

Ombudsman probes Leisure and Cultural Services Department's regulation of public coaching activities at public swimming pools

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

The Ombudsman, Ms Winnie Chiu, today (November 14) announced a direct investigation to examine the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD)'s regulation of public coaching activities at public swimming pools.

The Office of The Ombudsman previously initiated another direct investigation into the LCSD's allocation of swimming lanes in public swimming pools and its monitoring mechanism, and invited public views on the matter. Among the public views received, there were allegations that individual and group coaching activities had caused nuisance to other swimmers in public swimming pools. In fact, the Office has received similar complaints from time to time.

Under the Public Swimming Pools Regulation, no person, within a swimming pool or the precincts thereof, shall do any act which is likely to endanger, obstruct, inconvenience or annoy any person. In order to promote swimming and ensure water safety, the LCSD generally allows coaching activities at its public swimming pools provided that such activities are performed in an orderly manner without causing any nuisance to other swimmers. Otherwise, the LCSD will take enforcement action in accordance with the Regulation.

Currently, there are 44 public swimming pools under the management of the LCSD, and a public coaching area is designated in nine of them to better regulate the coaching activities therein. Preliminary inquiries by the Office have revealed that the LCSD had yet to establish a standardised mechanism for the designation of public coaching areas in public swimming pools. The Office considers it necessary to examine the LCSD's regulation of coaching activities at public swimming pools so as to minimise the nuisance caused to other swimmers.

Ms Chiu said, "Swimming is good for the body and mind. There is a practical need for members of the public to learn swimming at public swimming pools. Hence, the LCSD should consider measures to segregate different types of swimmers so as to reduce conflict between those participating in coaching activities and other swimmers. We have initiated this direct investigation to examine the LCSD's regulation of public coaching activities at public swimming pools, and we will make recommendations for improvement to the department where necessary."

The Ombudsman now invites members of the public to give their views on the above topic in writing to the Office of The Ombudsman by December 13,

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