

Government gazettes compulsory testing notice

The Government exercises the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) and publishes in the Gazette a compulsory testing notice, which requires any person who had been present at 37 specified premises during the specified period (persons subject to compulsory testing) to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test.

In view of four local / local related cases, seven import-related cases and eight cases tested preliminarily positive, 21 specified premises are included in the compulsory testing notice. The Government strongly reminds members of the public to strictly follow the compulsory testing requirements and undergo the multiple tests on time as required. The above compulsory testing requirement applies to those who have completed a COVID-19 vaccination course as well. They are advised to closely monitor their health conditions. They should seek medical attention and undergo testing even if they have only mild symptoms.

Furthermore, since some sewage samples collected in Kwai Chung, Chai Wan, Kwun Tong and Ma On Shan have tested positive, 16 specified premises are included in the compulsory testing notice.

Details of the compulsory testing notice are available on the Centre for Health Protection (CHP)'s website via the following link: (www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/ctn_20220126.pdf).

Persons subject to compulsory testing in accordance with a compulsory testing notice must go to any of the mobile specimen collection stations, community testing centres (CTCs) or recognised local medical testing institutions to undergo professional swab sampling in fulfilling the requirements for compulsory testing. Young children may continue to undergo the test using a stool specimen.

If Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 3 or above, the Red or Black Rainstorm Warning Signal or the post-super typhoon "extreme conditions" announcement by the Government is in force at any time during the period for undergoing the compulsory testing, the period for undergoing the compulsory testing will be further extended for one day.

The Comirnaty and CoronaVac vaccines are highly effective in preventing severe cases and deaths from COVID-19. They can provide protection to those vaccinated to prevent serious complications and even death after infection. The Government appeals to persons who are not yet vaccinated, especially senior citizens, chronic patients and other immunocompromised persons who face a higher chance of death after COVID-19 infection, to get vaccinated as soon as possible for better self-protection.

Subsequent to the announcement by the CHP on the updated quarantine arrangements of local COVID-19 cases with a mutant strain, persons who resided or worked within the same building as the residence of relevant cases will be subject to compulsory testing on specified dates in accordance with the announcement by the Department of Health (DH). They will also be required to undergo self-monitoring until the 21st day (see the details of the buildings and dates of testing at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/CTN_Specified_premises_and_Dates_of_Testing.pdf). In addition, all household members of close contacts are required to undergo compulsory testing. Any person who had lived with a person placed under quarantine pursuant to section 22 of the Prevention and Control of Disease Regulation (Cap. 599A) (person under quarantine) in the same residential unit on the date of commencement of quarantine or during the 14 days before that day, and who becomes aware of the quarantine of the person under quarantine when the relevant quarantine has not yet been completed, has to undergo testing within two days of him or her becoming aware that the person under quarantine has been placed under quarantine and report to the Government the result of the test by phone (6275 6901), fax (2530 5872) or email (ct@csb.gov.hk) within three days of undergoing the test. For prudence's sake, the above compulsory testing requirement applies to those who have completed a COVID-19 vaccination course as well.

CTCs provide testing services for the public, including free service for persons subject to compulsory testing. Booking and walk-in services are available. Members of the public only need to provide simple personal information on the 24-hour booking system (www.communitytest.gov.hk/en). The system shows the booking status of the centres for the coming two weeks to facilitate the public's planning and selection of a suitable testing centre and a time slot for testing. The testing centres will accord priority to serve individuals with advance bookings. As of 6pm on January 26, there were around 4 000 booking places available for today (January 27) at the CTCs, and around 59 per cent and 78 per cent availability for booking places for the coming seven days and 14 days respectively. Members of the public may call the testing centres for enquiries on the availability of bookings or walk-in quotas before visiting the centres.

