

# 立法會 *Legislative Council*

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## **Panel on Security**

**Updated background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat  
for the meeting on 13 April 2018**

### **Anti-drug efforts in Hong Kong**

#### **Purpose**

This paper provides background information on the Administration's anti-drug efforts and summarizes the discussions of the Panel on Security ("the Panel") on the subject since the Fourth Legislative Council ("LegCo").

#### **Background**

2. According to the Administration, its anti-drug policy is embodied in a "five-pronged" approach, namely, preventive education and publicity, treatment and rehabilitation, law enforcement and legislation, external cooperation and research. It has been drawn up on the advice of the Action Committee Against Narcotics ("ACAN") and its sub-committees.

3. The Chief Executive appointed in October 2007 the former Secretary for Justice to lead the Task Force on Youth Drug Abuse ("the Task Force") to tackle the youth drug abuse problem. The Task Force published a report in November 2008 with some 70 recommendations. An inter-departmental working group chaired by the Commissioner for Narcotics was set up in early 2009 to steer, coordinate and monitor the implementation of the recommendations of the Task Force.

4. The Chief Executive announced in his Policy Address 2011-2012 that stakeholders and the public would be consulted on the way forward in introducing the community-based drug testing<sup>1</sup> scheme. In September 2013,

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<sup>1</sup> The community-based approach was named as compulsory drug testing in the report the Task Force on Youth Drug Abuse.

ACAN launched a four-month public consultation exercise on the RESCUE<sup>2</sup> Drug Testing Scheme ("RDT Scheme"), which proposed for the community to consider RDT as an additional measure to help identify drug abusers as early as possible, and to refer them to social workers or healthcare professionals for counselling and treatment programmes. After the consultation period, ACAN published a report on the results of its public consultation exercise and ACAN's recommendations, and briefed the Panel on the report in July 2014.

## **Deliberations of the Panel**

### Drug situation and anti-drug work

5. While noting that the drug history of newly reported drug abuse cases had decreased from 5.9 years in 2015 to 4.6 years in 2016, members generally considered that the problem of hidden drug abuse was still serious. They were mostly concerned about the relatively high proportion of newly reported drug abusers being young adults. Members called on the Administration to examine the effectiveness of the measures in place to combat drug abuse. The Administration advised that although the declining drug trend reflected the effectiveness of the anti-drug strategy and the concerted efforts of various sectors in the community, the Administration acknowledged that hidden drug abuse was still a concern. The most common reasons for taking drugs, including those in respect of drug-abusing young adults, were to relieve boredom, depression or stress and to identify with peers. The Administration had been adopting a five-pronged anti-drug approach to address the drug situation.

6. The Administration further advised that the mainstay of the drug prevention efforts included measures to facilitate early identification of drug abusers and intervention through 11 Counselling Centres for Psychotropic Substance Abusers and district youth outreaching social work teams. Furthermore, some non-governmental organizations ("NGOs") had adopted novel means to reach hidden drug abusers (e.g. through online platforms, mobile phone applications as well as outreach work). NGOs were also encouraged to make funding applications to the Beat Drugs Fund for launching new programmes to identify hidden drug abusers.

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<sup>2</sup> "RESCUE" is an acronym for "Reasonable and Early Screening for Caring and Universal Engagement".

### Healthy School Programme with a Drug Testing Component

7. Members noted that since the launch of the voluntary Healthy School Programme with a Drug Testing Component ("HSP(DT)") in 2011, the number of schools participating in the Programme had increased from 43 in the 2011-2012 school year to 122 in the 2016-2017. Considering relatively low participation rate of schools in HSP(DT), members were concerned about the effectiveness and way forward of the Programme. According to the Administration, an independent evaluation research on HSP(DT) was conducted in the 2015-2016 school year and the research results affirmed the effectiveness of the Programme as an anti-drug education initiative.

8. Noting from the research findings that the level of support of non-participating schools for HSP(DT) was lower than that of participating schools, some members queried whether HSP(DT) should continue. According to the Administration, the research findings indicated that students, parents, principals and teachers of schools which had participated in HSP(DT) for a longer duration (e.g. more than three years) and hence had a deeper understanding of HSP(DT) were highly supportive of HSP(DT), as contrasted to non-participating schools in which the support level was comparatively lower and the students of these schools and their parents had a relatively limited understanding of HSP(DT). In this connection, the Administration accepted the recommendation of the research team to continue to implement HSP(DT). The Administration would step up promotion of HSP(DT) to non-participating schools.

### The proposed RESCUE Drug Testing Scheme

9. Some members expressed grave concern that under the proposed RDT Scheme, when there were reasonable grounds based on strong circumstantial conditions to suspect that a person had taken dangerous drugs, law enforcement officers would require that person to undergo a drug test. These members were concerned that the mandatory approach of RDT would result in more cases of hidden drug abuse and infringe the privacy and human rights of individuals. Some other members, however, expressed support for RDT. These members considered that RDT would provide an extra entry point of intervention before the drug had inflicted irreversible damage on the body of drug abusers, hence reducing the long-term medical and social cost associated with disability arising from drug abuse.

10. Some members were concerned about the way forward regarding the proposed RDT Scheme. The Administration advised that ACAN launched a first stage public consultation exercise on the proposed RDT Scheme in 2013 and submitted in 2014 its report and recommendations, which had been

accepted by the Administration. There were divergent views on the proposed RDT Scheme and the Administration did not have any timetable at present for the second stage consultation on the proposed RDT Scheme.

### **Relevant papers**

11. A list of the relevant papers on the LegCo website is in the **Appendix**.

Council Business Division 2  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
9 April 2018

**Relevant papers on  
Anti-drug efforts in Hong Kong**

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>Paper</b>
Panel on Security	2.12.2008 (Item IV)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
Legislative Council	18.3.2009	<a href="#">Official Record of Proceedings (Question 16)</a>
Panel on Security	5.5.2009 (Item VIII)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
Legislative Council	13.5.2009	<a href="#">Official Record of Proceedings (Question 9)</a>
Panel on Education	8.9.2009 (Item I)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
Panel on Security	25.11.2009 (Item I)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
Panel on Security	2.3.2010 (Item V)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
Legislative Council	10.3.2010	<a href="#">Official Record of Proceedings (Question 2)</a>
Panel on Security	11.11.2010 (Item II)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
Legislative Council	19.1.2011	<a href="#">Official Record of Proceedings (Question 12)</a>
Panel on Security	7.2.2012 (Item V)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
Panel on Security	5.6.2012 (Item V)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>Paper</b>
Panel on Security	28.1.2013 (Item I)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
Panel on Security	5.4.2013 (Item IV)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
Legislative Council	30.10.2013	<a href="#">Official Record of Proceedings (Question 9)</a>
Panel on Security	5.11.2013 (Item IV)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
Panel on Security	7.1.2014 (Item IV)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
Panel on Security	8.4.2014 (Item IV)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
Panel on Security	8.7.2014 (Item III)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
Panel on Security	5.5.2015 (Item IV)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
Legislative Council	28.10.2015	<a href="#">Official Record of Proceedings (Question 18)</a>
Panel on Security	3.5.2016 (Item V)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
Panel on Security	11.4.2017 (Item VI)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>