

Housing Authority responds to Ombudsman's direct investigation report

The following press release is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Housing Authority:

In response to the Ombudsman's direct investigation report on improving the maintenance and repair of the play and fitness equipment in public rental housing (PRH) estates, a spokesman for the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) said today (October 29) that the HA in general accepted the recommendations put forward by the Ombudsman.

"The HA adopts a proprietary maintenance strategy for play and fitness equipment in PRH estates to ensure the facilities are properly repaired by the sole agents," the spokesman said.

"We have already started reviewing our workflow and guidelines with a view to enhancing the efficiency in maintaining and repairing the play and fitness equipment in PRH estates, and shortening the time required for undertaking such works."

Currently, an average of five days is needed from the discovery of defects by estate staff to the issuance of inspection orders. Upon the receipt of repair orders, the contractors can complete simple repairs in around one month. For complicated repair works or those cases involving special spare parts, more time will be required for ordering materials, arranging delivery, working on-site and more.

"Contract managers of the Housing Department will continue to closely monitor the contractors' performance, and report on a quarterly basis to the Contractors Review Committee (Building Maintenance) under the HA. Should there be delay in work completion without reasonable explanation from contractors, liquidated damages shall be deducted by the HA in accordance with the contract requirements," the spokesman stressed.

"To step up monitoring of the whole repair progress, we are proactively looking into ways to enhance the monitoring system, including recording the times of defects being found and issuance of inspection orders in the computer system.

"To expedite the repair works, we will explore other procurement methods and contract arrangements, and also request the contractors to stock up on more different types of spare parts or components," the spokesman added.

Regarding the recommendation of improving the design of play and fitness equipment at PRH estates, the HA has to consider various factors including changes of the population structure at PRH estates, usage of existing

facilities, constraints of the environment and future maintenance and repair issues before deciding on the next step.

"We must also carefully consider the views of local residents in the PRH estates when refurbishing and refining the play and fitness equipment at suitable locations," the spokesman said.