

CSSA caseload for April 2018

The overall Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) caseload in April rose by 75 cases, remaining more or less the same as that of March, according to the latest CSSA caseload statistics released by the Social Welfare Department today (May 23).

The total CSSA caseload at the end of April stood at 231 543 (see attached table), with a total of 332 875 recipients.

Analysed by case nature, low-earnings cases and permanent disability cases registered month-to-month decreases of 1.4 per cent and 0.2 per cent to 4 125 cases and 17 006 cases respectively.

Old age cases increased slightly by 0.1 per cent to 144 244 cases. Unemployment cases, single parent cases and ill health cases remained steady at 12 619 cases, 25 673 cases and 23 576 cases respectively.

SEN concludes visit to Tokyo (with photos)

The Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, attended the C40 Regional Meeting for East, Southeast Asia and Oceania of the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group this morning (May 23) to exchange views with participants on various regional environmental issues. He then continued his participation in the Tokyo Forum for Clean City and Clear Sky on its second-day session. After that, he visited two plastic bottle recycling companies and their plants before concluding his itinerary in Japan.

At the second-day forum, Mr Wong spoke about air quality improvement measures in Hong Kong. He stated that the Environment Bureau released "A Clean Air Plan for Hong Kong" in 2013 and issued a progress report in June 2017, which gave a comprehensive account of the results achieved by Hong Kong in improving air quality.

After attending a press conference held by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government in the morning, Mr Wong visited two plastic bottle recycling plants to observe their recycling processes and learn more about the latest plastic bottle recycling technology. He also exchanged views with local recyclers to understand the latest developments in Japan's recycling industry.

Mr Wong will depart for Hong Kong and arrive tonight.



Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Wednesday, May 23, 2018 is 99.5 (down 0.2 against Monday's index).

LCQ10: Pilot scheme to combat traffic contraventions

Following is a question by the Hon James To and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (May 23):

Question:

It has been reported that the Police implemented a two-month pilot scheme in New Territories North and Kowloon East at the end of last year,

under which video cameras were used to assist police officers in taking law enforcement actions against six traffic offences which cause serious traffic obstructions, namely (i) picking up/setting down passengers in restricted zone, (ii) loading/unloading goods in restricted zone, (iii) unauthorised stopping at bus stop/public light bus stand/taxi stand, (iv) stopping bus, public light bus or taxi longer than necessary when picking up/setting down passengers, (v) unlawfully entering box junction, and (vi) "U" turn causing obstruction. Besides, the Energizing Kowloon East Office under the Development Bureau is conducting on-site tests on a Kerbside Loading/Unloading Bay Monitoring System (Monitoring System) in some sections of How Ming Street and Hoi Bun Road in Kwun Tong by making use of surveillance cameras installed on on-street lampposts to assist in monitoring the situation of the loading/unloading bays in these two road segments. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the number of times for which law enforcement actions were taken by the Police under the pilot scheme, broken down by month and the police division to which the law enforcement location belonged;
- (2) of the number of prosecutions instituted by the Police under the pilot scheme in respect of each of the aforesaid traffic offences, broken down by the police division to which the law enforcement location belonged;
- (3) of the respective numbers of times for which the Police took law enforcement actions under the pilot scheme by ticketing the offenders on the spot and other forms, and the criteria adopted for determining the form of law enforcement action to be taken;
- (4) of the criteria adopted by the Police for assessing the effectiveness of the pilot scheme, and the assessment outcome;
- (5) as it has been reported that the authorities will expand the coverage of the pilot scheme to the whole territory within the first half of this year, whether the Police have formulated a detailed implementation plan; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (6) whether the authorities will consider using the Monitoring System to monitor the usage of and the illegal parking situation in the loading/unloading bays in the entire Kwun Tong district and the whole territory; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

To effectively combat traffic contraventions, the Hong Kong Police Force (Police) launched a two-month pilot scheme in New Territories North and Kowloon East in December 2017, under which video cameras were used to assist police officers in taking enforcement actions against six traffic offences which cause serious traffic obstructions (Pilot Scheme). The six offences are: (i) picking up/setting down passengers in restricted zone; (ii) loading/unloading goods in restricted zone; (iii) unauthorised stopping at

bus stop/public light bus stand/taxi stand/public light bus stopping place; (iv) stopping public bus, public light bus or taxi longer than necessary when picking up/setting down passengers; (v) unlawfully entering box junction; and (vi) "U" turn causing obstruction.

My reply to the various parts of the Hon James To's question is as follows:

(1) The Police took a total of 103 actions under the Pilot Scheme. A breakdown of these actions by police district and month is set out at Annex 1.

(2) The Police issued a total of 540 fixed penalty tickets under the Pilot Scheme. A breakdown of these fixed penalty tickets for each traffic offence by police district is set out at Annex 2.

