

## LCQ22: Newly established schools

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Hak-kan and a written reply by the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (March 24):

Question:

It has been reported that Queen's Hill Estate and Shan Lai Court, which are located at Queen's Hill in Fanling, will be completed for intake within this year, and two primary schools (namely TWGHs Tseng Hin Pei Primary School and The Salvation Army Queen's Hill School) in the vicinity are under construction. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

1. whether it knows if the aforesaid two schools will commence classes in September this year as scheduled, and the latest progress of their teacher recruitment, student admission, etc.;
2. of the approved class structures, numbers of classes, numbers of students at each grade, numbers of teachers, and amounts of regular subventions in respect of the two schools;
3. whether the Education Bureau (EDB) has formulated a contingency plan which specifies the arrangements for the teachers employed and students admitted in the event that the two schools cannot commence classes as scheduled;
4. given that the two schools have not been included in the Choice of Schools List for Central Allocation (Primary One Admission 2021) for selection by parents, how the EDB assists the schools in admitting students, particularly the admission of those primary students who will soon move into Queen's Hill Estate and Shan Lai Court;
5. whether the EDB has formulated plans to assist those students who are studying in other primary schools in transferring to the two schools after they have moved into Queen's Hill Estate and Shan Lai Court; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and
6. as some members of the education sector have pointed out that the regular subvention received by an aided school is calculated on the basis of the number of students, but the student intakes of newly established schools at the initial stage are often lower than the target numbers, and such a situation is not conducive to the development of these schools, whether the EDB has plans to improve the method for calculating the subventions received by newly established schools; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Our reply to the Hon Chan Hak-kan's question is as follows:

(1), (2) and (3) The school building works of the two primary schools at Queen's Hill, Fanling are on schedule. It is expected that the new schools will be completed in the third quarter of 2021 for operation in the 2021/22 school year. The main buildings of the two school premises have been completed and the internal fitting-out works are underway. It is hoped that the two school premises can be handed over to the school sponsoring bodies as soon as possible. The Education Bureau (EDB) will continue to maintain close communication with the school sponsoring bodies on the preparatory work (including matters related to class arrangement, staffing and student admission) of the two new schools, so as to offer advice and support as appropriate to facilitate the school sponsoring bodies in preparing for the operation of the new schools. The EDB will, based on the Code of Aid and the principles set out in the relevant circulars, compute the staff establishment and recurrent cash grants according to the number of approved classes of the schools. In addition, the EDB will also provide the schools with additional teaching and professional support staff as well as recurrent and non-recurrent cash grants in accordance with the specific measures in various aspects.

(4) and (5) The EDB will provide placement assistance services for prospective residents of Queen's Hill Estate and Shan Lai Court. Regarding prospective Primary One (P1) students in the coming school year, residents who will move into Queen's Hill Estate and Shan Lai Court may approach the School Places Allocation (SPA) Section of the EDB to apply for net transfer or P1 places for their children on or before August 31, 2021. Under the prevailing mechanism, if parents need to apply for transfer to another school net for their children after participating in the Primary One Admission (POA) System because of allocation of public rental housing (PRH) flats, they may bring along the flat offer letters of the related estates or other relevant documentary proofs to the SPA Section of the EDB to apply for the net transfer. The EDB will allocate school places for these children in the school net at which the estates are located (i.e. School Net 81 of the North District) according to the established procedures. For parents who wish to apply for joining the POA 2021 for their children (for admission to P1 in September 2021) but have not yet submitted applications, they may bring along relevant documents to the SPA Section of the EDB for application on or before August 31, 2021. As for students currently attending primary schools in other districts who wish to transfer to a school in the district after moving into Queen's Hill Estate or Shan Lai Court, they may make applications to the EDB and we will make referrals.

To facilitate prospective residents' understanding of the details of the services, the EDB will provide school transfer information, a list of schools in the district and application forms of the aforesaid placement assistance services for distribution by the Housing Department to residents allocated with PRH flats. Parents who wish to transfer their children to the above two schools may also contact the schools concerned directly to apply for admission.

