

LCQ15: Encouraging public to exercise more

Following is a question by the Hon Kenneth Leung and a written reply by the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (February 28):

Question:

The findings of the Territory-wide Physical Fitness Survey for the Community announced by the Government last year indicated that more than half of the public did not have sufficient physical activity, with 66.3 per cent of children and 50.7 per cent of adolescents failing to meet the World Health Organization's recommended standards for physical activity (i.e. an average of 60 minutes per day of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity through the week). On the other hand, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) organises diversified sports programmes for people of different ages and abilities. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of persons registered as Users of LCSD Fitness Rooms, as well as the attendance and overall average usage rate of LCSD Fitness Rooms in each of the past three years;

(2) as the Chief Executive mentioned in the 2023 Policy Address that the Government would introduce smart fitness equipment at four LCSD outdoor recreation venues in 2024, of the latest progress and timetable of the relevant initiative, as well as the number of smart fitness equipment to be set up at each venue;

(3) whether it will consider drawing reference from overseas experience to launch an exercise programme for all which deploys innovative digital technologies, such as fitness mobile applications and platforms for storing personal sports data, to encourage the public to exercise more, thereby establishing a healthy lifestyle; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(4) as the aforesaid survey report has made recommendations for different age groups, for instance, emphasising the importance of quality of homework to schools, organising more family-based exercise events on holidays, and providing more weight management education and exercise programmes specific to obesity in adolescents, whether the relevant government departments have taken follow-up actions, and whether indicators will be set for improving the level of physical activity of different age groups in the future; and

(5) whether it will step up various measures for the promotion of "Sports for All" (e.g. increasing the frequency of holding the Sport For All Day, as well as increasing the number of times for which LCSD sports facilities are opened up for free and thematic sports days are conducted), so as to drive the

public to build up a habit of regular exercise, thereby increasing their physical activity sufficiency?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the question raised by the Hon Kenneth Leung is as follows:

(1) The number of persons registered as users and the attendance of Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) fitness rooms over the past three years are set out as below:

Year	No. of registered users of fitness rooms	Attendance of fitness rooms
2021*	14 018	2 772 465
2022*	15 495	2 462 772
2023#	33 892	4 851 565

*In light of the development of COVID-19, most of the sports premises under the LCSD, including fitness rooms, were closed during some periods in 2021 and 2022. When the premises were open, social distancing and anti-epidemic measures of varying scales were adopted.

#Although the LCSD fitness rooms resumed services in 2023, members of the public generally heightened their epidemic preparedness given the prevalence of COVID-19 and influenza in the community, thereby rendering them more cautious in the use of fitness equipment which are shared in turns with other users, resulting in the relatively low utilisation of the fitness room at the beginning of 2023. As the society resumed normalcy in full since March 2023, the monthly usage numbers have gradually increased. To optimise the use of fitness room resources, the LCSD has offered members of the public convenient access to learning resources on fitness room equipment by organising free "briefings on proper use of fitness room equipment", with a view to helping more members of the public acquire the qualifications required for using fitness rooms.

(2) The LCSD will introduce, on a trial basis, smart fitness equipment to Victoria Park in Wan Chai District, Hoi Fai Road Promenade in Yau Tsim Mong District, Kowloon Tsai Park in Kowloon City District and Hoi Chu Road Playground in Tuen Mun District in 2024-25. The equipment will allow users to store and retrieve data of their physical activities and access information on sports and health. This will facilitate their management of personal health and monitoring of their own physical fitness and add fun to exercising, thereby encouraging members of the public to exercise regularly.

(3) In response to the recommendations of the report of Territory-wide Physical Fitness Survey for the Community (the Survey), the LCSD has launched

a pilot scheme where self-test fitness corners were set up in fitness rooms of eight sports centres in January 2024. These enabled members of the public to conduct, with aid of Bioelectrical Impedance Analysers, simple physical fitness tests in a self-service manner at any time so as to obtain information such as body fat percentage, muscle mass and body water content, and instantly download test reports via smartphones. Such an arrangement will be extended to the remaining 10 districts by the end of 2024, with anticipated usage by about 100 000 people per year.

