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Replies to initial written questions raised by Legislative Council Members in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2022-23

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Security

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CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB001

(Question Serial No. 0256)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau
Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses
Programme: (3) Immigration Control
Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Ms Carol YIP)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The Territory-wide Identity Card Replacement Exercise (Replacement Exercise) commenced on 27 December 2018 and is estimated to complete in 2022. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. whether it is necessary to extend the Replacement Exercise as Smart Identity Card Replacement Centres have suspended their service for a number of times due to the COVID-19 pandemic;
2. if so, for how long? Will the staffing support and expenditure be increased as a result? If not, will it be feasible to implement the Replacement Exercise with the expenditure and manpower as estimated in light of its current progress?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Chun-ying (LegCo internal reference no.: 18)

Reply:

The Territory-wide Identity Card Replacement Exercise (“the Replacement Exercise”) was launched on 27 December 2018 and originally expected to complete by end-2022. In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, the services of 9 Smart Identity Card Replacement Centres were suspended on several occasions in the past two years to reduce the gathering of applicants and the risk of spreading the virus. As the card replacement progress has been affected by the pandemic, the Immigration Department (“ImmD”) will extend the Replacement Exercise to early 2023. To this end, ImmD has obtained approval for extending 956 existing posts (including 353 time-limited civil servant posts and 603 contract staff) and creating 57 new posts (including 3 time-limited civil servant posts and 54 contract staff) in 2022-23 to continue the implementation of the Replacement Exercise.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB002

(Question Serial No. 0390)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Ms Carol YIP)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The Immigration Department receives and handles quite a number of non-refoulement claims every year. In the past 3 years,

1. how many claims were received? What were the nationalities involved?
2. how many claims were determined?
3. how many claims were withdrawn?
4. how many claims were under screening?
5. how many claims were pending judicial review?
6. how many crimes (broken down by police district and crime category) involved claimants whose cases were under screening?
7. what were the Government's expenditures (including legal assistance, accommodation allowance and food assistance), staff arrangement and work details in handling non-refoulement claimants?
8. what were the average administrative fee and legal costs for handling each case?
9. what Government measures were in place to combat the abuse of the related mechanism?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hak-kan (LegCo internal reference no.: 10)

Reply:

(1)-(4) The Government implemented the Unified Screening Mechanism (USM) in March 2014 to screen non-refoulement claims on all applicable grounds in one go. As at the end of February 2022, the number of non-refoulement claims handled by the Immigration Department (ImmD) is set out in the table below. Due to the impact of COVID-19 epidemic, commencement of screening procedures of some claims were held back. The number of new claims received had also increased during the epidemic. ImmD has flexibly deployed manpower and increased resources to expedite the handling of claims.

As at the end of February 2022, apart from 455 claims pending completion of screening by ImmD, there were some 100 cases of which the screening procedures had yet to commence amidst a new wave of the epidemic this year.

Year	Claims received	Claims determined	Claims withdrawn or no further action can be taken	Pending claims
Commencement of the USM				6 699
2014 (March to December)	4 634	826	889	9 618
2015	5 053	2 339	1 410	10 922
2016	3 838	3 218	1 561	9 981
2017	1 843	4 182	1 743	5 899
2018	1 216	5 467	1 102	546
2019	1 213	1 344	149	266
2020	1 223	857	69	563
2021	2 528	2 220	130	741
2022 (January to February)	90	367	9	455
Total	21 638	20 820	7 062	

As at the end of February 2022, ImmD received 21 638 claims and the breakdown by nationality is as follows:

Nationality	No. of claims	Percentage
Vietnam	5 522	25%
India	3 628	17%
Indonesia	3 209	15%
Pakistan	2 735	13%
Bangladesh	1 872	9%
The Philippines	1 691	8%
Nepal	482	2%
Sri Lanka	244	1%
Nigeria	235	1%
Other countries	2 020	9%
Total	21 638	100%

(5) According to the Judiciary, there were 3 727, 2 367 and 1 675 applications for leave to apply for judicial review related to non-refoulement claims filed with the Court of First Instance in 2019, 2020 and 2021 respectively. The Judiciary has all along been adopting a stringent approach in handling leave applications for judicial review. As at 31 January 2022, among the leave applications to apply for judicial review related to non-refoulement claims filed from 2019 to 2021, 1 244 cases were disposed of, with leave granted in only 30 cases, representing 2.4% of the cases disposed of.

(6) According to the Police's record, the numbers of non-ethnic Chinese (NEC) persons on recognizance and issued with Form No. 8 (mostly non-refoulement claimants) who were arrested for criminal offences since 2019 are tabulated below with breakdown by police region/police district:

Police region/ police district	2019	2020	2021	2022 (January to February)
Hong Kong Island Region	121	167	183	20
Central District	40	31	36	2
Wan Chai District	49	80	85	13
Western District	18	34	31	2
Eastern District	14	22	31	3
Kowloon East Region	26	22	45	3
Wong Tai Sin District	6	9	13	1
Sau Mau Ping District	2	4	9	2
Kwun Tong District	8	3	11	0
Tseung Kwan O District	10	6	12	0
Kowloon West Region	389	564	514	41
Yau Tsim District	183	243	226	17
Mong Kok District	62	107	99	12
Sham Shui Po District	103	149	117	8
Kowloon City District	41	65	72	4
New Territories North Region	76	137	133	10
Border District	0	5	9	0
Yuen Long District	48	102	91	4
Tuen Mun District	24	28	24	6
Tai Po District	4	2	9	0
New Territories South Region	45	43	53	3
Tsuen Wan District	6	21	17	0
Shatin District	12	9	10	0
Kwai Tsing District	15	11	17	2
Lantau District	3	2	8	0
Airport District	9	0	1	1
Marine Region	0	1	1	0
Hong Kong overall	657	934	929	77

The numbers of NEC persons on recognizance and issued with Form No. 8 (mostly non-refoulement claimants) who were arrested for criminal offences are tabulated below with breakdown by crime category:

Offence	2019	2020	2021	2022 (January to February)
Shop theft	200	250	254	20
Serious drug offences	86	112	92	10
Miscellaneous thefts	58	98	134	13
Wounding and serious assault	59	92	90	8
Serious immigration offences (Note 1)	49	38	50	1
Criminal damage	29	36	37	4
Burglary	17	36	22	1
Others (Note 2)	159	272	250	20
Total	657	934	929	77

Note 1: “Serious immigration offences” include aiding and abetting illegal immigrants, arranging passage of unauthorised entrants to Hong Kong, using an identity card relating to another person, etc.

Note 2: “Others” include forgery and coinage, offences against public order, pickpocketing, disorder/fighting in public places, possession of offensive weapon, etc.

In addition, according to ImmD’s record, the numbers of NEC persons on recognizance (mostly non-refoulement claimants) who were arrested for taking up unlawful employment contrary to section 38AA of the Immigration Ordinance since 2019 are tabulated below:

Year	No. of persons arrested
2019	215
2020	156
2021	438
2022 (January to February)	51

(7)-(8) Major expenditures on handling non-refoulement claims and related work since 2019-20 are tabulated below:

Year	Screening of claims and handling of appeals/petitions (\$ million)	Repatriation of rejected claimants (\$ million)	Publicly-funded legal assistance (\$ million)	Humanitarian assistance (\$ million)	Total* (\$ million)
2019-20	344	45 [^]	93	482	964
2020-21	311	47 [^]	95	540	992
2021-22 (Revised estimate)	317	47 [^]	133	583	1 079
2022-23 (Estimate)	332	50 [^]	182	698	1 262

* Individual items may not add up to total due to rounding up.

[^] Only the expenditure on the dedicated manpower for the repatriation of non-refoulement claimants and related work is included. As other expenditures are incurred by duties (such as the arrangement for air tickets and application for travel documents) which form part of ImmD's overall repatriation work, we do not maintain a separate breakdown relating to the claimants.

Overall speaking, the COVID-19 epidemic has resulted in delay in commencement of the screening procedures of some claims by ImmD, and the work progress of the Torture Claims Appeal Board (TCAB) in handling appeals. As a result, the expenditure on publicly-funded legal assistance (PFLA) in 2020-21 was less than the original estimate. In order to cope with the backlogged claims due to the epidemic and the newly received claims, the service capacity of PFLA has increased gradually, with the daily quota increased in stages from 5 in October 2020 to 16 in November 2021. As the relevant fees were/will be gradually paid in 2021-22 and 2022-23, there is an increase in the revised estimate and the estimate in respect of PFLA in these two financial years. The Government will continue to review the service capacity of PFLA in response to the latest epidemic and, if necessary, further increase the quota according to the actual circumstances, thus a corresponding increase in the estimated expenditure in 2022-23 for such purpose. The Government does not maintain information about the specific expenditure on PFLA for each case.

As regards manpower, the number of posts in ImmD responsible for work related to screening claims, the number of TCAB members and the number of posts in TCAB Secretariat since 2019-20 are tabulated below:

Year	Number of posts in ImmD for screening claims, handling appeals and relevant legal proceedings	Number of posts in ImmD for repatriating claimants	Number of TCAB members	Number of posts in TCAB Secretariat
2019-20	207	72	95	36
2020-21	207	72	73	36
2021-22	207	72	73 [^]	36
2022-23 (Estimate)	207	72	73 [^]	35

[^] Number of members as at 28 February 2022, which is subject to adjustment as necessary.

In 2022-23, there are 39 staff under the Duty Lawyer Service (including 1 Chief Court Liaison Officer, 2 Assistant Chief Court Liaison Officers, 5 Senior Court Liaison Officers, 22 Court Liaison Officers, 2 Senior Personal Secretaries, 4 Personal Secretaries II, 1 Senior Accounting Officer, 1 Accounting Officer and 1 Office Assistant). The civil service establishment of the Pilot Scheme Office (PSO) for Provision of PFLA for Non-refoulement Claimants since 2019-20 is as follows:

Rank	Number of posts in 2019-20	Number of posts in 2020-21	Number of posts in 2021-22	Number of posts in 2022-23
Chief Executive Officer	1	1	1	1
Senior Executive Officer	1	1	1	1

Executive Officer I	3	3	3	3
Assistant Clerical Officer	4	4	4	4
Workman II	2	2	1	1
Total	11	11	10	10

In addition, there are currently 5 non-civil service posts in PSO.

(9) Since the commencement of the comprehensive review of the strategy of handling non-refoulement claims in 2016, the Government has implemented a number of measures, including preventing claimants from entering Hong Kong as far as possible; expediting the screening of pending claims; shortening the time for screening each claim; increasing the number of members and secretariat staff of TCAB; expediting the removal of unsuccessful claimants from Hong Kong; as well as stepping up law enforcement actions against crimes such as unlawful employment.

Although these measures have yielded considerable results, there remains a need to continue the handling of non-refoulement claims. It is therefore incumbent upon the Government to rationalise the legislative framework to further strengthen the various measures. The Immigration (Amendment) Ordinance 2021 took effect on 1 August 2021 to further improve the handling of non-refoulement claims, including enhancing efficiency in screening by ImmD and preventing delaying tactics; improving the procedures and functions of TCAB; and stepping up the interception at source, enforcement, removal as well as detention of claimants, etc. ImmD will continue to follow up various enhancement measures to ensure the smooth operation of the USM and remove the unsuccessful claimants from Hong Kong as soon as possible.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB003

(Question Serial No. 0624)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Internal Security

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Ms Carol YIP)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

In Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2022-23 under Programme (2), the Bureau states that it will “continue to oversee counter-terrorism policy and the operation of the Inter-departmental Counter-terrorism Unit”. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee:

1. since the implementation of the National Security Law, (a) the total number of cases involving terrorism detected by the Police, (b) the number of people arrested and (c) the number of people convicted by the court;
2. in 2022-23, (a) what new measures, technologies, equipment, etc. will be introduced by the Government to combat terrorism and (b) the manpower and expenditures to be involved;
3. whether the enactment of local legislation on Article 23 of the Basic Law has been incorporated in the Bureau's scope of work under Programme (2) for 2022-23; and the manpower and expenditures to be earmarked for the public consultation and preparation for enacting local legislation on Article 23; and
4. details regarding the net increase of 1 post under Programme (2) and the expenditures involved?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Wing-yan, JoePHY (LegCo internal reference no.: 1)

Reply:

1. Since the implementation of the National Security Law, as at 4 March 2022, the Police detected 3 cases involving terrorism with a total of 19 people arrested. So far, 12 people were charged, among which 1 person was convicted by the court.
2. Given the complex and ever-changing global terrorism landscape, coupled with the constant threat of domestic terrorism, government departments and relevant organizations, especially those playing a role in counter-terrorism (CT) work, will focus on enhancing and

improving CT strategies, deployment and action plans, in an effort to strengthen Hong Kong's overall CT response capability.

