

[CP visits Korean National Police Agency \(with photo\)](#)

The Commissioner of Police, Mr Lo Wai-chung, led a five-member delegation to visit the Korean National Police Agency (KNPA) on March 17.

As a highlight of the visit, Mr Lo, on behalf of the Hong Kong Police, signed a renewed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on combating international crime with the Commissioner General of KNPA, Mr Min Gab-ryong. The renewed memorandum is a testament to the continuation of strengthening collaboration and partnership between the two organisations.

The delegation also visited the Seoul Metropolitan Police Agency, Korean National Police University and the Korea Internet & Security Agency, where the delegates discussed strategies on enhancing policing using digital technologies and combating cybercrimes.

The delegation returned to Hong Kong today (March 20).



[LCQ15: Grade structure review for disciplined services grades](#)

Following is a question by the Hon Mrs Regina Ip and a written reply by the Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Joshua Law, in the Legislative Council today (March 20):

Question:

Some trade unions of the disciplined services have relayed to me that as compared with civilian staff, disciplined services staff are required to have better physical fitness, have a higher sense of discipline and work shifts more frequently, while the work of disciplined services is more dangerous

than that of civilian staff. However, the current remuneration packages for disciplined services staff have not sufficiently reflected such factors. For instance, the maximum pay point for Customs Officers is lower than that for Assistant Clerical Officers, whose entry requirement on academic qualifications is similar. Moreover, the pay difference between successive pay points in the pay scale for the former is smaller than that for the latter. Given that the Government is conducting a grade structure review for the disciplined services grades, will the Government inform this Council whether the review includes examining the raising of the pay levels for disciplined services staff (particularly for the rank and file), and widening the pay difference between successive pay points in their pay scales; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The civil service pay policy is to offer sufficient remuneration to attract, retain and motivate staff of a suitable calibre to provide the public with an effective and efficient service; and to maintain broad comparability between civil service pay and private sector pay. To implement this policy, the Government devised the "Improved Civil Service Pay Adjustment Mechanism" in 2007, under which civil service pay is compared with private sector pay through regularly conducted pay surveys. Nevertheless, as it is not possible to find comparable posts and jobs in the private sector for the disciplined services, and individual disciplined services grades are also facing recruitment or retention difficulties, the Chief Executive-in-Council therefore decided in October last year to conduct a grade structure review (GSR) for the disciplined services, and once every 10 years in future, to ensure that the grade structure and remuneration of the disciplined services are effective in attracting and retaining talents.

The Standing Committee on Disciplined Services Salaries and Conditions of Service (SCDS) has accepted the Government's invitation to conduct a GSR for the disciplined services grades. At the same time, the Standing Committee on Directorate Salaries and Conditions of Service (SDCS) has also agreed to advise on the salaries and conditions of service of the heads of the disciplined services. The two advisory bodies will conduct the review independently to consider the appropriate pay scales for each of the grades and ranks and the grade structure of each disciplined services, etc. The two advisory bodies will also consider the work nature, job duties and workload of the disciplined services; changes in public expectation towards the disciplined services; the recruitment and retention situation of the disciplined services; and other factors involving wider community interests (e.g. financial consideration). The SCDS and SDCS have commenced work, including meeting the management and the staff side representatives of the disciplined services and inviting them to submit proposals. If the staff side have any suggestions or views on, among other things, the pay of individual grades or the differences between pay points of the pay scales, they may raise them with the SCDS and the SDCS. In the course of the review, the two advisory bodies will maintain communication with the management and the staff side of the disciplined services. They will thoroughly consider proposals

submitted by the management and the staff side and listen to stakeholders' views. It is expected that the review will take around 18 months for completion by around mid-2020.

