

47th round of compulsory testing for staff members of RCHEs, RCHDs and nursing homes to commence shortly

The Government today (January 21) announced that the 47th round of compulsory testing for staff members of residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs), residential care homes for persons with disabilities (RCHDs) and nursing homes will commence shortly.

In accordance with section 10(1) of the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J), the Secretary for Food and Health issued a compulsory testing notice yesterday (January 20), requiring persons who are employed by and will be on duty at RCHEs, RCHDs, nursing homes and day service units attached to the premises of residential care homes during the period from February 2 to 8, 2022, or who will provide services to residents or users through hire-of-service contracts with residential care homes and the aforementioned units during that period (including full-time, part-time and relief staff), to undergo polymerase chain reaction-based nucleic acid tests for COVID-19 during the period from January 26 to February 1, 2022, according to the requirements and procedure set out in the notice (the Specified Test). The samples must be collected by using combined nasal and throat swabs and must not be taken by the person to be tested. However, persons who have completed a COVID-19 vaccination course (i.e. received two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine at least 14 days before the end of the testing period) are not required to undergo the Specified Test. Persons who have completed a COVID-19 vaccination course in places outside Hong Kong (i.e. received the recommended dose(s) of a COVID-19 vaccine as stipulated in relevant guidelines at least 14 days before the end of the testing period, and the vaccine used is included on the list of vaccines recognised for specified purposes as published on www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/list_of_recognised_covid19_vaccines.pdf), are also not required to undergo the Specified Test.

The staff of the aforementioned institutions may choose the following means to undergo the Specified Test:

- (1) To undergo the Specified Test in any of the Community Testing Centres (see the list at www.communitytest.gov.hk/en), Temporary Testing Centres (if any) (see the list at www.swd.gov.hk/en/index/site_pubsvc/page_supportser/sub_ttc), or mobile specimen collection stations (if any) (see the list at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html) in accordance with the instructions given by the staff at the centre/station;
- (2) To have a sample collected by a healthcare professional or trained personnel as arranged by institution operators at a laboratory listed on the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (see the list at

www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/List_of_recognised_laboratories_RTPCR.pdf); or

(3) To self-arrange testing provided by a laboratory listed on the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" at their own expense (see the list at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/List_of_recognised_laboratories_RTPCR.pdf) and the sample through a combined nasal and throat swab must not be taken by the person himself or herself.

Any person who fails to comply with the testing notice commits an offence and may be subject to a fixed penalty of \$5,000. He or she 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.

A spokesman for the Social Welfare Department (SWD) said that the SWD and the Department of Health would issue letters to institutions to inform them of the relevant arrangements and requirements. The spokesman reminded that staff of the said institutions who would undergo testing at community testing centres should make an advance booking via the community testing centre booking system (www.communitytest.gov.hk) for the free testing service. In addition, institution operators should remind their staff members to properly keep the SMS notifications of their test results or their test result reports.

Institution operators are required to keep records of their staff having received the Specified Test and the results within the time frame specified by the Government. They are also required to keep the list of staff members who have completed a COVID-19 vaccination course. Institution operators also have to co-operate with Checking Officers (Compulsory Testing) of the SWD who are enforcing the Regulation at residential care homes.

The SWD spokesman said that starting from the 26th round of compulsory testing, staff members who have not been vaccinated and do not have medical certificates certifying that they are unfit to receive COVID-19 vaccination owing to health reasons have to undergo compulsory testing at their own expense. The Government will continue to monitor the epidemic situation and make adjustments to the aforementioned testing policy after taking the overall anti-epidemic measures into account. Although staff members who have completed a COVID-19 vaccination course are exempted from the regular compulsory testing, they can still receive free testing if they voluntarily choose to undergo the test for the time being.

[Midwives Council of Hong Kong launches](#)

Voluntary Scheme on Advancement on Midwifery Practice

The Midwives Council of Hong Kong today (January 21) launched the Voluntary Scheme on Advancement on Midwifery Practice (the Scheme). Eligible registered midwives can submit applications through their current employers starting today.

