

## LCQ9: Elderly Hong Kong residents on the Mainland

Following is a question by the Hon Wilson Or and a written reply by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, in the Legislative Council today (June 17):

Question:

Regarding the elderly Hong Kong residents (i.e. aged over 60) on the Mainland, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) Of the number, and the number of person-times, of elderly Hong Kong residents travelling to the Mainland through the various boundary control points in each year from 2016 to 2019;
- (2) Whether it knows the number of elderly Hong Kong residents, in each year from 2016 to 2019, who had fixed abode on the Mainland and resided on the Mainland for more than six months in that year, and the top three provinces with the largest numbers of such persons residing therein;
- (3) Whether it knows the current number of elderly Hong Kong residents holding Residence Permits for Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan Residents;
- (4) Of the respective numbers of Hong Kong residents who received Old Age Living Allowance or Old Age Allowance under the Guangdong Scheme and the Fujian Scheme in 2019;
- (5) Whether it knows the respective numbers of person-times of elderly Hong Kong residents in each year from 2016 to 2019 who, due to urgent medical needs, were conveyed to the public hospitals in Hong Kong by (i) private cross-boundary transport services from the Mainland, and (ii) pre-arranged ambulances at the boundary control points after entering Hong Kong from the Mainland;
- (6) Of the number, and the number of person-times, of Hong Kong residents who used elderly health care vouchers at the University of Hong Kong – Shenzhen Hospital, the amount of money used each time on average, and the total amount of money involved, in each year from 2015 to 2019; and
- (7) Of the number of cases of elderly Hong Kong residents seeking assistance of the Hong Kong Government's offices on the Mainland in each year from 2016 to 2019, and among the issues involved in such cases, the top three issues most commonly raised by the people seeking assistance?

Reply:

President,

Having consulted the relevant policy bureaux, my reply to the Member's

question is set out below:

(1) According to information provided by the Security Bureau (SB), the number of departures of Hong Kong residents at various immigration control points between 2016 and 2019 are tabulated as follows:

Control Point / Year	2016	2017	2018	2019
Airport (Note 1)	11 285 453	12 127 560	12 681 474	12 968 194
Lo Wu	29 438 738	29 835 452	30 446 046	29 382 940
Hung Hom	849 249	841 956	832 307	549 198
Lok Ma Chau Spur Line	21 832 671	19 361 550	17 137 983	16 766 773
West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (Note 2)	Not applicable		867 913	3 355 166
Lok Ma Chau	8 683 619	9 068 237	8 998 322	8 248 387
Man Kam To	1 063 070	1 174 178	1 166 042	1 088 613
Sha Tau Kok	1 022 877	1 070 416	1 048 816	977 130
Shenzhen Bay	10 014 409	10 600 406	11 160 462	11 089 436
Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port (Note 1 and 3)	Not applicable		934 552	5 246 388
Harbour Control (Note 1)	3 488	3 051	5 144	4 402
Macau Ferry Terminal (Note 1)	5 164 137	4 964 704	4 718 284	3 478 064
China Ferry Terminal (Note 1)	1 708 535	1 491 919	1 416 030	895 153
Tuen Mun Ferry Terminal (Note 1 and 4)	277 514	319 157	336 236	244 884
River Trade Terminal (Note 1)	4	12	16	9
Kai Tak Cruise Terminal (Note 1 and 5)	414 567	445 052	464 205	420 224
Total	91 758 331	91 303 650	92 213 832	94 714 961

Note 1: The control point is not confined to travelling to and from the Mainland.

Note 2: Officially commissioned on September 23, 2018.

Note 3: Officially commissioned on October 24, 2018.

Note 4: The Tuen Mun Ferry Terminal, upon suspension of operation since July 1, 2012, resumed its cross-boundary passenger ferry services on January 28, 2016.

Note 5: The number of inbound and outbound passenger trips also included trips made by passengers of cruise liners berthing at other anchorages, as well as trips made by passengers on board Hong Kong-based passenger liners running regular daily high seas trips.

The Immigration Department does not maintain the breakdown statistics mentioned in the question.

(2) and (3) According to information provided by the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau (CMAB), the Government currently does not have comprehensive statistical information on Hong Kong people residing on the Mainland. Nevertheless, the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) has been making use of the movement records of Hong Kong permanent residents to compile the estimation of "Hong Kong residents usually staying in the Guangdong Province" since 2016. These residents refer to Hong Kong permanent residents who may have stayed in Guangdong for six months and above cumulatively during the six months before and after the reference time-point. Since C&SD generally assumes that Hong Kong permanent residents departing from Hong Kong via land control points and the China Ferry Terminal are travelling to Guangdong, statistics on destinations outside Guangdong are not available. Besides, the estimation cannot ascertain whether these persons have in fact stayed in Guangdong or have a fixed place of residence in Guangdong. The relevant statistics for the age group of 60 or above from 2016 to 2018 based on the above-mentioned estimation are tabulated below. The corresponding figure for 2019 is not yet available.