LCQ19: Wastage of the Administrative Officer and Executive Officer grades staff

Following is a question by the Hon Lam Cheuk-ting and a written reply by the Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Joshua Law, in the Legislative Council today (March 20):

Question:

Regarding the wastage of the Administrative Officer (A0) and Executive Officer (E0) grades staff, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the wastage of (a) directorate and (b) non-directorate officers in the two grades in the past three financial years, with a breakdown by reason for departure (i.e. retirement and other reasons) (set out in the table below); and

	A0 grade						E0 grade					
Financial Year	Retirement		Other reasons		Total		Retirement		Other reasons		Total	
	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)
2015-2016												
2016-2017												
2017-2018												

(2) of the measures in place to reduce the wastage of staff in the two grades?

Reply:

President,

My consolidated reply to the two parts of the question is as follows:

The number of (a) directorate and (b) non-directorate officers in the Administrative Officer (A0) grade and Executive Officer (E0) grade who left the service from 2015/16 to 2017/18 financial year is tabulated below:

Financial Year	A0 grade						E0 grade					
	Retirement		Other reasons		Total		Retirement		Other reasons		Total	
	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)
2015-2016	8	1	2	7	10	8	9	24	1	39	10	63
2016-2017	14	1	3	6	17	7	7	36	0	55	7	91
2017-2018	6	0	4	5	10	5	11	26	1	73	12	99

The wastage rate of the A0 grade in the three aforementioned financial years was 2.9%, 3.8% and 2.3% respectively, and that of the E0 grade was 2.4%, 3.0% and 3.4% respectively. The wastage rate of both grades during the same period was lower than that of the civil service as a whole, which was 4.7%, 4.7% and 5.1% respectively. Besides reaching retirement age, other reasons for leaving the service included resignation, completion of agreement and death. The major reasons for resignation included marriage or family reasons, taking up jobs in outside bodies and pursuing further studies etc.

The Civil Service Bureau will continue to pay attention to the vacancy situation of the A0 and E0 grades across all ranks, and will carry out recruitment and promotion exercises timely. We will also continue to maintain close communication with officers of the two grades, and will understand their work through different channels and provide suitable assistance.

[LCQ14: Repairs and maintenance of public roads](#)

Following is a question by the Hon Yung Hoi-yan and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (March 20):

Question:

I have received a number of complaints alleging that in Hong Kong, quite a number of footpaths have uneven surfaces and footpaths paved with paving blocks have paving blocks loosened and damaged, which make pedestrians (especially the elderly, children and persons with disabilities) prone to trip and fall. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of (i) the number of complaints or reports received by the Government about the surfaces of footpaths being uneven or damaged, (ii) the number of incidents with casualties arising from such situations, and (iii) the number of claims lodged by members of the public for compensation of such casualties and the amount of compensations involved, in each of the past three years,

with a breakdown by District Council district;

(2) of the Government's follow-up procedure and work upon receipt of the complaints or reports mentioned in (1), and the performance pledge it has set in this regard; the respective numbers of cases in the past three years in which the performance pledge was met and was not met, the reasons why the performance pledge was not met in some cases, and the improvement measures put in place;

(3) of the (i) arrangements (including the numbers of scheduled and unscheduled inspections), (ii) staffing establishment and (iii) annual expenditure in respect of the inspections on the conditions of footpaths and the relevant repair works currently undertaken by the Highways Department; the respective dates on which the last and the next reviews of the relevant work arrangements was/will be conducted;

(4) whether it will allocate additional resources and manpower in the coming three years to step up the inspections on the conditions of footpaths and the relevant repair works; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(5) whether it has examined the main causes for the uneven and damaged surfaces of footpaths, as well as the correlation between such situations and the workmanship of and materials used in the construction of footpaths; if so, of the outcome, and the specific improvement measures put in place; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Highways Department (HyD) attaches great importance to the repairs and maintenance of the public roads (including footpaths) and ancillary facilities within its ambit. Regular inspections of public roads territory-wide are conducted and repairs and maintenance are carried out timely to keep the roads in good condition and to ensure the safety of road users.

