LCQ20: Pilot schemes on elderly care service vouchers

Following is a question by the Hon Leung Yiu-chung and a written reply by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, in the Legislative Council today (January 8):

Question:

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) launched the First and the Second Phases of the Pilot Scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly (CCSV Pilot Scheme) in September 2013 and October 2016 respectively, as well as the Pilot Scheme on Residential Care Service Voucher for the Elderly (RCSV Pilot Scheme) in March 2017. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) Regarding the First and the Second Phases of the CCSV Pilot Scheme respectively, of the following information in each of the years in which they were implemented:

(i) a breakdown of the number of service units by service type;
(ii) number of day care service places;
(iii) number of home care service places;
(iv) number of concluded cases;
(v) cumulative number of recipients of the Community Care Service Voucher (CCSV);
(vi) number of CCSV users;
(vii) number of persons who did not use any of the CCSVs issued to them;
(viii) cumulative number of persons having left the Pilot Scheme, together with a breakdown by the major reason for their leaving the Scheme as far as SWD knows;
(ix) monthly average amount of subsidies; and
(x) administrative costs incurred by the Scheme.

(2) Of the following information on the RCSV Pilot Scheme in each of the past three years:

(i) a breakdown of the number of service units by service type;
(ii) number of service places;
(iii) number of concluded cases;
(iv) cumulative number of recipients of the Residential Care Service Voucher (RCSV);
(v) number of RCSV users;
(vi) number of persons who did not use any of the RCSVs issued to them;
(vii) cumulative number of persons having left the Pilot Scheme, together with a breakdown by the major reason for their leaving the Scheme as far as SWD knows;
(viii) monthly average amount of subsidies; and
(ix) administrative costs incurred by the Scheme.

(3) Given that SWD has commissioned consultants to review the effectiveness of the two Pilot Schemes, of the timetables of the review work, whether the approach of the reviews includes public engagement exercises, and whether the review reports will be made public; if not, of the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the Member's question is as follows:

(1) The first phase of the Pilot Scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly (CCSV Pilot Scheme) was implemented from September 2013 to August 2017, while its second phase commenced in October 2016. The information of the first and second phases of the CCSV Pilot Scheme from 2013-14 to 2019-20 is as follows:

The breakdown on number of recognised service providers (RSPs), service types and service places by year:

The first phase of the Pilot Scheme	Number of RSPs	Number of service places (Note)
2013-14	62	881
2014-15	62	923
2015-16	62	993
2016-17	62	998
2017-18 (as at end-August 2017)	62	998

Note: The first phase of CCSV may only be used for day care services. RSPs may separately provide home care services to CCSV users who are in need.

The second phase of the Pilot Scheme	Number of RSPs	Number of service places	
		Day care services	Home care services
2016-17	124	2 081	2 944
2017-18	125	2 254	3 040
2018-19	153	2 815	4 861
2019-20 (as at end-November 2019)	153	2 952	5 151

â€‹The breakdown on cumulative number of eligible applications processed, persons issued with CCSVs, number of persons who have used and have not used CCSVs by year:

The first phase of the Pilot Scheme	Cumulative number of eligible applications processed (number of persons issued with CCSVs)	Number of CCSV holders		Cumulative number of persons who have left the Pilot Scheme	
		who have used CCSVs	who have not used CCSVs	who have used CCSVs	who have not used CCSVs
2013-14	1 251	539	604	34	74
2014-15	2 092	972	232	351	537
2015-16	2 919	1 177	187	784	771
2016-17	2 968	1 061	14	1 071	822
2017-18 (as at end-August 2017)	2 968	1 053	1	1 080	834

The second phase of the Pilot Scheme	Cumulative number of eligible applications processed (number of persons issued with CCSVs)	Number of CCSV holders		Cumulative number of persons who have left the Pilot Scheme	
		who have used CCSVs	who have not used CCSVs	who have used CCSVs	who have not used CCSVs
2016-17	3 373	1 871	1 185	109	208
2017-18	6 520	3 031	1 357	831	1 301
2018-19	8 813	3 608	1 535	1 745	1 925
2019-20 (as at end-November 2019)	10 439	4 077	1 756	2 353	2 253

â€‹The breakdown on cumulative number of persons who have left the Pilot Scheme by year:

