

# Exchange Fund Bills tender results

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

Exchange Fund Bills tender results:

Tender date	: December 6, 2024
Paper on offer	: EF Bills
Issue number	: M2408
Issue date	: December 9, 2024
Maturity date	: January 8, 2025
Amount applied	: HK\$5,385 MN
Amount allotted	: HK\$800 MN
Average yield accepted	: 3.88 PCT
Highest yield accepted	: 3.88 PCT
Pro rata ratio*	: About 40 PCT
Average tender yield	: 3.97 PCT

\* "Pro rata ratio" refers to the average percentage of allotment with respect to each tender participant's tendered amount at the "highest yield accepted" level.

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## Hong Kong Customs detects smuggling case involving ocean-going vessel with goods worth about \$23 million seized (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs on December 1 detected a suspected case of using an ocean-going vessel to smuggle goods to Pakistan at the Kwai Chung Container Terminals. A large batch of suspected smuggled earphones and skincare products with an estimated market value of about \$23 million was seized.

Through intelligence analysis and risk assessment, Customs discovered that criminals intended to use ocean-going vessels to smuggle goods, and thus formulated strategies to combat related activities.

On December 1, Customs officers identified for inspection an ocean-going vessel preparing to depart from Hong Kong for Pakistan. A large batch of

suspected smuggled earphones and skincare products were found to be concealed in four machines inside a container which was declared as containing machines, air-conditioners, electronic parts, etc.

An investigation is ongoing. The likelihood of arrests is not ruled out.

Customs is the primary agency responsible for tackling smuggling activities and has long been combating various smuggling activities on all fronts. Customs will keep up its enforcement action and continue to resolutely combat sea smuggling activities through proactive risk management and intelligence-based enforcement strategies, and carry out targeted anti-smuggling operations at suitable times to crack down on related crimes.

Smuggling is a serious offence. Under the Import and Export Ordinance, any person found guilty of importing or exporting unmanifested cargo is liable to a maximum fine of \$2 million and imprisonment for seven years upon conviction.

Members of the public may report any suspected smuggling activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 182 8080 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account ([crimereport@customs.gov.hk](mailto:crimereport@customs.gov.hk)) or online form ([eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002](http://eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002)).



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**[Government appoints Chairmen and members to Councils of HKBU, CityU and](#)**

# PolyU

The Government today (December 6) announced that the Chief Executive appointed Dr Kennedy Wong Ying-ho as the Chairman of the Council of Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU), and Mr Michael Ngai Ming-tak as the Chairman of the Council of City University of Hong Kong (CityU), and reappointed Dr Lam Tai-fai as the Chairman of the Council of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU), all with effect from January 1, 2025, for a term of three years.

The Chief Executive also appointed members to the Councils of the above three universities (the terms all beginning on January 1, 2025, for three years): HKBU – appointed Mr Lo Wing-hung, Dr Louis Ng Chi-wa and Ms Malina Ngai Man-lin, and reappointed Mr Abraham Chan Yu-ling and Dr Wong Yu-yeuk; CityU – appointed Mr Eugene Fong Yick-jin and Ms Grace Yu Ho-wun, and reappointed Ms Miranda Kwok Pui-fong, Mr Robert Andrew Lui Chi-wang and Mr Justin Wong Tak-ho; PolyU – appointed incumbent Council member Dr Daniel Yip Chung-yin as the Deputy Chairman of the Council, and Mr Arthur Lee Kin as the Treasurer of the University.

The Chief Executive said, "With highly international and diverse post-secondary education, and outstanding science and research talent, Hong Kong is an international hub for high-calibre talent for exchanges and collaboration. HKBU, CityU and PolyU are important assets of Hong Kong, providing constant impetus for Hong Kong's development into an international post-secondary education hub, and commanding high expectations from the Government and the public. The new appointees are all prominent leaders in society. They have been dedicated to serving the community in different fields over the years. They possess outstanding capabilities and rich experience, and have made remarkable contributions to Hong Kong's education sector. With their wealth of experience in public service and knowledge about Hong Kong's education sector, I believe that they will steer the three universities towards greater achievements on various fronts in the coming few years, supporting Hong Kong's development into an international post-secondary education hub."

