

Third-term Commission on Poverty convenes second meeting

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, chaired the second meeting of the third-term Commission on Poverty (CoP) this afternoon (October 18).

At the meeting, Mr Cheung and relevant government officials briefed members on the various initiatives on improving people's livelihood announced in the 2018 Policy Address. These initiatives include further relaxing the age limit of the target beneficiaries of the Community Care Fund (CCF) Elderly Dental Assistance Programme; enhancing the means test of the Samaritan Fund and CCF assistance programmes; increasing education resources to secondary and primary schools as well as kindergartens; enhancing further labour protection for non-skilled workers engaged by government service contractors; strengthening support for the disadvantaged including ethnic minorities, children with special educational needs and persons with disability; and continuing to promote the Working Family Allowance Scheme. Members noted the Government's determination and commitment to improving people's livelihood and provided views on the new initiatives.

Mr Cheung stressed that the current-term Government attaches great importance to tackling social poverty and will continue to step up its efforts in alleviating poverty and helping the disadvantaged with a view to building a caring, harmonious and inclusive society.

The CoP also noted the implementation progress of various assistance programmes and the financial position of the CCF. In addition, the CoP agreed to extend the Special Care Subsidy for the Severely Disabled Programme for a maximum of 24 months to provide eligible persons with severe disabilities a subsidy to purchase care goods and services or for other purposes related to nursing care. The revised total provision for the Programme is \$452.79 million and more than 2 700 persons are expected to benefit from the Programme.

During the meeting, the Social Welfare Department briefed members on the progress of implementing after-school learning and support programmes for grass-roots children under the Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged (the Fund) as well as the review on the service impacts of dedicated portions under the Fund. Members recognised that the Fund could effectively promote tripartite partnership among the welfare sector, the business community and the Government to help the disadvantaged. Members also expressed views on the assistance programmes and way forward of the Fund.

In addition, as a follow-up to the discussion of the last meeting, the Office of the Government Economist and the Census and Statistics Department briefed members on the enhancement proposals of the poverty line analytical framework. Members gave views on the proposals.

Introduction of new smart Hong Kong identity card and territory-wide identity card replacement exercise

The Immigration Department (ImmD) will start to issue new smart Hong Kong identity cards (HKICs) next month.

"Starting from Monday, November 26, 2018, if a person applies for an HKIC at any one of the Registration of Persons (ROP) Offices, he or she will receive a new form of smart HKIC," an ImmD spokesman said today (October 18).

This covers HKIC applications from persons who need to apply for a juvenile identity card upon reaching the age of 11; persons who have to apply for an adult identity card upon reaching the age of 18; new arrivals; persons whose identity cards have been lost, destroyed, damaged or defaced; and persons who wish to amend the particulars printed on their HKICs.

The spokesman further announced that the upcoming territory-wide identity card replacement exercise will start on Thursday, December 27, 2018. Holders of existing smart HKICs will be invited to attend one of the nine newly established Smart Identity Card Replacement Centres (SIDCCs) in phases, in accordance with their year of birth, to have their HKICs replaced within specified periods. No fee will be charged for new smart HKICs issued under the replacement exercise.

"The nine SIDCCs are all situated in convenient locations (Annex) and are easily accessible by public transport. They will be open from Mondays to Saturdays (except Sundays and public holidays), from 8am to 10pm," the spokesman added.

It is estimated that the replacement exercise will last about four years. The Secretary for Security will issue an Order to announce the details of the first cycle. Subject to the normal negative vetting procedure of the Legislative Council, the arrangement will be as follows:

Eligible Persons	Period
Members of the Immigration Service, police officers and labour inspectors	December 27, 2018 – March 30, 2019
Holders of existing HKICs who were born in 1985 or 1986	January 21, 2019 – March 30, 2019
Holders of existing HKICs	April 1, 2019

The spokesman explained that, as with the last replacement exercise, the first cycle would begin by first replacing the smart HKICs of members of the Immigration Service, police officers and labour inspectors, allowing them to get familiar with the features of new smart HKICs for fighting against illegal immigration and illegal employment. Also, the Order has provided the Chief Executive, members of the Executive Council and the Legislative Council, and Principal Officials with an option to apply for the new smart HKICs at the same stage to further promote the new smart HKICs.

