

Appeal for information on missing man in Tseung Kwan O (with photo)

Police today (June 19) appealed to the public for information on a man who went missing in Tseung Kwan O.

Mui Pak-lam, aged 86, went missing after he left his residence on Ngan O Road yesterday (June 18) morning. His family made a report to Police on the same day.

He is about 1.7 metres tall, 60 kilograms in weight and of thin build. He has a square face with yellow complexion and short white hair. He was last seen wearing a grey T-shirt, grey pants, black shoes and carrying a dark blue sling bag.

Anyone who knows the whereabouts of the missing man or may have seen him is urged to contact the Regional Missing Persons Unit of Kowloon East on 3661 0316 or 9020 2746 or email to rmpu-ke-2@police.gov.hk, or contact any police station.



LCQ6: Waiting time for ordinary family applicants for public rental housing

Following is a question by the Hon Leung Man-kwong and a reply by the Acting Secretary for Housing, Mr Victor Tai, in the Legislative Council today (June 19):

Question:

It is learnt that the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) releases the average waiting time (AWT) for general applicants for public rental housing (PRH) and for the elderly one-person applicants among them on a regular basis, but not ordinary family applicants among the general applicants. There are views pointing out that given the shorter AWT for elderly one-person applicants, the AWT for general applicants has been reduced. As a result, the AWT for ordinary family applicants cannot be accurately reflected. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the AWT for ordinary family applicants as at the first quarter of this year;
- (2) of the latest AWT for ordinary family applicants, with a breakdown by the four districts where PRH estates are distributed (i.e. Urban, Extended Urban, New Territories, and Islands); and
- (3) whether the HA has considered releasing the AWT for ordinary family applicants on a regular basis to enhance the transparency of the relevant information; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Our reply to the question raised by the Hon Leung Man-kwong is as follows:

It is the objective of the Government and the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) to provide public rental housing (PRH) to low-income families who cannot afford private rental accommodation. We have been striving to ensure that PRH applicants could receive a flat offer as soon as possible. To this end, the HA has compiled the average waiting time (AWT) to reflect the waiting time of PRH general applicants who were given the first flat offer in the past 12 months. For the purpose of enhancing transparency, the HA would announce the latest number of PRH applications and AWT of general applicants at the end of each quarter. Specifically, the AWT is calculated as the average of the waiting time of general applicants who were housed to PRH in the past 12 months, and refers to the time taken between registration for PRH and first flat offer, excluding any frozen period during the application period (e.g. when the applicant has not yet fulfilled the residence requirement; the applicant has requested to put his/her application on hold pending arrival of family members for family reunion; the applicant is imprisoned, etc). According to this calculation methodology, the AWT only reflects the situation of general applicants who were housed to PRH within the past 12 months and it does not provide any indication as to the AWT in the future. Therefore, it should not be taken to project the time required for housing PRH applicants who are currently waiting on the queue.

Against the above objective and calculation methodology of the AWT, my consolidated reply to the questions raised by Hon Leung Man-kwong is as follows:

As mentioned above, as the AWT only reflects the situation of general applicants who were housed to PRH within the past 12 months and it should not be taken to project the time required for housing PRH applicants who are on the queue. For the applicants, their waiting time is affected by a number of factors, including the number of PRH flats available for allocation, the number of PRH applicants, the applicants' district choice, whether the supply of new and refurbished PRH flats matches with the applicants' district choice, etc. If we derive a separate AWT for each district and applicant type, the number of cases involved in each category will be relatively small. As a result, the relevant AWT will fluctuate greatly due to different factors. For example, there are only around tens of general applicants that are housed to the Islands district each year, the AWT calculated based on a small number of cases is prone to large fluctuations. Therefore, it is considered that there is not much meaning in the AWT calculated based on applicant types and selected districts and it will also mislead the applicants.

