

LCQ14: Persons from Mainland entering or transiting via Hong Kong

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Kwok Ka-ki and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (June 17):

Question:

Regarding persons from the Mainland entering or transiting via Hong Kong, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the respective numbers of Mainland residents from (i) Wuhan, (ii) Hubei Province (excluding Wuhan) and (iii) the Mainland (excluding Hubei Province) entering Hong Kong in each of the past 12 months, with a tabulated breakdown by the boundary control points they used (i.e. the Hong Kong International Airport, Hong Kong West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link, Hung Hom, Lo Wu, Lok Ma Chau Spur Line, Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, Lok Ma Chau, Man Kam To, Sha Tau Kok, Shenzhen Bay, China Ferry Terminal, Kai Tak Cruise Terminal, Hong Kong-Macau Ferry Terminal, and Tuen Mun Ferry Terminal);

(2) whether it knows the respective numbers of persons transiting via Hong Kong in each of the past 12 months who departed from (i) Beijing, (ii) Shanghai, (iii) Wuhan and (iv) other Mainland places, with a tabulated breakdown by their destinations (i.e. Australia, Canada, Japan, South Korea, North Korea, New Zealand, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, the United Kingdom, and the United States); and

(3) whether it knows the number of persons who took direct flights at the Wuhan Tianhe International Airport to Hong Kong in each of the past 12 months (set out in a table)?

Reply:

President,

In consultation with the Security Bureau and Airport Authority Hong Kong (AAHK), my reply to various parts of the question raised by Dr the Hon Kwok Ka-ki is as follows:

(1) For (i) and (ii), with effect from January 27, 2020, except for Hong Kong residents, residents from Hubei Province and persons who have visited Hubei Province in the past 14 days are not permitted to enter Hong Kong. The Immigration Department (ImmD) does not maintain breakdown statistics mentioned in the question.

For (iii), the ImmD does not maintain breakdown statistics mentioned in the question. The numbers of Mainland visitor arrivals at various control points from June 2019 to May 2020 (by month) are tabulated in the Annex.

(2) Since transfer passengers do not enter into Hong Kong, the relevant figures are maintained by airlines. The AAHK is not able to provide the breakdown statistics as per Dr the Hon Kwok Ka-ki's request. The numbers of transfer passenger trips from Mainland via the Hong Kong International Airport from June 2019 to May 2020 (by month) are tabulated below:

	2019							2020				
	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr (Note 2)	May (Note 2)
Total passengers (trips) (Note 1)	358 000	527 000	410 000	351 000	290 000	277 000	244 000	445 000	77 000	11 000	Less than 500	Less than 500

Note 1: Figures are rounded to the nearest thousand. Two trips will be counted for a passenger transferred from the Mainland to Hong Kong and from Hong Kong to other destinations.

Note 2: The figures for April and May 2020 are provisional.

(3) The numbers of passengers travelling to Hong Kong from Wuhan Tianhe International Airport by direct flights from June 2019 to May 2020 (by month) are tabulated below:

	2019							2020				
	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr (Note 2)	May (Note 2)
Total passengers (Note 1)	7 200	6 300	4 100	3 500	3 900	4 000	3 000	1 500	–	1 200 (Note 3)	–	–

Note 1: Figures refer to the number of passengers taking direct flights and are rounded to the nearest thousand. Transfer passengers are excluded.

Note 2: The figures for April and May 2020 are provisional.

Note 3: The figure refers to the number of passengers of the chartered flights arranged by the HKSAR Government for Hong Kong residents stranded in Hubei Province.

[Hong Kong residents stranded in India to take special flights to return home](#)

A Government spokesman said today (June 17) that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government has arranged two special flights to

bring back Hong Kong residents stranded in India. The two flights are tentatively scheduled to depart from Bengaluru and Chennai for Hong Kong on June 18 and 20 respectively at the earliest.

The two special flights will carry Hong Kong residents in various provinces in the southeast part of India with special needs primarily, such as people with illness, pregnant women and children as well as family members travelling with them.

