

## CFS finds Salmonella in prepackaged cut fruit sample

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (April 9) that a prepackaged cut fruit sample (including honeydew melon and netting melon) was found to contain a pathogen, Salmonella. The CFS is following up on the case.

"The CFS collected the abovementioned cut fruit sample from a supermarket in Ho Man Tin for testing under its routine Food Surveillance Programme. The test result showed the presence of Salmonella in 25 grams of the sample, exceeding the criterion of the Microbiological Guidelines for Food which states that Salmonella should not be detected in 25g of a ready-to-eat food sample," a CFS spokesman said.

The spokesman said that the CFS has notified the vendor concerned of the unsatisfactory test result and instructed it to stop selling the food item concerned immediately. The CFS has also provided health education on food safety and hygiene to the person-in-charge and staff of the vendor, and requested it to review and improve the food production process and carry out thorough cleaning and disinfection.

"Salmonella infection may cause fever and gastrointestinal upset such as vomiting, abdominal pain and diarrhoea. The effects on infants, young children, the elderly and patients with a weak immune system could be more severe and may even lead to death," the spokesman said.

The CFS will continue to follow up on the incident and take appropriate action to safeguard food safety and public health.

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## Statistics on Code on Access to Information for third quarter of 2019

The Government received a total of 2,138 requests for information under the Code on Access to Information in the third quarter of 2019, a spokesman for the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau said today (April 9).

The total number of requests received since the introduction of the Code in March 1995 and up to the end of September 2019 amounted to 75,887. Of these, 4,406 requests were subsequently withdrawn by the requestors and 3,743 requests covered cases in which the bureaux/departments concerned did not hold the requested information or cannot confirm or deny the existence of information. As at September 30, 2019, 345 requests were still being

processed by bureaux/departments.

Among the 67,393 requests which covered information held by bureaux/departments and which the bureaux/departments had responded to, 65,273 requests (96.9 per cent) were met, either in full (63,602 requests) or in part (1,671 requests), and 2,120 requests (3.1 per cent) were refused.

Any member of the public who is dissatisfied with the response of a bureau/department under the Code may request that the matter be reviewed. He or she may also lodge a complaint with the Ombudsman.

In the third quarter of 2019, the Ombudsman received 21 complaints relating to requests for information. In this quarter, the Ombudsman concluded 27 complaints, among which four were partially substantiated, three were unsubstantiated, 15 were settled after inquiries by the Ombudsman, and five were not pursued by the Ombudsman or were outside the Ombudsman's jurisdiction. As at September 30, 2019, the Ombudsman's investigations on 22 complaints were ongoing.

"The Code has provided an effective framework for the public to seek access to information held by the Government," the spokesman said.

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## Grading of beach water quality released

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (April 9) released the latest grading of water quality for 38 gazetted beaches (see Note 1) and one non-gazetted beach (i.e. Discovery Bay, see Note 2).

Twenty-five beaches were rated as Good (Grade 1), 10 as Fair (Grade 2) and four as Poor (Grade 3).

Grade 1 beaches are:

Cheung Chau Tung Wan Beach	Pui O Beach
Chung Hom Kok Beach	Repulse Bay Beach
Clear Water Bay First Beach	Shek O Beach
Clear Water Bay Second Beach	Silver Mine Bay Beach
Deep Water Bay Beach	Silverstrand Beach
Discovery Bay	South Bay Beach
Hap Mun Bay Beach	St Stephen's Beach
Hung Shing Yeh Beach	Stanley Main Beach
Kiu Tsui Beach	Tong Fuk Beach
Kwun Yam Beach	Trio Beach

Lo So Shing Beach  
Lower Cheung Sha Beach  
Middle Bay Beach

Turtle Cove Beach  
Upper Cheung Sha Beach

Grade 2 beaches are:

Anglers' Beach  
Approach Beach  
Big Wave Bay Beach  
Cafeteria New Beach  
Casam Beach

Golden Beach  
Hoi Mei Wan Beach  
Lido Beach  
Ma Wan Tung Wan Beach  
Ting Kau Beach

Grade 3 beaches are:

Butterfly Beach  
Cafeteria Old Beach

Castle Peak Beach  
Kadoorie Beach

Under the present grading system, beaches are classified into four grades, namely Good (Grade 1), Fair (Grade 2), Poor (Grade 3) and Very Poor (Grade 4), according to the level of E. coli in the water. Grades are calculated on the basis of the geometric mean of the E. coli counts on the five most recent sampling occasions.

