

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(3) 79/15-16

**Paper for the House Committee meeting
of 30 October 2015**

**Questions scheduled for the
Legislative Council meeting of 4 November 2015**

Questions by:

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|------|--|-------------------------------|
| (1) | Hon WONG Yuk-man | (Oral reply) |
| (2) | Hon Frederick FUNG | (Oral reply) |
| (3) | Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN | (Oral reply) |
| (4) | Hon Kenneth LEUNG | (Oral reply) |
| (5) | Hon Gary FAN | (Oral reply) |
| (6) | Hon Cyd HO | (Oral reply)(New question) |
| | <i>(Replacing her previous question)</i> | |
| (7) | Dr Hon LAM Tai-fai | (Written reply)(New question) |
| | <i>(Replacing his previous question)</i> | |
| (8) | Hon TANG Ka-piu | (Written reply) |
| (9) | Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG | (Written reply) |
| (10) | Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung | (Written reply) |
| (11) | Hon Tony TSE | (Written reply) |
| (12) | Hon CHAN Hak-kan | (Written reply) |
| (13) | Hon WU Chi-wai | (Written reply) |
| (14) | Dr Hon Elizabeth QUAT | (Written reply) |
| (15) | Hon Emily LAU | (Written reply) |
| (16) | Hon Steven HO | (Written reply) |
| (17) | Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung | (Written reply) |
| (18) | Hon Paul TSE | (Written reply) |
| (19) | Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki | (Written reply) |
| (20) | Dr Hon LEUNG Ka-lau | (Written reply) |
| (21) | Hon Alice MAK | (Written reply) |
| (22) | Hon CHAN Han-pan | (Written reply) |

註 :

NOTE :

議員將採用這種語言提出質詢

Member will ask the question in this language

Honouring the pledges relating to employee benefits
in the election manifesto of the Chief Executive

(6) Hon Cyd HO (Oral reply)

The incumbent Chief Executive (“CE”) made the following two pledges relating to employee benefits in his election manifesto, which I quote: “we will adopt measures to progressively reduce the proportion of accrued benefits attributed to employer’s contribution in the Mandatory Provident Fund account that can be applied by the employer to offset long-service or severance payments” and “a special committee ... will be set up to follow up on the study on standard working hours conducted by the current administration. This committee will examine issues relating to ... legislative proposals on standard working hours”. Only 20 months are now left in CE’s term of office, but the Executive Authorities have not yet submitted the legislative timetable concerned to this Council. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether it knows the number of Mandatory Provident Fund (“MPF”) accounts from which employers withdrew the accrued benefits derived from their contributions made for their employees to offset long-service or severance payments payable to the employees concerned under the Employment Ordinance (“the offsetting arrangement”) in each year since the implementation of the MPF scheme, and the relevant amounts of money involved, as well as the respective percentages of such amounts in the total amount of accrued benefits derived from employers’ contributions before withdrawal; the number of MPF accounts from which the accrued benefits were withdrawn more than once;
- (2) as CE indicated at the Question and Answer Session of this Council held on the 22nd of last month that, at this stage, he could not “make any pledge or state explicitly or implicitly the approach to be adopted by the Government” in respect of the abolition of the offsetting arrangement, of the reasons why the Government took such an attitude; whether one of the reasons is that “confidential information is involved”; if so, why the timing for CE to fulfil his election pledges is a piece of confidential information; and
- (3) of the channels for the authorities to collect views from employees and the business sector on the abolition of the offsetting arrangement; the authorities’ measures to ensure that the relevant legislative work will be completed within the term of office of the current Legislative Council or the incumbent CE’s term of office, so as to honour the pledges made by CE in his election manifesto in relation to standard working hours and the abolition of the offsetting arrangement; of the authorities’ plans to resolve the problem of employees’ MPF being gnawed by the offsetting arrangement should the business sector refuse to abolish it, and to ensure that the Government will take the responsibility of safeguarding the retirement protection of employees?