The Chief Executive has expressed his gratitude to the outgoing HKBU Council Chairman, Dr Clement Chen Cheng-jen, and members Mr Chui Wing-On, Ms So Ching and Ms Connie Wong Wai-ching; CityU Council Chairman, Mr Lester Garson Huang, and member Dr Eugene Chan Kin-keung; and PolyU Council Deputy Chairman, Dr Lawrence Li Kwok-chang, and Treasurer of the University, Ms Loretta Fong Wan-huen, for their work and efforts during their terms.

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# Government releases final report of Working Group on Oral Health and Dental Care and corresponding action plan (with photo/video)

The Government released the final report of the Working Group on Oral Health and Dental Care today (December 6). The Working Group recommended shifting the focus of the current oral health and dental care system from the prevailing treatment-oriented tendency to an approach targeting prevention, early identification, and timely intervention. The Working Group also recommended adopting oral health policies that encourage better oral hygiene habits among citizens, thereby enhancing their oral health through retention of teeth and eventually achieving the goal of overall good health and well-being. The Government concurred with the strategic recommendations of the Working Group and formulated a corresponding Oral Health Action Plan to adopt the strategies of widely promoting among citizens across all age groups prevention-oriented primary oral healthcare while providing essential dental care services targeting underprivileged groups.

## Recommendations on oral health policies and development strategies

With reference to the Global Strategy and Action Plan on Oral Health 2023–2030 of the World Health Organization and China's Oral Health Action Plan (2019-2025) released by the National Health Commission, the Working Group recommended the Government adopt the following oral health policies:

- Oral health constitutes an integral component of general health. The Government's oral health policies aim to enable all Hong Kong citizens to improve their oral hygiene and lifestyles conducive to further enhancing both oral health and general health levels;
- The Government will assist citizens in managing their oral health through publicity and education as well as promotion and development of primary oral health and dental care, with a view to putting into action prevention, early identification and timely intervention of dental diseases with the objective of retaining teeth; and
- The Government will provide appropriate oral health and dental care services for underprivileged groups with financial difficulties and special needs in a bid to ensure access to essential dental care services by these groups.

Having reviewed the reports of the oral health survey, the Working Group noted that the public health measures on oral health implemented over time have borne fruit, resulting in a relatively satisfactory level of oral health among citizens. However, the risk of having dental diseases and tooth loss persist, implying that there is need for better prevention. The Working Group

also observed that the Government has been substantially increasing the amount of resources for directly provided or subsidised dental services over the years, with relevant expenditure approaching \$1.3 billion in 2023/24, but the utilisation of resources has skewed towards curative treatment instead of prevention. There was also a lack of holistic examination on the cost-effectiveness of resources devoted.

The Working Group considered that preventive primary oral healthcare should be pushed ahead at full steam to reduce the demand for curative dental treatment. The cost-effectiveness and sustainability of resource utilisation as well as the priority of providing and subsidising dental services should also be reviewed such that resources will be more effectively utilised to promote primary oral healthcare towards the goal of improving citizens' oral health by focusing on prevention, early identification and timely intervention, thereby achieving the policy objective of enhancing citizens' health. To this end, the Working Group recommended the adoption of the approach to promote prevention-oriented primary oral healthcare among citizens across all age groups while providing essential dental care services for underprivileged groups in particular. Such an approach will serve as the strategy for the future development of the oral health and dental care system, as follows:

Community-wide preventive primary oral healthcare: To actively develop prevention-oriented primary oral healthcare through extensive promotion to Hong Kong citizens across different age groups, assisting them in managing their oral health, establishing good oral hygiene habits and lifestyles, and seeking regular oral check-ups and risk assessments of their own accord;

Essential dental care services targeting underprivileged groups: To focus on the provision of essential dental services through the public system or subsidy programmes for underprivileged groups who have difficulties in accessing dental care, namely those with financial difficulties, persons with disabilities or special needs and high-risk groups are to receive preventive and curative oral health and dental care services; and

The Working Group also considered various supporting conditions such as dental professional manpower resources, legal regulations, service models, financial arrangements and the use of electronic dental record systems, and subsequently put forward a series of strategic recommendations to the Government.