In this regard, the Inter-departmental Counter-Terrorism Unit (ICTU) monitors global and local terrorism trends and development, continues to enhance inter-departmental co-operation and strengthens CT capabilities and preparedness of government officers through intelligence gathering, regular training and exercises. The ICTU will also call on the whole community to counter terrorism and actively promote CT public education themes such as "Run, Hide, Report", "Stay Vigilant to Bomb" and "Spot and Report", so as to increase the CT awareness of the public and different sectors of the community, as well as enhancing their capabilities to prevent and tackle terrorism.

Strengthening CT work is also one of the Commissioner of Police's Operational Priorities in 2022. As the forefront CT agency, the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) organises training and exercises regularly for the continuous enhancement of the capabilities of various operational units in tackling terrorist activities. HKPF's CT units (such as the Counter Terrorism Response Unit and the Railway Response Team) will continue to enhance operational co-ordination and tactical deployment in light of the CT landscape in order to step up patrols at sensitive buildings and infrastructure in the territory in a more flexible and effective manner, so as to further enhance safety and prevent terrorist attacks.

To combat cyber terrorism, HKPF's Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau has also drawn up strategic plans to tackle potential cyber terrorist incidents targeting Hong Kong. Dedicated teams have also been set up to combat cyber terrorist activities on all fronts by means of intelligence gathering, investigation and enforcement, cyber security incident response, digital forensics, etc.

The Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) has also, in the previous financial year, set up its first Firearm Detector Dog Team, the deployment of which will be enhanced in 2022-23 to further strengthen C&ED's capability to combat smuggling of firearms, firearm component parts and ammunition into Hong Kong.

Other government departments will also review their operational needs from time to time and keep improving their workflows. On accoutrements, the Government will regularly review its CT needs and keep an eye on latest technological developments for timely procurement of suitable equipment and accoutrements, as well as deploying CT resources strategically for more effective prevention and detection of common modus operandi of terrorist attacks.

With regard to the actual manpower and expenditures, as internal operational details of government departments are involved, it is not appropriate to disclose such information.

3. The work of the Security Bureau related to legislation on Article 23 of the Basic Law is part of the work in safeguarding national security, and is not within the policy scope of Programme (2) Internal Security. Breakdown of the relevant manpower and expenditure will not be disclosed. Security Bureau will ensure that there will be sufficient funds to take forward the work concerned.

4. A post of Assistant Clerical Officer will be re-created under Programme (2) for the purpose of supporting anti-drug preventive education initiatives and the relevant promotion work. The annual expenditure involved is estimated to be \$288,840.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB004

(Question Serial No. 0342)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: Not Specified

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Ms Carol YIP)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Upon a review of the Talent List of Hong Kong under the Quality Migrant Admission Scheme (QMAS) earlier on, the Government has expanded the scope of some existing professions, as well as refined the requirements on legal and dispute resolution professionals. This is to complement Hong Kong's policy direction to accord priority to the development of finance, innovation and technology, arts and culture as well as dispute resolution services in future, and attract more targeted talent to Hong Kong. In this regard, please inform this Committee of the following:

1. numbers of applications approved and refused under QMAS, the Technology Talent Admission Scheme (TechTAS) and the Global STEM Professorship Scheme respectively in the past 3 years;
2. the distribution of professionals admitted to Hong Kong under the above schemes in the past 3 years by age and academic qualification;
3. whether the Government has assessed the effectiveness of QMAS, TechTAS and the Global STEM Professorship Scheme in the midst of the COVID-19 epidemic; if so, the details; if not, the reasons for that; and
4. the number of applications approved for each profession since the introduction of the Talent List of Hong Kong.

Asked by: Hon CHEN Chung-nin, Rock (LegCo internal reference no.: 3)

Reply:

The Quality Migrant Admission Scheme (QMAS) seeks to attract highly skilled or talented persons to settle in Hong Kong, thereby enhancing Hong Kong's competitiveness. The Technology Talent Admission Scheme (TechTAS) provides a fast-track arrangement for admitting overseas and Mainland technology talent to conduct research and development (R&D) work in Hong Kong. The approved figures under TechTAS cover applicants from 13 technology areas, including artificial intelligence, biotechnology, cybersecurity, data analytics, financial technologies, material science, robotics, 5G communications, digital entertainment, green technology, integrated circuit design, Internet-of-Things and

microelectronics. As for the Global STEM Professorship Scheme, it aims at strengthening support for the University Grants Committee-funded universities to attract world-renowned or promising innovation and technology (I&T) scholars and their teams to work in Hong Kong and conduct I&T-related research, thereby enabling local universities to scale new heights in I&T teaching and research.

- (1) Relevant statistics on QMAS and TechTAS in the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

Scheme	2019-20		2020-21		2021-22 (As at February 2022)	
	No. of applications approved	No. of applications refused	No. of applications approved	No. of applications refused	No. of applications approved	No. of applications refused
QMAS (Note 1)	716	1 960	2 173	3 307	1 540	3 725
TechTAS (Note 2)	62	0	122	0	51	0

Note 1: Numbers of applications approved are numbers of quotas allotted. The annual quota under QMAS was increased from 1 000 to 2 000 in 2020, and further raised to 4 000 in 2021.

Note 2: In 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22 (as at end February 2022), the Innovation and Technology Commission allotted 109, 220 and 60 quotas (with a 12-month validity period) respectively. The figures in the table represent the number of applications made by companies with allotted quotas to the Immigration Department for employment visa/entry permit for eligible persons in the relevant years.

Under the Global STEM Professorship Scheme, up to 100 professorships can be awarded in 5 years. The assessment panel had convened meetings in July and December 2021 to review the nominations submitted by universities in the first 2 rounds, among which over 60 nominations were approved. The outstanding scholars who were awarded professorships were from the Mainland and overseas. The Assessment Panel has invited the third round of nominations from universities. It is expected that the nominations will be considered within the second quarter of this year.

- (2) Statistics broken down by academic qualification and age of applicants in the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

QMAS

Academic Qualification	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22 (As at February 2021)
Doctorate/2 Master's Degrees or more	216	702	491
Master's Degree/2 Bachelor's Degrees or more	396	1 187	842
Bachelor's Degree or Equivalent	78	250	184
Other Academic Qualifications	26	34	23

Total	716	2 173	1 540
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Note: Numbers of applications approved are numbers of quotas allotted.

Age	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22 (As at February 2021)
18 - 44	639	1 917	1 365
45 or above	77	256	175
Total	716	2 173	1 540

TechTAS

Academic Qualification	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22 (As at February 2022)
Doctorate	22	33	21
Master's Degree	19	28	18
Bachelor's Degree or Equivalent	19	61	12
Other Academic Qualifications	2	0	0
Total	62	122	51

As for the Global STEM Professorship Scheme, all world-renowned scholars who were awarded professorships in 2021-22 were aged 45 or above and possessed doctorate degree.

The Government does not maintain other breakdown statistics mentioned in the question.

- (3) Over the past 2 years or so, the COVID-19 epidemic and the relevant entry restrictions have inevitably affected companies' arrangements for recruiting talents from other places, and slowed down the pace of talent coming to settle in Hong Kong. Meanwhile, the awarded scholars under the Global STEM Professorship Scheme and their research teams are gradually coming to Hong Kong.

For QMAS, ImmD will continue to maintain contact with the talents allotted with quotas and provide possible facilitation arrangements for their early settlement in Hong Kong.

The Government will continue to review the arrangement and effectiveness of various talent admission schemes and roll out measures in a timely manner, with a view to attracting more highly skilled or talented persons to develop their careers and settle in Hong Kong, thereby enlarging Hong Kong's talent pool.

- (4) Eligible applicants who are assessed to be meeting the professional specifications of the Talent List of Hong Kong will be awarded bonus points under the "General Points Test" of QMAS. Since the promulgation of the first Talent List of Hong Kong in August 2018 until February 2022, a total of 194 applications under QMAS have met the criteria under the Talent List. Among them, 172 have been allotted quotas

whereas the remaining 22 are being processed. The breakdown statistics on the quotas allotted are as follows:

Professions covered by the Talent List	No. allotted with quotas
Waste Treatment Specialists	1
Asset Management Professionals	16
Marine Insurance Professionals	2
Actuaries	5
Fintech Professionals	31
Data Scientists and Cyber Security Specialists	44
Innovation and Technology Experts	42
Naval Architects	4
Marine Engineers and Superintendents of Ships	5
Creative Industries and Performing Arts Professionals	19
Dispute Resolution Professionals and Transactional Lawyers	3
Professionals in Compliance in Asset Management (Note)	0
Financial Professionals in Environmental, Social and Governance (Note)	0
Total	172

Note: The professions were added to the Talent List in October 2021. Among the 22 applications being processed, 1 falls under “Financial Professionals in Environmental, Social and Governance”.

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CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB005

(Question Serial No. 0580)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Internal Security

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Ms Carol YIP)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

One of the main responsibilities of the Security Bureau is to formulate and implement government security policies. The National Security Law (NSL) has been successfully implemented but it does not fully cover Article 23 of the Basic Law to prohibit, for example, acts of treason, sedition, foreign political bodies conducting political activities in Hong Kong, theft of state secrets and political bodies of Hong Kong establishing ties with foreign political bodies. The Government said earlier that it expects to launch the public consultation on the enactment of Article 23 before the current term ends and will submit the bill to the Legislative Council in the second half of the year.

In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the manpower, expenditure and publicity budget for the legislative exercise on Article 23 of the Basic Law?

Asked by: Hon LEE Chun-keung (LegCo internal reference no.: 9)

Reply:

The work of the Security Bureau related to legislation on Article 23 of the Basic Law is part of the work in safeguarding national security. Breakdown of the relevant manpower and expenditure will not be disclosed. Security Bureau will ensure that there will be sufficient funds to take forward the work concerned.

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CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB006

(Question Serial No. 0113)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Ms Carol YIP)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

In recent years, the numbers of non-refoulement claims received and handled by the Immigration Department have risen again. In this connection, please advise this Committee on the following for the past 5 years:

the average time required for handling each non-refoulement claim;

numbers of non-refoulement claims handled, substantiated and unsubstantiated;

the average time required for handling substantiated and unsubstantiated claims respectively;

a breakdown of the number of unsubstantiated claimants by gender, age and nationality;

a breakdown of the number of non-refoulement claimants pending screening who were arrested for taking up unlawful employment or committing crimes by category of crimes;

the Government's expenditures on handling non-refoulement claims, as well as a breakdown of the actual expenditures on the Legal Assistance Scheme for Non-refoulement Claimants; and

whether the Government has put in place any measures to assist non-refoulement claimants stranded in Hong Kong to fight against the COVID-19 epidemic; if so, the details; if not, the reasons for that.

Asked by: Hon LEE Tsz-king, Dominic (LegCo internal reference no.: 1)

Reply:

The Government implemented the Unified Screening Mechanism (USM) in March 2014 to screen non-refoulement claims on all applicable grounds in one go. The number of non-refoulement claims handled by the Immigration Department (ImmD) as at the end of February 2022 is set out in the table below. Due to the impact of COVID-19 epidemic, commencement of the screening procedures of some claims were held back. The number of new claims received had also increased during the epidemic. ImmD has flexibly deployed manpower and increased resources to expedite the handling of claims.