My reply to the various parts of the Hon Yung Hoi-yan's question is as follows:

(1) In the past three years, the number of complaints received by the HyD about damaged footpaths and, among them, the number of cases in which members of the public sustained injuries and lodged claims for compensation are tabulated below (with breakdown by District Council district):

Complaints about damaged footpaths:

	2016	2017	2018
Central and Western District	476	546	545

Eastern District	444	442	367
Southern District	114	150	165
Wan Chai	420	506	512
Kowloon City	272	324	379
Kwun Tong	140	86	137
Sham Shui Po	407	443	482
Yau Tsim Mong	1 200	1 080	1 040
Wong Tai Sin	100	116	118
Tsuen Wan	233	227	258
Kwai Tsing	206	206	197
Sai Kung	151	146	131
Sha Tin	256	281	245
Tai Po	105	147	144
North District	246	203	216
Tuen Mun	173	210	171
Yuen Long	450	448	407
Islands District	53	74	70
Total	5 446	5 635	5 584

The number of cases in which members of public sustained injuries due to damaged footpath and lodged claims for compensation:

	2016	2017	2018
Central and Western District	3	3	2
Eastern District	1	1	2
Southern District	0	1	0
Wan Chai	1	3	1
Kowloon City	1	0	1
Kwun Tong	1	1	2
Sham Shui Po	1	1	2
Yau Tsim Mong	2	3	2
Wong Tai Sin	2	2	1
Tsuen Wan	1	1	1
Kwai Tsing	1	2	1
Sai Kung	0	1	1
Sha Tin	0	3	0
Tai Po	2	1	1
North District	0	1	1
Tuen Mun	1	1	2

Yuen Long	2	3	1
Islands District	1	0	0
Total	20	28	21

In general, upon receipt of a claim for compensation, the HyD will firstly refer the case to the contractor concerned for investigation. The HyD will monitor the investigation progress and examine its findings. If after investigation it is concluded the incident was attributable to the fault of the contractor, the contractor or their insurance company will liaise with the claimant direct to make arrangement for compensation in accordance with the established procedure. The HyD does not have information in regard to the amount of compensation involved. If after investigation the contractor considers and the HyD agrees that the contractor has adequately fulfilled their contract obligations, the contractor will promptly notify the claimant of the investigation outcome. These cases generally do not involve compensation.

(2) Upon receipt of a complaint or report on uneven surface of footpath, the HyD will carry out assessment and take prompt and appropriate follow-up action in relation to the footpath surface in need of repair (such as fencing off the relevant road section and conduct inspection in the surrounding areas) and complete the repairs as soon as possible. Owing to the varying extent of footpath damage in each case and hence the different scale of repairs, the HyD has not drawn up a performance pledge for maintenance of surfaces of footpaths.

(3) Subject to the location and pedestrian flow of the footpaths concerned, the HyD will arrange for regular inspection (at an interval ranging from seven days to three months) of footpaths within its ambit. Appropriate maintenance will be conducted where necessary to ensure that the footpaths remain in good condition. Moreover, the HyD will perform a detailed inspection for public roads (including footpaths) territory-wide at a six-month interval, in which road surfaces and structures will be inspected and the data collected will be used for planning of maintenance works for footpaths in the medium and long term. Road inspection is part of the district administration and road maintenance work of the HyD. As this is among its regular duties, there is no detailed division in its staff establishment.

(4) The HyD has arranged for, via eight maintenance contracts at present, contractors to conduct regular inspection of the conditions of all public roads (including footpaths) in Hong Kong and to perform the rehabilitation/reinstatement works required. The HyD will review the existing resources and manpower from time to time to ensure that the roads are kept in good condition for safeguarding the safety of road users.