Incidents of excessive lead content in drinking water

(7) Dr Hon LAM Tai-fai (Written reply)

It has been over three months since the occurrence of incidents in which the drinking water for households of public rental housing (“PRH”) estates was found to have a lead content exceeding the provisional guideline value set out in the World Health Organization’s “Guidelines for Drinking-Water Quality” (“incidents of excessive lead content in drinking water”). The problem has even spread to schools. According to the latest information released, the Government has completed sampling tests on the drinking water for all PRH estates completed in or after 2005, among which the drinking water samples from 11 estates were found to have an excessive lead content. The Government is now conducting sampling tests on the drinking water for those housing estates completed before 2005. Besides, the Government has conducted sampling tests on the drinking water in 414 kindergartens and 28 schools, with drinking water samples from six kindergartens being found to have an excessive lead content. Following that, one more secondary school was also found to have excessive lead content in its drinking water. Since 11 July, the Hospital Authority (“HA”) has been arranging blood tests for the more easily affected groups (namely children aged below six, lactating women and pregnant women) residing in the affected estates, and the scope of blood tests has subsequently been extended, on a discretionary basis, to children of full age below eight. HA has completed tests on blood lead level for a total of 4 913 residents, and 3.3% (i.e. 163 residents) of which were found to have borderline elevated blood lead level. In response to these incidents, the Water Supplies Department (“WSD”) and the Housing Authority have formed a task force and a review committee respectively. The preliminary findings of the investigations conducted by the task force confirmed that leaded solder joints of pipe components were the cause of the excessive lead content in drinking water of Kai Ching Estate and Kwai Luen Estate Phase 2. Also, in its interim review report, the review committee pointed out that all of the drinking water samples taken from estates which had not used solder joints did not have an excessive lead content. Moreover, the Chief Executive in Council appointed on 13 August a Commission of Inquiry into Excess Lead Found in Drinking Water (“the Commission”). The Commission is expected to submit its report within nine months. The Government explains that the occurrence of incidents of excessive lead content in drinking water is the result of insufficient awareness among the various relevant industries of the implications of lead in drinking water and lead on human health. Such remarks have aroused quite a number of repercussions in the community. There are comments that the way the Government handles the incidents of excessive lead content in drinking water will directly affect its popularity rating and will easily turn into a political bomb. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the total expenditure incurred so far in the installation of water filters for more than 8 000 affected households; the number of households for

whom water filters have not been installed (with a breakdown by name of estate);

- (2) as the authorities have indicated that they will replace, on a free-of-charge basis, the filter cores for the households concerned within two years, whether they have estimated the total expenditure needed; if they have, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (3) of the number of bottled distilled water supplied to affected households so far and the total expenditure involved;
- (4) when it will stop supplying bottled distilled water to affected households;
- (5) as the authorities will arrange for the replacement of the substandard water pipes in common areas and rental flats of affected estates, of the details of the project, including the commencement and completion dates of such works, as well as the estimated expenditure (with a breakdown by name of housing estate);
- (6) as the authorities have indicated that they will conduct water tests again for those households for whom water filters have been installed, how the authorities will handle the situation in which the drinking water is once again found to have an excessive lead content;
- (7) whether it will provide long-term medical support to children and pregnant women who have been found to have elevated blood lead levels; if it will, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (8) whether it will request contractors of the estates concerned to compensate the affected households; if it will, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (9) whether it will request the contractors of the estates concerned who have contravened the relevant requirements to refund to the Government the payments made to such contractors for the plumbing works; if it will, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; whether it will consider instituting prosecutions against such contractors; if it will, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (10) whether it will introduce more stringent penalties in future PRH estate works contracts so as to deter contractors and their sub-contractors from contravening requirements when carrying out the works; if it will, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (11) of the latest work progress of the aforesaid task force, review committee, and the Commission formed to investigate the incidents of excessive lead content in drinking water;
- (12) whether it has followed up on the current quality of the drinking water in those schools (including primary schools, secondary schools and kindergartens) where the drinking water has been found to have an excessive lead content; if it has, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

- (13) whether it has assessed if public confidence and trust in the Government have been undermined by the incidents of excessive lead content in drinking water; if it has, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (14) whether it has assessed if the incidents of excessive lead content in drinking water have caused a drop in the popularity ratings of the Government and the relevant officials; if it has, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?