(6) Generally speaking, the staffing and resources required of a school depend on the number of classes it operates. Regarding the funding provision for aided schools, irrespective of whether they are newly established or existing aided schools, the EDB will, based on the Code of Aid and the principles set out in the relevant circulars, compute the staff establishment and recurrent cash grants according to the number of approved classes of the schools. Among the grants, the annual Expanded Operating Expenses Block Grant will normally be released on a quarterly basis. For example, in respect of the two new schools mentioned in the question, the EDB will, with regard to the progress of intake of residents of Queen's Hill Estate and Shan Lai Court, consider approving the operation of additional classes at the relevant grades as necessary in the middle of the school year to meet the demand for school places. The EDB will adjust the staff establishment and the amount of relevant funding accordingly to ensure that the new schools have sufficient resources in providing quality education services to the residents.

In addition, the EDB will continue to provide each aided school (including newly established schools) with additional teaching and professional support staff, such as special educational needs coordinator, executive officer, social worker, educational psychologist and speech therapist in accordance with specific measures in various aspects. Besides, recurrent and non-recurrent cash grants for specific policy objectives will also be disbursed, enabling schools to deploy resources flexibly in view of their school-based needs. Schools can hire additional contract teachers and ancillary staff on top of the approved establishment or procure outside services to provide necessary support for students.

To conclude, the EDB will provide sufficient resources to meet the operational needs of all newly established and existing aided schools.

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## **LCQ19: Assisting street sleepers**

Following is a question by the Hon Alice Mak and a written reply by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, in the Legislative Council today (March 24):

Question:

It has been reported that the number of street sleepers has obviously increased since the outbreak of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 epidemic in January last year. The reasons for them to street sleep include: inability to afford paying rent as a result of the loss of jobs due to the epidemic, the immigration restrictions and quarantine measures making it difficult for persons who travelled between the Mainland and Hong Kong on a daily basis before the epidemic to cross the boundary to return home, and the fast food restaurants operating 24 hours a day where homeless people used to stay at

night being required to suspend operation at the specified hours as directed by the Government. Furthermore, as a result of voluntary organisations cutting back on their services of distributing free food items to street sleepers due to the epidemic, street sleepers are facing a more difficult situation. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it has compiled statistics on how the number of street sleepers has varied with the fluctuations of the epidemic situation during the past 12 months; if so, of the outcome;

(2) whether it has endeavoured to provide meals on an emergency basis for street sleepers amid the epidemic;

(3) whether it will consider opening temporary shelters at night for street sleepers to stay overnight on a temporary basis;

(4) whether it will follow the following practice adopted in countries such as the United Kingdom, France and Australia: renting hotel rooms to provide temporary accommodation for street sleepers in the light of the severe epidemic situation; whether it will allocate additional resources and increase the manpower of social workers to enhance the service of assisting street sleepers in finding more stable accommodation; and

(5) whether it will set aside some of the transitional housing units for street sleepers to wait for admission?

Reply:

President,

Street sleeping is a complex social problem involving policies and work of various bureaux and departments. With regard to the Member's question, having consulted the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) and the Transport and Housing Bureau (THB), I set out the reply as follows:

(1) and (2) The Social Welfare Department (SWD) provides subvention to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to operate three Integrated Service Teams (ISTs) for Street Sleepers. ISTs reach out to and visit street sleepers for early identification of their needs to provide appropriate social welfare support and service referral. During the pandemic, ISTs have stepped up outreaching visits so as to reach out to street sleepers in need and provide them with the services required, including the short-term food assistance specifically mentioned in the question. In 2019 and 2020, SWD-subvented ISTs and related units contacted about 1 300 and 1 500 street sleepers respectively.

(3) According to the information provided by HAB, under the existing mechanism, the Government will open temporary shelters when tropical cyclone warning signal No. 8 or above, landslip warning, red/ black rainstorm warning signal or cold/ very hot weather warning is in force or during the outbreak of a major fire to provide temporary accommodation for people in need, including but not limited to street sleepers. Moreover, HAB pointed out that as the COVID-19 epidemic has persisted, members of the public should continue

to maintain social distancing and avoid crowding so as to reduce the risks of the spread of the virus and a large-scale outbreak in the community. HAB is therefore unable to implement the proposal to open temporary shelters at night for street sleepers in view of the risks involved and the consideration that it is not in line with the policy objectives mentioned above.

(4) and (5) There are 228 SWD-subsided emergency or short-term hostel places operated by NGOs. During the street sleepers' stay, IST social workers will continue to provide them with assistance, including the identification of a more stable accommodation.