(4) To promote "Sport for All" and encourage members of the public to develop the habit of regular exercise, the LCSD organises diversified recreation and sports programmes for participation by people of different ages and abilities. These programmes include sports training courses, competitions and recreation activities.

Following the recommendations of the Survey report, the LCSD has published the Survey results and the preliminary recommendations via various media channels, including press releases, social media and relevant websites, enabling the public to understand their current level of physical fitness and the importance of regular participation in sports and physical activities. The LCSD has, in collaboration with government departments, stepped up publicity to convey to members of the public the importance of regular participation in physical activities, and offered opportunities for their more active participation in recreation and sports activities, in a bid to improve physical fitness of the general public. The specific follow-up work of the government departments concerned is as follows:

The LCSD has drawn up specific follow-up work plans with a view to encouraging children and young people to engage in adequate physical activities of appropriate intensity. These include providing members of the public with more varied recreation and sports facilities and combination of programmes, thereby optimising their chance of participation in favourite sports, while encouraging parents' engagement in more family-based physical activities to add incentives for children to participate in physical activities. Meanwhile, the LCSD will promote children and young people's understanding of the "Physical Activity Baseline Indicator" by means of publicity such as setting up dedicated webpages, producing videos and holding roving exhibitions, in order to relay the importance of regular exercise and its health benefits in a light-hearted manner.

To further promote those recreation and sports programmes which are popular among young people, the LCSD has set up a new dedicated page "For Youth" on the "LCSD Edutainment Channel" with information on various recreation and sports programmes such as the Hong Kong Games, School Sports Programme, Learning Sports 101, Urban Sports, Sport For All Day as well as Community Recreation and Sports Programmes. It serves as a one-stop platform where young people can access and enrol to the programmes catering to them. As regards sports competitions, the 9th Hong Kong Games also introduces new age groups, namely "15 or below" and "16 to 17", for individual sports events such as athletics, swimming, badminton, table tennis and tennis, in a bid to attract greater participation from youths.

The LCSD has introduced the Pilot Scheme on Subvention for New Sports since 2021, where subvention is provided to local sports organisations to support and promote development of new sports, thereby offering more choices and chances for members of the public to experience new sports and encouraging greater participation in sports.

The Education Bureau (EDB) has included the World Health Organization's recommendation that children and adolescents aged 5 to 17 should accumulate at least an average of 60 minutes daily of moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activities (MVPA60) across the week as one of the directions of the Physical Education (PE) curriculum. The "Active Students, Active People" Campaign has also been launched in the 2021-22 school year to rally the concerted efforts of schools and parents as well as other stakeholders to promote an optimised sports atmosphere in schools and in society. The Campaign offers a series of PE activities, as well as learning and teaching resources to support schools in mobilising students' participation in physical activities to further engage students in developing an active and healthy lifestyle. Since the launch of the Campaign, more than 140 000 student participants have been achieved. The EDB will inject new elements into the Campaign in a timely manner so as to meet the needs of schools.

Besides, the Department of Health (DH) encourages members of the public to do more physical activities and promotes healthy lifestyle through different promotion campaigns. For example, the "10,000 Steps a Day" Campaign launched in 2022 includes a series of publicity drives on walking in the community and the walking challenge organised for two consecutive years to encourage members of the public to walk more. In addition, the "StartSmart@school.hk Campaign", "Whole School Health Programme" and "Adolescent Health Programme" encourage schoolchildren to do more physical activities, whereas the "I'm So Smart" Community Health Promotion Programme promotes healthy lifestyle including regular physical activity in the community. In the future, the DH will continue to encourage members of the public to build an active lifestyle to prevent non-communicable diseases through various channels.

(5) To spread the message of "Sport for All" to members of the public, the LCSD has organised the Sport For All Day every August since 2009, with the slogan being "Stay Active, Healthy and Happy!", where a series of free sports and recreation programmes are offered at designated LCSD venues across the 18 districts, while most of the LCSD leisure and sports facilities are open for free use by members of the public. To further promote "Sport for All" and encourage members of the public to do more exercise, the LCSD will increase the number of days when its sports facilities are open for free use and hold thematic sports days for public participation, thereby offering members of the public more free access to the LCSD leisure facilities to experience the benefits and fun of doing exercise and develop a good habit of regular exercise.