Reason for leaving the Pilot Scheme	Cumulative number of persons who have left the first phase of the Pilot Scheme				
	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18 (as at end-August 2017)
Natural turnover					
Will be/have been allocated with subsidised community care service or subsidised/ private residential care service	48	339	642	836	845
Deceased	24	126	227	297	298
Taken care of by family members or domestic helpers	10	117	236	259	264
Others (e.g. hospitalised, out of town)	2	32	82	102	106
Service-related					
No suitable service providers/ service packages	24	274	368	399	401
Total	108	888	1 555	1 893	1 914

Reason for leaving the Pilot Scheme	Cumulative number of persons who have left the second phase of the Pilot Scheme			
	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20 (as at end-November 2019)
Natural turnover				
Will be/have been allocated with subsidised community care service or subsidised/ private residential care service	137	847	1 584	2 097
Deceased	76	483	919	1 189
Taken care of by family members or domestic helpers	40	375	545	614
Others (e.g. hospitalised, out of town)	24	225	357	421
Service-related				
No suitable service providers/ service packages	40	202	265	285
Total	317	2 132	3 670	4 606

As the service mode, places, items, combinations, numbers of service users and time slots for service provision are not the same for the two phases of the Pilot Scheme and each RSP, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) does not have information related to the monthly average amount of subsidy granted to each RSP and the related administrative costs.

(2) In the past three years, the breakdown on cumulative number of RSPs and service places under the Pilot Scheme on Residential Care Service Voucher (RCSV) for the Elderly (the RCSV Pilot Scheme) by year:

Year	Number of RSPs	Number of service places
2017-18	86	4 691
2018-19	104	5 394
2019-20 (as at end-November 2019)	118	5 816

â€‹The breakdown on cumulative number of eligible applications processed, persons issued with RCSVs, RCSV users and persons issued with RCSVs but have not used them by year:

Year	Cumulative number of eligible applications processed (number of persons issued with RCSVs)	Cumulative number of RCSV users	Cumulative number of persons issued with RCSVs but have not used them
2017-18	353	325	28
2018-19	1 163	978	185
2019-20 (as at end-November 2019)	1 867	1 617	250

â€‹The breakdown on cumulative number of persons who have left the Pilot Scheme and reasons for leaving the Pilot Scheme by year:

Reason for leaving the Pilot Scheme	Cumulative number of persons who have left the Pilot Scheme						
	Elderly persons having no immediate need for residential care services	0	10	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20 (as at end-November 2019)	21
	Taken care of by carers of family members, domestic helpers, etc. or community care service	1	29	71			
Deceased	19	106	233				
The preferred RSP was full/no suitable RSPs	3	15	50	Chose to wait for subsidised residential care places	4	18	27
Refused to accept the co-payment arrangement	1	10	18				

Others (e.g. long-term hospitalisation, out of town, chose not to leave the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme, etc.)	2	11	16
Total	30	199	436

â€‹As the service places and the duration for accommodating RCSV holders are different for each RSP, the SWD does not have information related to the monthly average amount of subsidy granted to each RSP and the related administrative costs.

(3) The SWD has commissioned consultants to conduct evaluation of effectiveness on the second phase of the CCSV Pilot Scheme and the RCSV Pilot Scheme. In the process of evaluation, the consultants have collected the views of stakeholders through interviews, focus group discussions, telephone surveys, questionnaires, etc. The SWD and the consultants are conducting comprehensive analysis on the data and views collected in the studies. Upon the completion of the evaluation reports, the SWD will study the content of the reports and consider the way forward for the two pilot schemes.

Second-round applications invited for Community-driven Projects under ICH Funding Scheme

The Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) Office of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) launched the second round of applications for the Community-driven Projects under the ICH Funding Scheme today (January 8).

The objective of the funding scheme is to support local residents and organisations with relevant experience to carry out ICH projects with a view to strengthening the safeguarding, research, promotion, education and transmission of local ICH items, as well as supporting relevant tasks conducted by local bearers and bearer organisations. By engaging the community's participation in safeguarding ICH, it is hoped that the public can enhance their awareness and understanding of ICH and heighten their respect for it.

The scope of support covers projects related to the items in the

Representative List and the Inventory of the ICH of Hong Kong. To attain the desired impacts of the Community-driven Projects, the proposed projects must be of a larger scale. As such, the funding amount applied for on each project shall not be less than $250,000.