As at the end of February 2022, apart from 455 claims pending completion of screening by ImmD, there were some 100 cases of which the screening procedures had yet to commence amidst a new wave of the epidemic this year.

Year	Claims received	Claims determined	Claims withdrawn or no further action can be taken	Pending claims
Commencement of the USM				6 699
2014 (March to December)	4 634	826	889	9 618
2015	5 053	2 339	1 410	10 922
2016	3 838	3 218	1 561	9 981
2017	1 843	4 182	1 743	5 899
2018	1 216	5 467	1 102	546
2019	1 213	1 344	149	266
2020	1 223	857	69	563
2021	2 528	2 220	130	741
2022 (January to February)	90	367	9	455
Total	21 638	20 820	7 062	

Among the 20 820 claims determined by ImmD, 259 were substantiated (including 170 substantiated by the Torture Claims Appeal Board (TCAB) on appeal).

As for the 20 731 non-refoulement claims found unsubstantiated by ImmD (including 170 claims subsequently substantiated by TCAB), a breakdown by nationality is as follows:

Nationality	Non-refoulement claims found unsubstantiated by ImmD
Vietnam	3 956
Pakistan	3 602
India	3 441
Indonesia	2 715
Bangladesh	2 382
The Philippines	1 555
Nepal	676
Sri Lanka	392
Nigeria	338
Gambia	180
Others	1 494
Total	20 731

Among those claims found unsubstantiated by ImmD, as broken down by gender, male and female claimants accounted for 66% and 34% respectively; as broken down by age, 6% of the claimants were aged below 18, 15% aged between 18 and 30, 43% aged between 31 and 40, and 36% aged over 40.

As regards the time for handling each claim, ImmD ensures that the screening procedures are highly efficient and achieve high standards of fairness through flexible staff deployment and optimised workflow. ImmD's handling time for each claim (from commencement of the screening procedures to determination by ImmD) has been shortened from about 25 weeks on average at the early implementation of the USM to the current average of about 10 weeks.

According to the Police's record, the numbers of non-ethnic Chinese (NEC) persons on recognizance and issued with Form No. 8 (mostly non-refoulement claimants) who were arrested for criminal offences are tabulated below with breakdown by crime category:

Offences	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022 (January to February)
Shop theft	428	239	200	250	254	20
Serious drug offences	200	207	86	112	92	10
Miscellaneous thefts	170	139	58	98	134	13
Wounding and serious assault	173	115	59	92	90	8
Serious immigration offences (Note 1)	111	80	49	38	50	1
Criminal damage	62	41	29	36	37	4
Burglary	33	22	17	36	22	1
Others (Note 2)	365	307	159	272	250	20
Total	1 542	1 150	657	934	929	77

Note 1: "Serious immigration offences" include aiding and abetting illegal immigrants, arranging passage of unauthorised entrants to Hong Kong, using an identity card relating to another person, etc.

Note 2: "Others" include forgery and coinage, offences against public order, pickpocketing, disorder/fighting in public places, possession of offensive weapon, etc.

In addition, according to ImmD's record, the numbers of NEC persons on recognizance (mostly non-refoulement claimants) who were arrested for taking up unlawful employment contrary to section 38AA of the Immigration Ordinance since 2017 are tabulated below:

Year	No. of persons arrested
2017	381
2018	332
2019	215
2020	156
2021	438
2022(January to February)	51

Major expenditures on handling non-refoulement claims and related work since 2017-18 are tabulated below:

Year	Screening of claims and handling of appeals/petitions (\$ million)	Repatriation of rejected claimants [#] (\$ million)	Publicly-funded legal assistance (\$ million)	Humanitarian assistance (\$ million)	Total* (\$ million)
2017-18	336	-	152	587	1,074
2018-19	401	-	207	531	1,138
2019-20	344	45 [^]	93	482	964
2020-21	311	47 [^]	95	540	992
2021-22 (Revised estimate)	317	47 [^]	133	583	1 079
2022-23 (Estimate)	332	50 [^]	182	698	1 262

[#] ImmD has deployed dedicated manpower to expedite the repatriation of unsuccessful claimants to their places of origin since 2019-20.

* Individual items may not add up to total due to rounding up.

[^] Only the expenditure on the dedicated manpower for the repatriation of non-refoulement claimants and related work is included. As other expenditures are incurred by duties (such as the arrangement for air tickets and application for travel documents) which form part of ImmD's overall repatriation work, we do not maintain a separate breakdown relating to the claimants.

Overall speaking, the COVID-19 epidemic has resulted in delay in commencement of the screening procedures of some claims by ImmD, and the work progress of TCAB in handling appeals. As a result, the expenditure on publicly-funded legal assistance (PFLA) in 2020-21 was less than the original estimate. In order to cope with the backlog of claims due to the epidemic and the newly received claims, the service capacity of PFLA has increased gradually, with the daily quota increased in stages from 5 in October 2020 to 16 in November 2021. As the relevant fees were/will be gradually paid in 2021-22 and 2022-23, there is an increase in the revised estimate and the estimate in respect of PFLA in these two financial years. The Government will continue to review the service capacity of PFLA in response to the latest epidemic and, if necessary, further increase the quota according to the actual circumstances, thus a corresponding increase in the estimated expenditure in 2022-23 for such purpose.

Since 2006, the Government has been providing humanitarian assistance for claimants during their presence in Hong Kong pending outcome of their claims in order to prevent them from becoming destitute while at the same time not creating a magnet effect which could have serious implications on the long-term sustainability of such assistance and the immigration control of Hong Kong. The Government has been closely monitoring the latest development of the COVID-19 epidemic and providing anti-epidemic materials including cleaning supplies and face masks regularly for claimants through the International Social Service Hong Kong Branch, on top of other personal protective equipment like hand sanitiser and disinfecting wet wipes. Besides, updated information on the epidemic has also been disseminated to claimants through brochures, which are translated into different major languages. Moreover, the Government has arranged for claimants and refugees recognised by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to be vaccinated. The Government will keep a close watch on the epidemic and provide timely and appropriate assistance for claimants to fight the epidemic together.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB007

(Question Serial No. 0815)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Internal Security

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Ms Carol YIP)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the estimates of the auxiliary services departments, the estimates of the Auxiliary Medical Service (AMS) and the Civil Aid Service (CAS) are reduced by 5.3% and 2.7% respectively against the original estimates, despite the fact that these two departments have been providing frontline services during the epidemic.

1. The expenditure of CAS is reduced mainly due to the decreased cash flow requirement for acquisition and replacement of equipment. What kind of equipment is it?
2. AMS's estimated number of man-hours for emergency duties (serious traffic accidents, disastrous fires, typhoons, rainstorms and major epidemics) for 2022 is lower than the actual figures in 2020 and 2021. The estimated operational expenses are reduced as well. In the midst of the COVID-19 outbreak, why are the estimates reduced instead of increased?

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Man-kwong (LegCo internal reference no.: 10)

Reply:

1. The cash flow required by the Civil Aid Service (CAS) for acquisition and replacement of equipment decreases in 2022-23 when compared with 2021-22 mainly because the replacement of the central air-conditioning control and monitoring system of the CAS Headquarters Building was completed with the necessary fees settled in 2021.
2. The number of man-hours of the Auxiliary Medical Service (AMS) in respect of "emergency duties (serious traffic accidents, disastrous fires, typhoons, rainstorms and major epidemics)" is subject to the actual needs in individual years and may vary from the estimated figure. A number of typhoons hit Hong Kong in both 2020 and 2021, and, as a result, the actual man-hours spent exceeded the estimated man-hours in the respective years.

Anti-epidemic work performed by the AMS is classified under the "supplementary services" item. In 2020 and 2021, with the outbreak of the epidemic, the actual man-hours for "supplementary services" for the respective years 2020 and 2021 were

greater than the corresponding estimates. The fifth wave of the COVID-19 epidemic was in its early stage when the 2022-23 estimates were drawn up. The estimated man-hours for 2022 therefore could not fully reflect the relevant impact of the epidemic.

Besides, AMS acquired operational equipment and replaced apparatus (e.g. automated external defibrillators and communication equipment) in 2021 while there will be no such one-off operational expenses in 2022-23. Thus, the estimated total operational expenses show a decrease when compared to 2021.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB008

(Question Serial No. 0057)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Ms Carol YIP)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the screening of non-refoulement claims, please provide the following information for the past 3 years:

1. numbers of claims received and nationalities of claimants;
2. numbers of claims substantiated and unsubstantiated;
3. numbers of claims determined, withdrawn or that no further action could be taken;
4. numbers of pending claims;
5. cases of non-refoulement claimants being arrested, prosecuted and convicted for committing crimes during their stay in Hong Kong (please provide a breakdown by police district and category of crimes);
6. the staff establishment, administrative expenses and expenditure on legal assistance involved; and
7. measures put in place to further prevent and combat the abuse of non-refoulement claims.

Asked by: Hon QUAT Elizabeth (LegCo internal reference no.: 5)

Reply:

(1)-(4). The Government implemented the Unified Screening Mechanism (USM) in March 2014 to screen non-refoulement claims on all applicable grounds in one go. The number of non-refoulement claims handled by the Immigration Department (ImmD) as at the end of February 2022 is set out in the table below. Due to the impact of COVID-19 epidemic, commencement of screening procedures of some claims were held back. The number of new claims received had also increased during the epidemic. ImmD has flexibly deployed manpower and increased resources to expedite the handling of claims.

As at the end of February 2022, apart from 455 claims pending completion of screening by ImmD, there were some 100 cases of which the screening procedures had yet to commence amidst a new wave of the epidemic this year.

Year	Claims received	Claims determined	Claims withdrawn or no further action can be taken	Pending claims
Commencement of the USM				6 699
2014 (March to December)	4 634	826	889	9 618
2015	5 053	2 339	1 410	10 922
2016	3 838	3 218	1 561	9 981
2017	1 843	4 182	1 743	5 899
2018	1 216	5 467	1 102	546
2019	1 213	1 344	149	266
2020	1 223	857	69	563
2021	2 528	2 220	130	741
2022 (January to February)	90	367	9	455
Total	21 638	20 820	7 062	

As at the end of February 2022, ImmD received 21 638 claims and the breakdown by nationality is as follows:

Nationality	No. of claims	Percentage
Vietnam	5 522	25%
India	3 628	17%
Indonesia	3 209	15%
Pakistan	2 735	13%
Bangladesh	1 872	9%
The Philippines	1 691	8%
Nepal	482	2%
Sri Lanka	244	1%
Nigeria	235	1%
Other countries	2 020	9%
Total	21 638	100%

Among the 20 820 claims determined by ImmD, 259 were substantiated (including 170 substantiated by the Torture Claims Appeal Board (TCAB) on appeal).

