

Fourth phase of the Elderly Dental Assistance Expanded Programme to be launched in February

The following is issued on behalf of the Community Care Fund Secretariat:

The Community Care Fund (CCF) will launch the fourth phase of the Elderly Dental Assistance Expanded Programme on February 1 (Friday) to cover people who are Old Age Living Allowance (OALA) recipients aged 65 or above with a view to enabling more elderly persons who have financial difficulties and do not receive Comprehensive Social Security Assistance to benefit from free removable dentures and other related dental services.

Refinements of the fourth phase of the expanded programme include relaxing the number of visits for other free dental services from one time to two times for elderly persons for whom removable dentures are not appropriate, and raising the maximum number of claim applications for X-ray films in each case from four films to six for each eligible dentist. The Programme will continue to provide free removable dentures and other related dental services to eligible elderly people. No additional funding is required for the above measures.

Under the Elderly Dental Assistance Programme, some 190 district service units, including elderly centres, community centres and dental clinics which process applications directly, will handle applications and arrange the first dental appointment for eligible elderly persons. These units are located in various districts across the territory.

After completion of the necessary dental treatments, the project office set up under the implementing agent of the programme, the Hong Kong Dental Association (HKDA), will disburse the subsidy to the dentists directly. The dentists should not charge the participating elderly persons any fee.

With effect from February 1, eligible elderly persons aged 65 or above can bring along the necessary documents to apply in person at the district service units.

The relevant leaflet and a list of district service units handling applications will be available for distribution at the elderly centres in various districts from next Friday. The eligibility and application procedures of the programme and the list of district service units can also be found on the websites of the CCF (www.communitycarefund.hk) and the HKDA (www.hkda.org). For enquiries, please call the hotline of the programme at 2525 8198.

The Elderly Dental Assistance Programme was introduced in September 2012 to provide free removable dentures and other related dental services to low-

income elderly persons who are users of home care service or home help service schemes subvented by the Social Welfare Department. The programme was expanded by phases in September 2015, October 2016 and July 2017 to cover elderly persons who are OALA recipients aged 80 or above (first phase expansion), aged 75 or above (second phase expansion) and aged 70 or above (third phase expansion) respectively.

Red flag hoisted at Clear Water Bay Second Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (January 25) that due to big waves, red flag has been hoisted at Clear Water Bay Second Beach in Sai Kung District. Beach-goers are advised not to swim at the beach.

Grading of beach water quality released

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (January 25) released the latest grading of water quality of four gazetted beaches which are open all year round for swimming.

Four beaches were rated as Good (Grade 1).

Grade 1 beaches are:

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Compared with the grading released last week, there was no change in the grading for these beaches.

Under the present grading system, beaches are classified into four grades 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.

While the ratings represent the general water quality at the beaches, an EPD spokesman reminded members of the public that water quality could be temporarily affected during and after periods of heavy rain. Bathers should avoid swimming at beaches for up to three days after a storm or heavy rainfall.

A summary of beach grades is published weekly before the weekend. Latest beach grades based on the most current data may be obtained from the department's websites on Beach Water Quality (www.epd.gov.hk/epd/beach) or the beach hotline, 2511 6666.

[CoI into Diaphragm Wall and Platform Slab Construction Works at Hung Hom Station Extension under Shatin to Central Link Project to resume](#)

substantive hearing on January 28

The following is issued on behalf of the Commission of Inquiry into the Diaphragm Wall and Platform Slab Construction Works at the Hung Hom Station Extension under the Shatin to Central Link Project:

The Commission of Inquiry into the Diaphragm Wall and Platform Slab Construction Works at the Hung Hom Station Extension under the Shatin to Central Link Project directs that the substantive hearing to hear closing addresses by Counsel for the Commission and the involved parties shall commence at 9.30am on January 28 at the hearing room on the first floor of the former Tsuen Wan Law Courts Building, 70 Tai Ho Road, Tsuen Wan, New Territories, Hong Kong.

Fourteen immigration offenders arrested (with photo)

The Immigration Department (ImmD) mounted a territory-wide anti-illegal worker operation codenamed "Twilight" from January 21 to 23. A total of nine illegal workers and five suspected employers were arrested.

During the operation, ImmD Task Force officers raided 33 target locations including car parks, companies, construction sites, a farm, shops, an industrial building, a market, restaurants and shopping malls. Nine illegal workers and five employers were arrested. The illegal workers comprised five men and four women, aged 35 to 63. Among them, one man and one woman were suspected of using and being in possession of forged Hong Kong identity cards. Meanwhile, two men and three women, aged 36 to 65, were suspected of employing the illegal workers.

"Any person who contravenes a condition of stay in force in respect of him shall be guilty of an offence. Also, visitors are not allowed to take employment in Hong Kong, whether paid or unpaid, without the permission of the Director of Immigration. Offenders are liable to prosecution and upon conviction face a maximum fine of \$50,000 and up to two years' imprisonment. Aiders and abettors are also liable to prosecution and penalties," an ImmD spokesman said.

The spokesman also warned that it is an offence to use or possess a forged Hong Kong identity card or a Hong Kong identity card related to another person. Offenders are liable to prosecution and a maximum penalty of a \$100,000 fine and up to 10 years' imprisonment.

The spokesman reiterated that it is a serious offence to employ people who are not lawfully employable. The maximum penalty is imprisonment for three years and a fine of \$350,000. The High Court has laid down sentencing guidelines that the employer of an illegal worker should be given an immediate custodial sentence. According to court sentencing, employers must take all practicable steps to determine whether a person is lawfully employable prior to employment. Apart from inspecting a prospective employee's identity card, the employer has the explicit duty to make enquiries regarding the person and ensure that the answers would not cast any reasonable doubt concerning the lawful employability of the person. The court will not accept failure to do so as a defence in proceedings. It is also an offence if an employer fails to inspect the job seeker's valid travel document if the job seeker does not have a Hong Kong permanent identity card. The maximum penalty for failing to inspect such a document is imprisonment for one year and a fine of \$150,000.

Under the existing mechanism, the ImmD will, as a standard procedure, conduct initial screening of vulnerable persons, including illegal workers, illegal immigrants, sex workers and foreign domestic helpers, who are arrested during any operation with a view to ascertaining whether they are trafficking in persons (TIP) victims. When any TIP indicator is revealed in the initial screening, the officers will conduct a full debriefing and identification by using a standardised checklist to ascertain the presence of TIP elements, such as threat and coercion in the recruitment phase and the nature of exploitation. Identified TIP victims will be provided with various forms of support and assistance, including urgent interference, medical services, counselling, shelter, temporary accommodation and other supporting services. The ImmD calls on TIP victims to report crimes to the relevant departments.