For individual applicants, the latest allocation status of PRH applications of various household sizes in various districts can better enable them to estimate the waiting time required to be housed. In this regard, the Housing Department (HD) would publish in newspapers the latest allocation status of different family sizes in each district on a monthly basis, and would upload relevant information to the HA's/HD's website for applicants' reference. The information is presented by district (i.e. Urban, Extended Urban, New Territories and Islands) and family size such that applicants can refer to the latest allocation status of their selected district and family size, including the highest application number that has been allocated with PRH or is being subject to detailed vetting. The information published is clear and transparent.

Furthermore, general applicants can also make reference to the future PRH supply in different districts so as to estimate their waiting time. To this end, the Housing Bureau (HB) would update and publish the public housing production forecast for the next five years on a quarterly basis, and would upload the relevant public housing project information (including project name, location, estimated number of flats completion year, etc.) on HB's website. At the same time, the Development Bureau would also update the public housing project information for the next six to ten years on an annual basis for public reference.

We would publish the analysis of AWT movements annually. The annual analysis of the AWT in 2023 indicates that the waiting time of PRH applicants for flats in the New Territories is generally shorter than those for flats in Urban district or Extended Urban district by a year. Looking ahead, as there will be more new PRH flats supply in the New Territories, it is envisaged that applicants for PRH flats in the New Territories will be allocated with PRH flats earlier.

We have been striving to provide information that is relevant and of reference value to PRH applicants. On this, HB has published the "Composite Waiting Time for Subsidised Rental Housing" on a quarterly basis after the Chief Executive announced in 2022 Policy Address the construction of Light Public Housing (LPH). By making reference to the figure, the public could tell the average waiting time of the general applicants for receiving the first offer of PRH or LPH units in the past 12 months, so that they can evaluate the Government's effectiveness in improving the living conditions of the public through the provision of different types of subsidised rental housing in a more comprehensive manner.

LCQ5: Road Safety Towns

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Ngan Man-yu and a reply by the Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Lam Sai-hung, in the Legislative Council today (June 19):

Question:

In Hong Kong, there are a total of three Road Safety Towns (Towns) located respectively in North Point, Sau Mau Ping and Shatin. The first Town, which was built as early as in the 1970s, has been providing a simulated road environment to enable school children to learn road safety through playing. It is learnt that the operation of the Towns (e.g. facility management, repair and maintenance, education work and the overall strategy for road safety education) has been put under different government departments. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the effectiveness assessment of the work of each Town in the past three years, including the number of attendances of organisations and members of the public, details of activities organised (including the number and content of such activities), publicity and promotional efforts, road safety education efforts, etc.;

(2) as there are views that the software and hardware of various Towns have not been upgraded for many years, whether the authorities have plans to comprehensively upgrade the software and hardware of the Towns (including the facilities and teaching methods), e.g. by introducing technologies such as augmented reality (AR) interactive experiences and procuring more simulated transport vehicles of different types, so as to integrate new technologies with road safety education, thereby making teaching and learning fun and authentic; and

(3) of the measures in place to enhance interdepartmental collaboration within the Government for better coordination and division of work among departments, thereby ensuring that any measure to upgrade the Towns can be

truly implemented to enrich the learning experience of school children in the Towns?

Reply:

President,

Road Safety Towns (RSTs) are recreational facilities to impart road safety knowledge to children. RSTs were incorporated into the plans of the former Urban Services Department as early as the late 1960s. The first RST was completed and opened in 1970, and the subsequent RSTs have been implemented in accordance with the planning of the former Urban Council. Currently there are three RSTs in Hong Kong, located at Pak Fuk Road in North Point, Sau Ming Road in Kwun Tong and Kong Pui Street in Sha Tin (Note 1). Each RST provides a simulated road environment to educate children of knowledge on road safety, which can be extended to their family members, with the aim to widely promote the awareness on road safety. Having consulted the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), our consolidated reply is set out below:

The facilities of RST are managed by the LCSD. Schools or groups may apply for a visit at designated times. The RST is open for public use when there is no group visit. In addition, the HKPF makes use of the classrooms and facilities in the RSTs to provide road safety education service to school groups (including kindergarten to primary school students).