(5) According to the Police's record, the numbers of non-ethnic Chinese (NEC) persons on recognizance and issued with Form No. 8 (mostly non-refoulement claimants) who were arrested for criminal offences since 2019 are tabulated below with breakdown by police region/police district:

Police region/ police district	2019	2020	2021	2022 (January to February)
Hong Kong Island Region	121	167	183	20
Central District	40	31	36	2
Wan Chai District	49	80	85	13
Western District	18	34	31	2
Eastern District	14	22	31	3
Kowloon East Region	26	22	45	3
Wong Tai Sin District	6	9	13	1
Sau Mau Ping District	2	4	9	2
Kwun Tong District	8	3	11	0
Tseung Kwan O District	10	6	12	0
Kowloon West Region	389	564	514	41
Yau Tsim District	183	243	226	17
Mong Kok District	62	107	99	12
Sham Shui Po District	103	149	117	8
Kowloon City District	41	65	72	4
New Territories North Region	76	137	133	10
Border District	0	5	9	0
Yuen Long District	48	102	91	4
Tuen Mun District	24	28	24	6
Tai Po District	4	2	9	0
New Territories South Region	45	43	53	3
Tsuen Wan District	6	21	17	0
Shatin District	12	9	10	0
Kwai Tsing District	15	11	17	2
Lantau District	3	2	8	0
Airport District	9	0	1	1
Marine Region	0	1	1	0
Hong Kong overall	657	934	929	77

The numbers of NEC persons on recognizance and issued with Form No. 8 (mostly non-refoulement claimants) who were arrested for criminal offences are tabulated below with breakdown by crime category:

Offence	2019	2020	2021	2022 (January to February)
Shop theft	200	250	254	20
Serious drug offences	86	112	92	10
Miscellaneous thefts	58	98	134	13
Wounding and serious assault	59	92	90	8
Serious immigration offences (Note 1)	49	38	50	1
Criminal damage	29	36	37	4
Burglary	17	36	22	1
Others (Note 2)	159	272	250	20
Total	657	934	929	77

Note 1: “Serious immigration offences” include aiding and abetting illegal immigrants, arranging passage of unauthorised entrants to Hong Kong, using an identity card relating to another person, etc.

Note 2: “Others” include forgery and coinage, offences against public order, pickpocketing, disorder/fighting in public places, possession of offensive weapon, etc.

In addition, according to ImmD’s record, the numbers of NEC persons on recognizance (mostly non-refoulement claimants) who were arrested for taking up unlawful employment contrary to section 38AA of the Immigration Ordinance since 2019 are tabulated below:

Year	No. of persons arrested
2019	215
2020	156
2021	438
2022 (January to February)	51

The law enforcement departments have not maintained prosecution and conviction figures concerning non-refoulement claimants.

(6) Major expenditures on handling non-refoulement claims and related work since 2019-20 are tabulated below:

Year	Screening of claims and handling of appeals/petitions (\$ million)	Repatriation of rejected claimants (\$ million)	Publicly-funded legal assistance (\$ million)	Humanitarian assistance (\$ million)	Total* (\$ million)
2019-20	344	45 [^]	93	482	964
2020-21	311	47 [^]	95	540	992
2021-22 (Revised estimate)	317	47 [^]	133	583	1 079
2022-23 (Estimate)	332	50 [^]	182	698	1 262

* Individual items may not add up to total due to rounding up.

^ Only the expenditure on the dedicated manpower for the repatriation of non-refoulement claimants and related work is included. As other expenditures are incurred by duties (such as the arrangement for air tickets and application for travel documents) which form part of ImmD's overall repatriation work, we do not maintain a separate breakdown relating to the claimants.

Overall speaking, the COVID-19 epidemic has resulted in delay in commencement of the screening procedures of some claims by ImmD, and the work progress of TCAB in handling appeals. As a result, the expenditure on publicly-funded legal assistance (PFLA) in 2020-21 was less than the original estimate. In order to cope with the backlog of claims due to the epidemic and the newly received claims, the service capacity of PFLA has increased gradually, with the daily quota increased in stages from 5 in October 2020 to 16 in November 2021. As the relevant fees were/will be gradually paid in 2021-22 and 2022-23, there is an increase in the revised estimate and the estimate in respect of PFLA in these two financial years. The Government will continue to review the service capacity of PFLA in response to the latest epidemic and, if necessary, further increase the quota according to the actual circumstances, thus a corresponding increase in the estimated expenditure in 2022-23 for such purpose.

As regards manpower, the number of posts in ImmD responsible for work related to screening claims, the number of TCAB members and the number of posts in TCAB Secretariat since 2019-20 are tabulated below:

Year	Number of posts in ImmD for screening claims, handling appeals and relevant legal proceedings	Number of posts in ImmD for repatriating claimants	Number of TCAB members	Number of posts in TCAB Secretariat
2019-20	207	72	95	36
2020-21	207	72	73	36
2021-22	207	72	73 [^]	36
2022-23 (Estimate)	207	72	73 [^]	35

[^] Number of members as at 28 February 2022, which is subject to adjustment as necessary.

In 2022-23, there are 39 staff members under the Duty Lawyer Service (including 1 Chief Court Liaison Officer, 2 Assistant Chief Court Liaison Officers, 5 Senior Court Liaison Officers, 22 Court Liaison Officers, 2 Senior Personal Secretaries, 4 Personal Secretaries II, 1 Senior Accounting Officer, 1 Accounting Officer and 1 Office Assistant). The civil service establishment of the Pilot Scheme Office (PSO) for Provision of PFLA for Non-refoulement Claimants since 2019-20 is as follows:

Rank	Number of posts in 2019-20	Number of posts in 2020-21	Number of posts in 2021-22	Number of posts in 2022-23
Chief Executive Officer	1	1	1	1
Senior Executive Officer	1	1	1	1
Executive Officer I	3	3	3	3

Assistant Clerical Officer	4	4	4	4
Workman II	2	2	1	1
Total	11	11	10	10

In addition, there are currently 5 non-civil service posts in PSO.

(7) Since the commencement of the comprehensive review of the strategy for handling non-refoulement claims in 2016, the Government has implemented a number of measures, including preventing claimants from entering Hong Kong as far as possible; expediting the screening of pending claims; shortening the time for screening each claim; increasing the number of members and secretariat staff of TCAB; expediting the removal of unsuccessful claimants from Hong Kong; as well as stepping up law enforcement actions against crimes such as unlawful employment.

Although these measures have yielded considerable results, there remains a need to continue the handling of non-refoulement claims. It is therefore incumbent upon the Government to rationalise the legislative framework to further strengthen the various measures. The Immigration (Amendment) Ordinance 2021 took effect on 1 August 2021 to further improve the handling of non-refoulement claims, including enhancing efficiency in screening by ImmD and preventing delaying tactics; improving the procedures and functions of TCAB; and stepping up the interception at source, enforcement, removal as well as detention of claimants, etc. ImmD will continue to follow up various enhancement measures to ensure the smooth operation of the USM and remove the unsuccessful claimants from Hong Kong as soon as possible.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 0498)

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Ms Carol YIP)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

With the epidemic lingering on, both individuals and enterprises in our society are in need of greater financial support.

1) Government information from last year indicated that \$6.3 billion of public money had been spent cumulatively on non-refoulement claims. Will the Government set an upper limit on the expenditure in respect of non-refoulement claims (e.g. capped it at \$100 million annually)? This is to reduce unnecessary expenditure as far as possible, and to prevent the non-refoulement claim mechanism from becoming a “blank cheque” which shells out public money recklessly year after year. The saving, which is estimated to be about \$1 billion per annum, can be used instead to strengthen financial assistance for individuals as well as small and medium-sized enterprises.

2) For the financial year 2021-22, what is the number of accumulated backlog of non-refoulement claims so far? What are the respective numbers of applications accepted, rejected and pending handling?

3) In the new financial year, how much public money will the Government earmark for handling the above cases? What is the rate of change as compared with that of the previous financial year?

4) Currently, each adult non-refoulement claimant may receive about \$3,000 monthly allowance from the Government (including food, accommodation, transport, water and electricity) to cover the living expenses during their stay in Hong Kong. In the past 3 financial years, what were the expenditures involved in such Government allowance? In the new financial year, how much will be earmarked for subsidising non-refoulement claimants?

5) Reports revealed that the number of non-refoulement claimants receiving Government allowance who had taken up unlawful employment in Hong Kong was on the rise. In the past 3 years, how many non-refoulement claimants were arrested for taking up unlawful employment in Hong Kong? Among them, how many were receiving Government allowance? What follow-up actions were taken in respect of cases where a non-refoulement claimant had taken up unlawful employment?

6) It is reported that the number of non-refoulement claimants involved in crimes has continually increased in recent years. Will the Government consider adopting the policy of “immediate repatriation upon arrest”, so as to serve as a deterrent to others, and to prevent bogus refugees from finding excuses to stay in Hong Kong, thereby cutting back unnecessary public expenditure?

Asked by: Hon TSE Wai-chun, Paul (LegCo internal reference no.: 9)

Reply:

(2) The Government implemented the Unified Screening Mechanism (USM) in March 2014 to screen non-refoulement claims on all applicable grounds in one go. The number of non-refoulement claims handled by the Immigration Department (ImmD) as at the end of February 2022 is set out in the table below. Due to the impact of COVID-19 epidemic, commencement of screening procedures of some claims were held back. The number of new claims received had also increased during the epidemic. ImmD has flexibly deployed manpower and increased resources to expedite the handling of claims.

As at the end of February 2022, apart from 455 claims pending completion of screening by ImmD, there were some 100 cases of which the screening procedures had yet to commence amidst a new wave of the epidemic this year.

Year	Claims received	Claims determined	Claims withdrawn or no further action can be taken	Pending claims
Commencement of the USM				6 699
2014 (March to December)	4 634	826	889	9 618
2015	5 053	2 339	1 410	10 922
2016	3 838	3 218	1 561	9 981
2017	1 843	4 182	1 743	5 899
2018	1 216	5 467	1 102	546
2019	1 213	1 344	149	266
2020	1 223	857	69	563
2021	2 528	2 220	130	741
2022 (January to February)	90	367	9	455
Total	21 638	20 820	7 062	

Among the 20 820 claims determined by ImmD, 259 were substantiated (including 170 substantiated by the Torture Claims Appeal Board (TCAB) on appeal).

(1)、(3) and (4)

Major expenditures on handling non-refoulement claims and related work since 2019-20 are tabulated below:

Year	Screening of claims and handling of appeals/petitions (\$ million)	Repatriation of rejected claimants (\$ million)	Publicly-funded legal assistance (\$ million)	Humanitarian assistance (\$ million)	Total* (\$ million)
2019-20	344	45^	93	482	964
2020-21	311	47^	95	540	992
2021-22	317	47^	133	583	1 079

(Revised estimate)					
2022-23 (Estimate)	332	50 [^]	182	698	1 262

* Individual items may not add up to total due to rounding up.

[^] Only the expenditure on the dedicated manpower for the repatriation of non-refoulement claimants and related work is included. As other expenditures are incurred by duties (such as the arrangement for air tickets and application for travel documents) which form part of ImmD's overall repatriation work, we do not maintain a separate breakdown relating to the claimants.

Overall speaking, the COVID-19 epidemic has resulted in delay in commencement of the screening procedures of some claims by ImmD, and the work progress of TCAB in handling appeals. As a result, the expenditure on publicly-funded legal assistance (PFLA) in 2020-21 was less than the original estimate. In order to cope with the backlog of claims due to the epidemic and the newly received claims, the service capacity of PFLA has increased gradually, with the daily quota increased in stages from 5 in October 2020 to 16 in November 2021. As the relevant fees were/will be gradually paid in 2021-22 and 2022-23, there is an increase in the revised estimate and the estimate in respect of PFLA in these two financial years. The Government will continue to review the service capacity of PFLA in response to the latest epidemic and, if necessary, further increase the quota according to the actual circumstances, thus a corresponding increase in the estimated expenditure in 2022-23 for such purpose.

The ruling of the High Court in the case of *FB v Director of Immigration and Secretary for Security* ([2009] 2 HKLRD 346) held that the Government must provide, among others, PFLA to claimants during the screening process, so as to meet the high standards of fairness required by the Court. The Government is thus required to provide every claimant with PFLA. In addition, the Government has been providing humanitarian assistance for claimants during their presence in Hong Kong pending outcome of their claims in order to prevent them from becoming destitute, while at the same time not creating a magnet effect which could have serious implications on the long-term sustainability of such assistance and the immigration control of Hong Kong. Apart from the expenditures involved in screening claims and handling appeals, the actual expenses for the above supporting services also depend on various factors including the number of claims received. Coupled with the Government's need to fulfill the relevant legal obligations, it is therefore impracticable to set a cap on the expenditures on handling non-refoulement claims and related work.