In view of positive sewage testing results, individual buildings in relevant districts are included in compulsory testing notice. The Government will set up a mobile specimen collection station at the ball court on carpark roof of Tsui Wan Estate in Chai Wan today, and the mobile specimen collection stations at Tai Wo Hau Estate Community Centre and Tai Wo Hau Sports Centre will continue to operate. The Government will re-open a number of mobile specimen collection stations in Tuen Mun District (Kin Sang Community Hall, Siu Lun Sports Ground, Yau Oi Sports Centre, Yau Oi Estate Football Field and covered playground on ground floor of On Ting/Yau Oi Community Centre) and set up a mobile specimen collection station at Wo Hing Sports Centre in Fanling to provide free services for persons subject to compulsory testing today.

As the next test for the residents of the buildings in Kwai Chung Estate not under "restriction-testing declaration" is scheduled on January 29

(Saturday), a number of mobile specimen collection stations in the estate will suspend service today and tomorrow and be re-opened on January 29. Notwithstanding the above, the two stations outside Luk Kwai House and Chin Kwai House will maintain service on a limited scale for individual residents with need (e.g. those who had not managed to complete compulsory test in time earlier).

Free testing service will be provided to persons subject to compulsory testing at CTCs and mobile specimen collection stations located at over 55 places in various districts today. The testing capacity should be sufficient to meet the demand. Persons subject to compulsory testing and those who received the "LeaveHomeSafe" COVID-19 exposure notification or SMS notification from the CHP reminding them to undergo testing as soon as possible may conduct free testing at CTCs or mobile specimen collection stations (if the service scope is applicable). The opening dates and operating hours of the mobile specimen collection stations are stated in the Annex.

Persons subject to compulsory testing may choose to undergo testing via the following routes:

1. To visit any of the mobile specimen collection stations (see the list and target groups (if applicable) at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html) for testing;
2. To attend any of the CTCs (see the list at www.communitytest.gov.hk/en);
3. To self-arrange testing provided by private laboratories which are recognised by the DH and can issue SMS notifications in respect of test results (see the list at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/List_of_recognised_laboratories RTPCR.pdf), and the relevant sample must be taken through combined nasal and throat swabs; or
4. To use a specimen bottle distributed to the relevant specified premises by the CHP (if applicable), and return the specimen bottle with the stool sample collected as per relevant guidelines.

If a person subject to compulsory testing obtains a medical certificate issued by a registered medical practitioner, proving that he or she is unfit to undergo testing using a sample taken through combined nasal and throat swabs because of health reasons, then he or she may choose to undergo testing via the following routes by providing a deep throat saliva sample:

1. To obtain a deep throat saliva specimen collection pack from any of the 120 post offices, vending machines set up at 20 MTR stations or 47 designated general out-patient clinics (GOPCs) of the Hospital Authority and return the specimen to one of the designated specimen collection points (see the distribution points and times, and the specimen collection points and times, at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html);
2. To undergo testing at any of the GOPCs of the Hospital Authority as instructed by a medical professional of the Hospital Authority; or
3. To self-arrange testing provided by private laboratories which are recognised by the DH and can issue SMS notifications in respect of test results.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau cautioned that testing received at the Accident and Emergency Departments of the Hospital Authority

or during hospital stays, or testing provided by private laboratories which cannot issue SMS notifications in respect of test results, does not comply with the requirements of the aforementioned compulsory testing notice.

"If persons subject to compulsory testing have symptoms, they should seek medical attention immediately and undergo testing as instructed by a medical professional. They should not attend the mobile specimen collection stations or the CTCs."

Persons subject to compulsory testing must keep the SMS notifications containing the result of the test and the relevant medical certificate (if applicable) for checking by a law enforcement officer when the officer requires the persons to provide information about their undergoing the specified test.

Furthermore, persons subject to testing under the compulsory testing notices should, as far as reasonably practicable, take appropriate personal disease prevention measures including wearing a mask and maintaining hand hygiene, and, unless for the purpose of undergoing the specified test, stay at their place of residence and avoid going out until the test result is ascertained as far as possible.

Any enquiries on compulsory testing arrangements may be addressed to the hotline at 6275 6901, which operates daily from 9am to 6pm. If persons subject to compulsory testing plan to conduct testing at any of the CTCs, they can check the centre's appointment status in advance. The hotlines of the CTCs are available at www.communitytest.gov.hk/en/info.

