

# LCQ21: Performance management of civil servants

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Han-pan and a written reply by the Secretary for the Civil Service, Mrs Ingrid Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (March 27):

Question:

It is learnt that the Government has all along been placing emphasis on enhancing the performance management of civil servants, with a streamlined mechanism for retiring civil servants in the public interest on grounds of persistent substandard performance under section 12 of the Public Service (Administration) Order (the streamlined mechanism) promulgated on September 4 last year. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the respective numbers of civil servants who were (i) not granted increments or (ii) required to retire from the service as a result of substandard performance in each of the three years prior to the implementation of the streamlined mechanism, together with a breakdown by government department, rank and year of service; whether it has estimated the average reduction in the time taken under the streamlined mechanism as compared with the old mechanism in respect of the procedures for processing cases involving civil servants mentioned in (i) and (ii) above;

(2) of the time taken by the Civil Service Bureau (CSB) to process cases involving civil servants being required to retire from the service as mentioned in (1) (counting from the time when the civil servants concerned received a fifth-level or sixth-level overall rating on a six-level performance scale in their appraisal reports, or two fourth-level overall ratings in two consecutive appraisal reports) (broken down by periods of within one year, more than one year and within two years, and more than two years); whether it has estimated the average reduction in the time taken under the streamlined mechanism as compared with the old mechanism in respect of CSB's procedures for processing such cases;

(3) whether, after the implementation of the streamlined mechanism, there are civil servants in respect of whom the procedures under the old mechanism are still being used to require them to retire from the service; if so, of the relevant number, as well as the longest and average time that have been taken to process such cases; whether the Government will consider completing the processing of such cases as soon as possible, so as to meet public expectation; and

(4) whether it will introduce new measures to reward civil servants with better performance; if so, of the specific plan and timetable; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Government attaches great importance to the performance management of civil servants and has a well-established system to manage civil servants' performance. The Chief Executive announced in his 2022 Policy Address the strengthening of the civil service management system. For officers whose performance remains persistently sub-standard despite supervision and assistance, their appointments should be terminated in a timely manner. In September 2023, the Civil Service Bureau (CSB) promulgated and implemented a streamlined mechanism (the streamlined mechanism) for retiring civil servants on grounds of persistent sub-standard performance under section 12 of the Public Service (Administration) Order (PS(A)O) (section 12 action) to strengthen the management of staff with sub-standard performance.

Our consolidated reply to the various parts of the question is as follows:

(1) and (2) From 2020 to end-August 2023, a total of 11 officers were issued with Section 12 Notification under the old mechanism due to sub-standard performance. As of end-August 2023, the procedures of section 12 action were suspended in three of the cases due to various reasons (e.g. performance improved to an acceptable level or department was taking disciplinary action against the officer). Four officers left the Government for various reasons (e.g. resignation or removal punishment imposed as a result of disciplinary action). The remaining four cases were being handled at different stages. During the said period, two more officers, who were issued with Section 12 Notification before 2020, were retired under section 12 of PS(A)O in 2020 and 2021 respectively. As the number of officers involved is limited and to safeguard the privacy of the officers, detailed information on the officers concerned would not be disclosed.

The average processing time of the above two completed cases was two years and 10 months, counting from the time when the Section 12 Notification was issued to the officer concerned notifying him of commencing the pre-section 12 action (i.e. the observation period) to the time when the decision of retiring the officer was made (Note 1).

Separately, under Civil Service Regulation 451(1), an officer may be granted an increment only if his/her work performance (including conduct, diligence and efficiency) has been satisfactory during the appraisal period. In the three financial years from 2020-21 to 2022-23, around 60 per cent of civil servants did not reach the maximum pay points of their respective ranks, among which, a total of 32 civil servants were not granted an increment due to unsatisfactory performance. The number of the officers in question, broken down by bureau/department and pay point, is at Annex. The CSB does not keep information on the length of service of civil servants not granted an increment.

(3) Since the implementation of the streamlined mechanism in September 2023,

a total of six officers were issued with Section 12 Notification. Section 12 action was suspended (Note 2) in one of the cases due to the officer's improved performance during the specified observation period. One officer has resigned, and one will soon be issued with the Letter-of-Intent since the officer's performance during the specified observation period remained sub-standard. The remaining three officers are still under the specified observation period. There has been no case which reaches the stage of termination of appointment at present. Hence, the average processing time of cases is not available. The streamlined mechanism enhances the efficiency of departments in handling cases of section 12 action through measures such as removing unnecessary procedures. The CSB will continue to oversee and encourage departments to make good use of the streamlined mechanism to terminate the appointment of civil servants with persistent sub-standard performance in a timely manner.