As with other policies, the Government will continue to closely monitor whether the resources deployed are put to good use and conduct reviews from time to time, with a view to meeting the policy objectives and serving the public interests.

(5) According to ImmD's record, the numbers of non-ethnic Chinese (NEC) persons on recognizance (mostly non-refoulement claimants) who were arrested for taking up unlawful employment contrary to section 38AA of the Immigration Ordinance since 2019 are tabulated below:

Year	No. of persons arrested
2019	215
2020	156
2021	438
2022 (January to February)	51

Under section 38AA of the Immigration Ordinance, an illegal immigrant, a person who is the subject of a removal order or a deportation order, an overstayer or a person who was refused permission to land is prohibited from taking any employment, whether paid or unpaid, or establishing or joining in any business. Offenders are liable upon conviction to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and up to 3 years' imprisonment. Currently, the provision of humanitarian assistance for claimants may be suspended for various reasons (e.g. detention/imprisonment of claimants). The International Social Service-Hong Kong Branch will reassess their needs after their release.

(6) According to the Police's record, the numbers of NEC persons on recognizance and issued with Form No. 8 (mostly non-refoulement claimants) who were arrested for criminal offences are tabulated below with breakdown by crime category:

Offences	2019	2020	2021	2022 (January to February)
Shop theft	200	250	254	20
Serious drug offences	86	112	92	10
Miscellaneous thefts	58	98	134	13
Wounding and serious assault	59	92	90	8
Serious immigration offences (Note 1)	49	38	50	1
Criminal damage	29	36	37	4
Burglary	17	36	22	1
Others (Note 2)	159	272	250	20
Total	657	934	929	77

Note 1: "Serious immigration offences" include aiding and abetting illegal immigrants, arranging passage of unauthorised entrants to Hong Kong, using an identity card relating to another person, etc.

Note 2: "Others" include forgery and coinage, offences against public order, pickpocketing, disorder/fighting in public places, possession of offensive weapon, etc.

In accordance with the judgment laid down by the Court of Final Appeal in 2012 for the *Ubamaka* case, the Government cannot remove any person, no matter how dangerous or undesirable his conduct is, to another state where he faces a genuine and substantial risk of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. In other words, even if a claimant has been convicted of an offence, it remains a duty of the Government to meet the Court's requirement to complete all the screening procedures (including appeals) which meet the high standard of fairness before proceeding with repatriation of the claimant. At present, ImmD and TCAB have expedited the handling of claims and appeals, particularly those of claimants with criminal records, so as to complete the screening before completion of service of the full sentence by the claimant, thus enabling early commencement of the

repatriation work. Meanwhile, ImmD will continue to expedite the removal procedures, including discussing the relevant arrangements with governments of major source countries and airlines, to enhance the overall efficiency in removal and remove all unsuccessful claimants from Hong Kong as soon as possible.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB010

(Question Serial No. 0257)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses

Programme: (1) Maintenance of Law and Order in the Community

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (SIU Chak-ye)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

It is mentioned under Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2022-23 that the Police Force will continue to strengthen interactions with the media and utilise social media to disseminate police messages in a timely and professional manner. In this connection, will the Government advise this Committee of:

1. the total number of multi-media programmes produced by the Force in 2021 as promotional tools for enhancing the public's knowledge of and confidence in police services, as well as the manpower and expenditure involved;
2. the manpower and expenditure to be involved for continuous management of social media platforms in the coming year; and
3. the number of multi-media programmes to be produced in the coming year to disseminate police messages for enhancing the public's knowledge of and confidence in police services, as well as the expenditure and manpower to be allocated?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Chun-ying (LegCo internal reference no.: 19)

Reply:

1. The Police Force has been actively interacting with the media and utilising social media to disseminate messages on preventing and fighting crime in a timely and professional manner. To enhance the public's knowledge of and confidence in police services, the Force collaborated with various media outlets, such as television and radio stations, in 2021 to produce multi-media programmes including "Everlasting Mission", "Profession Impossible", "Scam Feud", "Tips against Scammers", "Hong Kong Police Story 2021" and "Morning OffBeat".

The Force has also produced "OffBeat On Air", an in-house production that is live-streamed on the Hong Kong Police Facebook page and the Hong Kong Police YouTube Channel at 9:00 p.m. on Thursdays. Spreading messages on crime fighting and prevention, the programme appeals to the public to come forward with crime leads

and introduces the work of different police units. To foster interaction with the public and enhance the transparency of policing work, the programme features a question-and-answer session for viewers to put questions to the guests and hosts in real time.

The multi-media programmes are mainly produced by the TV & Film Liaison Section of the Police Public Relations Branch (PPRB), which is currently staffed with 10 members.

Rank	Number of officers
Chief Inspector	1
Inspector/Senior Inspector	1
Sergeant	2
Police Constable/Senior Police Constable	6
Total	10

The Force deploys existing manpower and resources for producing the multi-media programmes. The expenditure involved falls under the Programme of “Maintenance of Law and Order in the Community”. No specific breakdown is available.

2. Making good use of social media for publicity and promotion, the Force published nearly 6 000 posts in 2021 on 5 social media platforms, namely YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Weibo and Twitter.

The Hong Kong Police YouTube Channel was launched in March 2013, attracting more than 170 000 subscribers (as at 2 March 2022).

The Hong Kong Police Facebook page was launched in October 2015, receiving “likes” from over 330 000 users and attracting more than 510 000 followers (as at 2 March 2022).

The Hong Kong Police Instagram page was launched in November 2016, attracting more than 78 000 followers (as at 2 March 2022).

The Hong Kong Police Twitter page was launched in January 2019, attracting more than 87 000 followers (as at 2 March 2022).

The Hong Kong Police Weibo page was launched in January 2019, attracting more than 440 000 fans (as at 2 March 2022).

The social media platforms of the Force are mainly managed by the Social Media Communication Division of the PPRB, which is currently staffed with 30 members, comprising 28 police officers and 2 contract staff members:

Rank	Number of officers
Superintendent	1
Chief Inspector	2
Inspector/Senior Inspector	4
Station Sergeant	1
Sergeant	8
Police Constable/Senior Police Constable	12
Contract New Media Writer	1
Contract New Media Designer	1
Total	30

In the coming financial year, the Force will continue to deploy existing manpower and resources for managing the social media platforms. The expenditure to be involved falls under the Programme of “Maintenance of Law and Order in the Community”. No specific breakdown is available.

3. The Force will keep abreast of the times by reviewing developments in the mass media and social media when appropriate to foster interaction with the public and enhance the transparency of policing work.

On 10 January 2022, the Force formally launched its sixth social media account, the Hong Kong Police Force’s WeChat official account, to strengthen communication with the public via WeChat. On this platform, the Force aims to disseminate anti-scam and crime prevention information, and to promote its activities so as to further enhance public understanding of police work. As at 2 March 2022, the Hong Kong Police Force’s WeChat official account has published almost 60 articles and attracted over 82 000 followers.

The Force will continue to deploy existing manpower and resources for providing the public with professional services. The expenditure to be involved falls under the Programme of “Maintenance of Law and Order in the Community”. No specific breakdown is available.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB011

(Question Serial No. 0388)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force
Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses
Programme: (2) Prevention and Detection of Crime
Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (SIU Chak-ye)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

1. The Police School Liaison Programme (PSLP) aims at enhancing the law-abiding awareness of youths and tackling juvenile delinquency. In this connection, please advise how the Police collaborated with schools under PSLP in jointly promoting national security education (not limited to knowledge on the National Security Law of Hong Kong). Please set out specifically the projects, the number of participants and the expenditure involved in the past 3 years, and advise on the plans and the estimated expenditure for the current financial year.
2. Please advise whether additional resources have been allocated in this financial year to extend the PSLP to tertiary institutions for jointly promoting national security education and enhancing the law-abiding awareness of youths; if yes, the details of the plans and the estimated expenditure to be involved.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hak-kan (LegCo internal reference no.: 8)

Reply:

1. The Police School Liaison Programme (PSLP) has been an integral part of the community policing strategy adopted by the Police Force. Through a multi-agency approach, the PSLP is aimed at preventing juvenile crime and diverting youths from going astray. The post of School Liaison Officer (SLO) was created in the Force in 1988 and the number of SLOs has been increased to 117 since 1 April 2017.

Through school visits, SLOs refer appropriate cases to relevant organisations for follow-ups and maintain close liaison with the education sector. Talks and group or individual discussions are conducted as necessary to enhance the law-abiding awareness of students.

In addition, the first-ever “Law Abidance Training Package” on juvenile crime and legal knowledge was released by the Force in June 2021 to help SLOs enhance the law-abiding awareness of youths. The training package, available in both primary

and secondary school editions, includes mini-movies, comics and quizzes on various crime prevention topics, along with explanations on punishment of certain offences by retired judges.

Separately, through the Junior Police Call (JPC), the Force has organised activities including movie screening, workshops on Chinese-style flag raising, visits to historical exhibitions and exchanges with Mainland Olympic gold medalists, with a view to deepening the youth's understanding of national history and development as well as enhancing their sense of national identity.

The expenditure of the above items falls under the Programmes of "Maintenance of Law and Order in the Community" and "Prevention and Detection of Crime". No specific breakdown is available.

2. Through the JPC and the Police Mentorship Programme, the Force is committed to enhancing its communication with the youths and promoting their active engagement in activities co-organised by the Force and tertiary institutions, the Education Bureau and other stakeholders. Community and educational projects are also organised in collaboration with other government departments / organisations in different police districts, with a view to encouraging youngsters to participate in healthy community activities. These activities help strengthen the law-abiding awareness and sense of national identity of the youths and cultivate their positive values.

The Force will also make proactive use of online platforms and social media to provide the public with the Force's updates, disseminate crime prevention messages and highlight the serious consequences of breaking the law. The Force will continue to explore and optimise the use of platforms favoured by youngsters, so as to strengthen the communication with them and enhance their law-abiding awareness.

The expenditure of the above items falls under the Programmes of "Maintenance of Law and Order in the Community" and "Prevention and Detection of Crime". No specific breakdown is available.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**SB012****(Question Serial No. 0279)**Head: (122) Hong Kong Police ForceSubhead (No. & title): ()Programme: (1) Maintenance of Law and Order in the CommunityControlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (SIU Chak-ye)Director of Bureau: Secretary for SecurityQuestion:

The Police Force has been providing anti-epidemic support to the Department of Health amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, including taking enforcement actions under the Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance (Cap. 599). Please set out in tabular form, in relation to the enforcement of (a) the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F), (b) the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G) and (c) the Prevention and Control of Disease (Wearing of Mask) Regulation (Cap. 599I), (i) the number of prosecutions instituted, (ii) the number of fixed penalty notices issued, (iii) the amount of fines imposed for contravention of the said legislations and (iv) the cumulative amount of fines received in the last financial year, with a breakdown by month and an account on the use of fines so received.

Asked by: Hon LAU Ip-keung, Kenneth (LegCo internal reference no.: 5)Reply:

(i)-(iii) A breakdown on the numbers of fixed penalty notices (FPNs) (currently carrying a fine of \$5,000 each) issued and prosecutions instituted by the Police Force under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F), the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G) and the Prevention and Control of Disease (Wearing of Mask) Regulation (Cap. 599I) from 1 April 2021 to 28 February 2022 is as follows:

Month/Year	Cap. 599F		Cap. 599G		Cap. 599I	
	Number of FPNs	Number of Persons Prosecuted	Number of FPNs	Number of Persons Prosecuted	Number of FPNs	Number of Persons Prosecuted
Apr 2021	#	123	2 460	28	432	0
May 2021	#	52	976	23	484	1
Jun 2021	#	54	1 850	39	394	0

	Cap. 599F		Cap. 599G		Cap. 599I	
Jul 2021	#	45	1 265	21	385	2
Month/Year	Number of FPNs	Number of Persons Prosecuted	Number of FPNs	Number of Persons Prosecuted	Number of FPNs	Number of Persons Prosecuted
Aug 2021	297	79	1 389	25	395	0
Sep 2021	389	88	1 060	30	357	0
Oct 2021	248	78	704	32	456	3
Nov 2021	234	52	714	23	344	0
Dec 2021	520	124	1 400	39	396	0
Jan 2022	219	69	1 087	38	550	0
Feb 2022	79	24	620	12	1 909	3
Total	1 986	788	13 525	310	6 102	9

Measures to impose penalties under Cap. 599F have been in place since August 2021.

