

CE visits Food and Environmental Hygiene Department contract cleaning workers (with photos/video)

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, visited the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD)'s contract cleaning workers working in Mong Kok today (January 8), expressing her gratitude for their hard work and relentless efforts for Hong Kong.

Mrs Lam met and spoke with about 50 cleaning workers to learn more about their working conditions. Presenting them with cookies, Mrs Lam thanked them for their efforts during the recent months when violent clashes broke out frequently in Mong Kok. She noted that they had cleared barricades and objects on roads through the night so that basic cleaning work could be completed before large numbers of members of the public went out in the morning. In addition, in response to the cluster of pneumonia cases detected in Wuhan, Mrs Lam said the Government is stepping up its cleaning work for public facilities to safeguard public health and appealed for assistance by the cleaning workers.

Mrs Lam said the Government attaches great importance to the well-being of grass-roots workers, and pointed out that she announced in her Policy Address in 2018 improvement measures for the tendering of government service contracts to enhance protection for the rights and interests of outsourced non-skilled employees. The new measures include increasing the technical weighting in marking schemes and raising the weighting for wage levels in technical assessment. Tens of thousands of workers can also enjoy three new benefits, namely entitlement to a 6 per cent contractual gratuity after working for 12 consecutive months, statutory holiday pay upon employment for one month and remuneration at 1.5 times the wage for work performed when Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 8 or above is in force.

Mrs Lam said, "the new measures were scheduled to come into effect in April in 2019 following their announcement in 2018, but taking into account the opinions of people concerned about labour welfare, I decided to extend the measures to cover contracts tendered out between October 10, 2018, when the Policy Address was announced, and March 31, 2019, so that nearly 10 000 more workers could also benefit."

Mrs Lam said she was pleased to note that since the implementation of the new measures, the hourly rates for government outsourced contract workers have substantially increased. For example, the monthly salary of the FEHD's cleaning workers has increased by 22 per cent when compared to the wage level at the end of 2018. The Government will pay attention to the implementation of the new measures and will continue to explore further room for improvement.