Application information is available at the ICH Office (address: Sam Tung Uk Museum, 2 Kwu Uk Lane, Tsuen Wan, New Territories) and the ICH Office website (www.lcsd.gov.hk/ICHO). The closing time for receiving applications is 6pm on March 2.

A briefing session will be held at 11am on January 22 at the Lecture Hall of the Hong Kong Science Museum, 2 Science Museum Road, Tsim Sha Tsui East, Kowloon, to brief interested individuals and organisations on the content and application details of the funding scheme. Information about registration matters regarding the briefing session is available on the ICH Office website. For enquiries about the Community-driven Projects, please contact the ICH Office at 2267 1971.

LCQ17: Scientific, reading and mathematical literacy of Hong Kong students

Following is a question by the Hon Cheung Kwok-kwan and a written reply by the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (January 8):

Question:

According to the study results of the "Programme for International Student Assessment 2018" released last month by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, among the 79 countries or economies participating in the study, Hong Kong's 15-year-old students ranked fourth in both (i) mother tongue reading and (ii) mathematical literacy, dropping by two places as compared with the rankings in the last study, and kept the ranking of the ninth place in (iii) scientific literacy. Mainland and Macao students' scores in all of the aforesaid three literacy domains were higher than those of Hong Kong students (with Mainland students even achieving the highest scores), and Hong Kong students' scores in scientific and reading literacy hit a record low since 2006. In view of the aforesaid study results, quite a number of Hong Kong people are worried that Hong Kong students are gradually losing their competitiveness as their academic competence is declining and has been overtaken by their counterparts in neighbouring regions. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that Hong Kong students' scores in reading and scientific literacy both dropped and their scores in the aforesaid three literacy domains were all lower than those of their Mainland and Macao counterparts, how the Education Bureau (EDB) interprets the aforesaid study results, and whether the EDB has avoided the important and dwelt on the trivial in making the comment, in a press release it issued after the release of the aforesaid study results, that Hong Kong students' "performance in these three areas was significantly higher than the international level";

(2) given that it has been more than four years since education on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) was promoted in primary and secondary schools, whether the EDB has studied the reasons why Hong Kong students' score in scientific literacy has dropped instead and hit a record low since 2006; if the EDB has, of the details; whether the EDB will review if the deployment and utilisation of STEM education resources are appropriate and effective;

(3) as some academics have pointed out that the drop in the score of Hong Kong students in scientific literacy may be related to the decrease in recent years in the number of senior secondary students taking the subjects of physics, biology and chemistry simultaneously, whether the EDB will review the weighting of science subjects in the senior secondary curriculum, as well as the levels and contents of those subjects;

(4) whether the EDB will right away put in place effective measures to enhance local students' literacy in mathematics and science, and whether the EDB will study and make reference to the merits of the education systems in Macao and the Mainland in order to improve Hong Kong's education system; and

(5) of the new measures in place to promote a reading culture among Hong Kong youngsters so as to enhance their reading literacy?

Reply:

President,

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is organised by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). It aims to assess how well 15-year-old students in participating countries/economies have acquired the knowledge and skills essential for meeting the challenges of our society, and develop educational indicators for governments and policy makers of different countries to examine, evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of their education systems both at national and school levels. Since 2000, PISA has been conducted every three years, assessing students’ mother tongue reading, mathematical and scientific literacy. Around 600 000 students from 79 countries/economies participated in PISA 2018.

Hong Kong's education, which aims at facilitating students' learning, provides a broad spectrum of knowledge and nurtures high-level thinking, generic skills and positive values to achieve whole-person development. Our primary concern in curriculum design and delivery is the interest of students

and their outcomes. In line with this policy objective, we will carefully study the findings of PISA 2018 to understand the strengths and weaknesses of our students, and review the effectiveness of the curriculum as well as learning and teaching in the light of the successful experience of countries/economies with outstanding performance in order to further enhance the quality of education in Hong Kong and improve the competitiveness of our students internationally.