According to THB, generally speaking, the beneficiaries of transitional housing projects shall meet the following criteria:

- (i) waiting for public rental housing for not less than 3 years; or
- (ii) living in severely inadequate housing conditions and are in urgent need for housing.

The operating organisations will draw up the detailed criteria for application according to their service specialties.

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## Firing practice for April 2021

Firing practice will take place at two military sites, namely the San Wai/Tai Ling Firing Range and the Tsing Shan Firing Range, next month (April).

Red flags or red lamps will be hoisted at the firing areas before and during firing practice. For their safety, people are advised not to enter the firing area.

Following are the dates and times for the firing practice sessions in April 2021:

San Wai/Tai Ling Firing Range

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Date	Time
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April 1 (Thursday)	8am-9pm
April 7 (Wednesday)	8am-9pm
April 8 (Thursday)	8am-9pm
April 9 (Friday)	8am-9pm
April 10 (Saturday)	8am-9pm
April 12 (Monday)	8am-9pm
April 13 (Tuesday)	8am-9pm
April 14 (Wednesday)	8am-9pm
April 15 (Thursday)	8am-9pm
April 16 (Friday)	8am-9pm
April 17 (Saturday)	8am-9pm
April 19 (Monday)	8am-9pm
April 20 (Tuesday)	8am-9pm
April 21 (Wednesday)	8am-9pm
April 22 (Thursday)	8am-9pm
April 23 (Friday)	8am-9pm
April 24 (Saturday)	8am-9pm
April 26 (Monday)	8am-9pm
April 27 (Tuesday)	8am-9pm
April 28 (Wednesday)	8am-9pm
April 29 (Thursday)	8am-9pm
April 30 (Friday)	8am-9pm

Tsing Shan Firing Range

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Date	Time
April 1 (Thursday)	8am-9pm
April 7 (Wednesday)	8am-9pm
April 8 (Thursday)	8am-9pm
April 9 (Friday)	8am-9pm
April 10 (Saturday)	8am-9pm
April 12 (Monday)	8am-9pm
April 13 (Tuesday)	8am-9pm
April 14 (Wednesday)	8am-9pm
April 15 (Thursday)	8am-9pm
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April 30 (Friday)	8am-9pm

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# Key statistics on service demand of A&E Departments and occupancy rates in public hospitals

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

During the winter surge, the Hospital Authority is closely monitoring the service demand of Accident and Emergency Departments and the occupancy rates in public hospitals. Key service statistics are being issued daily for public information. Details are in the appended table.

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## Statistics for COVID-19 Vaccination Programme

The COVID-19 Vaccination Programme has been implemented for 26 days since February 26.

In the past 24 hours ending at 8pm today (March 23), the following figures were recorded:

(i) About 9 000 persons received their first dose of Sinovac vaccine, including about 6 400 persons vaccinated at eight Community Vaccination Centres (CVCs) and about 2 000 persons at private doctors and clinics participating in the programme; and

(ii) About 14 400 persons received their first dose of BioNTech vaccine at 19 CVCs.

(iii) A total of about 23 400 persons received their first dose of vaccine.

The overall percentage of people who have received Sinovac vaccine at eight CVCs today is about 80 per cent, while the overall percentage of people who have received BioNTech vaccine at 19 CVCs today is about 96 per cent.

So far, a cumulative total of about 403 000 persons have received their first vaccination dose (Annex 1), with about 252 800 persons receiving Sinovac vaccine and about 150 200 persons receiving BioNTech vaccine.

As of 8pm today, about 5 600 persons had reserved their first and second doses of the Sinovac vaccine online in the past 24 hours, while about 11 100 persons had reserved their first and second doses of the BioNTech vaccine online.

In the past 24 hours ending at 0000 hours today, there were 20 cases of ambulance transfer to hospital. Among them, 15 persons were discharged, three persons were admitted for observation, two persons were discharged against medical advice (Annex 2).

Meanwhile, as background information, in the past 24 hours ending at 0000 hours today, there were 47 cases of stroke or myocardial infarction that required admission to Intensive Care Unit, Acute Stroke Unit and Cardiac Care Unit in public hospitals. This figure is the actual total number of new cases admitted to concerned wards due to stroke or myocardial infarction and serves as a cross reference for the general public to comprehend the unwell cases.