(3) In the course of the Pilot Scheme, the Police took 53 enforcement actions under the "immediate ticketing" mode and 50 enforcement actions under the "non-immediate ticketing" mode, issuing respectively 243 and 297 fixed penalty tickets.

The Police determined the most appropriate mode of ticketing as warranted. The factors taken into account included the safety of frontline officers and other road users, the volume of traffic on the road, the feasibility of stopping vehicles along the section of the road where enforcement actions were taken, the deterrent effects on offending drivers, as well as manpower deployment at the time.

(4) and (5) The Police have completed the two-month Pilot Scheme, and are currently assessing and reviewing its effectiveness and considering whether to further extend the Pilot Scheme. In reviewing the effectiveness of the Pilot Scheme, the Police will take into consideration whether the scheme can serve its purposes, including assisting frontline officers in more efficient enforcement, enhancing the reliability of evidence, boosting the effectiveness of enforcement and conviction, as well as strengthening the deterrent effect.

(6) The Energizing Kowloon East Office of the Development Bureau has been collaborating with the Police since 2018 to conduct a trial on the "Kerbside Loading and Unloading Bay Monitoring System" in Kwun Tong. The two departments are also studying the implementation of a trial on "Illegal Parking Monitoring System" at suitable road sections in Kowloon East. The trial, which makes use of video analytic techniques to monitor illegal parking activities, is expected to commence within this year.

The Government's objective is to make use of new technologies to assist frontline officers in taking enforcement actions against traffic contraventions and enhance the efficiency of the back-end support process. If the system is proved practicable by the trial, the Government will consider using such systems at suitable locations to facilitate Police's prosecution against traffic offences.

LCQ7: Landing facilities and berthing spaces for local vessels

Following is a question by the Hon Steven Ho and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (May 23):

Question:

Some fishermen have relayed that at present, some small fishing vessels cannot berth at typhoon shelters due to reasons such as licence restrictions or susceptibility to collision with other vessels. These fishermen have no choice but to berth their fishing vessels at places such as the outer area of typhoon shelters and breakwaters. Since such berthing locations lack embarking and disembarking facilities, fishermen can only embark on or disembark from their vessels by quite dangerous means such as climbing the boulders along the shore, striding over other small fishing vessels and making use of hand-pulled ferries and rafts. There have been cases in which some fishermen fell into the sea or sustained injuries while embarking on or disembarking from a vessel. I have proposed to the Marine Department (MD) that reference be made to the relevant practices of local pleasure boat clubs and those around the world to provide floating bridges at typhoon shelters for berthing of small fishing vessels, but MD has rejected the proposal on the ground that it falls under the purview of a number of departments and there is currently no policy support. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it has assessed if it is common for fishermen to embark on and disembark from fishing vessels berthed in the outer area of typhoon shelters and breakwaters by adopting the aforesaid quite dangerous means, and if the personal safety of them and other people is thus seriously endangered; if it has assessed and the outcome is in the affirmative, why the authorities have failed to take measures to solve the problem; if it has not assessed, of the reasons for that;

(2) of the government department currently responsible for considering the proposal to provide the aforesaid floating bridges at typhoon shelters; whether it will set up an inter-departmental working group to be led by the relevant policy bureau to study the proposal and coordinate the relevant work;

(3) as quite a number of fishermen of small fishing vessels have relayed that there is an acute shortage of berthing spaces in typhoon shelters in various districts, how the authorities will improve the relevant situation;

(4) of the respective numbers of locally licensed vessels in the past three

years that were less than 10 metres and between 10 and 15 metres in length; the number of embarking/disembarking points in various typhoon shelters in the territory in the past three years; whether it has assessed the capacity of the landing facilities, in terms of the number of vessel trips per month, in various typhoon shelters in the territory; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(5) as the Government said in reply to my question raised on July 13, 2016 that survey results indicated that the three landing facilities in Tuen Mun still had capacity to cope with more vessels and meet existing and projected demands, of the details of the survey concerned (including the criteria adopted); and

(6) given that some fishing vessels are currently not allowed to enter typhoon shelters under the law, but certain wholesale fish markets and important fisheries facilities are accessible only through typhoon shelters, how the authorities assist those fishermen in selling their catch and getting replenishment?

Reply:

President,

The reply to the Hon Steven Ho's question is as follows:

(1) Except for certain areas of waters where anchoring is prohibited, owners and masters of local vessels are allowed under existing legislation to anchor their vessels in the waters of Hong Kong according to the vessels' operational needs and the availability of different areas of waters, including safe and suitable waters in the outer area of typhoon shelters and breakwaters. Where necessary, seafarers should use shuttle vessels to travel between vessels anchored at sea and facilities such as public piers and landing steps for safe embarkation or disembarkation. The Government is committed to ensuring that there are enough landing facilities for use by vessels in the Hong Kong waters so as to enable seafarers to travel to and from vessels anchored at sea in a smooth and safe manner.