A currently employed registered midwife in Hong Kong, who has obtained a Masters degree in midwifery; or has obtained a Masters degree in health related stream and completed a total of 60 hours of specialised midwifery courses; or is a fellow of the Hong Kong Academy of Nursing in the specialty of Midwifery who was admitted in 2012, 2013 or 2014; or is a fellow of the Hong Kong Academy of Nursing in the specialty of Midwifery who has obtained a Masters degree in health related stream; and also possesses six years of full time post-registration experience in midwifery practice immediately prior to his/her application, can apply for recognition as an advanced practice midwife.

Having considered the latest developments of the advanced and specialised practice of healthcare professions, the Council recognised that it is a global trend to promote advanced midwifery practice. To shoulder the responsibility for the professional development of midwives and pave the way for setting up a statutory registration system for an advanced midwifery practice in the long run, the Council decided to formulate and implement the Scheme. A Working Group on Advancement on Midwifery Practice, comprising Council members and representatives from midwifery training institution, major employers of registered midwives as well as midwifery organisations, was formed under the Council for the Scheme in May 2018.

Given the complexity of advancement on midwifery practice, the working group conducted regular meetings normally on a bi-monthly basis. It conducted extensive research on the work and practices of an advanced midwifery practice at both global and local levels. To define clearly the scope and competencies of advanced practice midwives, the working group developed the "Scope of Midwifery Practice" and "Competencies of Advanced Practice Midwives" for reference.

To ensure that views from stakeholders were taken into consideration throughout the course of formulation of the Scheme, an online briefing was organised for the stakeholders on December 15, 2020. A two-month consultation exercise was also conducted from December 15, 2020, to February 14, 2021. Having consolidated views collected during the consultation period, the Council submitted a proposal on the implementation of the Scheme to the Food and Health Bureau in July 2021, and support was granted by the Food and Health Bureau in November 2021 for implementation of the Scheme.

Applications for recognition as advanced practice midwives are now being

accepted. Details of the Scheme are available at the Council's website (www.mwchk.org.hk/english/voluntary_scheme/index.html). For enquiries concerning the Scheme and the application procedure, please contact the Council Secretariat by phone at 2527 8553 or by email at pa1_nmc@dh.gov.hk.

Proposed Phase 2 Stage 2 improvement works at Mui Wo gazetted

The Government gazetted today (January 21) the proposed Phase 2 Stage 2 improvement works at Mui Wo, including construction of a public car park, a bus terminus and a footpath along the waterfront outside the Mui Wo Cooked Food Market to provide infrastructure to cater for community needs.

Details of the proposed works are set out in the Annex. The plans and scheme are available for public inspection at the following government offices during office hours:

Central and Western Home Affairs Enquiry Centre,
G/F, Harbour Building,
38 Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong

Islands District Office Main Office,
20/F, Harbour Building,
38 Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong

Islands Home Affairs Enquiry Centre (Mui Wo),
G/F, Mui Wo Government Offices,
2 Ngan Kwong Wan Road, Mui Wo, Lantau Island

Islands Home Affairs Enquiry Centre (Tung Chung),
1/F, Tung Chung Post Office Building,
6 Mei Tung Street, Tung Chung, Lantau Island

District Lands Office, Islands,
19/F, Harbour Building,
38 Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong

The gazette notice, scheme, plans and location plan are available at www.thb.gov.hk/eng/psp/publications/transport/gazette/gazette.htm.

Any person who wishes to object to the works or the use, or both, is required to address to the Secretary for Transport and Housing an objection in writing, which can be submitted via the following means:

- By post or by hand to the Transport and Housing Bureau's drop-in box No. 6 located at the entrance on 2/F, East Wing, Central Government Offices, 2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong. The box is available for use between 8am and 7pm from Monday to Friday (except public holidays);
- By fax to 2868 4643; or
- By email to gazettethb@thb.gov.hk.

