

Our Ref.: FEHD P CON 55-60/10/16

Your Ref.: CB4/PAC/R71

4 January 2019

(By e-mail : ahychu@legco.gov.hk)

Mr Anthony Chu
Clerk, Public Accounts Committee
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Mr Chu,

Public Accounts Committee
Consideration of Chapter 6 of the Director of Audit's Report No. 71
Barrier-free facilities at government premises

Thank you for your letter dated 17 December 2018 requesting response and/or information in writing on matters set out in the Appendix of your letter. Our submission is attached at **Annex** for your perusal, please.

Yours sincerely,


(Raymond Tam)

for Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Enclosure

c.c. Secretary for Labour and Welfare	(Fax: 2537 3539)
Secretary for Food and Health	(Fax: 2869 4376)
Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury	(Fax: 2147 5239)
Director of Leisure and Cultural Services	(Fax: 2602 4884)
Director of Buildings	(Fax: 2868 3248)
Director of Architectural Services	(Fax: 2810 7341)
Director of Audit	(Fax: 2583 9063)

**Response to Enquiries from
LegCo Public Accounts Committee
on Audit Report No. 71 (Chapter 6)**

Barrier-free facilities at government premises

Q17. As referred to in paragraph 3.6, both Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) and Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) did not maintain a complete and updated list of concerned barrier-free facilities. Why was this case? What measures will be taken to address this problem?

A17: FEHD has maintained lists of barrier-free facilities in respect of the Administration and Development Branch, Centre for Food Safety and Private Columbaria Affairs Office as well as a list of accessible toilets (which is published on FEHD's website) under the management of the Environmental Hygiene Branch of the Department. For those venues which do not have frequent public interface (such as refuse collection points in remote areas (in villages or being temporary structures, with simply rubbish bins on site)), lists of barrier-free facilities have not been maintained. Information on barrier-free facilities at other FEHD venues is maintained by the respective venue management.

In order to compile complete and updated lists of barrier-free facilities at venues under FEHD's management, we are reviewing the existing access audit checklists, in consultation with professional departments, to ensure that all necessary barrier-free facilities are included in the checklists. A new round of access audits will then be conducted using the revised checklists. Results of the access audits will be used to compile the lists of barrier-free facilities with relevant information to be promulgated on FEHD's website by phases from mid-2019. The lists of barrier-free facilities at venues will be updated on a regular basis with reference to the result of the annual access audits thereafter.

Q18. According to paragraphs 3.13 to 3.16, the records of the access audits of LCSD and FEHD were inaccurate, please explain whether this was caused by human negligence, and what measures have been/will be taken by LCSD and FEHD to improve the problem?

A18: To facilitate the Access Officers (AOs) and their assistants to perform their duties in relation to the accessibility issues at venues, a departmental Administrative Circular and Operating Manual for Access

Officers and their Assistants (including the audit checklist) were issued in April 2017. The access audits referred to in the Audit Report were the first access audits conducted by the AOs and their assistants covering the period from April 2017 to March 2018 by using the audit checklist promulgated in April 2017. The inaccuracies found in the records of the access audits might be attributable to the fact that some staff members were not familiar with the aforementioned Circular and the audit checklist issued in 2017.

We will review the classification of venues and the audit checklists in consultation with the professional departments to decide on the scope and categories of venues provided with barrier-free facilities and ensure that the requirements of Design Manual 2008 on different types of venues are included in the checklists as appropriate. We will also review the departmental guidelines and enhance the training for AOs and their assistants to facilitate them to conduct the access audits according to the relevant guidelines.

Q19. With reference to paragraphs 3.20 to 3.22, please provide the follow-up actions that will be taken by LCSD and FEHD to correct deficiencies identified by Audit in the provision, maintenance and control of barrier-free facilities managed by FEHD and LCSD and the implementation timeline of the follow-up actions.

A19: On cases of deficiencies in provision and maintenance of barrier-free facilities identified by Audit, FEHD has already followed up with relevant government departments and maintenance agents responsible for the maintenance works to fix or replace the facilities as appropriate. We will also strengthen regular inspection of barrier-free facilities in our venues and follow up on those facilities requiring repair or replacement.

On management and control of barrier-free facilities, we have taken action to clear obstruction and blockage to these facilities. We have also reminded district offices and venue management not covered by the Audit Report to step up the management and monitoring work to ensure the availability of barrier-free facilities for use by persons with disabilities. We will strengthen the training for AOs and their assistants with a view to enhancing their awareness, knowledge and skills in handling accessibility issues (please see our reply to Question No. 20 below for details). Supervisory checks would also be conducted at regular intervals to ensure the required performance standards are sustained.

Q20. According to paragraph 3.36, as of 30 June 2018, 52 out of 101 AOs of FEHD and 183 out of 347 of LCSO had not attended seminars/trainings on accessibility issues.

(a) What is the frequency of seminars held on accessibility issues by FEHD & LCSO, and whether the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB) has set any guidelines in this regard?

A20(a): Seminar run by the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) on the anti-discrimination ordinances, including the Disability Discrimination Ordinance, has been included in the induction training programme for the new recruits in the Health Inspector, Hawker Control Officer and Foreman Grades in FEHD. Training seminars for AOs are also organized in collaboration with EOC once to twice a year. We also plan to conduct in-house training seminars in early 2019 to further enhance AOs' awareness, knowledge and skills in handling accessibility issues. We will review the effectiveness of this new training initiative and consider if additional sessions would be organized to meet training demand in due course.

Apart from the aforementioned departmental training, AOs are also nominated for training seminars on accessibility organized by LWB and Civil Service Training and Development Institute (CSTDI) as and when appropriate. Other web-based training materials and information on accessibility issues launched by LWB and CSTDI are available in the Government intranet for AOs' reference.

According to the guidelines of LWB, Access Co-ordinators in bureaux/departments should arrange suitable training for their AOs, in collaboration with EOC and CSTDI, as appropriate. Such training should cover practical guidance on handling accessibility issues, assistance to persons with disabilities having regard to the operational circumstances of individual departments and venues, and proper ways to help persons with disabilities to evacuate from the venue in case of emergency. The frequency of seminar is not specified in the guidelines.

(b) Is it compulsory or voluntary for AOs to join, and whether LWB has set any guidelines in this regard?

A20(b): According to the guidelines of LWB, Access Co-ordinators in bureaux/departments should arrange suitable training for their AOs, in

collaboration with EOC and CSTDI, as appropriate. Such training should cover practical guidance on handling accessibility issues, assistance to persons with disabilities having regard to the operational circumstances of individual departments and venues, and proper ways to help persons with disabilities to evacuate from the venue in case of emergency. To better ensure that AOs would receive the necessary training for handling accessibility issues, commencing from January 2019, FEHD will maintain a register of those AOs who have not yet participated in accessibility training, and remind their supervisors that officers assigned with AO duties should be nominated for such training as early as practicable and be encouraged to access the training materials and information set out in item (a) above.

(c) If it is voluntary, how could B/Ds ensure their AOs would understand the latest requirements of the issues?

A20(c): Supervisors of the venue management are from time to time invited to nominate their AOs to participate in the training seminars on accessibility organized by the LWB, FEHD and CSTDI as appropriate. Apart from attending these training seminars, AOs may also keep themselves abreast of the latest development on accessibility issues through access to the web-based training materials and information as set out in item (a) above.

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
December 2018