## Oral Health Action Plan

Concurring with the recommendation directions of the Working Group, the Government developed a corresponding Oral Health Action Plan in response to various strategic recommendations of the Working Group.

In accordance with the strategy of developing community-wide preventive primary oral healthcare, the action plan covers the following measures to be implemented next year:

- To pilot risk assessment and oral hygiene instruction services at certain District Health Centres/District Health Centre Expresses;
- To introduce preventive dental services for preschool children aged up to 6 years by providing regular oral check-ups and care guidance;
- To launch the Primary Dental Co-care Pilot Scheme for Adolescents to incentivise regular oral check-ups among adolescents aged between 13 and 17 by providing Government subsidies under co-payment arrangements;
- To encourage citizens to receive regular oral check-ups. For adults in particular, employers offering dental benefits will be encouraged to drive their employees to receive regular oral check-ups through their prevailing plans. The dental sector will also be motivated to formulate the essential items in oral check-up packages for citizens of different age groups; and
- To encourage the elderly to make good use of Elderly Health Care Vouchers (EHCVs) for seeking oral check-ups. Through the Elderly Health Care Voucher Pilot Reward Scheme launched in 2023 and joint promotion efforts with the sector on the importance of oral check-ups, the elderly will be steered to better utilise the EHCVs for prevention dental services.

According to the strategy of providing essential dental services targeting underprivileged groups, the action plan will take forward the following measures:

- To launch the Community Dental Support Programme next year to provide dental services for underprivileged groups (including elderly persons with financial difficulties) with enhancement in capacity and service points and extension of service scope. This support programme will supplant the Community Care Fund Elderly Dental Assistance Programme by 2026;
- To continue streamlining the arrangements of dental services of the General Public Session of the Department of Health (DH). The DH will launch an Online Registration System for Dental General Public Session on December 30 and consider introducing eligibility criteria to put the service focus on helping those with financial difficulties; and
- To continue expanding special care dental services to further cover groups with other disabilities or special needs, while strengthening relevant dental services in hospitals and providing additional training.

The Oral Health Action Plan also includes various relevant supporting measures for strengthening professional dental manpower and the eHealth system. The Government will also establish a steering and advisory framework for oral health and dental care to keep advancing various measures.

The full text of the Working Group's final report is available on the website of the Health Bureau:  
[www.healthbureau.gov.hk/download/press\\_and\\_publications/otherinfo/241200\\_dental/e\\_final\\_report.pdf](http://www.healthbureau.gov.hk/download/press_and_publications/otherinfo/241200_dental/e_final_report.pdf).

The Chairman of the Working Group and the Permanent Secretary for Health, Mr Thomas Chan, said, "I would like to express gratitude to all

members of the Working Group for their efforts and contributions. The Government will, in accordance with the Working Group's recommendations, push ahead the development of community-wide preventive primary oral healthcare and continue to develop Hong Kong's oral health and dental care system along the approach of promoting prevention-oriented primary oral healthcare among citizens across all age groups while providing essential dental care services for underprivileged groups in particular. The Government looks forward to working with the dental profession, training institutions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and members of the public to promote oral health for all, enabling citizens to improve their oral health behaviours and retain their teeth through prevention, early identification and timely intervention of dental diseases, thereby genuinely embracing both oral and general health."