Our reply to the Hon Cheung Kwok-kwan's question is as follows:

(1) PISA 2018 showed that, among the 79 countries/economies participating in the study, Hong Kong's 15-year-old students ranked fourth in both mother tongue reading and mathematical literacy, and ninth in scientific literacy. In reading literacy, although the ranking of Hong Kong students dropped slightly from second in 2015 and their score dropped marginally from 527 to 524, the score was still significantly above the OECD average of 487. The results reveal that Hong Kong students' performance was still outstanding. As for mathematical literacy, despite the slight drop in the ranking of our students in PISA 2018, the average score increased from 548 in 2015 to 551 in 2018, significantly above the OECD average (the OECD average scores in 2015 and 2018 were 490 and 489 respectively). In addition, 29 per cent of Hong Kong students attained the highest level of mathematical literacy (i.e. Levels 6 and 5 on a scale from 1 to 6), higher than 26.5 per cent in PISA 2015 and significantly above the OECD 2018 average of 10.9 per cent, reflecting that our students' performance in mathematical literacy remained outstanding. As for scientific literacy, Hong Kong students' ranking did not drop, staying at the ninth in both PISA 2018 and PISA 2015. Although the average score in science (517) was slightly lower than that in the previous assessment (523), the OECD average score in science dropped from 493 in 2015 to 489 in 2018 as well. Compared with other OECD countries/economies, Hong Kong students attained an average score that was significantly higher than the OECD average, sustaining good overall performance. In sum, Hong Kong's performance in the above three areas was significantly above the international level.

(2) The Education Bureau (EDB) released the Report on "Promotion of STEM Education – Unleashing Potential in Innovation" in late 2016, and has been actively promoting STEM education by implementing a wide range of strategies, so as to enable students to develop abilities required to excel in the 21st century. These strategies included, among others, renewing the curriculum of the Science Education Key Learning Area (KLA), enhancing teachers' professional training in STEM education, and providing resources to support schools in taking forward school-based STEM education projects. STEM education is not a separate and new subject, but is implemented in local primary and secondary curricula through the Science, Technology and Mathematics Education KLAs (such as Mathematics at the primary and secondary levels, Science and Computer Literacy at the junior secondary level, and General Studies at the primary level). These KLAs must be included in both primary and secondary school education. The aims of promoting STEM education are to enable students to recognise the relationship between innovative technology and their daily lives, to enhance their ability in integration and

application of knowledge and skills learnt in the relevant KLAs, and to nurture their collaborative, hands-on, minds-on and creative problem-solving skills. Evaluation of the effectiveness of STEM education in schools by merely looking at the PISA rankings of students in mathematical and scientific literacy is far from comprehensive. Given the different circumstances and developmental focus of schools, the pace at which STEM education is promoted in schools may, understandably, vary. All along, we have gained an understanding of the progress of implementation of STEM education in schools, including the effectiveness of relevant supporting measures, through various channels (including daily liaison with schools, school visits, school inspections and questionnaires). Leveraging their existing strengths, schools have generally implemented school-based STEM education. By improving the design of STEM learning activities, most schools have provided their students with STEM-based learning activities and assessment tasks, which include investigations, "hands-on and minds-on" activities, "design-and-make" activities, problem-solving activities, and open-ended assessment tasks related to daily life, to enhance their problem-solving skills, creativity and innovation. As a result, many students have become more interested in STEM and more proactive in learning with self-confidence, fully demonstrating the positive impact brought by STEM education on students.

(3) and (4) We have been discussing with stakeholders the strengths and weaknesses of our students in learning by actively making reference to PISA-related data and the practices of other countries/economies, with a view to optimising the learning and teaching of science and enhancing students' interests and capabilities in science and technology. Apart from international studies, the EDB has been keeping an eye on the learning and performance of Hong Kong students from multi-perspectives through different sources including school inspection reports, students' overall performance in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination, and their performance in major international competitions.

The senior secondary curriculum and subjects under the New Academic Structure (NAS), implemented since 2009, are formulated prudently upon extensive consultation, taking into account different factors including, among others, social demands, students' needs, lateral coherence of various subjects, and international benchmarks. Students' needs and school contexts have been considered from a professional perspective to provide an adequate choice of subjects to students with different aptitudes, abilities and backgrounds. The former division between the arts and science streams in the old system has been replaced with a broad and balanced senior secondary curriculum under the NAS. The proportion of senior secondary students taking one or more STEM-related elective subjects has remained at about 60 per cent in recent years, and Biology, Physics and Chemistry have also been among the most popular elective subjects for senior secondary students.

