

Suspected MERS case reported

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (July 4) reported a suspected case of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), and again urged the public to pay special attention to safety during travel, taking due consideration of the health risks in the places of visit. The case is detailed below:

Sex	Female
Age	65
Affected area involved	Dubai, United Arab Emirates
High-risk exposure	Camel ride
Hospital	Princess Margaret Hospital
Condition	Stable
MERS-Coronavirus preliminary test result	Negative

"Travellers to the Middle East should avoid going to farms, barns or markets with camels; avoid contact with sick persons and animals, especially camels, birds or poultry; and avoid unnecessary visits to healthcare facilities. We strongly advise travel agents organising tours to the Middle East to abstain from arranging camel rides and activities involving direct contact with camels, which are known risk factors for acquiring MERS Coronavirus (MERS-CoV)," a spokesman for the CHP said.

Locally, the CHP's surveillance with public and private hospitals, with practising doctors and at boundary control points is firmly in place. Inbound travellers and members of the public who recently visited the Middle East and developed fever or lower respiratory symptoms within 14 days will be classified as suspected MERS cases. They will be taken to public hospitals for isolation and management until their specimens test negative for MERS-CoV.

Travellers to affected areas should maintain vigilance, adopt appropriate health precautions and take heed of personal, food and environmental hygiene. The public may visit the MERS pages of the [CHP](#) and its [Travel Health Service](#), MERS statistics in [affected areas](#), the CHP's [Facebook Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#), and the World Health Organization's [latest news](#) for more information and health advice. Tour leaders and tour guides operating overseas tours are advised to refer to the CHP's [health advice on MERS](#).

LCQ21: Hillside escalator links and elevator systems

Following is a question by the Hon Lam Cheuk-ting and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (July 4):

Question:

The Government formulated in 2009 criteria for assessing proposals for construction of hillside escalator links and elevator systems. Upon completion of assessment, the Government decided in 2010 to take forward 18 proposals. So far, the progress for implementing those proposals has been slow as only three of them have been completed and four are under construction. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that among the aforesaid 18 proposals, the Escalator Link System between Hong Sing Garden and Po Hong Road which is ranked the 14th in priority, the Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Saddle Ridge Garden and Sai Sha Road which is ranked the 16th, as well as the Escalator Link System between Sui Wo Court and MTR Fo Tan Station which is ranked the 18th, are still stuck at the stages of feasibility studies or internal discussion within the Government, of the original and latest timetables for the various work stages of these three proposals (including completion of design work, submission of funding applications to this Council, invitation of tenders, commencement and completion of works), the reasons for their slow progress and their latest cost estimates; the respective timetables for the various work stages and the actual costs/cost estimates of the remaining 15 proposals; and

(2) of the measures to be put in place to expedite the progress of the three proposals mentioned in (1)?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the various parts of the Hon Lam Cheuk-ting's question is as follows:

To enhance the accessibility of hillside area and facilitate people to commute, the Government established in 2009 a set of objective and transparent scoring criteria for assessing proposals for hillside escalator links and elevator systems (HEL) to determine the priority for conducting preliminary technical feasibility studies for the 20 proposals received at that time. Upon completion of the assessment, the assessment results were

reported to the Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Transport in February 2010. Two proposals were screened out initially, and 18 others were ranked. The Government indicated at the time that preliminary technical feasibility studies for the proposals ranked top ten in the assessment would be conducted first by batches, and that the remaining proposals would be followed up after the smooth implementation of the top ten proposals. Among the remaining proposals are the Escalator Link System between Hong Sing Garden and Po Hong Road which is ranked 14th, the Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Saddle Ridge Garden and Sai Sha Road which is ranked 16th, as well as the Escalator Link System between Sha Tin Sui Wo Court and MTR Fo Tan Station which is ranked 18th.