#### Working Group on Oral Health and Dental Care

The [Working Group on Oral Health and Dental Care](#), established as announced in "The Chief Executive's 2022 Policy Address", comprises members from the dental profession, medical sector, social welfare sector, patient groups, collaborating NGOs collaborating government-subsidised dental care programmes, and relevant well-regarded community personalities. The Working Group conducted a comprehensive review of dental care services provided or subsidised by the Government and put forward a series of recommendations including long-term strategies for oral health and dental care as well as enhancement of service scopes and models with the aim of safeguarding public oral health. The Working Group's tenure will expire at the end of this year. Throughout the term, seven meetings were held and an interim report was released at the end of last year.

#### Report of Oral Health Survey 2021

The DH also released today the [Report of Oral Health Survey 2021](#) which was conducted between 2021 and 2023. As revealed by the survey results, various oral health-related public health measures implemented by the Government over the years have effectively improved citizens' oral health, observing a general decline in tooth decay and a continuous increase in tooth retention among the elderly. The tooth decay level among Hong Kong children aged 5 and 12 and the proportion of elderly persons with complete tooth loss compares very favourably with global levels. That said, citizens still face a risk of having dental diseases and tooth loss. Strengthening of prevention is required.



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## [DH releases latest “Report of Oral Health Survey”](#)

The Department of Health (DH) today (December 6) released the "Report of Oral Health Survey 2021" (OHS 2021), which contains the latest and representative oral health information on Hong Kong citizens.

### Report of Oral Health Survey 2021

The OHS 2021 commenced in November of that year, with the objective to continuously monitor the oral health status of the population. It was conducted in accordance with the survey methods recommended by the World Health Organization. Around 7 100 people in five population groups, namely 5-year-old children, 12-year-old youths, adults aged between 35 and 44 (adults), non-institutionalised older persons aged 65 to 74 (NOP), and an additional group of functionally dependent elderly aged 65 or above who were receiving long-term care (LTC) services under the Social Welfare Department were evaluated. Owing to the local COVID-19 epidemic situation, the fieldwork of the OHS 2021 was generally postponed and completed in December 2023.

The OHS 2021 found that the overall level of oral health in Hong Kong has continued to improve over the past 20 years since 2001. There was no obvious change in the proportion of the population with tooth decay experience in the adults and NOP groups, as about one third of adults and almost half of the NOP had untreated tooth decay. There was a significant drop in tooth decay experience among 5-year and 12-year-old groups, from 50.7 per cent and 22.6 per cent in 2011 to 41.6 per cent and 16.3 per cent in 2021 respectively. In terms of the tooth loss situation, the proportion of NOP with no teeth significantly dropped from 5.6 per cent in 2011 to 0.9 per cent in 2021, while their number of "teeth in mouth" increased from 19.3 and 22.8 in parallel.

Effective oral home care is conducive to good oral health. As shown in this survey result, there was an increasing proportion of 5 year olds who



brushed their teeth twice or more daily (74.5 per cent in 2011, increased to 77.9 per cent in 2021). The majority of them used toothpaste and had parental assistance when they brushed (90.2 per cent and 90.4 per cent percent in 2011 and 2021 respectively). Over 80 per cent of people who were functionally independent in other population groups brushed their teeth twice or more daily, while only 13.0 per cent to 31.6 per cent of them had daily interdental cleaning habits.

In addition, the periodontal (gum) condition of adults and NOP continued to be a concern. About 40 per cent of adults and NOP presented with gum bleeding at around half or more of their teeth, which was about 50 per cent lower than the percentages a decade ago. However, 57 per cent of adults and 70 per cent of NOP had gum pockets, which was a higher indicator than that of adults (40 per cent) and NOP (60 per cent) in 2011. Gum pockets are more commonly detected in molars (back teeth) for both age groups, which reflected that the technique of dental plaque removal might not be effective in the prevention of periodontal disease.