(5) With the prolonged use of footpaths, stepping could gradually develop between adjacent paving blocks. The common causes are excessive loading on the footpaths by frequent loading/unloading of heavy articles or illegal

parking of vehicles, poor reinstatement by the contractors of public utilities or government departments after excavation works, etc. To enhance the stability of sand bedding, the HyD has adopted as a standard practice the addition of a small amount of cement to the sand bedding since 2008. Being able to effectively address quite a lot of stepping problems, this practice would be adopted as appropriate in re-laying works to be conducted progressively having regard to the degree of wear and tear of footpaths in various districts. Moreover, geogrids (Note) will be used to reinforce the bedding of block paving subject to the actual conditions of the road sections concerned so as to effectively control stepping between the paving blocks.

Note: A geogrid is a net made of durable textile that can interlock with surrounding soil to reinforce the bedding. This technique can restrict stepping between the paving blocks to within a few millimetres.

LCQ7: Supply of various types of housing and their vacancy rates

Following is a question by Hon Chan Hoi-yan and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (March 20):

Question:

Regarding the supply of housing, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the respective numbers and vacancy rates of the various types of public and private residential units at present;

(2) whether it knows, regarding the residential developments the acquisition of which respectively by (i) the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) and (ii) the Hong Kong Housing Society (HKHS) has been completed and are awaiting redevelopment at present, the number of years for which they have been left vacant, as well as the timetable for the relevant redevelopment projects and the number of units to be supplied;

(3) whether it knows, regarding the vacated rental estates under HKHS which are awaiting redevelopment at present, the number of years for which they have been left vacant, as well as the timetable for the relevant redevelopment projects and the number of units to be supplied;

(4) of the number of transitional housing projects successfully facilitated by the Task Force on Transitional Housing since its establishment and the number of such kind of projects currently receiving support from the Task Force, and set out their locations, site areas, number of units to be

supplied, average floor area of such units, as well as the number of years for which the relevant lands may be used for transitional housing; and

(5) whether it will form a working group with URA and HKHS to explore the provision of transitional housing by making use of vacant lands and vacant properties; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Having consulted the Development Bureau, I set out below my consolidated reply to the question raised by the Hon Chan Hoi-yan.

(1) The latest information on various types of public and private housing is as follows:

According to the records of the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) and the Hong Kong Housing Society (HKHS), as at the fourth quarter of 2018, there were about 825 200 public rental housing (PRH) units (Note 1) and 410 500 subsidised sale flats (SSFs) (Note 2).

As at end-December 2018, the number of HA's lettable PRH units was around 784 000. The number of lettable vacant flats was about 6 700 and the vacancy rate was about 0.8 per cent (Note 3). For HKHS, as at end-December 2018, the number of lettable rental units was about 32 000. The number of lettable vacant rental units was about 250 and the vacancy rate was about 0.8 per cent (Note 4). The Government does not have information on the vacancy rate of SSFs.

As for private housing, according to the preliminary figures (Note 5) of the Rating and Valuation Department (RVD), the stock of private residential units was 1 194 000 as at end-2018. The vacancy rate was 4.3 per cent, which was lower than the longstanding average vacancy rate of 5 per cent during the period from 1998 to 2017.

(2) HKHS does not have any residential development the acquisition of which has been completed and is awaiting redevelopment at present.

The projects of the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) where acquisition has commenced and the date of delivery of vacant possession has expired but demolition works have yet to commence are set out in Annex 1.

(3) Under its two-pronged approach, HKHS has on the one hand carried out rehabilitation works for its aged rental estates, including installing lifts, upgrading security and fire safety systems, improving the appearance of exterior walls and lobbies, etc. On the other hand, HKHS has taken forward its redevelopment programmes in an orderly and gradual manner having regard to the building conditions and availability of appropriate rehousing resources in the vicinity of the estates. Undergoing or planned redevelopment projects of HKHS include Ming Wah Dai Ha, Yue Kwong Chuen, Kwung Tong Garden Estate Site II and Chun Seen Mei Chuen. Details are at Annex 2.