A summary of beach grades is published weekly before the weekend. The latest beach grades based on the most current data may be obtained from the EPD's website on Beach Water Quality ([www.epd.gov.hk/epd/beach](http://www.epd.gov.hk/epd/beach)) or the beach hotline, 2511 6666.

Note 1: To tie in with the response level under the Preparedness and Response Plan for Novel Infectious Disease of Public Health Significance having been raised to the Emergency Response Level and to encourage people to avoid gathering, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department has announced that all beaches will continue to be temporarily closed until further notice.

Note 2: Discovery Bay is a non-gazetted beach without lifeguard service.

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## **SLW's speaking notes on welfare and women policy areas tabled at LegCo Finance Committee special meeting**

Following are the speaking notes of the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, on welfare and women policy areas tabled at the special meeting of the Legislative Council (LegCo) Finance Committee today

(April 9):

Chairman and Honourable Members,

In 2020-21, government recurrent spending on social welfare and women's interests is estimated to be \$93.9 billion, accounting for 19.3 per cent of the total recurrent government expenditure for the year, second only to education. Compared with the revised estimate for 2019-20 of \$82.3 billion, there is an increase of about \$11.6 billion (i.e. 14.2 per cent). This reflects the Government's commitment to supporting the disadvantaged. The Government will continue to provide and enhance our support for the disadvantaged, including the elderly, children, persons with disabilities, low-income families and those in need. Now, let me highlight how the Labour and Welfare Bureau will make use of these resources.

#### Elderly care

The recurrent government expenditure on elderly services in 2020-21 is estimated to reach about \$12.3 billion, representing an increase of about 17 per cent over the revised estimate in 2019-20. In 2020-21, the Government will provide an additional 1 797 subsidised residential care places, including 181 places provided by contract homes and subsidised homes and 1 616 EA1 places under the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme, as well as 320 subsidised day care places for the elderly. The Government has also allocated additional resources to implement various initiatives on enhancing elderly services put forth in the Chief Executive's 2019 Policy Address, including providing a total of 3 000 additional service quotas under the Integrated Home Care Services (Frail Cases) in 2020 and 2021, and providing an additional 1 000 service vouchers, bringing the total to 8 000, under the Pilot Scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly. In addition, the Government will allocate additional resources to relevant subsidised elderly service units (including subsidised elderly homes and elderly community care and support service units) to provide soft meals for elderly persons with swallowing problems. The Government will also make arrangements under the Pilot Scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly and the Pilot Scheme on Residential Care Service Voucher for the Elderly accordingly so that service units can provide soft meals to elderly persons in need.

#### Social welfare service units

To make available a more comfortable environment for service users to take part in activities, starting from 2020-21 onwards, the Government will provide an additional recurrent provision of \$46.6 million to the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) subvented by the Social Welfare Department (SWD) and operating day service units to meet the electricity costs of providing air conditioning for all activity areas. This initiative will benefit 1 147 subvented day service units and more than 1 million service users.

## Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project (NSCCP)

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To enhance the service quality of the NSCCP, the SWD has allocated an additional provision of about \$24 million to service operators since January this year, enabling them to increase manpower to strengthen training for home-based child carers, and raised the level of incentive payment for home-based child carers to encourage more volunteers to serve as child carers.

## Launching Pilot Scheme on Social Work Services for Pre-primary Institutions

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For early identification of and provision of assistance to pre-primary children and their families with welfare needs, the Government has allocated \$990 million from the Lotteries Fund to provide social work services in phases in subsidised/aided child care centres, kindergartens and kindergarten-cum-child care centres for about 150 000 pre-primary children and their families. The first two phases have provided services to 485 eligible pre-primary institutions in total. The third phase will commence in August this year.

## Short-term food assistance service

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Given the prevailing local economic conditions, the Government will allocate a further \$85 million to the short-term food assistance service for meeting the projected growth in demand for food assistance. The Government expects that the proposed allocation will sustain the service till July 2021, with at least 20 000 beneficiaries.

## Community Investment and Inclusion Fund (CIIF)

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The Government will inject \$500 million into the CIIF to support social capital development projects (including community support projects for residents of new public rental housing estates) and build mutual help networks in the community through cross-sectoral collaboration. The funding injection should enable the continual operation of the CIIF until 2024, for supporting about 140 projects benefiting more than 140 000 people.

## Strengthening After School Care Programme

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In order to meet the keen service needs, the Government will introduce various enhancement measures to strengthen the After School Care Programme at primary school level, including addition of 2 500 full fee-waiving places, relaxation of application eligibility, increase of the subsidy level, provision of extra subsidy for students with special educational needs, and streamlining of the financial vetting process. The enhancement measures are expected to roll out in October 2020 and benefit more than 5 700 students and their families.