Over the past few days, the Immigration Department (ImmD) has individually contacted assistance seekers who meet the above circumstances to ascertain their wishes to take the flights and to obtain their personal particulars for applying for travel permission from the local governments. The two flights will carry a total of about 280 passengers who will pay for the cost of the air tickets.

Upon arrival in Hong Kong, the returnees from India will proceed to the Department of Health's Temporary Specimen Collection Centre at AsiaWorld-Expo for compulsory COVID-19 testing. After their deep throat saliva samples are collected, the returnees will be transferred to designated quarantine centres for a 14-day compulsory quarantine period.

In view of the COVID-19 pandemic situation, the Indian Government has suspended all international flight movements since late March. As at June 16, the ImmD had successfully contacted about 5 490 Hong Kong residents who are stranded in India. After receiving requests for assistance, the Security Bureau and the ImmD have been liaising with the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the HKSAR and the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Republic of India to understand the local situation and take follow-up action, and to provide relevant information as well as appropriate suggestions and practicable assistance to the assistance seekers. The HKSAR Government has also been in close liaison with the Consulate General of India in Hong Kong, and has worked with a local airline for arranging flights to take the stranded Hong Kong residents home.ã€€ã€€

The HKSAR Government has earlier arranged two flights to bring about 570 Hong Kong residents stranded in India back to Hong Kong from New Delhi and Mumbai on May 18 and June 4 respectively. Currently, there are still many Hong Kong residents stranded in different areas of India. The HKSAR Government will continue to assist the stranded residents to return to Hong Kong in an orderly manner in batches, taking into account the actual circumstances.

Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at noon today (June 17), two COVID-19 confirmed patients (case numbers: 1057 and 1079) were discharged from hospital in the past 24 hours. So far, a total of 1,071 patients with confirmed or probable infection have been discharged.

At present, there are 624 negative pressure rooms in public hospitals with 1,179 negative pressure beds activated. A total of 38 confirmed patients are currently hospitalised in eight hospitals, among which three patients are in critical condition (case numbers: 595, 1084 and 1100), one patient is in serious condition (case number: 1092) and the remaining 34 patients are in stable condition.

The Hospital Authority will maintain close contact with the Centre for Health Protection to monitor the latest developments and to inform the public and healthcare workers on the latest information in a timely manner.

LCQ21: Provision of interpretation services for the ethnic minorities

Following is a question by the Hon Kwong Chun-yu and a written reply by the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Erick Tsang Kwok-wai, in the Legislative Council today (June 17):

Question:

At present, government departments and public organizations providing public services (public service providers) will provide interpretation services for the ethnic minorities (EMs) who understand neither Chinese nor English to facilitate their access to public services. The Centre for Harmony and Enhancement of Ethnic Minority Residents (CHEER) operated by the Hong Kong Christian Service is one of the interpretation service providers. Some EMs have relayed that the frontline staff of quite a number of public service providers did not take the initiative to arrange interpretation services for them even though the staff members could not communicate with them effectively. On the other hand, the Government has amended the Administrative Guidelines on Promotion of Racial Equality (the Guidelines) to incorporate into the Guidelines the guidance notes on language services and data

collection on service users. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of occasions in each of the past three years on which the various public service providers (including the Social Welfare Department, the Housing Department, the Department of Health, the Labour Department and other government departments as well as the Hospital Authority) arranged interpretation services, with a breakdown by (i) name of public service provider, (ii) type of interpretation service (i.e. telephone interpretation, on-sight interpretation, on-site interpretation, written translation, proofreading and simultaneous interpretation), and (iii) the EM language involved in the interpretation service;

(2) whether it knows the number of requests received by CHEER in each of the past three years for the provision of interpretation services to EMs using public services, with a breakdown by (i) name of public service provider, (ii) type of interpretation service, (iii) the EM language involved in the interpretation service, and (iv) whether the request was acceded to;

(3) given that the Government will collect, in accordance with the Guidelines, the relevant data on the use of various types of public services by EMs (including ethnicities and EM languages), whether the Government will, based on such data, plan for the future allocation of resources for supporting fair access to public services by EMs;

