

CE visits self-help organisations for people with disabilities (with photos/video)

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, visited two self-help organisations established by parents of people with disabilities and volunteers in Sham Shui Po this afternoon (March 14) and gave them face masks donated earlier by various sectors to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government.

Accompanied by the Deputy Director of Social Welfare, Mr Lam Ka-tai, Mrs Lam met separately with the Hong Kong Joint Council of Parents of the Mentally Handicapped and the Intellectually Disabled Education and Advocacy League (IDEAL). She chatted with the chairmen and members of the organisations to learn about challenges facing them amid the COVID-19 epidemic and their views on rehabilitation services. While pointing out that, in the face of persistent tight supply of face masks, the HKSAR Government is required to address the needs of the health care workers and other front-line personnel taking part in anti-epidemic work first, she said a decision was nonetheless made earlier to pass all face masks donated by various sectors to the HKSAR Government to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) so that they can distribute them to underprivileged groups, in particular the elderly. Given that some patients' self-help organisations are also facing difficulties in procuring face masks for use by members, the Government has recently decided to expand the number of beneficiary organisations that can receive the donated masks from the Government to include about 94 self-help organisations currently under the Social Welfare Department (SWD) subsidy scheme for self-help organisations for persons with disabilities or chronic illnesses. The distribution of face masks will take into consideration the number of members of the organisations concerned, and the total number of face masks is currently about 850 000. The SWD will contact various self-help organisations on the arrangements.

The Hong Kong Joint Council of Parents of the Mentally Handicapped and IDEAL are self-help organisations that were established by parents and volunteers in 1987 and 1989 respectively to provide various services for persons with intellectual disability to help in their integration into society.

Mrs Lam said, "As mutual support from various sectors in the community is important in the fight against the disease together, the Government set up the public participation workgroup under the Steering Committee in relation to the COVID-19 virus. One of its initiatives is to distribute face masks to people in need and I have also participated in activities of the NGOs to distribute face masks on a number of occasions. Taking into account the 2 million- odd face masks given to over 30 charity organisations, more than 3 million face masks have been distributed. I would like to express my

heartfelt thanks to every donor."

Members of the public are welcome to visit the following link for information on the activities of the public participation workgroup:
www.hab.gov.hk/en/policy_responsibilities/District_Community_and_Public_Relations/working_group.htm.