In the past three years, owing to the outbreak of the COVID-19, the number of users of the RSTs was affected in 2021 and 2022, and rebounded after the society has gradually returned to full normalcy from 2023 onwards. Details are set out as follows:

Year 2023	Number of group visits	Number of users (Individuals and groups)
Pak Fuk Road, North Point	227	25 499
Sau Ming Road, Kwun Tong	135	25 664
Kong Pui Street, Sha Tin	178	161 879
Wu Shan Recreation Playground, Tuen Mun	103	45 095

Year 2022 (Note 2)	Number of group visits	Number of users (Individuals and groups)
Pak Fuk Road, North Point	7	12 854
Sau Ming Road, Kwun Tong	0	9 199
Kong Pui Street, Sha Tin	1	88 866

Wu Shan Recreation Playground, Tuen Mun	0	37 198
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Year 2021 (Note 2)	Number of group visits	Number of users (Individuals and groups)
Pak Fuk Road, North Point	0	17 740
Sau Ming Road, Kwun Tong	0	10 539
Kong Pui Street, Sha Tin	0	130 999
Wu Shan Recreation Playground, Tuen Mun	0	43 086

The Road Safety Council (the Council) is an advisory body to the Government for promoting road safety. The Council is chaired by a representative of the HKPF, with official members from seven government bureaux and departments, including the Transport and Logistics Bureau, the HKPF, the Transport Department, the Education Bureau, the Home Affairs Department, the Highways Department and the Information Services Department. The Council also includes members from various sectors of the community, such as the automobile, logistics, medical, insurance and education. The Road Safety Campaign Committee (the Committee) is set up under the Council with an aim to promote road safety education and publicity programmes to road users. As far as Road Safety Towns are concerned, the Committee provides a platform for various government departments as well as members of the Council and the Committee to exchange views on upgrading the facilities of the RSTs so that the relevant departments can coordinate with one another to enhance the user experience in the RSTs.

Currently, we are actively exploring with the LCSD and the members of the Committee, including the HKPF, the possibility of refurbishing or acquiring additional hardware and software facilities for the RSTs. For instance, the Government is working with the Committee to explore the incorporation of the Council's mascot "Mr. Safegg" in the RSTs, so as to attract more visits and "check-ins", as well as the use of virtual reality games developed by the Council for the road safety education service in the RSTs to make it more interesting. Besides, the Government is actively following up with the Committee to explore the feasibility and priority of refurbishing or adding different facilities, taking into account the conditions of the existing facilities, their utilisation rates and the resources required.

Thank you, President.

Note 1: The RST located in Wu Shan Recreation Playground in Tuen Mun has been temporarily closed since late October 2023 to cope with the railway construction of the Tuen Mun South Extension.

Note 2: Number of users in 2021 and 2022 were lower than those in 2023,

mainly due to the intermittent closure of venues during the outbreak of the COVID-19.

LCQ21: Public healthcare services in Wong Tai Sin district

Following is a question by the Hon Yang Wing-kit and a written reply by the Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, in the Legislative Council today (June 19):

Question:

It is learnt that there is currently a lack of public accident and emergency (A&E) services in the Wong Tai Sin (WTS) district, while the three public hospitals in the district only provide limited specialist outpatient services, and only two general outpatient clinics (GOPC) offer evening consultation services, resulting in many residents in the district having to seek medical consultation in other districts with occasional delays in treatment. Regarding the public healthcare services in WTS district, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the following information (broken down by hospital) relating to the use of public healthcare services by the residents in WTS district in each of the past three years: (i) the respective attendances at A&E departments, GOPC and specialist outpatient clinics; (ii) in-patient attendances for treatment; and (iii) the average time taken from patients' boarding the ambulance in the district to their arrival at A&E departments;

