

**For information  
on 18 February 2019**

## **Legislative Council Panel on Health Services**

### **Promotion of Breastfeeding**

#### **PURPOSE**

This paper briefs Members on the Government's measures to promote, protect and support breastfeeding.

#### **BACKGROUND**

2. The Government has endeavored to promote, protect and support breastfeeding. The Food and Health Bureau ("FHB") set up the Committee on Promotion of Breastfeeding (the "Committee") in April 2014 under the Chairmanship of the Under Secretary for Food and Health. Members include representatives from relevant professional healthcare bodies, academia as well as representatives of the organisations that have participated in the promotion of breastfeeding. The Committee provides recommendations on strategies and action plans to further strengthen the promotion, protection and support for breastfeeding. Its objectives are to enhance the sustainability of breastfeeding and promote breastfeeding as a norm for baby care widely accepted by the general public.

3. Through implementing the direction and measures recommended by the Committee, FHB and the Department of Health ("DH") have been promoting breastfeeding through a multi-pronged approach, including strengthening publicity and education on breastfeeding; encouraging the adoption of "Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace" policy to support working mothers to continue breastfeeding after returning to work; encouraging public places to become "Breastfeeding Friendly Premises" so that the breastfeeding mothers can breastfeed their children or express milk anytime, anywhere; imposing mandatory requirement for the provision of baby care rooms and

lactation rooms in the sale conditions of government land sale sites for new commercial premises; providing baby care rooms and lactation rooms in suitable new government premises; implementing the voluntary “Hong Kong Code of Marketing of Formula Milk and Related Products and Food Products for Infants and Young Children” (the “HK Code”) and encouraging the trade to formulate marketing strategy according to the principles and aim of the HK Code; and strengthening the surveillance on local breastfeeding situation. Details of the key measures are outlined below.

## **KEY MEASURES IN PROMOTING BREASTFEEDING**

### *Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative*

4. The Baby Friendly Hospital (“BFH”) Initiative is a worldwide programme launched by the World Health Organisation (“WHO”) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (“UNICEF”). Its objective is to remove elements obstructing breastfeeding in medical institutions, including hospitals, clinics and mother and baby centres, and to support more mothers to sustain breastfeeding through the provision of services and guidance.

5. To this end, the Hospital Authority (“HA”) has been implementing the BFH initiative in its eight public hospitals with maternity wards<sup>1</sup> and encouraging them to become BFH in phases. The Queen Elizabeth Hospital and Queen Mary Hospital were accredited BFH in May 2016 and January 2018 respectively. Other hospitals are at various stage of the accreditation process. As part of the BFH Initiative, DH launched in June 2016 a pilot scheme of Baby-Friendly Maternal and Child Health Centre (“MCHC”) Accreditation in three MCHCs, namely, Sai Ying Pun MCHC, Kowloon City MCHC and Yaumatei MCHC. DH will consolidate experience of the pilot scheme and explore extending the BFH initiative to other MCHCs in future.

### *Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace*

6. To provide appropriate support for lactating mothers when they return

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<sup>1</sup> The eight public hospitals with maternity wards are Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Queen Mary Hospital, Prince of Wales Hospital, Kwong Wah Hospital, Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital, Tuen Mun Hospital, United Christian Hospital and Princess Margaret Hospital.

to work and promote an inclusive culture for breastfeeding in the workplace, FHB has been promoting the “Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace” policy in the Government whereby bureaux and departments are encouraged to facilitate lactating staff to continue breastfeeding after returning to work. Facilitation includes allowing lactation breaks to lactating staff for expression of breastmilk for at least one year after childbirth; providing a private space for milk expression; and providing refrigerating facilities for safe storage of expressed breastmilk. So far over 75 bureaux, departments and related organisations have implemented the policy.

7. As regards the private sector, in May 2015, the Secretary for Food and Health issued letters to more than 450 non-governmental organisations and private enterprises to promote and encourage them to implement measures of “Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace”. DH has promulgated the “Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace” policy through various measures including production and broadcasting of Announcements in the Public Interest, development and distribution of guidelines to employers and employees, and conducting briefing sessions to commercial sectors. In July 2015, the Hong Kong Committee for UNICEF, in collaboration with FHB and DH launched the “Say Yes to Breastfeeding” campaign, and promoted breastfeeding support in the community. Further, the Family Council has launched a new award category titled “Awards for Breastfeeding Support” in the Family-Friendly Employers Award Scheme since 2015/16 to commend employers that provide suitable facilities in the workplace to support employees who are breastfeeding. In 2017/18, a total of 592 companies, organisations and government bureaux and departments received the “Awards for Breastfeeding Support”.