In view of the demographic changes of Hong Kong, and to make the arrangement more convenient to the public, in particular groups in need, the following new facilitation measures will be introduced in the replacement exercise:

(a) The HKIC holders who are invited under their age groups may bring along two family members or friends aged 65 or above (born in 1954 or before) to replace their smart HKICs together during the same visit, so that these elderly persons need not proceed to the SIDCCs separately by themselves when their respective age groups are called up for HKIC replacement at a later stage; and

(b) For the first time an on-site identity card replacement service will be introduced at specified residential care homes for elderly persons and persons with disabilities (RCHs). In addition to replacing their HKICs at the SIDCCs in the period specified for their age groups, residents of the relevant RCHs may choose to have their HKICs replaced on-site at the RCHs. Starting from the second quarter of 2019, ImmD will roll out the on-site identity card replacement service by visiting the RCHs concerned throughout the territory in phases.

ImmD will also make better use of technology to enhance convenience and efficiency. With effect from October 29, members of the public may make appointments and prefill forms on the Internet before visiting the ROP Offices or the SIDCCs, so that they may save queuing time and enjoy a faster registration process. In addition, ImmD's Mobile Application will provide relevant services from November 26. Furthermore, self-service registration kiosks and self-service collection kiosks will be introduced to provide more convenient services to the public.

Publicity will be conducted through various channels to explain to members of the public the details of the new smart HKICs and the replacement exercise prior to its launch and throughout the exercise.

Hong Kong residents who are presently overseas need not rush back to Hong Kong solely for replacement of their HKICs. They can do so within 30 days after their return to Hong Kong if they have missed their turn. Meanwhile, the existing arrangement for issuing the Certificate of Exemption to the aged, the blind or the infirm who are in Hong Kong but are unable to replace their identity cards in person remains unchanged.

For enquiries, please contact ImmD by calling the enquiry hotline at 2824 6111, by fax to 2877 7711 or by email to enquiry@immd.gov.hk.

CHP investigates influenza A outbreak at kindergarten in Kwai Tsing

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (October 18) investigating an influenza A outbreak at a kindergarten in Kwai Tsing.

The outbreak involves 10 boys and 10 girls aged 3 to 6, who have developed fever, cough, sore throat and runny nose since October 12. Nineteen of them sought medical attention. Five patients required hospitalisation and three of them were discharged after treatment. All patients are in a stable condition.

The nasopharyngeal swab of three students tested positive for influenza A virus upon laboratory testing.

Officers of the CHP have conducted a site visit to the school and advised the school to adopt infection control measures against respiratory infections. The school has been put under medical surveillance.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "To prevent outbreaks of influenza and other respiratory infections, it is of prime importance that children with fever, regardless of the presence of respiratory symptoms, should not be allowed to attend school. They should seek medical advice and avoid school till 48 hours after the fever has subsided. Schools should also measure and record students' body temperature properly."

Schools are reminded to follow the [Guidelines on Prevention of Communicable Diseases](#) on preventive and control measures as well as management of outbreaks, which should be reported to the CHP for prompt follow-up.

The Vaccination Subsidy Scheme 2018/19 was launched on October 10. The spokesman for the CHP urged eligible persons to receive subsidised seasonal influenza vaccination (SIV) in a timely manner to better protect themselves in the coming winter influenza season.

"Influenza can cause serious illnesses in high-risk individuals and even healthy persons. Given that influenza vaccines are safe and effective, all persons aged 6 months or above, except those with known contraindications, are recommended to receive SIV for personal protection," the spokesman said.

"Based on past epidemiological patterns, the winter influenza season usually occurs from January to March/April each year. As it takes about two weeks to develop antibodies, we urge eligible persons to receive SIV early for protection against seasonal influenza. Vaccination among family members is key to protecting their personal and family's health."