- (iv) The amounts of fines collected from the FPNs issued by the Force under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F), the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G) and the Prevention and Control of Disease (Wearing of Mask) Regulation (Cap. 599I) in each month from 1 April 2021 to 28 February 2022 are as follows:

	Cap. 599F	Cap. 599G	Cap. 599I
Month/Year	Amount of Fines (\$)	Amount of Fines (\$)	Amount of Fines (\$)
Apr 2021	#	10,840,000	1,695,000
May 2021	#	5,290,000	1,760,000
Jun 2021	#	6,815,000	1,835,000
Jul 2021	#	6,160,000	1,600,000
Aug 2021	0	5,985,000	1,875,000
Sep 2021	85,000	5,590,000	1,367,000
Oct 2021	1,550,000	3,680,000	1,420,000
Nov 2021	1,400,000	3,470,000	1,795,000
Dec 2021	1,525,000	4,145,000	1,535,000
Jan 2022	1,940,000	6,240,000	2,345,000
Feb 2022	830,000	3,330,000	3,880,000
Total	7,330,000	61,545,000	21,107,000

Measures to impose penalties under Cap. 599F have been in place since August 2021.

The fines collected are credited to the revenue under the General Revenue Account.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB013

(Question Serial No. 0596)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force
Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses
Programme: (2) Prevention and Detection of Crime
Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (SIU Chak-ye)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Community policing is a pivotal component in prevention of crime and radicalisation as well as crime detection. It is also a policing direction adopted by the Hong Kong Police Force. As stated in the Force's Programme of Prevention and Detection of Crime under Head 122, guarding against the threat of terrorist activities, juvenile crimes and youth involvement in drugs are among the key initiatives of the Force. In this connection, please advise the Committee of:

1. the details (in terms of rank, salary and job description) in respect of the increase of 29 posts in the Force in 2022;
2. general working data in respect of territory-wide and district-based crime prevention activities organised by the Fight Crime Committee of each district between 2019 and 2021;
3. working data in respect of the use of social media (i.e. Facebook and Instagram) by the Force between 2019 and 2021; and
4. general working data in respect of the Force's capabilities in counter-terrorism response and crime investigation between 2019 and 2021.

Asked by: Hon LEE Hoey Simon (LegCo internal reference no.: 4)

Reply:

1. To meet operational needs, the Police Force will have a net increase of 29 posts (involving an increase of 32 disciplined services posts and a decrease of 3 civilian posts) in prevention and detection of crime for 2022-23, mainly for strengthening the Force's operational capabilities in countering terrorism and defending national security and to support the operation of the Intermodal Transfer Terminal at the Hong Kong International Airport. A breakdown of the additional posts by rank and salary is tabulated below:

Rank	Net increase/decrease of posts	Police Pay Scale (PPS)/ Master Pay Scale (MPS)
Chief Inspector	3	PPS 44 - 49
Senior Inspector/Inspector	5	PPS 24 - 43
Station Sergeant	3	PPS 24 - 33a
Sergeant	6	PPS 17 - 28
Police Constable	15	PPS 4 - 17
Total number of police officers	32	
Typist	-3	MPS 2 - 10
Total number of civilian staff	-3	
Total	29	

2. According to the reports submitted to the Central Fight Crime Committee by the District Fight Crime Committees (DFCCs), the details of anti-crime activities organised by the DFCCs between 2019 and 2021 are tabulated below:

	2019	2020	2021
Total number of activities	122	93	182
Total number of participants	About 650 000	About 160 000	About 130 000

3. The Force endeavours to disseminate messages on preventing and fighting crime through social media in a professional and timely manner. The total number of posts published by the Force on 5 social media platforms, namely YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Weibo and Twitter, between 2019 and 2021 are tabulated below:

	Total
Number of posts in 2019	3 770
Number of posts in 2020	6 031
Number of posts in 2021	5 927

Furthermore, the Force officially launched its sixth social media platform, the Hong Kong Police Force's WeChat official account, on 10 January 2022 to enhance communication with the public through the WeChat, enabling members of the public to learn more about policing and raise their crime prevention awareness. As at 2 March 2022, the Force's WeChat official account has published nearly 60 posts, attracting more than 82 000 followers.

4. Strengthening counter-terrorism (CT) efforts is one of the Commissioner's Operational Priorities 2022. As a CT agency at the forefront, the Force will remain highly vigilant against terrorist activities and strategically allocate CT resources for appropriate deployment and preparation. Through professional training and

exercises, the Force ensures its workforce can respond promptly and effectively to any potential terrorist activities.

From 2019 to 2021, the Force conducted a total of 27 joint CT exercises with other government departments and public organisations to test their CT responsiveness and related contingency plans, which in turn enhance the coordination and cooperation among the participating parties from the experience gained.

In recent years, the Force has also vigorously strengthened CT training of frontline officers on “Immediate Tactical Intervention” to ensure that those arriving earliest at the scene are capable of making swift responses to provide members of the public with immediate care for the sake of their safety. To this end, dedicated training teams were deployed to provide enhanced training to nearly 800 frontline officers over the past 6 months with a total training time of more than 4 600 hours. Elements of public engagement will be introduced in various drills when appropriate to raise public alertness and awareness of terrorist attacks.

Through the Inter-departmental Counter Terrorism Unit (ICTU), the Force also works with other law enforcement agencies to enhance CT strategies, action plans, intelligence gathering, training and public education. In particular, the ICTU has launched public education campaigns such as “Stay Vigilant to Bomb”, “Run, Hide, Report” and “Spot and Report” to raise the public’s awareness of terrorist threats and response capabilities.

Furthermore, the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau is committed to improving the reliability of information system networks of critical infrastructure and enhancing Hong Kong’s capabilities in protecting information system networks and defending against cyber attacks, whilst the Financial Intelligence and Investigation Bureau is tasked with anti-money laundering and counter-financing of terrorism efforts.

The number of cases, detection rate, total number of arrestees and number of young arrestees aged between 10 and 20 in respect of overall crime and serious drug offences between 2019 and 2021 are tabulated as follows:

	2019			2020			2021		
	Number of cases	Detection rate	Number of arrestees (Number of young arrestees aged between 10 and 20)	Number of cases	Detection rate	Number of arrestees (Number of young arrestees aged between 10 and 20)	Number of cases	Detection rate	Number of arrestees (Number of young arrestees aged between 10 and 20)
Overall crime	59 225	37.1%	28 058 (4 268)	63 232	37.8%	29 565 (3 987)	64 428	38.5%	29 218 (3 021)
Serious drug offences	740	99.7%	1 014 (144)	1 149	99.9%	1 824 (318)	1 570	99.7%	2 188 (430)

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB014

(Question Serial No. 0332)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (4) Operations

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (SIU Chak-ye)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

- (a) The estimate under this programme for 2021-22 is 13.2% lower than the original estimate. Please advise on the main reason for the reduction in estimate.
- (b) In recent years, unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) technology has become increasingly mature. Please advise on the introduction of UAS in the Force to assist in law enforcement actions, including the number of UAS currently kept by the Force, the major purpose of using UAS, and the estimate for procurement of UAS in 2022-23.
- (c) Smuggling activities were rampant last year, particularly a law enforcement officer passed away in the line of duty. Please advise whether additional equipment will be acquired to enhance the Force's capabilities in conducting anti-smuggling operations.
- (d) There has been an increase in illegal border crossings of people from Hong Kong into the Mainland amidst the severe epidemic situation in the territory. Please advise on the countermeasures to be taken by the Government.

Asked by: Hon MA Fung-kwok (LegCo internal reference no.: 6)

Reply:

- (a) The revised estimate is lower than the original estimate for 2021-22, mainly due to some vacancies remaining unfilled in 2021-22 and the lower than expected requirements on general departmental expenses. This is partly offset by the increase in personal emoluments and personnel-related expenses after the implementation of the recommendations of the grade structure review for the disciplined services grades which has taken effect from 1 September 2021.
- (b) The Police Force will review the global trend of technology development and the application of technology by law enforcement agencies around the world from time to time. Suitable accoutrements and equipment will be introduced in a timely manner based on actual operational needs to further enhance the operational effectiveness of the Force. At present, the Force has introduced unmanned aircraft systems to assist

in work in areas such as major incidents, rescue operations, internal security and counter-terrorism.

The expenditure and quantity of the Force's procurement of accoutrements and equipment are part of the Force's operational deployment details. It is inappropriate to disclose such information.

- (c) The Marine Region will review its existing accoutrements when necessary and procure appropriate new accoutrements in a timely manner to ensure the safety of frontline officers engaged in maritime operations and to effectively combat different types of maritime crimes, including smuggling. The Marine Region has formed a task force to review the existing equipment, facilities and training, and is in the process of acquiring relevant equipment, including emergency personal oxygen providers, personal buoyancy devices, maritime body-worn positioning devices and emergency cabin lighting systems. Meanwhile, the Marine Region is also studying proposals on enhancing the maritime survival training, including training on emergency escape during shipwreck. To further safeguard Marine Police officers in discharging their maritime duties, the Marine Region will, through a large-scale police launch replacement programme, incorporate more safety considerations into the design and build of vessels.
- (d) Adhering to an intelligence-led approach, the Force will continue to enhance intelligence gathering. Officers will also conduct high-profile patrols at blackspots of illegal border crossings and mount intelligence-led operations against such activities. Besides, the Force will work with other law enforcement agencies, including those in the city, such as the Immigration Department and the Customs and Excise Department, as well as those in the Mainland, such as China Coast Guard and Public Security Departments, in strengthening intelligence exchange and launching joint operations to combat related illegal acts.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB015

(Question Serial No. 0346)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force
Subhead (No. & title): ()
Programme: (2) Prevention and Detection of Crime
Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (SIU Chak-ye)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

It is stated in Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2022-23 under this Programme that the Force will strengthen its response in tackling deceptions and frauds through the Anti-Deception Coordination Centre (ADCC). In this connection, please advise on:

1. the number of cases reported, the number of victims, the amount of money involved, the number of cases detected and the number of persons arrested for deception and fraud in the past 2 years, breaking down by type of crime (e.g. telephone scam, internet fraud, etc.);
2. the number of deceptions and frauds involving fraudulent multi-level marketing practices and financial intermediaries, the amount of money involved, the number of cases detected and the number of persons arrested in the past 2 years;
3. among the cases mentioned above, the number of offences committed abroad and the methods in hunting down the fugitives; and
4. (a) the new initiatives to be implemented, (b) the manpower earmarked and (c) the funding set aside for the ADCC on prevention of deception and combating the malpractices of financial intermediaries in the coming financial year.

Asked by: Hon MAK Mei-kuen, Alice (LegCo internal reference no.: 6)

Reply:

1. The number of deceptions and frauds reported to the Police Force, the detection rate and the number of persons arrested in each of the past 2 years are tabulated below:

	2020	2021	Percentage change
Total number of deceptions and frauds	15 553	19 249	+23.8%
Detection rate	11.1%	10.6%	-0.5 percentage points
Number of persons arrested	2 058	2 835	+37.8%

The major types of deception and fraud as well as the amount of money involved are tabulated below:

	Number of cases			Amount of losses (HK\$ million)		
	2020	2021	Percentage change	2020	2021	Percentage change
Online business fraud	6 941	6 491	-6.5%	127.2	77.0	-39.5%
Social media scam	1 988	3 638	+83.0%	259.1	669.4	+158.4%
Investment scam	510	1 511	+196.3%	856.1	3 355.3	+291.9%
Advance fee fraud	819	1 252	+52.9%	56.0	102.7	+83.4%
Telephone deception	1 193	1 140	-4.4%	574.8	811.1	+41.1%
Employment fraud	332	1 074	+223.5%	19.9	85.1	+327.6%

The Force does not maintain statistics on the numbers of victims and arrestees by type of deception and fraud.