The EDB has all along reviewed the implementation of the curriculum in a timely manner, including drawing reference from different places' curricula and curricula implementation as well as their successful experience, and has promoted the professional development of teachers through international

exchange platforms at various levels so as to improve students' learning effectiveness and continuously enhance the quality of education in Hong Kong. We conducted the NAS Review from 2012 to 2015 to improve the implementation of the senior secondary curriculum and assessment. We established the Task Force on Review of School Curriculum (Task Force) in November 2017 to holistically review the implementation of the primary and secondary curricula. The Task Force conducted a public consultation from June to October 2019 on its six directions of preliminary recommendations, including how to enhance STEM education in primary and secondary schools. Upon the Task Force's submission of its final report in early 2020, the EDB will consider and implement various recommendations, where feasible, as soon as possible.

(5) To further enhance the reading interests and abilities of students, we will draw reference from the successful experience of other places and continue with our efforts in the promotion of "Reading to Learn". We will also continue to strengthen the support for schools, including providing a recurrent grant to facilitate schools to further promote reading starting from the 2018/19 school year, implementing the new "Reading across the Curriculum" initiative and the reform of the Chinese Language Curriculum introduced in recent years, as well as providing continuous programmes/training for teachers' professional development and the learning and teaching resources on reading to help teachers (including teacher-librarians) employ appropriate reading strategies and organise reading activities.

CS inspects prevention and control measures at airport (with photos)

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, today (January 8) visited Hong Kong International Airport to inspect the prevention and control measures adopted in response to the cluster of pneumonia cases detected in Wuhan, Hubei Province.ã€€

At the gate of a flight from Wuhan, Mr Cheung, accompanied by the Chief Executive Officer of the Airport Authority Hong Kong, Mr Fred Lam; the Chief Port Health Officer of the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health, Dr Leung Yiu-hong; and the Executive Director, Airport Operations, of the Airport Authority Hong Kong, Mrs Vivian Cheung, observed officers of the Port Health Division of the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health inspecting temperatures of travellers concerned by using thermal imaging system.

He was also briefed on the enforcement of prevention and control measures at the airport and expressed warmest gratitude to the officers for their dedication in safeguarding the health of the public and travellers.

Mr Cheung stressed that whilst no serious pneumonia cases related to those in Wuhan have been detected in Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government has strengthened prevention and control measures on all fronts including enhancing health surveillance measures at all boundary control points.

He added that, at an earlier meeting of the inter-departmental action task force under his chairmanship, he instructed all relevant government departments to stay vigilant and step up cleaning efforts at public facilities under their purview.

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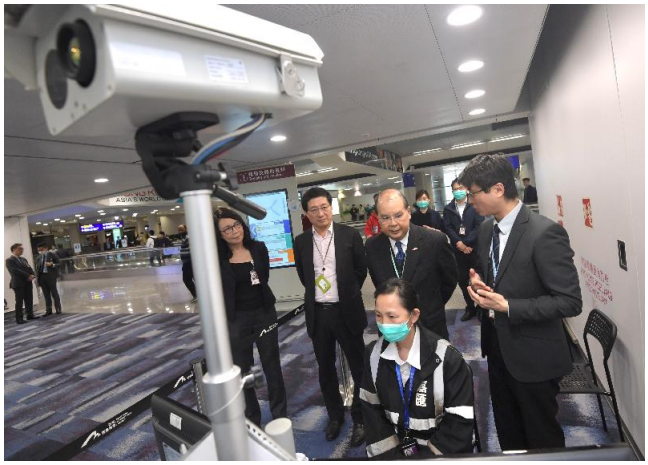
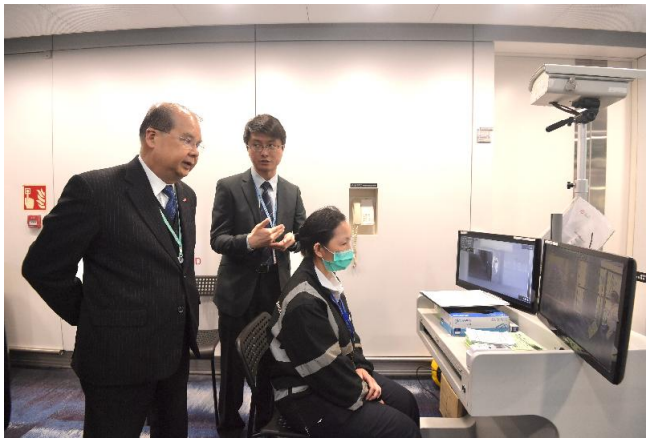
Mr Cheung also appealed to members of the public to maintain good personal and environmental hygiene. Those with symptoms of respiratory illness are advised to wear surgical masks, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice as soon as possible.