The Government will continue to trace possibly infected persons who had been to the relevant premises, and seriously verify whether they had complied with the testing notices. Any person who fails to comply with the testing notices commits an offence and may be fined a fixed penalty of \$5,000. The person would also be issued with a compulsory testing order requiring him or her to undergo testing within a specified time frame. Failure to comply with the order is an offence and the offender would be liable to a fine at level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months.

The spokesman said, "The Government urges all individuals who are in doubt about their own health conditions, or individuals with infection risks (such as individuals who visited places with epidemic outbreaks or had contact with cases tested positive), to undergo testing promptly for early identification of infected persons."

[SWD's statement in response to](#)

improvement plans and review report submitted by Hong Kong Society for the Protection of Children on Children's Residential Home's incident

Regarding the suspected child abuse incident that happened at the Children's Residential Home (CRH) in December last year, a spokesman of the Social Welfare Department (SWD) today (January 26) reiterated that the incident is totally unacceptable. The SWD has immediately taken a series of measures to ensure the proper operation of the child care centre after the incident, and requested the Hong Kong Society for the Protection of Children which operates the centre to submit improvement plans and a review report regarding the incident. The SWD yesterday (January 25) received the review report from the independent review committee commissioned by the Hong Kong Society for the Protection of Children. After a preliminary study of the report, the SWD considers that the direction of reforming governance and recommendations on service improvement contained in the report are acceptable on the premise that an effective internal management and supervision system will be established by the Hong Kong Society for the Protection of Children as soon as possible to ensure that improvement measures are effectively enforced, so as to rebuild public confidence in the organisation. The SWD will closely monitor the effectiveness of the implementation of the recommendations, to safeguard the well-being of the children.

The independent review report revealed serious shortcomings in the daily operation, supervision and staff training in the child care centre. These observations match with those made by the SWD. The SWD takes note that the Hong Kong Society for the Protection of Children has accepted the recommendations of the independent review committee and undertaken to implement a series of measures, including replacing personnel in the senior management and strengthening organisational governance and daily supervision. The SWD will closely supervise the organisation's full implementation and effective enforcement of the improvement measures in the review report, including staff recruitment, support and training; and setting up committees to monitor service quality and management. The SWD also notes that the independent review committee will review in the next phase the overall governance of the Hong Kong Society for the Protection of Children. The department will closely monitor the outcome and recommendations of the review, as basis to consider whether the Hong Kong Society for the Protection of Children is suitable for providing services subsidised by the SWD.

In the process of handling the incident, the Government noted that there is room for improvement on SWD's monitoring system. The department will, adopting a risk-based approach, step up the depth and breadth of inspections to ensure child care service providers are in strict compliance with the service quality standard of the SWD and legal requirements, and have

effective internal control and monitoring systems in place. Enhancement measures include including health inspectors and other professionals to join the inspection teams; increasing the frequency of inspections of service units that take care of vulnerable children and/or service units with unsatisfactory past records based on risk assessment; and conducting random checks on closed-circuit television (CCTV) footages at the service units.

In addition, the SWD will require all residential child care service units to install CCTV system to facilitate supervision, and will provide financial assistance to individual service units if needed.

To follow up the implementation of the recommendations of the Review Report on Enhancement of Lump Sum Grant Subvention System completed in August last year, the SWD has accorded priority to conducting a review on residential child care and related services. The review covers service targets and nature (including interface between residential child care services and other child care services), service performance standards, notional staffing establishment and administrative support. The SWD has reported the scope and timetable of the review to the Working Group on Children Protection under the Commission on Children on January 19, and will consult stakeholders in March. The Commission on Children will also organise public engagement events to invite stakeholders to express their views on the subject. The Government will invite the Working Group on Children Protection to supervise the review, with a target of completing the review in March 2023.

Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at 9am today (January 26), 32 patients who had tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus (case numbers: 12666, 12676, 12746, 12747, 12754, 12790, 12799, 12818, 12822, 12825, 12835, 12842, 12855, 12856, 12858, 12860, 12862, 12885, 12904, 12923, 12926, 12930, 12937, 12965, 12971, 12984, 12992, 12993, 12999, 13020, 13029 and 13175) were discharged from hospital in the last 24 hours. So far, a total of 12 655 patients have been discharged.

A total of 578 patients who had tested positive are currently hospitalised in the North Lantau Hospital Hong Kong Infection Control Centre, the Hospital Authority (HA) Infectious Disease Centre, the Community Treatment Facility at AsiaWorld-Expo and 12 public hospitals. All of them are in stable condition.

The HA will maintain close contact with the Centre for Health Protection

to monitor the latest developments and to inform the public and healthcare workers on the latest information in a timely manner.

CHP investigates 81 confirmed and 26 asymptomatic additional SARS-CoV-2 virus cases and identifies 85 additional Omicron cases from previously announced cases

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (January 26) announced the latest epidemic situation of COVID-19. As of 0.00am, January 26, the CHP was investigating 81 additional confirmed cases and 26 additional asymptomatic cases in the past 24 hours (i.e. there were 107 additional cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus confirmed by the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch (PHLSB) in those 24 hours). This brings the total number of confirmed cases to 13 262 so far, while the figures for asymptomatic cases and re-positive cases recorded since January 1 are 358 and six respectively, i.e. Hong Kong has recorded a total of 13 626 cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus so far.

The newly reported cases consist of seven imported cases, 79 cases epidemiologically linked with imported cases, seven local cases, and 14 cases epidemiologically linked with local cases. Eighty-eight of the cases involve mutant strains, the mutation test results of 18 cases are pending and the viral load of the remaining case is insufficient for mutation tests. The patients comprise 54 males and 53 females, aged 1 to 85. For case details and contact tracing information, please see the Annex or the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk).

With regard to the cases tested positive recently in Block 1, Tropicana Gardens in Wong Tai Sin, apart from the units E involved in relevant cases earlier, the CHP also identified a case tested positive (case 13622) at the building, who lives in unit F on a floor with cases detected before. It is suspected that the virus might have transmitted through the yard area of adjacent units after initial investigation. Taking into account the opinions from experts, the CHP will arrange residents of units F on 6th to 8th floor to undergo quarantine at a quarantine centre.

A total of 539 cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus have been reported in the past 14 days (January 12 to 25). Three-hundred-and-fifty-three of them are epidemiologically linked with imported cases, 22 are local cases, 36 are cases epidemiologically linked with local case, and the

rest are imported cases.

Meanwhile, the whole genome sequencing analysis of cases announced earlier conducted by the PHLSB confirmed that cases 13113, 13126, 13128 to 13131, 13133 to 13135, 13137 to 13143, 13145, 13148 to 13150, 13155, 13156, 13159 to 13163, 13165 to 13175, 13177 to 13179, 13181 to 13186, 13191, 13197, 13198, 13206 to 13208, 13210, 13217 to 13221, 13224, 13225, 13228, 13231 to 13235, 13237, 13240, 13241, 13243, 13245 to 13247, 13252, 13255, 13257, 13263, 13269 and 13286 to 13291 all carried the Variant of Concern Omicron. Together with the aforementioned cases, there are so far 641 cases involving Omicron in Hong Kong.

Also, as a passenger flight (EK384) operated by Emirates from Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, and Bangkok, Thailand, arriving in Hong Kong on January 24 had five passengers who tested positive upon arrival, the DH thus invoked the Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation (Cap. 599H) to prohibit the landing of passenger flights from Dubai and Bangkok operated by Emirates in Hong Kong from January 26 to February 8.

According to the testing and quarantine arrangements for cases with mutant strains, persons who resided or worked within the same building as the residence of relevant cases will be subject to compulsory testing on specified dates in accordance with the announcement by the DH. They will also be required to undergo self-monitoring until the 21st day (see the details of the buildings and dates of testing at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/CTN_Specified_premises_and_Dates_of_Testing.pdf).