The public should maintain good personal and environmental hygiene for protection against influenza and other respiratory illnesses:

- Receive SIV for personal protection;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water properly whenever possibly contaminated;
- When hands are not visibly soiled, clean them with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub as an effective alternative;
- Wash or clean hands frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, or after touching public installations such as handrails or door knobs;
- Cover the nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing, and wash hands thoroughly afterwards;
- Dispose of soiled tissue paper properly in a lidded rubbish bin;
- Put on a surgical mask when respiratory symptoms develop;
- Maintain good indoor ventilation;
- Avoid going to crowded or poorly ventilated public places; high-risk individuals may consider putting on surgical masks when staying in such places; and
- Maintain a balanced diet, exercise regularly, take adequate rest, do not smoke and avoid overstress.

For more information, please visit the CHP's [influenza page](#) and weekly [Flu Express](#).

[SED visits Southern District \(with photos\)](#)

The Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, visited Southern District this afternoon (October 18) to see children's learning through play at a kindergarten and brief District Council members on the education initiatives in the Chief Executive's 2018 Policy Address.

Accompanied by the Chairman of the Southern District Council (SDC), Mr Chu Ching-hong; the Vice Chairman of the SDC, Mr Chan Fu-ming; and the District Officer (Southern), Mrs Dorothy Ma, Mr Yeung first visited TWGHs Tin Wan (1996-1997 Directors) Kindergarten, where he was briefed on the

kindergarten's characteristics, such as picture book teaching and promotion of reading activities.

While observing a class to appreciate storytelling by students, he also joined their extended learning activities, including learning language and vocabulary through cake tasting, and learning art and craft through making clay pizza.

Mr Yeung said that reading can inspire students' interest in pursuing knowledge and their self-directed learning ability. To instil in children a love for reading, the Education Bureau (EDB) launched the Pilot Scheme on the Promotion of Reading Grant for Kindergartens in the current school year. It is now open to application by kindergartens until October 22.

Participating kindergartens, based on their student numbers, will receive a grant of \$5,000 or \$10,000 for procuring reading resources, organising school-based activities related to the promotion of reading, and hiring of services to organise reading activities. With the participation of the kindergarten sector, the EDB hopes that the Pilot Scheme could help it understand and examine different modes of reading promotion, with a view to formulating long-term strategies catering for early childhood.

Mr Yeung added that the Government has implemented the new kindergarten education policy starting from the 2017/18 school year with a substantial increase in government expenditure to enhance teachers' remuneration, reduce parents' financial burden and improve the quality of teaching. The EDB plans to start a review in mid-2019 on the implementation of the new policy, including the salary arrangements for kindergarten teachers and other measures. During the process, stakeholders will be consulted with the aim of improving the kindergarten education policy.

He then went to the SDC to brief its members on the content of the Policy Address and exchange views with them on education and other district issues.





[CE visits STEM Education Centre](#)

To mark the first anniversary of the opening of the STEM Education Centre under the Education Bureau, the event "STEM Education Centre: Supporting STEM education and sharing of students' achievement" was held today (October 18). The event aimed to consolidate the experience on supporting science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education in schools over the past year, share students' work and introduce the services for this school year.

The Chief Executive Mrs Carrie Lam officiated the event at the STEM Education Centre in Lok Fu.

Mrs Lam, accompanied by the Under Secretary for Education, Dr Choi Yuk-lin, visited various facilities in the Centre and showed appreciation for prize-winning students' work and students' achievements, including a 3D printed Chinese cultural architecture design model as well as air-cushioned sliding raft and hovercraft model projects. She also visited the Maker Space of the Centre and observed students' participation in STEM learning activities.

The STEM Education Centre will organise various STEM education related courses and activities this school year, including STEM education training programmes for teachers to enhance their pedagogical knowledge, and inter-

school competitions for students to provide opportunities for them to integrate and apply knowledge and skills acquired, unleash creativity and solve problems through hands-on learning experiences. The Centre will continue to provide school-based support services to partner schools with on-site support and experience sharing to support them to further promote STEM education.

The STEM Education Centre has been providing support to primary and secondary schools in promoting STEM education since its opening in October 2017. Detailed information of the STEM Education Centre is available on its website (www.atec.edu.hk/stemcentre).