### *Provision of Babycare Rooms and Lactation Rooms*

8. The Government has imposed a mandatory requirement for the provision of babycare rooms and lactation rooms in the sale conditions of government land sale sites for new commercial developments<sup>2</sup>. The sale conditions set out the detailed requirements, including the size and number of babycare room(s) and/or lactation room(s) in new commercial developments on land sale sites. Further, the Buildings Department promulgated the updated Practice Note on “Provision of Babycare Rooms and Lactation Rooms in

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<sup>2</sup> “Commercial developments” include office premises and/or retail outlets, eating places and exclude hotels.

Commercial Buildings”<sup>3</sup> in November 2018 to promote the provision of babycare rooms for the public and lactation rooms for staff in private commercial buildings.

9. The Government has been actively promoting the provision of babycare facilities in government offices and public places. The “Advisory Guidelines on Babycare Facilities” were developed in August 2008 to encourage the provision of babycare rooms in public venues managed by the Government. Since then, a total of 324 babycare rooms (as of December 2018) are set up in premises of government departments and organisations (breakdown at **Annex**). To step up the efforts, starting from early 2019, communal lactation rooms for staff as well as communal babycare rooms for the public will be provided in suitable new government premises.

*Hong Kong Code of Marketing of Formula Milk and Related Products and Food Products for Infants and Young Children*

10. The Government promulgated the voluntary “HK Code”<sup>4</sup> in June 2017 to protect breastfeeding and support the optimal feeding of infants and young children under the age of 36 months. Since the launch of the HK Code, the Government has promulgated the HK Code through various channels including a designated website of HK Code, sending e-mails and letters to inform relevant stakeholders, and conducting briefing sessions for traders, as well as those in the health, education and social sectors. DH has commissioned in late 2018 a survey to examine marketing practice of formula milk with reference to HK Code. The scope of the survey includes examining marketing practices in media advertisements (including local advertisements in mass media, internet and social media platforms), health education and product information (such as websites of local manufacturers and distributors of formula milk), and product label (such as containers of formula milk available at local market). The survey is expected to be completed within 2019. The Government will take into account the survey findings in mapping out the way forward of the HK Code.

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<sup>3</sup> The Practice Note on “Provision of Babycare Rooms in Commercial Buildings” was first issued in February 2009.

<sup>4</sup> The HK Code is available at [www.hkcode.gov.hk](http://www.hkcode.gov.hk).

## **CONCLUSION**

11. With increasing awareness about the benefits of breastfeeding, more mothers have opted to breastfeed their child nowadays. There has been increase over the past decade in, for example, the ever breastfeeding rate on hospital discharge and the exclusive breastfeeding rate. Amongst mothers giving birth and public and private hospitals in 2006, 69.6% of them initiated breastfeeding on hospital discharge, whereas nearly nine out of 10 mothers (86.8%) did in 2016. For exclusive breastfeeding rate, 13.3% of the babies born in 2006 was exclusively breastfed at four-month. It has been more than doubled to 30.7% in 2016. The Government will continue to work actively and closely with various sectors and organisations to promote breastfeeding.

12. Members are invited to note the content of this paper.

**Food and Health Bureau  
Department of Health  
Hospital Authority  
February 2019**

**Babycare Rooms in Premises of Government Departments  
and Organisations (as of December 2018)**

<b>Government Departments/Organisations</b>	<b>Type of Premises</b>	<b>Number of Babycare Rooms</b>
Department of Health	Maternal and Child Health Centre	31
	Health Education Centre	1
Hospital Authority (“HA”)	Hospitals and clinics in HA clusters	84
	General out-patient clinics	10
Home Affairs Department	Community halls/centres	8
Housing Department	Shopping centres managed by the Housing Authority	16
Immigration Department	Birth registries	2
	Immigration branch offices	2
	Smart Identity Card Replacement Centres	13
Leisure and Cultural Services Department	Performance venues	5
	Libraries	8
	Museums	6
	Music Office	1
	Leisure venues (Note 1)	84
Airport Authority	Passenger Terminal Building	39
Others	Others (Note 2)	14
<b>Total</b>		<b>324</b>

(Note 1) Including sports centres, swimming pools, sports grounds, stadia, tennis courts, parks, etc.

(Note 2) Including the Central Government Complex, departmental headquarters buildings, Wetland Park, etc.