscle, inflammation of the posterior chamber of the eye or chest infection.

Meningococcal infection is a serious illness. Patients should be treated promptly with antibiotics.

To prevent meningococcal infection, members of the public are advised to take heed of the following measures:

- Wash hands with liquid soap and water properly, especially when they are dirtied by respiratory secretions, e.g. after sneezing, and clean hands

- with alcohol-based handrub when they are not visibly soiled;
- Cover the nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing, hold the spit with a tissue, dispose of nasal and mouth discharges in a lidded rubbish bin, and wash hands immediately;
  - Avoid crowded places;
  - Avoid close contact with patients who have a fever or severe headache;
  - Travellers to high-risk areas may consult doctors for meningococcal vaccination; and
  - Travellers returning from high-risk areas should seek medical advice if they become ill and should discuss their recent travel history with their doctor.

The public may visit the CHP's [website](#) for more information on meningococcal infection.

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## **Effective Exchange Rate Index**

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Tuesday, April 20, 2021 is 101.2 (down 0.3 against yesterday's index).

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## **Fraudulent websites related to OCBC Wing Hang Bank Limited**

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) wishes to alert members of the public to a press release issued by OCBC Wing Hang Bank Limited relating to fraudulent websites, which has been reported to the HKMA. A hyperlink to the press release is available on the [HKMA website](#).

Anyone who has provided his or her personal information, or who has conducted any financial transactions, through or in response to the websites concerned, should contact the bank using the contact information provided in the press release, and report the matter to the Police by contacting the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau of the Hong Kong Police Force at 2860 5012.

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## Applications open for 2021 Hong Kong Youth Music Camp

The 2021 Hong Kong Youth Music Camp, organised by the Music Office of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, will be held from July 24 to 31 at designated music centres of the Music Office. Applications are now open for qualified young local musicians aged 8 to 25.

Campers will join the String Orchestra, Chinese Orchestra, Junior Yangqin Ensemble or Youth Yangqin Ensemble to receive training from renowned musicians and the Music Office's instructors. The fee for each camper ranges from \$450 to \$850. They will also participate in the public evening concert to be held at the Concert Hall of Hong Kong City Hall on August 1 to showcase their achievements. Tickets will be available for sale at URBIX from July 11.

Interested persons with the required music qualifications and in the relevant age cohort are welcome to submit applications online or by post. A link to the audition video is required to be provided in the application for selection. The deadline for application is May 14. For details, please visit the Music Office website [www.lcsd.gov.hk/musicoffice](http://www.lcsd.gov.hk/musicoffice).

For enquiries, please call 3842 7773, 2596 0898 or 3842 7775.

In view of the latest situation of COVID-19, visitors to music centres of the Music Office are required to scan the "LeaveHomeSafe" QR code or register their name, contact number and the date and time of the visit before being allowed to enter. They will also need to use hand sanitiser, wear their own masks and be subject to temperature checks.