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5 July 2021

Clerk to Panel on Public Service
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong
(Attn.: Miss Maggie CHUNG)

Dear Miss CHUNG,

**Legislative Council Panel on Public Service
Letter from Hon Elizabeth QUAT**

Thank you for your letter of 9 June 2021 to the Secretary for the Civil Service, relaying Hon Elizabeth QUAT's request to discuss "the manpower situation of and grade structure review (GSR) for lifeguards" at the Legislative Council Panel on Public Service (PS Panel). My reply is as below:

We have consulted the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) on the issues mentioned in the letter. In the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the LCSD's swimming pools were closed between December 2020 and March 2021. The selection interviews and trade tests for seasonal lifeguards, originally scheduled for the above period, were also suspended. As some public swimming pools and beaches have been reopened starting from 2 April 2021, the selection interviews and trade tests for seasonal lifeguards have been resumed. The recruitment exercise is being expedited and the appointed lifeguards will report for duty gradually to meet the actual operational needs of the aquatic venues reopened. To ensure the safety of swimmers, the LCSD will station sufficient lifeguards at public swimming pools open for service, as well as at gazetted beaches that are provided with lifeguard services. In the past three years, there were a total of 219 rescue cases and seven drowning cases at the LCSD's public swimming pools, gazetted beaches and water sports centres during service. At the time of the incidents, there were sufficient lifeguards on duty at the public swimming pools and beaches concerned.

We understand Members' concerns about the establishment of LCSD's civil service lifeguards and the overall number of lifeguards (including both civil service lifeguards and non-civil service seasonal lifeguards). We note that the LCSD meets the representatives of the two lifeguard unions from time to time concerning the relevant issues. The LCSD has also indicated that they will closely monitor the recruitment situation this year with an open mind. The Civil Service Bureau and representatives of the department concerned will attend the PS Panel meeting in due course to exchange views with Members on this matter. As regards the proposal of conducting a GSR for civil service lifeguards, since the objective of a GSR is to assist the grade concerned in easing proven and persistent recruitment or retention difficulties, or to review the grade concerned when there are significant changes to its work nature, job complexity and responsibilities, a GSR, which does not review the size of establishment of the grade, is not the appropriate measure to tackle the problems Members are concerned with. The civil service lifeguard grade currently has no proven and persistent recruitment and retention difficulties, and its resignation rate has all along been lower than that of the entire civil service. Moreover, there have been no fundamental changes to the work nature, job complexity and responsibilities of civil service lifeguards. At this stage, the need to conduct a GSR has yet to arise.

Yours sincerely,



(Leo LI)
for Secretary for the Civil Service

c.c. Director of Leisure and Cultural Services
(Attn.: Mr. CHAN Ming-cheong, Horman)