- The number of deceptions and frauds reported to the Force involving financial intermediaries, the amount of money involved, the number of cases detected and the numbers of persons arrested in each of the past 2 years are tabulated below:

	2020	2021	Percentage change
Number of cases	446	148	-66.8%
Amount of money involved (HK\$ million)	85.4	43.2	-49.4%
Number of cases detected	50	18	-64.0%
Number of persons arrested	139	96	-30.9%

No case of deception and fraud involving multi-level marketing practices has been reported to the Force for the past 2 years.

3. Deceptions and crimes related to money-laundering have no geographical boundaries. Through a close police cooperation mechanism, the Force has been sharing with overseas law enforcement agencies the latest modi operandi and information about deception and money-laundering, so as to enable them to take prompt corresponding actions. For example, last year the Force collaborated with the Mainland and overseas law enforcement agencies in a series of intelligence-led joint operations, neutralising multiple cross-boundary deception syndicates involving over 260 Internet and telephone deception cases that occurred in Hong Kong. 85 scammers were arrested locally and 147 scammers were captured overseas, freezing as much as HK\$50 million worth of assets.

Moreover, the Anti-Deception Coordination Centre (ADCC) was established in July 2017 to build up collaborations with Mainland and overseas law enforcement agencies in intercepting crime proceeds. To further enhance the capability, the ADCC established the International Stop-Payment Mechanism with the Financial Crimes Unit of the INTERPOL in October 2019 to enable most member states to make mutual stop-payment requests, thereby facilitating the Force to combat cross-border deception more effectively. From its inception till December 2021, the ADCC has successfully intercepted more than HK\$9.87 billion in 2 844 deception cases where payments had already been made to local and overseas banks.

The Force does not maintain statistics on deceptions and frauds which involve offences committed abroad.

4. The ADCC has been updating its publicity and education materials to enhance public awareness of fraud prevention. Further to the large-scale territory-wide campaign “Anti-Deception Month” rolled out in April last year to promote anti-fraud vigilance on various fronts via different platforms and media, another round of “Anti-Deception Month” was rolled out in February this year. Under the theme “Scammers Steal, Stay Alert”, engaging videos featuring 4 new scam characters were produced to alert people to fraud including telephone deception, romance-cum-investment scam, employment fraud and phishing scam, etc. Relevant Announcements in the Public Interest were aired on 6 television stations and 3 radio stations, with the videos uploaded to the ADCC’s website. In addition, the ADCC’s advertisements were put up across the city, including tunnels, public transport and large outdoor advertising spaces. Besides, thematic postcards on romance-cum-investment scams were mailed to the public via the Hongkong Post Circular Service and a promotional truck was arranged to stop by various locations in town to spread anti-deception messages.

Also, the ADCC has co-produced a programme with a radio broadcaster entitled “Tips against Scammers”, a series revealing a range of tactics adopted in fraud cases with the aid of comic strips. In collaboration with a television network, the ADCC has also produced “Anti-Deception Month Feature” and “Scam Feud”, the latter being a television game show, to debunk common deception cases and enhance public awareness of scams so as to keep fraudsters at bay.

The ADCC currently has an establishment of 40 posts, comprising 26 officers on permanent terms and 14 officers redeployed from various formations in the Force.

Regarding the clampdown on illegal lending practices and lending malpractices of financial intermediaries, the Force will continue its efforts in public education and publicity, step up intelligence gathering and closely monitor the situation to take appropriate law enforcement actions when offences are identified.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB016

(Question Serial No. 0047)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force
Subhead (No. & title): ()
Programme: (2) Prevention and Detection of Crime
Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (SIU Chak-ye)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The number of deception cases reported in Hong Kong in 2021 was 19 249, a substantial rise of 3 696 cases when compared with that in the preceding year. The jump was mainly driven by the upsurge of cases in compensated dating scams, romance scams, investment fraud and online employment fraud. It is stated under Programme 2 that the Police Force will strengthen its response in tackling deceptions and frauds through the Anti-Deception Coordination Centre (ADCC). In this connection, please advise on the staff establishment and expenditure involved in respect of the ADCC for the current financial year, and whether additional manpower and resources will be sought for the ADCC in the next financial year in order to strengthen its capabilities in law enforcement and intercepting crime proceeds; if yes, please provide the details and the estimated expenditure involved. Please also advise whether relevant departments will continue to update the respective promotional and educational materials so as to raise public awareness of the latest modus operandi of deception; if yes, please provide the details.

Asked by: Hon NG Wing-ka, Jimmy (LegCo internal reference no.: 6)

Reply:

The Anti-Deception Coordination Centre (ADCC) currently has an establishment of 40 posts, comprising 26 officers on permanent terms and 14 officers redeployed from various formations in the Police Force. The Force does not maintain the expenditure breakdown of the manpower involved. The Force will review the manpower and resources allocated to various formations and adjust the establishment from time to time.

The ADCC has been updating its publicity and education materials to enhance public awareness of fraud prevention. Further to the large-scale territory-wide campaign "Anti-Deception Month" rolled out in April last year to promote anti-fraud vigilance on various fronts via different platforms and media, another round of "Anti-Deception Month" was rolled out in February this year. Under the theme "Scammers Steal, Stay Alert", stories featuring 4 scam characters were presented to alert the public to fraud including telephone deception, romance-cum-investment scam, employment fraud and phishing scam, etc. Relevant Announcements in the Public Interest were aired on 6 television stations and 3

radio stations, with the videos uploaded to the ADCC's website. In addition, the ADCC's advertisements were put up across the city, including tunnels, public transport and large outdoor advertising spaces. Besides, thematic postcards on romance-cum-investment scams were mailed to the public via the Hongkong Post Circular Service and a promotional truck was arranged to stop by various locations in town to spread anti-deception messages.

Also, the ADCC has co-produced a programme with a radio broadcaster entitled "Tips against Scammers", a series revealing a range of tactics adopted in fraud cases with the aid of comic strips. In collaboration with a television network, the ADCC has also produced "Anti-Deception Month Feature" and "Scam Feud", the latter being a television game show, to debunk common deception cases and enhance public awareness of scams so as to keep fraudsters at bay.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB017

(Question Serial No. 0011)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Maintenance of Law and Order in the Community
(2) Prevention and Detection of Crime

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (SIU Chak-ye)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding cases involving different types of drugs cracked down by the Police in 2021, both the number of youths arrested for drug offences and the quantity of drugs seized have increased substantially as compared with those in 2020. Please advise on the trend of drug-related cases expected by the Police in 2022, and whether new measures or strategies will be taken to combat such offences, particularly those involving youths; if yes, what are the respective measures and strategies; if no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon WONG Chun-sek, Edmund (LegCo internal reference no.: 7)

Reply:

Combatting dangerous drugs is one of the Commissioner of Police's Operational Priorities for 2022. The work mainly includes (i) enhancing cooperation with other law enforcement agencies to interdict the flow of illicit drugs into Hong Kong; (ii) targeting drug traffickers, especially those exploiting students and youths; (iii) taking proactive measures to investigate and confiscate proceeds of drug trafficking; and (iv) promoting awareness and preventing the abuse of drugs by students and youths through multi-agency collaboration and community-based approach.

As the logistics as well as the export and import control measures of various places had been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, drug traffickers changed their mode of transporting drugs, including making use of sea and air cargo more often to smuggle large quantities of drugs. This led to a surge in the seizure amounts of different types of drugs in 2021 as compared to those in 2020.

The Police Force will keep a close watch on the drug trends, and continue to conduct anti-drug operations and combat drug trafficking through intelligence-led operations, including enhancing intelligence-gathering targeting drug trafficking on the Internet and social media; and exchanging intelligence and conducting timely joint operations with the Mainland and overseas law enforcement agencies.

On the exploitation of students and youths for drug trafficking, the Force will endeavour to track down drug syndicates exploiting youngsters, and invoke Section 56A of the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance (Cap. 134) to seek enhanced sentencing on the persons exploiting youngsters for drug trafficking, hence achieving a stronger deterrent effect.

On the prevention of drug abuse among youths, the Force will continue to work with stakeholders including other government departments, schools, parent-teacher associations, non-governmental organisations and other professional sectors to put in place measures targeting youth drug trafficking and drug abuse.

In June 2021, the Force organised the “Anti-drug Month”, a large-scale territory-wide publicity campaign to raise the public’s anti-drug awareness on all fronts, including seminars, publicity clips, press briefings, a promotion truck, etc. Coming with a drug smell simulator, the first of its kind in Hong Kong that helped parents and teachers to identify various drugs, the promotion truck also offered to visitors virtual reality experience on the discomfort caused by drug abuse. The Force is currently partnering with relevant stakeholders to launch a one-year “Leadership Institute on Anti-Narcotics” programme, under which participating secondary and tertiary students would be trained on anti-drug knowledge, leadership and event planning. They could then disseminate anti-drug messages on campus by designing, leading and executing anti-drug activities.

Through different channels such as the Force’s online platforms, the Junior Police Call, various crime prevention activities and seminars, the Force will continue to remind members of the public, especially young people, not to abuse drugs or deliver drugs or articles from unknown sources for other people. The Force will also continue to deepen teachers’ and parents’ understanding of the involvement of youths in drugs, with a view to enhancing their awareness of drug harms and ability to identify relevant situations.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB018

(Question Serial No. 0026)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force
Subhead (No. & title): ()
Programme: (4) Operations
Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (SIU Chak-ye)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

It has been recently reported that a law enforcement officer passed away unfortunately in an accident while intercepting smugglers at sea. In this connection, will the Police consider, in addition to exercising greater care in operational deployment, acquiring more sophisticated equipment and facilities so as to enhance the protection to law enforcement officers engaged in such operations? If so, what are the details? If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon WONG Ying-ho, Kennedy (LegCo internal reference no.: 9)

Reply:

In discharging their duties, Marine Police officers will conduct risk assessments and take corresponding safety measures, having regard to the uniqueness of each operation or each case. The Marine Region will also review its manpower, training and equipment where necessary to ensure the safety of frontline officers engaged in maritime operations and to effectively combat different types of maritime crimes. In light of the accident in question, the Marine Region has immediately formed a task force to review the existing equipment, facilities and training, and is in the process of acquiring relevant equipment, including emergency personal oxygen providers, personal buoyancy devices, maritime body-worn positioning devices and emergency cabin lighting systems. Meanwhile, the Marine Region is also studying proposals on enhancing the maritime survival training, including training on emergency escape during shipwreck. To further safeguard Marine Police officers in discharging their maritime duties, the Marine Region will, through a large-scale police launch replacement programme, incorporate more safety considerations into the design and manufacture of vessels.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB019

(Question Serial No. 0252)

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Road Safety

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (SIU Chak-ye)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

[Note: The question below concerns matters under the policy purview of the Transport and Housing Bureau (THB). The reply was prepared by the Hong Kong Police Force and vetted by the THB.]

Question:

Regarding the crackdown on illegal parking, please inform this Committee of the following:

1. the reason(s) for an increase of 20% in the number of fixed penalty tickets (FPTs) issued for parking offences in 2021 (3 298 956 FPTs) as compared with 2020 (2 707 869 FPTs);
2. the progress of work and the resources involved for the Police to work closely with relevant agencies and government departments to identify technological solutions to address serious parking offences in 2021; and
3. the number of vehicles towed by the Police for parking offences and the number of cases in which multiple FPTs were issued against a vehicle at the same spot within the same day in the past 2 years, as well as the factors considered by the Police in determining whether to issue multiple FPTs against an illegally-parked vehicle or to tow it away.