Subsequently, the Highways Department (HyD) also completed the preliminary technical feasibility studies for the proposals ranked 11th and 12th. As for the proposals ranked 14th (Note), 16th and 17th, the Transport Department (TD) determined the scope of works in April this year, while the HyD is currently carrying out the preliminary technical feasibility studies, which are planned for completion in the third quarter of 2018. If the studies show that the proposals are technically feasible upon preliminary assessment, the HyD will progressively conduct ground investigation, carry out preliminary design and consult District Councils as well as relevant stakeholders. For the proposal ranked 18th, the project involves works of relatively large scale and is rather complex as a substantial part of the proposed alignment runs through lots held by the Hong Kong Housing Authority and private owners. The TD is actively following up on the proposal to expedite the determination of its scope. As these lower-ranking proposals are still at a very early stage of development, their implementation schedules have yet to be finalised.

Overall, three out of the 18 proposals have been completed and opened for public use; four are under construction; one proposal has just obtained funding approval for the construction works; five are in various phases of planning, investigation and design; and another four are at the stage of preliminary technical feasibility studies. The current progress and cost estimates of the 18 proposals are set out at Annex 1 and Annex 2 respectively.

The taking forward of the HEL projects involves various considerations such as the alignment of the HEL, the pedestrian flow, the layout of structures, the impact of the projects on the surrounding environment and on residents, the diversion of underground utilities, etc. Moreover, in line with the established procedures for public works, the HyD has to arrange for the gazettal of the proposals and handle objections (if any) under the Roads (Works, Use and Compensation) Ordinance, and, where necessary, carry out land acquisition for the HEL projects. The projects can therefore be considerably complex. Some of them may also be controversial, with the affected residents having divergent views on the alignment of the project. As such, the HyD has to discuss with various stakeholders and undertake relevant studies to resolve the problems. HyD would seek to balance the demands of relevant stakeholders in the process, which inevitably takes considerable time.

We understand the concerns of Members on HEL projects. HyD has also

increased its manpower for taking forward the projects and engage engineering consultants as necessary to assist in taking the projects forward. When the projects has progressed to a mature stage, we will seek funding approval from the LegCo as soon as possible for commencing the construction works for the HEL projects.

Note: Two proposals share the rank of 14, the other one being the Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Lai King Hill Road and Princess Margaret Hospital.

Manager of unlicensed guesthouse fined

A man was fined \$8,000 at the Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts today (July 4) for contravening the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance.

The courts heard that in August last year, officers of the Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA), the Home Affairs Department, inspected a suspected unlicensed guesthouse on Reclamation Street in Mong Kok. During the inspection, the OLA officers posed as lodgers and successfully rented a room in the guesthouse on an hourly basis.

According to the OLA's records, the guesthouse did not possess a licence under the Ordinance on the day of inspection. The man responsible for managing the premises was charged with contravening section 5(1) of the Ordinance.

A department spokesman stressed that operating or managing an unlicensed guesthouse is a criminal offence and will lead to a criminal record. Upon conviction, the offender is liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and two years' imprisonment.

The spokesman appealed to anyone with information about suspected unlicensed guesthouses to report it to the OLA through the hotline (Tel: 2881 7498), by email (hadlaeng@had.gov.hk), by fax (2504 5805) using the report form downloaded from the OLA website (www.hadla.gov.hk), or through the mobile application "Hong Kong Licensed Hotels and Guesthouses".

LCQ20: Statistical information on

residential care homes for the elderly

Following is a question by the Dr Hon Fernando Cheung and a written reply by the Acting Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Caspar Tsui, in the Legislative Council today (July 4):

Question:

Some members of the public have pointed out that when formulating service quality standards (e.g. the area of floor space per resident and manpower ratios) for places for the elderly, the Government often give a lot of weight to the views of the operators of non-subsidised residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs). As the operators have claimed that the implementation of the reform proposals put forward by community groups will lead to waves of closures of RCHEs, the Government has brushed aside such proposals. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council of the following information on the provision of places for the elderly (to set out in tables):

