

More public services to resume in a safe and orderly manner

In view of the need to fight the epidemic for the whole community, the Government has implemented special work arrangements for government employees since December 2 last year. Save for those involved in the provision of emergency services and essential public services and in anti-epidemic efforts, all other government employees were arranged to work from home. Taking into account the needs for the functioning of society and the economy, a spokesman for the Government announced today (January 26) that in addition to the continued provision of emergency services and essential public services, government departments will also resume the provision of some basic public services from January 28.

"Despite the impact of the epidemic, the Government has the responsibility to maintain the continuing functioning of the community and the economy. To meet the needs of the public and enterprises, bureaux and departments will resume the provision of some basic public services from January 28 onwards upon the implementation of targeted measures to reduce social contact and measures for infection control. The Government's ultimate goal is to resume full public services when conditions permit," the spokesman said.

Government departments will announce separately the services to be resumed, relevant arrangements and details. As bureaux and departments may need time to deploy their staff and resources and make necessary adjustments, they may not be able to provide full services immediately.

"In view of the need to reduce the flow of people and social contact, bureaux and departments will adopt flexible measures to reduce the number of staff working in an office at any one time as far as possible, such as splitting staff into two teams which may then take turns to work from home, or staggering of work and lunch hours to the widest possible extent. We appeal for the understanding of members of the public as opening hours of some offices may be adjusted, waiting times for public services may be lengthened, or a longer time may be needed for the processing of applications," the spokesman said.

The spokesman appealed to the public that, where necessary, they are encouraged to use alternative means, such as post, drop-in boxes or online channels, to receive the services they need. They should wear surgical masks at all times when they are entering or are present in any government buildings or offices, and comply with the infection control measures implemented by relevant departments including temperature checks, using the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile app and crowd control arrangements.

The spokesman also appealed to employers to make flexible work arrangements for employees in accordance with their operational needs

including allowing them to work from home when appropriate so as to reduce the flow of people and social contact in the community.