## Ethnic Minority (EM) District Ambassador pilot scheme

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In view of the increasingly diversified needs of EM communities, the Government will launch a three-year EM District Ambassador pilot scheme in 2020-21 in nine districts with higher EM populations. Additional EM or designated staff will be engaged as EM District Ambassadors to enhance service provision in welfare service units of the SWD and subvented NGOs.

## Rehabilitation services

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### Supporting pre-school children with special needs

To provide early support to pre-school children with special needs, the Government will keep in view the demand and supply of pre-school rehabilitation services and the manpower supply of allied health professionals concerned, and provide additional places under various pre-school rehabilitation services in a timely manner. The Government has plans to increase the number of on-site pre-school rehabilitation services places by 1 000 each year for the three school years from 2020/21 to 2022/23. This total increase of 3 000 service places will bring the overall number of service places to 10 000, involving an additional full-year provision of \$306 million. The total number of service places of special child care centres as well as early education and training centres will also increase gradually by about 1 200 to about 6 700 from 2019-20 to 2021-22, involving an additional full-year provision of \$150 million.

### Enhancing community support and residential services

The Government will continue to increase the number of day rehabilitation service and residential service places. In 2019-20 to 2021-22, about 3 800 additional service places are expected to be gradually provided through planned development projects, involving an additional full-year provision of \$628 million. In 2020-21, 345 additional residential places will be purchased under the Bought Place Scheme for Private Residential Care Homes for Persons with Disabilities, and 130 additional day rehabilitation service places will be provided through purchase of premises, involving an additional full-year provision of \$61 million.

### Training sponsorship

The Government will continue to implement the Training Sponsorship Scheme to sponsor NGOs providing subsidised elderly or rehabilitation services in offering tuition fee sponsorship to occupational therapy (OT) and physiotherapy (PT) students whom the NGOs have recruited. The Scheme covers the OT/PT Master Programmes of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University from 2020-21 to 2023-24 as well as the OT Bachelor Programme of Tung Wah College from 2020-21 to 2022-23.

## Cash assistance

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As regards cash assistance, the Chief Executive's 2019 Policy Address

announced a series of improvement measures under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme, which include substantially increasing the rent allowance, and relaxing the eligibility of a range of supplement and special grants. It is expected that an additional annual expenditure of \$960 million will be incurred. Meanwhile, in order to maintain the relativity between the payments under the Working Family Allowance (WFA) and CSSA, the Government will increase all payment rates under the WFA, which will incur an additional annual expenditure of \$460 million. The Government has issued a paper to the LegCo Finance Committee with respect to the above improvement measures, and will implement them as soon as practicable after their approval.

Furthermore, the Chief Executive announced on January 14, 2020, to standardise the payment rates of the Old Age Living Allowance (OALA) by adopting the Higher OALA rate, and significantly increase the asset limits to \$500,000 for elderly singletons and \$750,000 for elderly couples. These enhancements are estimated to benefit about 150 000 elderly persons, which will involve an additional annual expenditure of about \$3.7 billion. The implementation timetable and relevant details will be announced in due course.

The Chief Executive also announced on February 14, 2020, to provide a one-off special allowance under the newly established Anti-epidemic Fund to each beneficiary household under the WFA and means-tested Student Financial Assistance for pre-primary, primary and secondary students. The Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency will start disbursing the special allowance in batches by end-June, which will benefit more than 200 000 low-income households and involve a one-off expenditure of \$990 million.

Separately, the Financial Secretary has proposed in the 2020-21 Budget to provide an extra allowance to recipients of social security and the Work Incentive Transport Subsidy, which is equal to one month of payment. It is expected to benefit over 1.4 million persons and will involve an additional one-off expenditure of about \$4.2 billion.

The various measures I have just mentioned involve an additional recurrent expenditure of more than \$5 billion per year, as well as another \$5 billion one-off expenditure.

#### Women's development

In 2020-21, the Government has earmarked around \$38 million to promote women's interests and support the work of the Women's Commission (WoC). These include the provision for assisting the WoC in implementing the Capacity Building Mileage Programme and implementing the Funding Scheme for Women's Development under which 18 District Councils and women's groups may implement programmes that are conducive to women's development.

Chairman, this concludes my opening remarks. Members are welcome to raise questions.

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## **Fraudulent website and phishing email related to The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation 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 The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited on fraudulent website and phishing email, which has been reported to the HKMA. Hyperlink to the press release is available on [the HKMA website](#) for ease of reference by members of the public.

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