(1) the following information on non-subsidised places for the elderly in each of the past 10 financial years: (i) number of homes (and among which the number of those participated in the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme (EBPS)), (ii) number of places (and among which the number of those provided by homes participated in EBPS), (iii) number of residents (and among which the number of recipients of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance), (iv) vacancy rate of places, and (v) the area of floor space per resident;

(2) the respective numbers of non-subsidised RCHEs opened and closed down in each of the past 10 financial years, and the number of places involved (and among which the number of those provided by homes participated in EBPS);

(3) the following information on subsidised places in each of the past 10 financial years: (i) the number of persons waiting, (ii) average waiting time, (iii) the number of elderly persons who passed away while waiting for those places and (iv) the number of applications withdrawn;

(4) the respective numbers of elderly persons in each of the past 10 financial years who expressed willingness and unwillingness to choose EA1 and EA2 places under EBPS when being assessed under the Standardised Care Need Assessment Mechanism for Elderly Services, and their reasons; and

(5) the following information respectively on (i) the scheme to encourage developers to provide RCHE premises in new private developments, (ii) the Pilot Residential Care Services Scheme in Guangdong and (iii) the Special Scheme on Privately Owned Sites for Welfare Uses, in each financial year since their implementation: number of places provided, vacancy rate and average waiting time of these places, as well as the area of floor space per resident and manpower ratios of the homes concerned?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the Member's question is as follows:

(1) Information on the number of homes providing non-subsidised residential care services for the elderly and the number of non-subsidised places from 2008-09 to 2017-18 is at Annex 1.

The number of recipients of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) who are aged 60 or above and reside at non-subsidised homes from 2008-09 to 2017-18 is as follows:

Year	Number of CSSA recipients aged 60 or above residing at non-subsidised homes (Note)
2008-09	24 330
2009-10	24 920
2010-11	25 179
2011-12	24 902
2012-13	24 688
2013-14	25 705
2014-15	25 004
2015-16	24 340
2016-17	24 434
2017-18	24 607

Note: These are the numbers of recipients as at end-March in the year concerned. The Social Welfare Department (SWD) does not have figures on the number of CSSA recipients residing at different types of non-subsidised homes. The above figures include the number of recipients residing at non-subsidised residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) and residents residing at non-subsidised residential care homes for persons with disabilities.

SWD has not systematically compiled information on the number of residents receiving non-subsidised residential care services for the elderly, vacancy rate of places and the area of floor space per resident. As at end-March 2018, the average occupancy rate of private RCHEs participating in the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme (EBPS) and those not participating in that scheme was 91 per cent and 83 per cent respectively. At present, different types of RCHEs are providing non-subsidised places, including subvented, contract, self-financing and private RCHEs. The area of floor space per resident of these RCHEs generally ranges from a minimum of 6.5 square metres to a maximum of 24.8 square metres.

(2) Regarding RCHEs providing non-subsidised places, information on the number of homes opened and closed down from 2008-09 to 2017-18 and the number of places involved is at Annex 2.

(3) The average waiting time for various types of subsidised residential care places for the elderly from 2008-09 to 2017-18 is at Annex 3.

The number of persons waiting for subsidised residential care places for the elderly and the number of persons who passed away or withdrew applications while waiting for these places from 2008-09 to 2017-18 is as follows:

Year	Number of persons waiting for subsidised residential care places for the elderly	Number of persons who passed away while waiting for service	Number of persons who withdrew applications while waiting for service
2008-09	24 168	4 372	2 256
2009-10	25 815	4 573	2 419
2010-11	26 751	4 844	2 540
2011-12	27 888	4 797	2 473
2012-13	28 818	5 146	2 778
2013-14	29 435	5 262	2 182
2014-15	31 349	5 675	2 199
2015-16	33 368	5 774	2 243
2016-17	35 931	6 027	2 172
2017-18	37 911	6 611	2 191

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(4) The number of persons who were waiting for subsidised care-and-attention (C&A) places and, amongst them, the number of persons who expressed willingness to accept subsidised places under EBPS from 2008-09 to 2017-18 is as follows:

Year	Number of persons waiting for subsidised C&A places (1)	Amongst (1), number of persons who expressed willingness to accept subsidised places under EBPS (2)
2008-09	17 948	1 264
2009-10	19 556	1 313
2010-11	20 342	1 119
2011-12	21 432	1 205
2012-13	22 546	1 313
2013-14	23 216	1 196
2014-15	25 304	1 490
2015-16	27 365	1 611

2016-17	29 672	1 745
2017-18	31 358	1 753

SWD does not have information on elderly persons' reasons for expressing willingness to accept subsidised places under EBPS, or the number of persons who expressed unwillingness to accept such places and their reasons.

(5) The Government launched the Scheme to Encourage Provision of Residential Care Home for the Elderly Premises in New Private Developments in July 2003. Under the scheme, eligible RCHE premises proposed will be exempted from payment of premium under different types of land transactions including lease modifications, land exchange and private treaty grants, on the condition that the developers are willing to accept incorporation of certain lease conditions. Since the launch of the scheme, the Lands Department (LandsD) has approved one application. The developer concerned signed a land exchange agreement with LandsD in December 2012 for the development of a 290-place RCHE. The developer is carrying out construction and fitting works of the RCHE.

SWD has since June 2014 implemented the Pilot Residential Care Services Scheme in Guangdong (the pilot scheme), whereby the Government purchases places from two RCHEs respectively located in Yantian, Shenzhen and Zhaoqing and operated by Hong Kong non-governmental organisations (NGOs), to enable elderly persons waiting for subsidised C&A places in Hong Kong to choose to reside therein. While the pilot scheme can provide 400 places, the actual number of places to be purchased each year depends on the number of participants under the pilot scheme. As at end-March 2018, a total of 180 elderly persons participated in the pilot scheme. On the premise of ensuring the service quality as well as meeting the requirements and performance standards as stipulated in the service agreements signed with SWD, the two RCHEs participating in the pilot scheme have the flexibility to arrange suitable staffing. While SWD does not have information on the staffing ratio and area of floor space per resident of the two RCHEs, the two RCHEs have acquired accreditation under the Residential Aged Care Accreditation Scheme managed by the Hong Kong Association of Gerontology, and the accreditation scheme has been accredited by the Hong Kong Accreditation Service.

The Government launched the Special Scheme on Privately Owned Sites for Welfare Uses in September 2013 to encourage NGOs to better utilise their own sites and provide or increase, through expansion, redevelopment or new development, those welfare facilities considered by the Government as being in acute demand, in particular to increase elderly and rehabilitation service places. As at end-May 2018, a project involving residential care services for the elderly was completed and commenced services in 2017-18. The project offers 120 C&A places providing continuum of care (including subsidised and non-subsidised places). On the premise of ensuring the service quality as well as meeting the service output requirements and performance standards as stipulated in the Funding and Service Agreements, the NGO concerned has the flexibility to deploy the subventions and arrange suitable staffing in operating the RCHE.

[Hong Kong Customs combats sale of memory cards with infringing music files \(with photo\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (July 3) conducted an operation to combat the sale of memory cards with infringing music files. A total of 5 668 memory cards loaded with suspected infringing music files and a batch of song list booklets with an estimated market value of about \$280,000 were seized. Four persons were arrested.

Customs earlier received information alleging the sale of memory cards loaded with suspected infringing music files at fixed hawker pitches in Sham Shui Po. After investigation, Customs officers conducted an operation yesterday and seized the batch of memory cards and the song list booklets at three fixed hawker pitches on Apliu Street.

During the operation, one male shop owner and three female salespersons, aged between 32 and 70, were arrested.

Investigation is ongoing and the arrested persons have been released on bail pending further investigation.

Customs will continue to step up patrols to curb any form of infringing activity.

Under the Copyright Ordinance, any person who possesses an infringing copy of a copyright work with a view to selling it commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$50,000 per infringing copy and imprisonment for four years.

Members of the public may report any suspected infringing activities to the Customs 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).