(2) whether it will study the establishment of a new acute hospital in WTS district, including the establishment of an acute hospital in the context of the expansion of the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals Wong Tai Sin Hospital on the vacant land made available after the relocation of Diamond Hill Fresh Water and Salt Water Service Reservoirs, in order to meet the healthcare needs of the residents in the district; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether it will consider extending the service hours of outpatient services of Our Lady of Maryknoll Hospital Family Medicine Clinic to round the clock; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

In consultation with the Security Bureau and the Hospital Authority

(HA), the consolidated reply to the question raised by the Hon Yang Wing-kit is as follows:

(1) At present, there are 43 public hospitals and healthcare institutions (18 of them with Accident & Emergency (A&E) departments), 49 Specialist Out-patient Clinics (SOPCs) and 74 General Out-patient Clinics (GOPCs) under the HA. Public hospitals are mainly responsible for providing comprehensive secondary and tertiary healthcare services for citizens, including services provided by A&E departments for the critically ill or seriously injured people and victims of disasters and specialist consultation services provided by SOPCs for patients referred from GOPCs, private or family doctors. As part of primary healthcare services, the GOPCs are mainly positioned to serve with priority low-income individuals and socially disadvantaged groups, and patients with chronic diseases in stable medical condition as well as those with episodic illnesses with relatively mild symptoms.

All the hospitals and clinics of the HA are grouped under seven hospital clusters according to the regions in which they are located respectively, the demarcation of which is different from that of the 18 District Councils. The implementation of hospital clusters aims to enable patients to receive continual care within the same geographical setting and throughout their treatment process, from onset through convalescence, rehabilitation, and community after-care. To meet this end and ensure the cost-effective utilisation of resources within and between clusters, every hospital cluster needs to maintain a certain scale. The hospitals and clinics within clusters are to also operate in a streamlined and complementary way to provide comprehensive and co-ordinated services for the local community.

At present, Wong Tai Sin, Kowloon City and Yau Tsim Mong Districts are within the main catchment area of the Kowloon Central Cluster (KCC). There are nine hospitals and healthcare institutions in the KCC, including Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH), Kwong Wah Hospital (KWH), Tung Wah Group of Hospitals Wong Tai Sin Hospital (WTSH) and Our Lady of Maryknoll Hospital (OLMH). The service statistics of HA patients living in Wong Tai Sin, Kowloon City and Yau Tsim Mong Districts according to hospital clusters for 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 are set out in Annex 1. A&E services for Wong Tai Sin District are mainly provided by three hospitals (Note 1) including KWH and QEH, as well as United Christian Hospital (UCH) in the Kowloon East Cluster.

According to the information provided by the Fire Services Department in relation to the ambulance services in Wong Tai Sin District, the average time taken from patients boarding the ambulance in the district to their arrival at the A&E department of the hospitals in 2021, 2022 and 2023 were about 23 minutes, 22 minutes, and 23 minutes respectively.

(2) The HA plans and develops various public healthcare services on a cluster basis, taking into account a number of factors, including the increase in service demand as a result of population growth and demographic changes, rising prevalence of chronic diseases, technology advancement, manpower availability as well as service arrangement of the clusters. The HA will monitor the utilisation of various healthcare services and plans the public

healthcare services based on population projection parameters of the districts and the Government's development plans. For planning of A&E services, the HA will also ensure that the A&E department is located within a reasonable distance from its catchment areas.