Reference time-point	Statistics on Hong Kong residents aged 60 or above who are usually staying in Guangdong
End-2016	109 900
End-2017	113 600
End-2018	119 800

According to information provided by CMAB, since September 1, 2018, Hong Kong and Macao residents who have stayed in the Mainland for more than six months and are able to show proof of either a legitimate and stable job, a legitimate and stable residence, or ongoing school attendance can choose to apply for residence permits in accordance with the Regulations for Application of Residence Permit for Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan Residents. Although applications were made on a voluntary basis, the number of applicants may serve as a rough indicator of the number of Hong Kong residents staying in the Mainland. According to CMAB, based on information from the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, more than 230 000 Hong Kong residents had applied for residence permits as at May 2020.

(4) The Social Welfare Department (SWD) launched the Guangdong Scheme (GD Scheme) and Fujian Scheme (FJ Scheme) on October 1, 2013 and April 1, 2018 respectively to provide the Old Age Allowance (OAA) (currently at \$1,435 per month) for elderly persons residing in Guangdong and Fujian. As at end-December 2019, there were 16 108 and 1 622 persons receiving OAA under the GD Scheme and FJ Scheme respectively.

Meanwhile, SWD launched the Old Age Living Allowance (OALA) under the GD Scheme and FJ Scheme on January 1, 2020, which includes the Normal OALA (currently at \$2,770 per month) and Higher OALA (currently at \$3,715 per month).

(5) According to information provided by SB, under normal circumstances, upon receiving emergency ambulance calls, the Fire Services Department (FSD) ambulance will, based on the established arrangement, convey the patients from the Hong Kong side of various boundary control points (BCPs) to the Accident and Emergency Departments of hospitals under the Hospital Authority for treatment. From 2016 to 2019, FSD ambulances handled about 3000 patients aged over 60 per annum on average among the emergency ambulance calls handled at the Hong Kong side of land BCPs, including patients who were transferred to BCPs by the Mainland ambulances and patients who called for ambulances after arriving at Hong Kong. FSD does not have the breakdown of the relevant patients' nationalities.

The Government does not maintain other statistics mentioned in the question.

(6) According to information provided by the Food and Health Bureau, the Pilot Scheme for use of the Elderly Health Care Vouchers at the University of Hong Kong – Shenzhen Hospital (HKU-SZH) was launched on October 6, 2015 and has been regularised since June 26, 2019. Currently, each eligible Hong Kong elderly person aged 65 or above is provided with a voucher amount of \$2,000 annually for them to choose the private healthcare services that best suit their health needs in Hong Kong and at HKU-SZH. Breaking down by year, the cumulative number of elderly persons who had used the vouchers at HKU-SZH from 2015 to 2019 was around 500, 1 200, 2 100, 3 400 and 4 600 respectively.

The annual number of voucher claim transactions involved and the annual amount of vouchers claimed, as well as the average amount of vouchers claimed per transaction are tabulated below:

Year	Number of voucher claim transactions	Amount of vouchers claimed (in '\$'000)	Average amount of vouchers claimed per transaction (\$)
2015	2 287	537	235
2016	5 667	1,471	260
2017 (Note 6)	6 755	1,855	275
2018 (Note 7)	11 418	3,492	306
2019 (Note 8)	13 562	3,997	295

Note 6: The eligibility age for the Elderly Health Care Voucher Scheme was lowered from 70 to 65 on July 1, 2017.

Note 7: On June 8, 2018, each eligible elderly person was provided with an additional voucher amount of \$1,000 on a one-off basis, and the accumulation limit of vouchers was increased to \$5,000.

Note 8: On June 26, 2019, each eligible elderly person was provided with an

additional voucher amount of \$1,000 on a one-off basis, and the accumulation limit of vouchers was further increased to \$8,000.

(7) According to information provided by CMAB, the number of requests for assistance from Hong Kong residents received by the five Mainland Offices of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (namely the Beijing Office and the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices in Guangdong, Chengdu, Shanghai and Wuhan) in 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 were 466, 550, 593 and 653 respectively. The Mainland Offices do not have the number of requests for assistance from Hong Kong residents aged 60 or above. In 2019, the top three types of requests for assistance in terms of the number of cases received were accidents, injuries or other incidents on the Mainland; loss of travel documents or money; and cases relating to property transactions on the Mainland. The Mainland Offices had followed up on and handled the requests for assistance having regard to the actual circumstances.