

政府總部
勞工及福利局

香港添馬添美道
政府總部



LABOUR AND WELFARE BUREAU
GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT

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15 July 2020

Ms Wendy JAN
Clerk-to the Panel on Welfare Services
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central
Hong Kong

Dear Ms JAN,

Panel on Welfare Services Meeting on 11 May 2020
Social Welfare Support Services for Street Sleepers

At the meeting of the Panel on Welfare Services on 11 May 2020, the Government was requested to provide information about the social welfare support measures for street sleepers. The supplementary information is enclosed herewith for Members' reference.

- (a) the total number of street sleepers;
- (b) the number of street sleepers who had given up street sleeping and a breakdown of the reasons for giving up street-sleeping;
- (c) the number of street sleepers approached by the Integrated Services Teams for Street Sleepers and related service units during the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) epidemic;
- (d) the increase in the number of street sleepers in recent months due to the rise in the unemployment rate under the COVID-19 epidemic;

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) has been reaching out and providing services to street sleepers in need through subventing three Integrated Services Teams for Street Sleepers (ISTs) operated by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (including The Salvation Army, St. James' Settlement and Christian Concern for The Homeless Association) and related service units, as

well as collecting service user information. In 2019-20, ISTs and related service units have approached 1 423 street sleepers. During the same period, the number of street sleepers who had given up street sleeping after receiving support service from ISTs is 218. During the pandemic, ISTs continued to conduct outreaching visits so as to identify the social welfare needs of street sleepers and provide them with the services required. ISTs have approached 337 street sleepers between January and March 2020.

SWD does not have breakdown on the reasons for street sleepers giving up street sleeping, and the increase in the number of street sleepers in recent months due to the rise in the unemployment rate under the pandemic.

- (e) whether the Administration would provide rental allowance for street sleepers who were not on CSSA and had difficulties in meeting rental expenses;**

ISTs could make use of SWD's emergency fund for meeting the urgent needs of street sleepers as and when required, such as short-term payment of rent and living costs, rental deposit and other removal expenses.

- (f) the average number of days SWD had taken to process CSSA applications received during the COVID-19 epidemic;**

In general, the application procedures can be completed within four weeks if the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme (CSSA) applicants or their guardians / appointees provide all the necessary information.

- (g) when the Administration would be able to arrange overnight or temporary accommodation for all the 1 423 street sleepers who had been approached by ISTs and related service units in 2019-2020;**


- (h) whether the Administration would provide storage facilities for street sleepers to keep their personal belongings;**

To address the emergency and short-term accommodation needs of street sleepers, SWD subsidises NGOs to provide temporary shelter for street sleepers. During street sleepers' stay in the emergency and short-term accommodation, responsible social workers will provide them with assistance, including identification of more stable accommodation or appropriate residential care service. SWD has no plan to provide storage facilities for street sleepers.

- (i) **whether street sleepers who were required to undergo compulsory quarantine at the temporary accommodation sites, namely Tso Kung Tam Outdoor Recreation Centre, Sai Kung Outdoor Recreation Centre and Lady MacLehose Holiday Village, would be exempted from paying the daily fee of \$200 for accommodation and meal arrangements.**

According to the information provided by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, for the purpose of preventing, combating and alleviating the effects of the public health emergency triggered by COVID-19, the Government announced that starting from 8 February 2020, all people entering Hong Kong from the Mainland shall stay at home or other accommodation for a 14-day compulsory quarantine. Such arrangement was later extended to cover the persons who came from Macao and Taiwan on 25 March. Persons subject to compulsory quarantine under the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap. 599C) will normally be quarantined at home, hotels or other dwelling places. If Hong Kong residents under compulsory quarantine are not able to arrange their own accommodation, they will undergo the compulsory quarantine at a temporary accommodation provided by the Government, i.e. Lady MacLehose Holiday Village, Sai Kung Outdoor Recreation Centre and Tso Kung Tam Outdoor Recreation Centre. A daily charge of \$200 for accommodation and meal arrangement will be levied on the quarantinees who have selected to stay in the temporary accommodation since 17 March. Recipients of CSSA and Portable Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme, subject to SWD's confirmation, may be exempted from the charges. Other than that, all persons admitted into the above temporary accommodations on or after 17 March for compulsory quarantine under Cap. 599C are required to pay the daily fee of \$200 for accommodation and meal arrangements.

Yours sincerely,



(Miss Karen SHING)

for Secretary for Labour and Welfare

cc:

Director of Social Welfare (Attn.: Ms PANG Kit-ling)