

# Ombudsman probes into effectiveness of rodent prevention and control by Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

The following is issued on behalf of the Office of The Ombudsman:

The Ombudsman, Ms Winnie Chiu, today (January 14) announced the launch of a direct investigation to examine the effectiveness of rodent prevention and control by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD).

The Government's rodent prevention and control work is important, as it can affect people's everyday life. Currently, the Pest Control Teams of the FEHD are responsible for rodent prevention and disinfection in public places. Their major duties include conducting rodent infestation rate (RIR) surveys, carrying out inspections at places with potential risks of rodent infestation, such as rear lanes and illegal refuse disposal blackspots, and taking necessary preventive and control measures. The FEHD also provides training and technical support for other government departments regarding rodent prevention and control at public venues and premises under their management.

However, there are public views that the FEHD's rodent control has been ineffective and that the Department's RIR surveys have failed to reflect the actual situation, leading people to believe that the rodent infestation situation is not serious.

Ms Chiu noted, "Rodent infestation can cause a nuisance to the daily life of the general public and spread different types of serious diseases. I have noticed the wide media coverage about the grave problems of rodent infestation in a number of markets managed by the FEHD last year. Moreover, it is of concern that since the world's first case of human infection of rat Hepatitis E virus was found in Hong Kong in 2018, more than 10 cases had been recorded as at December 2020. In view of the situation, I have decided to initiate a direct investigation to examine the effectiveness of the FEHD's rodent prevention and control work and make recommendations for improvement where necessary."

The Ombudsman now invites members of the public to provide information and views on this topic. Written submissions should reach the Office of The Ombudsman by February 14, 2021:

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