In further planning the Second Hospital Development Plan (HDP), the Health Bureau (HHB) and the HA will continue to review the development direction of the KCC where Wong Tai Sin District is situated. The Government's latest population statistics and projected service demand as well as the cluster's healthcare service utilisation and demand, including the situation after the commencement of operation of the new acute hospital (NAH) at the Kai Tak Development Area and redevelopment of KWH, will be considered during the process with a view to providing an optimal healthcare service model and facilities for meeting the long-term needs of the residents. The HA will also keep in view the on-going First HDP and the Second HDP under planning in relation to the KCC, and continue to deliberate and fully consider various feasible development options according to the projected service demand, including the need and feasibility of identifying a suitable site for the construction of a new acute hospital, and follow up with relevant government departments and organisations on the discussion and project development. The Health Bureau and the HA will report to the Legislative Council in a timely manner regarding the latest progress of the Second HDP.

(3) Two of the GOPCs in Wong Tai Sin District, including OLMH Family Medicine Clinic (FMC) and Robert Black GOPC, provide evening clinic service. In view of the medical needs of the local residents, OLMH FMC has extended the consultation hours during public holidays since April 2015, from morning only to full-day consultation service provision covering morning and afternoon. In addition, the relevant clinic has been providing additional evening clinic sessions (Note 2) since the second quarter of 2017 to further enhance the services. From 2017-18 to 2023-24, the evening clinics of the HA's GOPCs in Wong Tai Sin District have recorded total attendances of nearly 350 000 in meeting the district's demand for evening clinic service. The utilisation of evening clinic service in the GOPCs of Wong Tai Sin District over the past three years is set out in Annex 2.

The HA fully understands and attaches great importance to the service demand of the residents of Wong Tai Sin District for evening clinics. Before the commencement of operation of the NAH in the Kai Tak Development Area, the HA will continue to closely monitor the service demand of the district, flexibly deploy manpower and other resources, and increase the service capacity of the GOPCs as necessary, in order to provide appropriate primary healthcare service to the local residents.

Note 1: Since some of the areas in Wong Tai Sin district are closer to UCH with shorter arrival time, to enable patients with serious conditions or injuries and victims of disasters to receive treatment as soon as possible, some of the patients may be transferred to UCH.

Note 2: The service hours of evening clinics of the HA's GOPCs are from 6pm

to 10pm on Monday to Friday (public holidays excluded).

LCQ17: Encouraging blood donation by members of public

Following is a question by Reverend Canon the Hon Peter Douglas Koon and a written reply by the Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, in the Legislative Council today (June 19):

Question:

In August last year, the Secretary for Health said that the Hong Kong Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service would need to collect 650 units of blood daily in order to provide sufficient blood to all hospitals across the territory for patients' use. On encouraging blood donation by members of the public, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it will follow the practices of other countries where governments offer funds to collaborate with organisations for the provision of non-cash and material rewards to blood donors, including giving away daily necessities, supermarket coupons, etc., in order to increase the incentives for members of the public to donate blood; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) whether it will, by making reference to the practices of some countries (e.g. Australia and Italy), introduce a "blood donation holiday" to allow employees to spare time to donate blood during working hours while enjoying the protection of full pay and other labour rights and interests in order to reduce the opportunity cost of blood donation on the part of employees and increase their incentives to donate blood; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(3) whether it will consider the use of mobile phone SMS messages or WhatsApp alerts to invite regular and deferred blood donors to donate blood again; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(4) whether it will consider adjusting or extending the operating hours of donor centres to allow sufficient time for members of the public and employees to donate blood after work; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(5) as there are only 10 donor centres operating at fixed hours and fixed locations currently, whether it knows if the Hong Kong Red Cross will consider setting up a new donor centre in each of the 18 districts across the territory; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Hong Kong Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service (BTS) began to promote voluntary blood donation in Hong Kong since 1952. Under the management of the Hospital Authority (HA) since 1991, the BTS provides blood to all hospitals in Hong Kong for use by patients, and continues to be the only institution supplying blood in Hong Kong.

There is no substitute for blood, and the shelf life of blood is limited. Therefore, it is of particular importance for citizens to donate blood voluntarily and benevolently on a regular basis, so that a timely supply of blood of assured safety and quality can be secured for patients in need of rescue. The Government will continue to lend its full support to the work of the BTS and call on members of the public, enterprises and organisations to actively participate in blood donation drives, thereby giving the hospitals a stable and safe blood supply for clinical transfusion and treatment purposes.