LCQ19: Cleansing of police uniforms

Following is a question by the Hon Joseph Lee and a written reply by the Secretary for Security, Mr John Lee, in the Legislative Council today (January 8):

Question:

Since June last year, the Police have used a total of some 16 000 tear gas canisters during public meetings and processions. Some online rumours have claimed that some frontline police officers took their uniforms and other clothing (police clothing) worn at work to self-service laundries for washing. As such police clothing might have been stained with residues of chemicals from tear gas canisters, some members of the public are worried about their clothing washed at such laundries being contaminated. Regarding the washing of clothing which might have been contaminated by chemicals, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether the Police have formulated guidelines on the decontamination and washing procedure for police clothing which might have been contaminated by chemicals;

(2) whether the clothing of uniformed and plain-clothed police officers is required to be sent to designated laundries for washing; if so, of the locations of such laundries and their operation details; if not, the reasons for that;

(3) whether the Police have, since June 9 last year, outsourced laundry work; if so, of the details, including the decontamination and washing procedure to be followed by the service contractors, as well as whether it is provided in such procedure that police clothing which might have been contaminated by chemicals must be handled separately from other clothing; and

(4) given that on the evening of November 17 last year, the Police fired a number of tear gas canisters on Gascoigne Road adjacent to the Queen

Elizabeth Hospital, whether the Police have liaised with the Hospital Authority afterwards for making special arrangements for washing the clothing in the hospital which might have been contaminated by chemicals?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the question raised by Hon Joseph Lee is as follows:

Since early June last year, more than 1 200 protests, processions and public assemblies have been staged in Hong Kong, many of which ended up in violent illegal acts. When illegal acts take place, the Police must take appropriate law enforcement actions to maintain public order, protect lives and properties of citizens, as well as preserve the public peace. The Police would not need to use any force if members of the public could express their views in a peaceful and lawful manner.

The Police have strict guidelines on the use of force. Tear gas is used to create a safe distance between police officers and protesters, so as to avoid close confrontation and to reduce the chance of injury to either party as far as practicable, while dispersing the crowd and controlling the violent scenes.

Tear gas contains 2-chlorobenzalmalononitrile, commonly known as CS, and is released into the air as particles. In general, post-exposure symptoms to tear gas may include burning sensation to the skin and eyes, coughing, sneezing and temporary breathing difficulty resulted from irritation to the nose and throat. These symptoms will usually subside after a short period of time. On the health effects of tear gas, the Department of Health has uploaded health information on tear gas to the website of the Centre for Health Protection for the public's reference.

As we understand from international literatures, similar to ordinary stains, CS will be washed into water during the washing process and will gradually dissolve in water. The dissolved CS will be hydrolysed rapidly. This is especially so when the temperature of the water will be increased during the normal washing process and the pH will also be increased by the alkaline additives used in the washing powder, as both processes will accelerate the CS hydrolysis process. Generally speaking, CS has a half-life of only one minute in water of 25 degrees Celsius and a pH value of 9 with general laundry detergents in the washing process. Therefore, ordinary laundry progress can already handle CS residuals that may be stained on clothes.

As stipulated in the Police General Orders, officers should ensure that they are correctly dressed when in uniform at all times and that uniforms are kept clean and neatly pressed. Over the years, there have been arrangements in allowing police uniforms to be cleaned by laundries inside police stations which are operated by outsourced service contractors. Hence, according to the current arrangement, officers (both uniformed or

plainclothes) participating in the operations may hand their uniforms or operational outfits to the laundries run by outsourced service contractors in police stations for washing, based on their operational needs. Police have not received any report of discomfort or health problems on the wearing of cleaned clothing all along.

Regarding the incident occurred in the vicinity of Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) on November 18, 2019, QEH has been closely monitoring the indoor air quality and made suitable arrangements, including temporarily suspending intake of fresh air to the ventilation system at specific areas, sealing off windows and turning on the indoor air curtains to reduce air infiltration. Portable air purifiers have been deployed to individual wards in need. In addition, QEH has arranged environmental cleansing and started replacing the air filters of ventilation system and medical compressed air system.

QEH has maintained communication with its staff and provided necessary support regarding the incident. Staff Clinic has also provided support to staff who experienced discomfort under the influence of tear gas.