Since September 2023, one officer has been retired in the public interest under the old mechanism. The processing time of that case was about two years and seven months. The CSB will continue to oversee departments to make good use of the streamlined mechanism and step up efforts to monitor their handling of cases, as well as monitoring potential and ongoing cases of section 12 action through departments' quarterly returns. Moreover, the CSB will check with departments proactively the progress of cases which remain outstanding for a prolonged period of time and offer advice.

(4) Subject to satisfactory performance, including conduct, diligence and efficiency, officers normally advance one increment a year within their respective pay scales of their ranks until they reach the maximum point of the scales. Civil servants displaying excellent and outstanding performance will be considered for promotion. For those with remarkable performance and dedication to serving the community, due recognition will be given through various existing commendation schemes for civil servants, including the Chief Executive's Award for Exemplary Performance, the Secretary for the Civil Service's Commendation Award Scheme, the Civil Service Outstanding Service Award Scheme, the Long and Meritorious Service Travel Award Scheme, etc. Bureaux/departments (B/Ds) also give recognition to officers with consistently outstanding service, substantial contributions to B/Ds, etc, through the Commendation Letter Scheme.

The Government maintains a clear and well-structured career development system for civil servants to attract, nurture and retain talents. The Government has put greater emphasis on identifying as early as possible civil servants with potential, commitment and outstanding performance. For officers with shorter years of service, we will enhance training and career management (e.g. arrange appropriate postings, professional and management trainings, Mainland and overseas visits, and secretariat attachments) for them in order to prepare them for effective performance and for taking up higher responsibilities.

Note 1: Under section 12 action, when an officer obtains an overall rating of 4 (and shows signs of further deterioration) on a six-level rating scale in his/her appraisal report, the management should call for an Observation

Appraisal in a specified period of six months. For an overall rating of 5 or worse, the management should call for an Observation Appraisal in a specified period of three months. The processing time of a case of section 12 action counts from the time when the department notifies the officer concerned of the commencement of the observation period to the time when the case is completed.

Note 2: There is a three-year monitoring period in place under the mechanism. Should the officer's performance deteriorate again within the monitoring period resulting in an appraisal with an overall rating of 5 or 6 for a period not less than three months, the Head of Department or Head of Grade may proceed to issue Letter-of-Intent to him without having to go through the observation process.

---

## LCQ1: Devices for enhancing traffic safety of taxis

Following is a question by the Hon Luk Chung-hung and a reply by the Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Lam Sai-hung, in the Legislative Council today (March 27):

Question:

Some members of the taxi trade are of the view that installing closed-circuit television cameras and dash cameras in taxi compartments will be conducive to deterring "black taxis", reducing disputes between passengers and drivers, and strengthening the safeguard for traffic safety. However, it is learnt that the installation and maintenance of such devices involve certain expenses, and as the Government has not provided the trade with financial assistance, the installation of such devices has not been popular yet. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it will consider modelling on the practices of the Mainland and Macao to make it mandatory for all taxis to install a central cloud-based camera system, and stipulate that the relevant footages are restricted to the access of authorised persons only in handling complaints or traffic accidents, and can be adduced as evidence in court where necessary; if it will consider, of the timetable, and whether it will provide the trade with financial assistance; if it will not consider, the reasons for that;

(2) as the Government proposed in July last year that all fleet taxis would have to be installed with traffic safety-related devices (such as dash cameras, global positioning system and safety devices that monitored drivers' driving performance), of the authorities' measures in place to encourage the installation of the same type of devices in non-fleet taxis; and

(3) whether it will discuss with the insurance trade the provision of concessionary premiums for taxis installed with in-vehicle camera systems and dash cameras, so as to further increase the incentives of vehicle owners for installing such devices; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

After consulting the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau, the reply to the Hon Luk Chung-hung's question is as follows.

The Government has all along been highly concerned about taxi services, and has introduced a number of measures to encourage the trade to enhance service quality and driving safety of taxis, thereby strengthening the protection of passengers and other road users.

