

## CSSA caseload for June 2018

The overall Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) caseload in June showed a drop of 257 cases, representing a decrease of 0.1 per cent compared with that of May, according to the latest CSSA caseload statistics released by the Social Welfare Department today (July 25).

The total CSSA caseload at the end of June stood at 231 162 (see attached table), with a total of 333 147 recipients.

Analysed by case nature, low-earnings cases registered a month-to-month decrease of 1.5 per cent to 4 005 cases while unemployment cases dropped by 0.2 per cent to 12 552 cases. Both old age cases and ill health cases slipped by 0.1 per cent to 143 991 cases and 23 488 cases respectively.

Both single parent cases and permanent disability cases increased slightly by 0.1 per cent to 25 803 cases and 17 038 cases respectively.

---

## Re-appointment of Hong Kong Productivity Council Chairman

The Government today (July 25) announced that the Chief Executive has re-appointed Mr Willy Lin Sun-mo as Chairman of the Hong Kong Productivity Council (HKPC) for two years starting from August 6, 2018.

The Secretary for Innovation and Technology, Mr Nicholas W Yang, welcomed the re-appointment of Mr Lin as Chairman of the HKPC. "Under Mr Lin's able leadership in the past two years, the HKPC has been making valuable and significant contributions to support the Government's policy in driving 're-industrialisation' in Hong Kong and assist the industry in enhancing its competitiveness. I look forward to continuing to work with Mr Lin closely to promote the development of innovation and technology in Hong Kong," Mr Yang said.

Mr Lin was first appointed as Chairman of the HKPC in August 2016.

The HKPC was established in 1967 to promote increased productivity in Hong Kong. Its role is to provide integrated support to innovative and growth-oriented Hong Kong firms across the value chain. The HKPC's main sectoral focus is Hong Kong's manufacturing and related service activities, while its main geographical focus is Hong Kong and the Pearl River Delta. The HKPC provides its clients with a diverse range of support services in product development, consultancy, training and technology transfer.

---

## Fresh beef sample found to contain sulphur dioxide

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (July 25) that a fresh beef sample was found to contain sulphur dioxide, a preservative which is not permitted to be used in fresh meat. The CFS is following up on the case.

A spokesman for the CFS said, "Following up on a food complaint, the CFS took the fresh beef sample from a fresh provision shop in Wong Tai Sin for testing. The test result showed that the sample contained sulphur dioxide at a level of 310 parts per million."

According to the Preservatives in Food Regulation (Cap 132BD), it is an offence to add sulphur dioxide to fresh or chilled meat. The maximum penalty is a \$50,000 fine and six months' imprisonment.

The CFS has informed the vendor concerned of the above-mentioned irregularity. Prosecution will be instituted should there be sufficient evidence.

Sulphur dioxide is a commonly used preservative in a variety of foods including dried fruits, pickled vegetables and meat products such as sausages and grilled burgers, but under the Regulation it is not permitted in fresh or chilled meat. Nonetheless, individual meat traders have been found illegally using sulphur dioxide to make meat look fresher. This preservative is of low toxicity. As it is water soluble, most of it can be removed through washing and cooking. However, susceptible individuals who are allergic to this preservative may experience breathing difficulties, headache and nausea.

The spokesman reminded the food trade to comply with the law and not to sell fresh or chilled meat adulterated with sulphur dioxide. Members of the public should purchase meat from reliable market stalls or fresh provision shops. They should avoid buying or consuming meat which is unnaturally red and maintain a balanced diet to avoid malnutrition or excessive exposure to chemicals from a small range of food items.

The CFS will continue to follow up on the case and take appropriate action.

---

## [SRPA reminds prospective purchasers of first-hand residential properties about fire safety requirements for properties with open kitchens](#)

The Sales of First-hand Residential Properties Authority (SRPA) today (July 25) reminded prospective purchasers that owners of residential units with open kitchens must comply with fire safety regulations for the fire service installations and equipment in these units.

"Prospective purchasers can, from the floor plans of residential properties in the development in the sales brochure of a first-hand residential development, check whether the kitchen in a residential unit has an open kitchen design. They can also check in the fittings, finishes and appliances section in the sales brochure for a description of fire service installations and equipment fitted in or near an open kitchen, including smoke detectors and sprinkler heads," an SRPA spokesman said.

Owners of residential units with open kitchens are required to observe and comply with fire safety regulations related to these installations and equipment and relevant provisions under the deed of mutual covenant, which include arranging annual inspection and maintenance. They should also allow registered contractors to access the units for annual inspection and maintenance of the fire service installations and equipment.

"Prospective purchasers are reminded that to comply with those requirements, expenses will be incurred. They may also check with the vendor whether the management offices would assist owners in arranging annual inspections in future," the SRPA spokesman said.

To remind prospective purchasers of the fire safety requirements, the SRPA today issued new Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for prospective purchasers and updated an existing FAQ regarding residential units with open kitchens.

A new FAQ for the trade on provision of information in the sales brochure about fittings, finishes and appliances in respect of fire service installations and equipment for open kitchens was also issued. The new and updated FAQs can be viewed on the SRPA website ([www.srpa.gov.hk](http://www.srpa.gov.hk)).

Prospective purchasers can also visit the Fire Services Department website ([www.hkfsd.gov.hk](http://www.hkfsd.gov.hk)) for details of fire safety provisions in open kitchen units.

---

## **Effective Exchange Rate Index**

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Wednesday, July 25, 2018 is 103.7 (down 0.4 against yesterday's index).