

## SB's response to media enquiries on community isolation facilities (with photos)

In response to media enquiries about the operation of community isolation facilities, a spokesman for the Security Bureau (SB) today (March 7) gave the following reply:

As the fifth wave of the epidemic in Hong Kong is still rampant, community isolation facilities are one of the important contingency measures for the soonest admission of COVID-19 confirmed patients with no or mild symptoms, to cut the virus transmission chains and prevent the spread of the virus in the community.

At present, there are 23 different types of community isolation facilities, providing about 16 000 rooms or beds for isolation purposes, with an overall occupancy rate of about 40 per cent. The occupancy rate of community isolation facilities varies and hinges on various factors such as the turnaround time for cleaning and disinfection when occupants complete the isolation. In addition, we also need to reserve some rooms or beds to cope with the large number of confirmed patients identified by the compulsory testing. For the Tsing Yi community isolation facility (TYCIF), which was constructed with the support of the Central Government, it is a large-scale and new type of isolation facility, so it will be opened for use in phases. To ensure the smooth operation of the TYCIF, some improvement and refinement works are being carried out. At present, a total of 700 rooms in the facility have been occupied by persons who are in isolation, involving about 800 people. More patients will be admitted later.

To further enhance the arrangement of community isolation facilities, we launched a new service today which facilitates people in need to contact the Fire Services Department (FSD) through a direct line for arranging them into community isolation facilities as soon as possible. People who tested positive by nucleic acid test, deep throat saliva test or rapid antigen test with no or mild symptoms and are not suitable for quarantine at home can contact the FSD direct via email, WhatsApp hotline and WeChat account. Priority arrangement would be based on their living environment and the availability of isolation facilities. We appeal to people in need to contact the FSD as soon as possible via the aforementioned channels for early arrangement of isolation facilities, so as to protect their families and community from infection and prevent the spread of the virus.

The Government has been, through different methods, speeding up the process for arranging confirmed patients to community isolation facilities as soon as possible. According to the Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance (Cap. 599), relevant public officer is authorised to send relevant confirmed patients to community isolation facilities. If the individual refuses to co-operate, he/she may commit the offence of obstructing public

officers and is subject to a fine of \$5,000 or imprisonment for two months. If a confirmed patient leaves the isolation site during the quarantine period, he/she is also subject to a fine of \$5,000 or imprisonment for six months.