(1) and (2) In response to the views of the community that the Government should strengthen the regulation of taxi services, the Government has earlier reviewed the overall taxi operation and management, and put forward a series of measures to enhance the personalised point-to-point transport services and promote the healthy development of the taxi trade in the long run. These measures include introducing a taxi fleet regime, as well as a Taxi-Driver-Offence Points System and a two-tier penalty system for certain taxi-driver-related offences that are of a more serious nature. The relevant Bills were passed by the Legislative Council (LegCo) in December 2023. With the relevant legislation coming into force, various new measures have been implemented in phases with a view to enhancing the overall safety standard and service quality of taxis.

Among the aforesaid measures, the taxi fleet regime is a new licensing regime, under which taxi owners may assemble existing taxis and apply to the Transport Department (TD) for a Taxi Fleet Licence. The TD will regulate the operation and management of the taxi fleets through licence conditions, and specify the devices to be installed on the fleet taxis, including dash cameras, closed circuit television systems, and technological devices relating to the enhancement of driving safety, so as to improve driving safety and service standards of fleet taxis. The TD is actively carrying out the preparatory work and plans to invite the trade to apply for Taxi Fleet Licences in April this year, so that fleet taxis may commence operation as soon as possible. We believe that fleet taxis would set a leading and exemplary role in the trade, thereby encouraging non-fleet taxis to have similar devices installed. Meanwhile, the introduction of the taxi fleet regime will also foster healthy competition in the trade and gradually change the trade's ecology through market evolution.

Apart from the taxi fleet regime, the Government has been encouraging the trade to make good use of technology to improve taxi driving safety. For example, the Government launched the \$1 billion Smart Traffic Fund (the Fund) to provide funding support to local organisations or enterprises for

conducting researches and applications of vehicle-related innovation and technology. As of today, the Fund has approved three projects relating to taxi driving safety, including the trial of installing driving safety monitoring systems in taxis to monitor the driving condition and behaviour of drivers, and to issue alerts to remind the drivers when necessary. We will continue to support the study of relevant technological applications and provide appropriate assistance in the process.

The TD will continue to make use of different channels to remind taxi drivers to comply with the law, and pay attention to road safety and service quality. At the same time, the TD will work with the Police to raise taxi drivers' awareness of driving safety and combat malpractices of black sheep in the trade by means of law enforcement, publicity and education. To enhance safety and quality of taxi services, since October 1, 2020, all applicants for a full taxi driving licence must attend and complete a taxi driver pre-service course and obtain a course certificate within a specified period of time, in addition to passing the relevant test, before they can be issued with a full driving licence. Such course helps increase taxi drivers' awareness of driving safety and equip them with knowledge of passenger service and skills in customer service. We believe that the package of measures mentioned above is conducive to improving taxi safety and quality, thereby offering better protection for passengers and enhancing their riding experience.

During the earlier discussion of the taxi-related Bills at the LegCo Bills Committee meetings, some Members advised that the Government should consider mandating the installation of a central cloud-based camera system in all taxi compartments, so as to facilitate the retrieval of relevant video files by law enforcement authorities as objective corroborative evidence to protect the interests of both drivers and passengers in case of disputes, and help improve the driving safety of taxis. In view of the above, the Government has commenced a study earlier this year to explore the feasibility of such recommendation and other related matters. We plan to consult the taxi trade within this year with a view to reaching a consensus on whether this mandatory measure should be implemented.

(3) The Government supports the taxi trade in taking appropriate measures to enhance its safety standard and management quality, thereby reducing the risk associated with underwriting taxi insurance at source. If taxi owners or companies install and use cameras, safety monitoring devices and dash cameras in their taxis, and provide full records to insurers when making insurance claims, this may facilitate insurers' risk differentiation for making underwriting decisions and setting premium levels for individual policies more accurately.

To this end, all parties concerned have been in close communication and collaboration. Relevant bureaux and departments, together with the Insurance Authority, met with LegCo Members and representatives of the insurance industry earlier to discuss the use of technology to reduce the risks associated with taxi traffic accidents with a view to easing the burden of insurance premium on the taxi trade.

We note that some insurance companies have already been offering discounts on insurance premiums and lower deductibles, etc, for taxis equipped with driving safety devices. However, the insurance industry reflected that not many taxis have accepted such offers, and submission of inaccurate or insufficient information and records was also observed. The Government will continue to engage with all parties and encourage the taxi trade to step up their efforts in enhancing driving safety and reducing the risk of taxi accidents at source, so as to foster the long-term and sustainable development of both the taxi trade and taxi insurance industry.

Thank you, President.