(2) In general, private yacht clubs provide floating bridges as landing facilities while the Government provides mainly public piers and landing steps as landing facilities. Public landing facilities are built for use by all local vessels for the main purposes of passenger embarkation and disembarkation but not berthing. From time to time, the Government reviews the utilisation of public landing facilities and gauges views from stakeholders to improve the design of landing facilities and facilitate their use by various stakeholders, including fishermen. Relevant government departments including the Marine Department (MD), the Home Affairs Department, the Transport Department and the Civil Engineering and Development Department have recently liaised with fishermen representatives and listened to their suggestions on improving the landing facilities. Considerations will also be given as to how the design and quality of such facilities can be further enhanced.

(3) The Government is committed to ensuring that there is sufficient and suitable sheltered space within the Hong Kong waters for local vessels to take refuge during typhoons or inclement weather to safeguard the safety of these vessels and their crew members. To monitor the utilisation of such sheltered space, the MD keeps records of the highest occupancy of each typhoon shelter during typhoons. For instance, when a number of typhoons hit Hong Kong in 2017, sheltered spaces remained available for berthing by local vessels (including fishing vessels) in the typhoon shelters frequently visited by fishing vessels, including the Aberdeen, Shau Kei Wan, Cheung Chau, Sam Ka Tsuen and Shuen Wan Typhoon Shelters, with the exception of the Tuen Mun Typhoon Shelter. The MD is aware that the Tuen Mun Typhoon Shelter has seen occupancy rates of 100 per cent during typhoon passages in recent years. In view of this, whenever typhoons approach, the MD will closely liaise with local fishermen representatives in Tuen Mun to ensure that fishermen at sea stay alert to the latest typhoon information and return to Hong Kong as early as possible. To the MD's understanding from the representatives of local fishery associations, no Tuen Mun-based fishing vessels have been unable to return to the Tuen Mun Typhoon Shelter for berthing during typhoons in the past few years. The MD will continue to maintain contact with local fishery associations on arrangements during typhoon passages to ensure fishermen safety in inclement weather. In addition, the MD conducts regular territory-wide assessments on the demand and supply of typhoon shelter spaces to ensure that there is sufficient typhoon shelter space for use by local vessels in the waters of Hong Kong during typhoon passages.

(4) In the past three years, the respective numbers of locally licenced vessels (including fishing vessels) that were less than 10 metres and between 10 and 15 metres in length are as follow:

Year (As at year end)	Less than 10 metres	Between 10 and 15 metres
2015	11 733	2 000
2016	11 972	2 027
2017	12 027	2 084

In the past three years, the total number of embarking/disembarking points in various typhoon shelters in Hong Kong remained at 52. The Government will from time to time review the usage situation and the structural safety of the various landing facilities to ensure that members of the crew can embark and disembark from a vessel in a smooth and safe manner. When considering the expansion or addition of landing facilities, various factors will be taken into account, including the feasibility of the works involved, the utilisation rate of such facilities, the area to be served, and availability of similar facilities in the waters nearby.

(5) The landing facilities mentioned in the reply to the question raised on July 13, 2016, as quoted in this current question, refer to the Kadoorie

Public Pier, as well as the Tuen Mun Area 27 Landing No. 1 and the Tuen Mun Area 27 Landing No. 2 located within the Tuen Mun typhoon shelter near Sam Shing Estate. The Transport Department arranged for a usage survey of these landing facilities in 2015, and the findings indicated that the three landing facilities still had capacity to cope with more vessels. The usage statistics of the three landing facilities in the duration of the survey are as follow:

Landing facility	Daily vessel usage (Hourly vessel usage on average)	
	Weekdays	Weekends
Tuen Mun Area 27 Landing No. 1	75 vessels (6 vessels)	108 vessels (8 vessels)
Tuen Mun Area 27 Landing No. 2	38 vessels (3 vessels)	26 vessels (2 vessels)
Kadoorie Public Pier	0 vessels (0 vessels)	2 vessels (0 vessels)

Remarks: The survey was conducted between 7 am and 8 pm.

(6) Except for fishing vessels with length overall exceeding the "permitted length overall" of a typhoon shelter and outboard open sampans, currently all fishing vessels are allowed to enter typhoon shelters. The intention of granting licences to outboard fishing sampans, which are fishing sampans of smaller size and fitted with engines of smaller horsepower, was to enable and facilitate fishermen in transporting fish catch, fish fry, feed, replenishment, etc, within mariculture rafts located in remote waters. Owing to safety considerations, we do not advise this type of vessel to navigate in open waters where winds and waves are stronger, or to leave the rafts and head to further destinations. Should there be a need for fishermen to head to the relevant fisheries facilities to sell their catch and get replenishments, it would be more suitable to use other fishing vessels of greater size and sturdier construction. Nevertheless, if needed, open fishing sampans could still use the nearby public piers and landing steps located outside of the typhoon shelters to handle their catch and replenishments.