Regular professional dental care is crucial for prevention and early identification of oral diseases, so dental check-up habits should be promoted as early as the first tooth erupts in order to identify decayed teeth in a timely manner. The OHS 2021 revealed that the habit of dental check-ups was not common in pre-school children. Up to 39.2 per cent of 5 year olds had untreated decay in primary teeth, while a significant proportion of parents had inaccurate assessments of their children's oral health status. On the other hand, when primary school children are eligible to join the School Dental Care Service with annual dental check-ups, there was a significant improvement in their oral health. On average, the 12-year-old youth group only had 0.24 teeth with decay experience, which was extremely low. To encourage adolescents in maintaining the habit of regular dental check-ups after completion of the School Dental Care Service, the Government will launch a new Primary Dental Co-care Pilot Scheme for Adolescents programme in 2025.

The utilisation of professional dental care services among adult and NOP groups was uncommon. Only 57.3 per cent of the adult group and 33.4 per cent of the NOP group had dental check-up habits. They also tended to ignore oral symptoms, even for severe pain that disturbed sleep, and consider self-management of any discomfort. The lack of time and cost concerns were strong barriers for them to seek dental care. Self-perceived good oral health was the most commonly reported reason of both age groups for not having regular dental check-ups, which is unfavourable to early identification and timely management of dental diseases. The delay in dental care, together with an increase in snacking frequency as found in this survey, may result in further deterioration leading to increasing discomfort and more complex and costly treatment, which can result in the extraction of teeth. Professional instructions from dentists and dental care professionals, and individualised risk assessments are helpful for establishing targeted oral self-care and early identification of any hidden risk factors in developing dental disease. In summary, all age groups should develop regular dental check-up habits as soon as possible.

This survey also found more remaining teeth in the 65-year-old or above LTC users, and a smaller proportion of them had complete tooth loss when compared to the same population groups in 2011. However, untreated decayed teeth were found in more than half of the LTC users, and the cleanliness of their teeth and prosthesis was a concern. The importance of daily oral care must also be promoted to their carers. The majority of LTC users required modifications in provision of dental treatment due to their complex medical conditions. As such, enhanced training of the dental profession in management of this high-risk group is important to address their dental needs.

Moreover, the habit of regular dental check-ups was not common in all the target population groups, which supports and reinforces the need to develop primary oral care services appropriately for different age groups in order to facilitate lifestyle changes among people. Regular assessments of oral health risks through dental check-ups by dental professionals should be an integral part of the primary dental services to be developed. Combined with a healthy lifestyle, primary oral care services enable effective prevention, early identification and timely management of oral diseases, with an aim to help maintain good oral health by retaining natural teeth into old age.

#### Oral Health Goals 2030

The Audit Commission Report No. 68 published in 2017 on provision of dental services recommended that the oral health goals established in 1991 should be reviewed. The DH hence set up an Expert Group in May 2019 comprising members from the Faculty of Dentistry of the University of Hong Kong, representatives from the Hong Kong Dental Association and the College of Dental Surgeons of Hong Kong, and Specialists in Community Dentistry from the DH. After reviewing the 2001 and 2011 OHS reports and the local situation, the Expert Group had proposed appropriate oral health goals for different targeted age groups. Based on the OHS 2021 results, DH conducted a review this year and eventually finalised the oral health goals for Hong Kong to be achieved by 2030.

The Government established the Working Group on Oral Health and Dental Care (Working Group) in December 2022 to review the scope and effectiveness of the existing oral health measures as well as dental care services. These areas are to be examined and suggestions made on the long-term strategic development for oral health and dental care. The Final Report of the Working Group stressed the importance of primary oral health care for all Hong Kong citizens with a focus on prevention, early identification and timely management of dental diseases. The recommendations are substantiated by the findings of OHS 2021.

"The results of the OHS 2021 provides an important basis for the DH in deriving the Oral Health Goals 2030 for Hong Kong. It also supports collaborative planning of oral care services among the Government, dental professionals and relevant stakeholders to meet diverse community needs for better oral health in the Hong Kong population", a spokesman for the DH said.

The full report and highlight versions of the OHS 2021 can be downloaded from the DH website ([www.dh.gov.hk/english/index.html](http://www.dh.gov.hk/english/index.html)).