The CHP strongly reminded members of the public to strictly follow the compulsory testing requirements and undergo the multiple tests on time as required. The compulsory testing requirement applies to those who have completed a COVID-19 vaccination course as well. The Government will seriously verify whether they had complied with the testing notices. Any person who fails to comply with the testing notices commits an offence and may be fined a fixed penalty of \$5,000. The person would also be issued with a compulsory testing order requiring him or her to undergo testing within a specified time frame. Failure to comply with the order is an offence and the offender would be liable to a fine at level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months. Relevant officers of different government departments are empowered to perform certain functions under the relevant Regulations under the Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance (Cap. 599), including requesting individuals to provide information and assistance when necessary. Any person who fails to comply with the relevant request commits an offence and would be liable to a fine at level 3 (\$10,000). The Government reiterates that the aim of issuing a compulsory testing notice is to stop the spread of COVID-19 in the community as soon as possible to protect overall public health and safety.

The spokesman for the CHP stressed that the global situation of COVID-19 infection remains severe and there is a continuous increase in the number of cases involving mutant strains that carry higher transmissibility.

With the higher transmissibility and risk of infection of the Omicron mutant strain, the CHP strongly appeals to the community to continue to comply with the recently tightened social distancing measures, and to refrain from participating in unnecessary or crowded activities or gatherings (particularly religious or cross-family activities and gatherings). This would lower the risk of infection and prevent the virus from spreading in the community.

SLW responds to incident in Children's Residential Home

In response to the submission of an Independent Review Committee (IRC) review report by the Hong Kong Society for the Protection of Children (HKSPC) on its Children's Residential Home (CRH), the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, today (January 26) said that the incident revealed severe deficiencies in extensive areas of the HKSPC, from daily operations, supervision to staff training of the CRH, breaching requirements of the Social Welfare Department (SWD) and falling short of public expectations.

The Government noted that the HKSPC had accepted the IRC's recommendations and pledged to take a series of actions, including replacing members of the senior management and enhancing its corporate governance and daily supervision, with the commitment to rebuild public confidence. The SWD has demanded the HKSPC to implement all the recommendations as soon as possible, and will closely monitor the effectiveness of the measures after implementation in order to protect the well-being of children. Moreover, the SWD will continue to keep in view the outcome and recommendations of the IRC's review on the HKSPC's other services, as a basis to consider whether the organisation is still fit to provide SWD-subsidised services in future.

During the process of handling the incident, the Government has also identified room for improvement in the SWD's regulatory mechanism. The SWD will adopt a risk-based approach, and enhance inspections with extended breadth and depth to ensure the child care service providers meet the service quality standard and statutory requirements, with effective internal control and monitoring mechanism in place.

"We will invite the Working Group on Children Protection of the Commission on Children to supervise a review on children welfare services, covering the residential child care and related services, with an aim to complete the review by March next year," Dr Law said.

In addition, the Government will take forward the legislative work on a mandatory reporting mechanism for child abuse cases, under which practitioners in the professions subject to mandatory reporting obligations

will receive appropriate training to enhance their capacity for early identification and handling of child abuse cases. The target is to introduce the bill into the Legislative Council (LegCo) in the first half of next year. The Government is also considering how to take forward the recommendations as set out in the Law Reform Commission's report on causing or allowing the death or serious harm of a child or vulnerable adult published last September.

"The Government attaches great importance to protect the best interests of children and firmly believes that every child has a right to protection against harm and abuse. This requires the concerted efforts of the Government, related sectors as well as the entire community to work together to achieve this goal. Special tribute should be paid to various welfare organisations with children service units for their offer of assistance and essential helping hands by seconding or recommending personnel to deal with the untoward situation," Dr Law said.

The Labour and Welfare Bureau is prepared to attend a special meeting of the LegCo Panel on Welfare Services to brief Members and harness collective wisdom and insights to improve welfare services for children.