In consultation with the HA, the consolidated reply to the question raised by Reverend Canon the Hon Peter Douglas Koon is as follows:

(1) While blood donation is a voluntary and non-remunerated act for the public good, in order to encourage and express gratitude to members of the public for blood donation, the BTS has introduced a range of medals and certificates to commend supportive donors who have participated in blood donation drives. During special festivities and holidays, such as the Chinese New Year, Valentine's Day, Easter, summer holidays and Christmas, the BTS also presents souvenirs to those who donate blood to save lives during these festive occasions as a token of appreciation and to encourage the public to actively participate in blood donation. In recent years, the BTS has designed a variety of practical souvenirs based on the mascot "Captain Blood", which have been well received by the public. Moreover, the BTS will launch a blood donation reward scheme, whereby blood donors can earn points by donating blood and redeem them for different rewards through its mobile application "HK Blood". At the same time, the BTS also plans to collaborate with various enterprises and organisations through the reward platform, so as to join hands with different sectors of the community to promote blood donation.

(2) Blood donation is a voluntary act for the public good. The BTS actively encourages private enterprises to arrange for their employees to participate in blood donation drives during working hours when mobile blood donation teams or blood donation vehicles visit; or to organise group blood donation drives by visiting the donor centres, as a kind of staff team building activity for small and medium-sized enterprises as well as large enterprises. At present, quite a number of supportive enterprises have taken the initiative to introduce half-day paid leave for blood donation; or recognise blood donation as a form of voluntary work of participating in social welfare activities, so that their employees can apply for the corresponding volunteer leave. The BTS will continue to take forward the relevant publicity work.

As for the public sector, various government departments also organise blood donation drives on a regular basis, including the one held just last week at the Central Government Offices, which offer convenience for government personnel to donate blood during normal office hours to help patients in need of blood transfusions.

(3) In order to enhance the communication between the BTS and blood donors, and to express gratitude to blood donors for their selfless contributions, the BTS has rolled out the "BloodTHX" Short Message Service (SMS) in October 2023 to send thank-you messages to blood donors. When the donated whole blood has been processed, tested and distributed to various hospitals, blood donors will receive messages of appreciation from the "BloodTHX" SMS account of the BTS and will also be notified that the donated blood has reached hospitals for use by patients, thus enabling blood donors to better appreciate the significance of the message of "giving blood to save lives". At present, the "BloodTHX" SMS has been gradually extended to cover donors of apheresis donation. Besides, the BTS has also made extensive use of SMS and mobile application to disseminate messages to invite donors who are suitable or eligible to come forward to donate blood again, so as to stabilise the supply at the blood bank. In addition, the BTS has continued to develop more communication channels to strengthen ties with blood donors and the general public. This includes the setting up of "Blood for Life" WhatsApp channel in December 2023 to provide the latest blood donation information and to maintain communication with people from all walks of life, in particular the younger generation.

(4) and (5) The majority of blood donor centres under the BTS are open until 7pm every day to facilitate blood donation by the public. Meanwhile, the BTS has set up mobile blood donation teams and mobile blood donation vehicles to visit the 18 districts in the city to facilitate government departments, enterprises, organisations and the academia to arrange different types of blood donation drives. In addition, the BTS actively works in concerted efforts with the Government. With the support of the Health Bureau and the Government Property Agency, the BTS has established a blood donation centre at the Immigration Tower in Wan Chai in 2021 and a new blood donation centre will be set up in the newly constructed joint-user complex in Tseung Kwan O. The BTS also sets up temporary blood donation points in various districts from time to time to encourage the general public to join the league of blood donors and to promote the message of "giving blood to save lives" on all fronts in the community.