(4) whether the Government will monitor if the various public service providers have provided interpretation services for EMs in accordance with the guidance notes on provision of language services in the Guidelines; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(5) whether the Home Affairs Department and the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau will formulate guidelines to require CHEER and the various public service providers to record and publish the reasons for declining requests for interpretation services, so as to enhance transparency and enable monitoring by the public; and

(6) given that quite a number of government departments (e.g. the Housing Department and the Labour Department) have not formulated any booking arrangement for interpretation services, and hence EMs who need on-site interpretation services to help them fill out application forms for public services have to visit the offices of these departments to obtain a tag and wait for their turn to be interviewed before interpretation services will be arranged for them, and such process is very time-consuming, whether the Government will urge the various public service providers to formulate booking arrangements for on-site interpretation services?

Reply:

President,

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government is committed to

eliminating racial discrimination and promoting equal opportunities for people of diverse race. To strengthen support for people of diverse race, the Government has refined the Administrative Guidelines on Promotion of Racial Equality (the Guidelines). With effect from April this year, the scope of application of the Guidelines has been extended from 23 government bureaux/departments (B/Ds) and public organisations (Note 1) to all B/Ds as well as related organisations (collectively referred to as public authorities) providing services to people of diverse race. The purpose of the Guidelines is to raise public authorities' awareness on the need for racial diversity and inclusion as well as equity considerations in the formulation, implementation and review of relevant policies and measures. The Guidelines also provide guidance to public authorities to ensure that people of Hong Kong, regardless of their race, enjoy equal access to public services.

In Hong Kong, people of diverse race who cannot communicate effectively in English and Chinese may encounter difficulties in accessing public services. To bridge the language barrier, the revised Guidelines contain a new guidance note on provision of language services. Concrete steps have been set out to facilitate the management and front-line staff of public authorities to identify the language service needs of service users, introduce the availability of and proactively offer language services, and arrange language services to those in need as appropriate.

The revised Guidelines also contain a new guidance note on data collection which stipulates the requirements for public authorities to review all policy areas, identify policies and measures that people of diverse race may make use of and need access to, and collect data on a regular basis for the purposes of service monitoring and continuous improvement of service provision. The data collection arrangement will be implemented by phases with a view to completing the identification of services and necessary preparations for full implementation by public authorities by March 2022.

After consulting the relevant responsible B/Ds, the consolidated reply to the questions raised by Hon Kwong Chun-yu is as follows:

(1) The revised Guidelines are applicable to all B/Ds and related organisations with effect from April this year. Since the collection of data relating to interpretation services is being implemented gradually, only information pertaining to B/Ds and public organisations covered by the previous version of the Guidelines can be provided at this stage. The number of interpretation services arranged by the public organisations concerned for people of diverse race in the past three financial years is shown in Annex 1.

(2) The Home Affairs Department (HAD) provides support services for people of diverse race to help them integrate into the community. Major services include the provision of language learning classes and integration programmes through six support service centres for ethnic minorities and two sub-centres. One of these centres, namely the Centre for Harmony and Enhancement of Ethnic Minority Residents (CHEER Centre) operated by the Hong Kong Christian Service, also provides general interpretation and translation services in eight languages (Note 2) for non-specialised/non-professional

areas. B/Ds, public organisations and people of diverse race are welcome to make use of these services. Interpretation services include mainly instant telephone interpretation services. Subject to the availability of resources, on-site or simultaneous interpretation services can also be arranged.

The interpretation and translation services provided by the CHEER Centre with breakdowns by B/Ds, public organisations and people of diverse race as well as by languages in the past three years are shown in Annexes 2 and 3 respectively. The CHEER Centre does not keep statistics on cases where interpretation services cannot be provided.

(3) In accordance with the Guidelines, public authorities can base on the information regularly collected to assess the impact of their policies and measures on racial equality. This would in turn enable public authorities, having regard to their actual operational circumstances, to consider refining their respective policies, measures and services so as to achieve the objective of enabling people of diverse race enjoy equal access to public services and for continuous improvement of service provision.