---

## **Hong Kong Academy of Finance admits participants for the Financial Leaders Programme 2024**

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Academy of Finance (AoF) announced the admission of 21 senior executives for the Financial Leaders Programme (FLP) 2024 today (March 27). The 21 participants come from a diverse spectrum of financial sub-sectors including banking, insurance, securities and asset management, professional services, fintech and financial regulatory bodies.

The AoF launched the FLP in 2022, with the aim to inspire and nurture the next generation of senior financial leaders for Hong Kong, equipping them with a mindset to lead, enhancing their understanding of financial issues from macro and systemic perspectives, as well as expanding their professional network.

The FLP offers a unique opportunity for participants to engage in dialogue with top leaders in financial services and other sectors. Each year, the FLP admits around 20 promising financial talents from a diverse background at approximately two levels below the CEO position. It is conducted on a part-time basis and lasts for about nine months. So far, 42 participants have graduated from the FLP.

The 2024 Programme was open for application between November 15 and December 17, 2023, receiving enthusiastic response and a number of high-quality applications. Following a competitive selection process, the Membership Committee of the AoF approved the admission of 21 applicants.

Further information about the FLP and the 2024 cohort are available on

the [AoF website](#).

---

## [Hongkong Post to issue 2023 Prestige Annual Stamp Album and 2023 Annual Stamp Pack \(with photo\)](#)

Hongkong Post announced today (March 27) that the 2023 Prestige Annual Stamp Album (Ordinary Version) and the 2023 Annual Stamp Pack will be released for sale at ShopThruPost ([shopthrupost.hongkongpost.hk](http://shopthrupost.hongkongpost.hk)) and 37 philatelic offices from 8am tomorrow (March 28). The 2023 Prestige Annual Stamp Album (Deluxe Version) will be put on sale at ShopThruPost on the same day.

The stamp issues released by Hongkong Post in 2023 encompassed a variety of themes, ranging from local culture, natural landscape, development of the city, transport system and so on. The rich variety of interesting topics, each demonstrating the ingenuity of the designers and having great significance, captured the attention of stamp collectors and the general public alike.

The 2023 Prestige Annual Stamp Album is a collectible with exquisite designs and of great commemorative value. The 2023 Prestige Annual Stamp Album (Ordinary Version), priced at \$898, contains a complete collection of special/commemorative stamps, stamp sheetlets and souvenir sheets issued by Hongkong Post in 2023, while the Deluxe Version, priced at \$998, additionally comes with a certificate signed by the Postmaster General and a unique serial number. The 2023 Annual Stamp Pack, priced at \$328, contains all special stamps (except stamp sheetlets and souvenir sheets) issued by Hongkong Post during the year.

By browsing through the album and stamp pack, stamp enthusiasts can recall the diversified stamp topics in the past year, which are eye-pleasing items for true philatelists to enjoy at leisure.

Information about the 2023 Prestige Annual Stamp Album and the 2023 Annual Stamp Pack is available on the Hongkong Post Stamps website ([stamps.hongkongpost.hk](http://stamps.hongkongpost.hk)) and the Hongkong Post mobile app.



2023 Prestige Annual Stamp Album & Annual Stamp Pack  
2023年珍貴郵票冊及郵票套摺



2023 Prestige Annual Stamp Album (Ordinary Version)  
2023年珍貴郵票冊 (精裝版)

2023 Annual Stamp Pack  
2023年郵票套摺



2023 Prestige Annual Stamp Album (Deluxe Version)  
2023年珍貴郵票冊 (珍藏版)

---

## LCQ20: Barrier-free taxis

Following is a question by the Hon Nixie Lam and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Lam Sai-hung, in the Legislative Council today (March 27):

Question:

Regarding barrier-free taxis, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the respective numbers and percentages of urban, New Territories and Lantau barrier-free taxis in Hong Kong at present;
- (2) as it has been reported that electric wheelchairs are relatively large in size and not all barrier-free taxis are electric wheelchair accessible, whether the authorities have kept the number of barrier-free taxis which are electric wheelchair accessible; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (3) as the Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address proposed that \$50 million would be earmarked to subsidise the trade to purchase wheelchair accessible electric taxis, of the support measures apart from such subsidy the Government has introduced to the taxi trade and drivers respectively to promote the popularisation of barrier-free taxis; whether it will draw up a timetable for increasing the number of barrier-free taxis; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (4) as there are views that, in the light of the road conditions and topography of Hong Kong, the models of barrier-free taxis which allow wheelchair users to directly board and alight from them via their rear ends

are more suitable for use in Hong Kong, but the existing taxi models available in the community are unable to cater for the needs of wheelchair users, whether the Government will strike a balance between road safety and the travel needs of wheelchair users, and consider allowing taxis, by amending the legislation, to be suitably modified to cater for the needs of wheelchair users;

