

Transcript of remarks by SFH at media session

Following is the transcript of remarks made by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, after attending a radio programme today (March 2):

Reporter: With the return to work of civil servants and many people in the private sector, do you think it will increase the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in the community?

Secretary for Food and Health: The Government's decision of progressively having some people returning to work and also starting some of the public services has balanced the expectation of the people and taken into account the current situation. Obviously, there will be some risk but the Government – the Civil Service Bureau – has already been working together with all the department heads in looking into the flexibility in such as working hours and lunch hours, and also other measures that can be taken to protect colleagues when they are providing services to the public and going to work. For example, now in government buildings, the temperature of people would have to be taken before they enter the building. There are also other hygiene measures at government offices. So, everybody should be very vigilant. For example, when they go to lunch, the advice is not to have lunch together, use more delivery services, and not gather together. The issue of social distancing is still very important for people to observe. Using appropriate protective equipment, such as masks and also other personal protective clothing, when providing services are also important. All the department heads, as I understand, have already worked on the specific services that each department will be providing and sending out press releases to highlight those services.

Reporter: Did the Government consult any of its own medical experts when they made this decision?

Secretary for Food and Health: The Chief Executive has an expert advisory group and this issue has been discussed with our experts during the previous meetings. The experts' advice is to provide more flexibility. The protection as well as on how to maintain social distancing in a flexible manner when people start to work or to provide public services have also been discussed.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)