A notice of objection should describe the objector's interest and the manner in which he or she alleges that he or she will be affected by the works or the use. Objectors are requested to provide contact details to facilitate communication. A notice of objection should be delivered to the Secretary for Transport and Housing not later than March 22, 2022.

Government finishes exercise on “restriction-testing declaration” in respect of specified “restricted area” in Tsuen Wan and enforcement operation for breaches of compulsory testing notice

The Government yesterday (January 20) exercised the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to make a "restriction-testing declaration" effective from 7.30pm yesterday, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Tsuen Wan (i.e. Tower 1, New Haven, 363 Sha Tsui Road, Tsuen Wan) were required to stay in their premises and undergo compulsory testing. Persons subject to compulsory testing were required to stay in their premises until all such persons identified in the area had undergone testing and the test results were mostly ascertained. Moreover, the Government issued a compulsory testing notice yesterday, requiring persons who had been present at the above building for more than two hours from January 7, 2022 to January 20, 2022, even if they were not present in the "restricted area" at the time when the declaration took effect, to undergo compulsory testing on or before January 22, 2022. The Government announced the completion of the compulsory testing exercise at around 6.45am today (January 21) and carried out enforcement action in the "restricted area" afterwards to verify that all people in the "restricted area" had undergone compulsory testing in accordance with the requirements of the relevant declaration and compulsory testing notice. The Government announced that the enforcement operation ended at around 9am

today.

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In this exercise, the Home Affairs Department (HAD) (including the Tsuen Wan District Office), the Hong Kong Police Force, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department and the Tobacco and Alcohol Control Office of the Department of Health mobilised around 140 staff to arrange for implementation of the declaration and enforcement actions for breaches of the compulsory testing notice issued earlier.

The Government provided simple food for persons subject to compulsory testing, including canned food, instant noodles and corn kernels, so as to facilitate the dinner arrangements of some persons subject to compulsory testing. One box of masks and detergent were also provided to each person subject to compulsory testing to help them fight against the virus.

The HAD also set up a hotline for people restricted by the declaration to make enquiries and seek assistance.

The Government thanks persons subject to compulsory testing for their support and understanding. With everyone's co-operation and efforts, coupled with the tireless efforts of the testing contractors, residents have been informed about their testing results by SMS notification. After finishing the compulsory testing exercise at around 6.45am today, the Government took enforcement action in the "restricted area" immediately to verify that all people in the "restricted area" had undergone testing according to the requirements of the declaration and the compulsory testing notice. Persons who could present an SMS notification containing a negative testing result or wore a wristband as proof of having undergone the compulsory testing could leave the "restricted area" through the designated exit after providing personal information to a prescribed officer. The enforcement operation was completed at around 9am. Test records of around 200 persons subject to compulsory testing were checked. Nobody was found to have not undergone compulsory testing. Taking into account the above situation, the Secretary for Food and Health revoked the "restriction-testing declaration" in accordance with Cap. 599J (see attachment).

The Government reminds the about 15 households who have not answered the door to contact the Government for arrangement of testing as soon as possible after reading the notices put up by the Government, in the hope of eliminating the possible risk of further spread of the virus in the community.

The Government thanks all participating government staff and the testing agencies for their hard work. The Government is also grateful to those subject to compulsory testing for their support and understanding, and their full co-operation during this period in undergoing testing and waiting for the results at home.

The Government will seriously follow up on the compliance situation of the compulsory testing notices and the "restriction-testing declaration" by persons subject to compulsory testing. Any person who fails to comply with

the compulsory testing notices commits an offence and may be liable to a fixed penalty of \$5,000. The person will 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 or the "restriction-testing declaration" is an offence and the offender may be liable to a fine of level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months.

Key statistics on service demand of A&E Departments and occupancy rates in public hospitals

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

During the winter surge, the Hospital Authority closely monitors the service demand of Accident and Emergency Departments and the occupancy rates in public hospitals. Key service statistics are being issued daily for public information. Details are in the appended table.