

HKSAR Government announces registration arrangement for first batch of chartered flights taking Hong Kong people stranded in Hubei back to Hong Kong

A spokesman for the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau announced today (February 26) the registration arrangement for Hong Kong residents who wish to take the first batch of chartered flights from Hubei back to Hong Kong. The first batch of chartered flights will mainly assist Hong Kong residents currently stranded in Wuhan to return to Hong Kong. The costs will be borne by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government. The Wuhan Economic and Trade Office of the HKSAR Government (Wuhan ETO) will arrange transportation for Hong Kong residents to go to the airport in Wuhan.

For Hong Kong residents who are now in Wuhan and have not previously contacted the Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit of the Immigration Department (AHU) or the Wuhan ETO, if they wish to return to Hong Kong they may call the (852) 1868 hotline or contact the AHU through email at 1868@immd.gov.hk for registration before 6pm on February 28. Please provide the contact person's name, telephone number and current address during registration for contact and follow-up by the AHU.

The spokesman emphasised that Hong Kong residents currently in Wuhan who have earlier sought assistance from the AHU or the Wuhan ETO need not register again by calling the (852) 1868 hotline or through email. AHU officers have been notifying the relevant Hong Kong residents by text messages, and will contact them by phone to confirm their registration, including assisting them to fill in the health assessment form of the Department of Health.

The spokesman said, "All people taking the chartered flights to return to Hong Kong must be Hong Kong identity card holders. In order to reduce the risk of cross-infection during the return journey, Hong Kong residents who develop fever, respiratory tract symptoms or other signs of infectious diseases are not suitable to board the chartered flights. Health screenings will be conducted for each passenger before boarding. Those with fever, abnormal vital signs, respiratory tract symptoms or other signs of infectious diseases will not be allowed to board the plane.

"While the HKSAR Government will take measures to minimise the risk of cross-infection among Hong Kong residents during the return journey, it will be unavoidable for them to travel from their current residential places in Wuhan to the local airport, and to take the flights back to Hong Kong in groups. Therefore, Hong Kong residents who wish to take the chartered flights should be aware of the potential risks and consider their health condition in

deciding whether they are fit for travel.

"Taking into consideration the potential public health risk, the people concerned will be arranged to stay at a quarantine centre for 14 days upon their arrival in Hong Kong."

For Hong Kong residents currently in other areas of Hubei (that is, areas outside Wuhan), there are individual cases which have relatively urgent needs, such as pregnant women, those who suffer from serious illnesses and are urgently in need of surgery or other medical treatments (such as chemotherapy and electrotherapy) in Hong Kong, and secondary school graduates who need to sit for the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination in Hong Kong. The HKSAR Government will discuss with the Hubei Provincial Government and relevant local departments with an aim to arrange for them to take the first batch of chartered flights to Hong Kong, as well as seek medical advice on whether they are fit for travel.

As for Hong Kong residents who are now in other areas of Hubei without urgent needs, the HKSAR Government will further discuss with the Hubei Provincial Government and make arrangements for them to return to Hong Kong in stages. The spokesman appealed to them not to call the (852) 1868 hotline or make enquiries through email at this stage. The HKSAR Government will make a further announcement on the arrangement as soon as it is available.

After obtaining the number of assistance cases, the HKSAR Government will consider all factors including the operational details and the arrangement for receiving cases by quarantine facilities in working out the number of chartered flights and passengers to be carried by the first batch of flights as far as practicable.

As at 11am today, the HKSAR Government received over 1 700 requests for assistance by Hong Kong people in Hubei, involving more than 3 000 Hong Kong residents scattered in 37 cities in the province, among which 532 are in Wuhan.