(4) To avoid language becoming an obstacle for service users to access public services, it is stipulated in the Guidelines that public authorities should oversee and regularly review the arrangements of language services provision, and make refinement to the arrangements as appropriate. Moreover, public authorities are required to report on "the need for language services" (including the number of requests received and the number of interpretation services provided) and "preferred language" to the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau (CMAB) annually to facilitate overall monitoring. If a member of the public consider that the public authorities are in breach of the Guidelines, he/she can put up the case under the existing complaint handling mechanism of the public authorities concerned.

(5) In accordance with the Guidelines, public authorities should collect basic information on "the need for interpretation/translation services" and "preferred language" (other than Chinese and English) of service users who need interpretation/translation services. Such information includes the number of cases where language services are requested; the number of cases where language services are offered to service users; the number of cases where offer of language services is accepted or declined; and the language requested, etc. Public authorities will provide the above information to the CMAB annually. The aggregate statistics will be published on the CMAB's website for public information.

(6) Public authorities will provide suitable assistance to service users of diverse race according to such users' actual needs, including interpretation services, thereby ensuring their equal access to public services. Since the interpretation needs of people of diverse race vary depending on what public services they are accessing to, public authorities will consider the actual situation and adopt appropriate arrangements to provide interpretation services to them.

For instance, members of the public requiring interpretation services

when visiting Hong Kong Housing Authority's offices (such as estate offices and office of public rental housing application) may make advance appointment with the CHEER Centre for interpretation services. They can also make request to the duty officers on the spot who will contact the CHEER Centre for arranging interpretation services through telephone or other means instantly, or make appointment for such service. Moreover, the Labour Department (LD) arranges interpretation services for people of diverse race to ensure that their access to services will not be hampered owing to language barriers. When people who speak neither Chinese nor English come to the LD with immediate need of service, the LD would contact the CHEER Centre as soon as possible to provide interpretation services over the phone. As for prior appointments and scheduled interviews, the LD would arrange on-site interpretation service as far as practicable.

Note 1: The 23 B/Ds and public organisations are the Education Bureau, Social Welfare Department, Labour Department, Home Affairs Department, Employees Retraining Board, Vocational Training Council, Food and Health Bureau, Department of Health, Hospital Authority, Construction Industry Council, Office of the Government Chief Information Officer, Innovation and Technology Commission, Office of the Communications Authority, Housing Department, Hong Kong Observatory, Hongkong Post, Legal Aid Department, Hong Kong Police Force, Correctional Services Department, Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department, Immigration Department, Hong Kong Fire Services Department and Registration and Electoral Office.

Note 2: The eight languages are Bahasa Indonesia, Hindi, Nepali, Punjabi, Tagalog, Thai, Urdu and Vietnamese.

[Works departments receive UK New Engineering Contract awards](#)

The Highways Department, the Drainage Services Department and the Civil Engineering and Development Department were awarded today (June 17) the Transport Contract of the Year, Water Contract of the Year and Contract Innovation Award respectively by the New Engineering Contract (NEC) Users' Group of the United Kingdom.

The NEC Awards scheme was established in 2015 by the NEC Users' Group under the Institution of the Civil Engineers of the United Kingdom with an aim of recognising excellence in project delivery and showcasing examples of good practice through collaboration across the world.

"Cultural change towards collaborative partnering in public works projects is bearing fruit of the true use of the NEC as our management tool," said Mr Lam Sai-hung, the Permanent Secretary for Development (Works), at the

NEC Awards 2020 presentation ceremony specially held for the winners of Hong Kong. He added that the NEC has been well received by the industry for achieving collaborative partnerships, enhancing management efficiency, increasing mutual trust and reducing contractual disputes within public works projects over the past decade.

The Development Bureau piloted the use of the NEC form in 2009 and expanded its application in public work projects since 2015. As of today, more than 200 NEC contracts have been awarded.

Full list of the relevant projects is available on the NEC's website: www.neccontract.com/NEC4-Products/NEC-Awards/Awards-2020.