In an effort to increase the supply of transitional housing by optimising the use of existing rental housing resources, HKHS launched in July 2018 its first "T-Home" Transitional Housing Scheme. Under the Scheme, 217 small-sized flats which had been vacated under Phase I of redevelopment programme of Yue Kwong Chuen and are estimated to be demolished after five years were refurbished by HKHS and made available for eligible persons who had been waiting for PRH for a certain period of time for temporary stay.

Phase I of redevelopment programme of Ming Wah Dai Ha is estimated to be completed in 2019-20. The newly completed rental units will be used for rehousing existing households affected by Phase II of the redevelopment programme, so as to facilitate the commencement of HKHS's demolition works of Phase II. Currently, there are around 200 units which have been vacated under Phase II of redevelopment programme and are estimated to be demolished one year later.

Vacant rental units in the other two rental estates of HKHS which are awaiting redevelopment (i.e. Kwun Tong Garden Estate Site II and Chun Seen Mei Chuen) are allocated to eligible PRH applicants under the established mechanism. There is no vacant rental unit which can be converted to transitional housing. HKHS will continue to streamline redevelopment processes as far as possible, so as to optimise the use of existing rental housing resources by minimising the number of vacant rental units awaiting redevelopment and shortening the vacancy period.

(4) and (5) The Government has been addressing the problem of inadequately housed households (IHHs) amongst the low-income families by increasing the supply of PRH. As pointed out in the Chief Executive's 2017 and 2018 Policy Addresses, since it takes time to identify land for housing construction, the Government will, on top of the long-term housing policy and measures, support and facilitate the implementation of various short term initiatives put forward and carried out by the community to provide transitional housing for alleviating the hardship faced by families awaiting PRH and other IHHs. To this end, the Transport and Housing Bureau (THB) has set up a task force to provide one-stop co-ordinated support to facilitate the implementation of transitional housing projects by the community.

The Task Force on Transitional Housing (the Task Force) has, over a period of time in the past, facilitated the implementation of a number of transitional housing projects initiated by the community, including several projects in existing vacant residential buildings through the "Community Housing Movement" operated by the Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS). The organisations responsible for these projects have made use of community resources flexibly to provide transitional housing, and, at the same time, appropriate support to meet the needs of the tenants. As at February 2019, a total of nine transitional housing projects provided about 610 units, of which about 220 were launched under the "Community Housing Movement" of HKCSS. Details of these projects are set out in Annex 3.

The Task Force has also been deliberating on other proposals, but given that these projects are currently still at their advocacy stages, the Government considers it more appropriate to defer to the

proponents to announce these projects when they have reached a more mature stage.

The Task Force meets with different organisations (including HKHS and URA) from time to time to discuss ways to increase the supply of transitional housing. The Task Force also welcomes organisations in the community to suggest potential sites for transitional housing.

Note 1: Including (i) PRH units and interim housing units under HA; and (ii) rental flats and Senior Citizen Residences Scheme flats under HKHS.

Note 2: Including (i) HA's Home Ownership Scheme (HOS), Private Sector Participation Scheme, Middle Income Housing Scheme, Buy or Rent Option Scheme, Mortgage Subsidy Scheme, Green Form Subsidised Home Ownership Pilot Scheme, Tenants Purchase Scheme flats sold with premium not yet paid and 14 unsold HOS flats arising from rescinded cases, as well as (ii) HKHS' Flats-for-Sale Scheme, Sandwich Class Housing Scheme and Subsidised Sale Flats Projects flats sold with premium not yet paid; but excluding those flats sold by HA and HKHS but not yet completed and the 322 flats provided by URA on a one-off basis in 2015/16.

Note 3: Vacancy rate refers to the percentage of lettable vacant units (excluding those units which have been offered for PRH applicants' consideration and are expected to be let out in the short term) out of the total lettable PRH stock.

Note 4: Not including units affected by demolition and units awaiting alteration.

Note 5: firmed figures will be published in RVD's "Hong Kong Property Review 2019" in April 2019.