(5) whether it has collaborated with the taxi trade in exploring with the manufacturers concerned the types of barrier-free taxis suitable for use in Hong Kong; if so, of the details; if not, how it meets the demands of wheelchair users for barrier-free taxis; and

(6) in order to facilitate wheelchair users' transfer between buses and barrier-free taxis, whether the authorities will explore the feasibility of setting up taxi pick-up/drop-off points at locations in the vicinity of large-scale bus-bus interchanges; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

â€‹The reply to the Hon Nixie Lam's question is as follows:

The Government is committed to the concept of "Transport for All", and has been improving public transport facilities and promoting a barrier-free transport system in collaboration with various public transport operators to facilitate the accessibility of public transport services for persons with disabilities and elderly persons.

(1) and (2) At present, there are 18 163 taxis in Hong Kong, of which 15 250 are urban taxis, 2 838 are New Territories (NT) taxis and 75 are Lantau taxis. As at end February 2024, about 4 700 taxis are wheelchair accessible. The relevant figures are tabulated below:

Number of wheelchair accessible taxis (percentage among the total number of the respective type of taxis)			
Urban taxis	NT taxis	Lantau taxis	Total
4 196 (27.5 per cent)	495 (17.4 per cent)	6 (8 per cent)	4 697 (25.9 per cent)

The design of the wheelchair accessible taxi models available in the market vary, including the height restriction inside the compartment and the maximum loading capacity of the wheelchair ramp. Since different electric wheelchair models vary in dimensions and weights, and the weight and height of wheelchair users may also vary to a certain extent, it is difficult to generalise which taxi model is suitable for access by electric wheelchairs. Passengers may choose the suitable taxi model based on their individual circumstances.

(3) Under the concept of "Transport for All", the Government has been actively encouraging the taxi trade to introduce more wheelchair accessible taxis and different models of such taxis, so as to provide more options for wheelchair users and facilitate their transportation needs. The Government also announced in the Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address that \$50 million has been earmarked to subsidise the trade to purchase wheelchair accessible electric taxis.

To further improve the taxi service quality, the Government will soon introduce a taxi fleet regime, under which existing taxis may form a fleet and apply to the Transport Department (TD) for a Taxi Fleet Licence. The TD will regulate the operation and management of the taxi fleets through license conditions, and specify that the fleet must include a certain number of wheelchair accessible taxis so as to facilitate travelling by wheelchair users. The TD is actively carrying out the preparatory work and plans to invite the trade to apply for Taxi Fleet Licences in April this year, so that fleet taxis may commence operation as soon as possible. We expect that more wheelchair accessible taxis will come into service in phases.

â€‹

(4) and (5) To ensure passenger safety and road safety, any vehicle modifications must comply with relevant safety standards relating to vehicle construction (e.g. wheelchair tie-down systems and user restraining systems) as stipulated in the Road Traffic Ordinance (Cap. 374) and its subsidiary legislation. Provided that the above statutory requirements are fulfilled, taxis which are currently not wheelchair accessible can be retrofitted with wheelchair accessible devices through modifications.

The TD has all along been open to the introduction of wheelchair accessible taxi models by the taxi trade or vehicle suppliers. The TD will also continue to maintain communication with the taxi trade and various vehicle suppliers to assist them in understanding the relevant standards and vetting procedures, and will help co-ordinate the trade's efforts in identifying models suitable for use on the roads in Hong Kong as and when necessary.

(6) The Government has been designating taxi pick-up and drop-off points across the territory and, where traffic situations allow, relaxing some no-stopping restrictions for taxis to pick-up or drop-off passengers, so as to facilitate riding of taxis by passengers.

Bus-Bus Interchanges (BBIs) are interchange stops for passengers to switch between different bus routes. The BBIs have relatively high utilisation (especially during peak hours), and most of them face certain geographical and spatial constraints. In considering whether it is appropriate to set up taxi pick-up and drop-off points at an individual BBI, the TD has to carefully assess all relevant factors (including the utilisation of the BBIs concerned, the provision of passenger facilities, the circulation space for buses and passengers) so as to avoid affecting the daily operation of the BBIs.