Asked by: Hon YICK Chi-ming, Frankie (LegCo internal reference no.: 8)

Reply:

1. Road safety is one of the Police Force's operational priorities, and changing the irresponsible behaviour of road users that obstructs traffic flow is also among the Force's Selected Traffic Enforcement Priorities. The Force has been very concerned about the illegal parking situation. The Force aims to address parking offences through patrols and enforcement actions, and change the undesirable behaviour of road users that obstructs traffic flow through publicity and education.

During the period from the second half of 2019 to the first half of 2020, the Force's priority was to stop violence and curb disorder caused by black-clad riots, hence

affecting the traffic enforcement figures. As social tensions began to ease in the second half of 2020, Police Districts have since redeployed resources to strengthen traffic enforcement actions.

In addition, to crack down rigorously on parking offences, the Force has all along leveraged technologies to enhance the effectiveness of frontline law enforcement officers. Since March 2020, the Force has launched in phases the e-Ticketing Pilot Scheme in all police districts across the territory. Frontline law enforcement officers have since been able to access and input data on vehicles parked illegally via their mobile smart devices and print out fixed penalty tickets (FPTs) without delay, minimising man-made errors arising from issuing summonses manually for parking offences and hence enhancing the overall accuracy of law enforcement. In 2021, the Force further extended the pilot scheme to facilitate engagement of more frontline officers, resulting in a jump in relevant law enforcement figures.

2. The Force has always been committed to adopting technological solutions for traffic enforcement. It will also continue to maintain liaison with law enforcement agencies worldwide and make reference to their experience to explore the use of new technologies in enhancing the effectiveness of law enforcement against illegal parking and road obstruction.

As mentioned in part 1 of the reply, the e-Ticketing Pilot Scheme has effectively enhanced the accuracy of and efficiency in traffic enforcement. The Force is therefore currently developing a new Traffic e-Enforcement System to facilitate the electronic processing of FPTs and summons applications for traffic offences. The system will also process all information and data relating to traffic enforcement, which will be conducive to enhancing the Force's efficiency in traffic management. Meanwhile, the Force will also develop a public-oriented website dedicated to electronic traffic enforcement, through which members of the public can view their electronic FPTs and handle related matters online.

In June 2021, a funding of \$352 million was secured from the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council (LegCo) for the development of the system, with a view to launching the first phase of the system in the first half of 2023 and putting it into full operation in 2024. Furthermore, the Transport and Housing Bureau and the Force plan to introduce a bill into the LegCo in the second half of 2022 to facilitate the issuance of electronic FPTs.

3. On law enforcement, the Force will be redoubling its efforts in areas with severe traffic congestion and issuing FPTs without prior warning to vehicles/drivers who commit offences causing serious obstruction and endangering road safety. Where necessary, apart from serving multiple summonses on the offending vehicles and repeatedly prosecuting the drivers concerned, the Force will even tow away the offending vehicles. In 2019, 2020 and 2021, there were 1 243, 3 226 and 2 997 cases in which vehicles parked illegally were towed away by the Force respectively.

The Force does not maintain statistics on cases in which multiple FPTs were issued against a vehicle at the same spot within the same day.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB020

(Question Serial No. 0389)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses

Programme: (2) Control upon Entry

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (K W AU)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

1. Passenger clearance services at most of the control points in Hong Kong have been suspended since 2020 to “guard against importation of cases”, resulting in a significant drop in the amount of work in examining passengers upon their entry via sea, land or air. In this connection, what arrangements were made by the Department in 2020 and 2021 for the deployment of officers tasked with the examination work at control points for better utilisation of human resources? Please list the numbers of officers who worked from home and were deployed to other departments to provide services, etc., and the numbers of days involved. Did such deployment result in any change in the provisional expenditure?
2. Given that the pandemic has not shown any sign of easing off in 2022, what arrangements have been made by the Department for the deployment of the officers concerned?
3. What preparations has the Department made for achieving the goal of striving for the resumption of quarantine-free travel between Hong Kong and the Mainland?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hak-kan (LegCo internal reference no.: 9)

Reply:

1. Since the outbreak of the pandemic in early 2020, the HKSAR Government has timely adjusted its immigration control measures at different stages in light of the pandemic developments outside Hong Kong and the actual local situation. At present, passenger clearance services are still provided at the control points at Hong Kong International Airport, Shenzhen Bay and Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port, while all cargo clearance services at control points continue to operate throughout the pandemic. In addition, the cross-boundary cargo clearance services at the Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point came into operation on 26 August 2020 with operating hours from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., while the cross-boundary cargo clearance operating hours at the Shenzhen Bay Control Point have been extended from 6:30 a.m. - midnight to 24 hours with effect from 10 December 2020. On the whole, the operating hours of cross-boundary cargo clearance services had in fact increased rather than reduced in the past two years. As for harbour control, the passenger clearance services at Kai Tak Cruise Terminal resumed for

Hong Kong residents between 30 July 2021 and 6 January 2022 following the resumption of “cruise-to-nowhere” itineraries. The Harbour Control Section and the River Trade Terminal have also been in operation all along to conduct immigration clearance on incoming and outgoing vessels. Yet, in view of the drop in the demand for passenger clearance services, the Immigration Department (ImmD) has made flexible internal redeployment of the resources of control points (including manpower and equipment) to other sections, such as the Foreign Domestic Helpers Section, Extension Section, International Co-operation Section, Castle Peak Bay Immigration Centre, Removal Assessment and Litigation Section, Information and Liaison Section, Task Force, and Systems Support Section, etc., to cope with the increased workload arising from the pandemic.

Besides, ImmD has deployed dedicated teams to handle the additional work arising from the implementation of anti-epidemic measures, including assisting passengers to complete quarantine arrangements before arriving in Hong Kong, conducting spot checks at the dwelling places of persons subject to compulsory quarantine to ensure compliance with compulsory quarantine etc. Staff at control points have also been deployed to the Government’s Contact Tracing Office to help step up efforts in close contact tracing and help carry out the Government’s “restriction-testing declaration” operations in numerous specified “restricted areas”. The deployment concerned is part of the regular duties of ImmD, which does not involve additional manpower or resources.

ImmD does not maintain other breakdown statistics mentioned in the question.

2. ImmD will continue to proactively provide support to the Government to carry out various anti-epidemic work through flexible manpower deployment, including helping manage the newly commissioned community isolation and treatment facilities.

3. At present, ImmD is going all out to provide support to the Government in carrying out various anti-epidemic work. When the pandemic eases off, ImmD will strive to work with relevant bureaux/departments to prepare for the resumption of normal travel between Hong Kong and the Mainland.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**SB021****(Question Serial No. 0625)**Head: (70) Immigration DepartmentSubhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expensesProgramme: (4) Personal DocumentationControlling Officer: Director of Immigration (K W AU)Director of Bureau: Secretary for SecurityQuestion:

The Department intends to cut 264 posts under Programme (4) in 2022-23. In this connection, would the Government please inform this Committee of:

1. the posts intended to be cut, including the ranks and post titles;
2. the main duties of the posts intended to be cut; and
3. the total amount of expenditure to be curtailed.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Wing-yan, Joephy (LegCo internal reference no.: 3)

Reply:

The specific changes in the number of posts resulting in the net decrease of 264 posts in the Immigration Department under Programme (4) "Personal Documentation" in 2022-23 are as follows:

Rank	Number of Posts
Chief Immigration Officer	+2
Senior Immigration Officer	-11
Immigration Officer	-169
Chief Immigration Assistant	+8
Clerical Officer	-86
Assistant Clerical Officer	-3
Photographer II	-5
Total	-264

The above 264 posts are mainly time-limited posts created between 2018-19 and 2022-23, including those for implementing the Territory-wide Identity Card Replacement Exercise and those for assisting the Treasury in implementing the Cash Payout Scheme and the first round of the Consumption Voucher Scheme.

The total annual salary costs involved in the net decrease of 264 posts under Programme (4) “Personal Documentation” are about \$166 million in terms of the notional annual mid-point salary.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB022

(Question Serial No. 0392)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Pre-entry Control

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (K W AU)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Would the authorities please provide the following information on various talent admission schemes for 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22:

(a) a breakdown of the numbers of professionals admitted under the Quality Migrant Admission Scheme (QMAS) by the 13 professions currently included in the Talent List of QMAS; and

(b) a breakdown, in tabular form, of the numbers of talents admitted under the General Employment Policy, the Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals, the QMAS, the Technology Talent Admission Scheme and the Immigration Arrangements for Non-local Graduates by (1) industry and (2) wage level?

Asked by: Hon CHAU Siu-chung (LegCo internal reference no.: 2)

Reply:

(a)

The Government promulgated the first Talent List of Hong Kong in August 2018. As at February 2022, a total of 194 applications under the Quality Migrant Admission Scheme (QMAS) have met the eligibility criteria under the Talent List. Among them, 172 have been allotted quotas whereas the remaining 22 are being processed. The breakdown statistics on the quotas allotted are as follows:

Profession on the Talent List	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22 (As at February 2022)
Waste Treatment Specialists	0	0	0	1
Asset Management Professionals	0	0	4	12
Marine Insurance Professionals	1	1	0	0
Actuaries	0	2	2	1
Fintech Professionals	2	5	14	10
Data Scientists and Cyber Security Specialists	5	14	17	8
Innovation and Technology Experts	6	6	18	12
Naval Architects	1	0	2	1
Marine Engineers and Superintendents of Ships	1	1	3	0
Creative Industries and Performing Arts Professionals	2	5	9	3
Dispute Resolution Professionals and Transactional Lawyers	0	1	1	1
Professionals in Compliance in Asset Management*	Not applicable			0
Financial Professionals in Environmental, Social and Governance*				0
Total	18	35	70	49
	172			

* The professions were added to the Talent List in October 2021. Among the 22 applications being processed, 1 falls under “Financial Professionals in Environmental, Social and Governance”.

(b)

The breakdown statistics on the number of applications approved for admission to Hong Kong under various talent admission schemes/policies by industry/sector and monthly remuneration of applicants are tabulated as follows:

General Employment Policy

Industry/Sector	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22 (As at February 2022)
Financial Services	5 119	4 245	2 345	2 333
Commerce and Trade	7 604	5 127	2 168	1 863
Academic Research and Education	4 970	4 105	2 038	1 755
Engineering and Construction	1 227	1 427	1 266	1 176
Recreation and Sports	5 489	5 446	693	887
Information Technology	1 491	1 418	614	497
Catering Services	884	712	248	325
Legal Services	497	399	169	170
Tourism	738	990	166	158
Medical and Health Care Services	599	530	141	154
Arts/Culture	3 654	4 377	119	107
Manufacturing Industries	168	192	135	83
Telecommunications	99	105	41	41
Architecture/Surveying	142	113	64	40
Biotechnology	11	17	15	10
Traditional Chinese Medicine	1	2	2	0
Others	9 100	5 989	3 302	2 478
Total	41 793	35 194	13 526	12 077

Monthly Remuneration	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22 (As at February 2022)
Below \$20,000	11 636	11 509	1 509	1 407
\$20,000 - \$39,999	13 411	10 871	5 261	4 471
\$40,000 - \$79,999	10 222	7 973	4 065	3 561
\$80,000 or above	6 524	4 841	2 691	2 638
Total	41 793	35 194	13 526	12 077

Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals

Industry/Sector	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22 (As at February 2022)
Academic Research and Education	2 420	2 133	1 843	2 013
Financial Services	2 205	2 053	1 784	2 004
Engineering and Construction	598	665	1 398	1 182
Medical and Health Care Services	106	65	600	1 022
Commerce and Trade	809	704	889	916
Information Technology	433	441	508	528
Biotechnology	21	10	87	299
Arts/Culture	4 573	3 455	106	189
Telecommunications	104	93	138	133
Recreation and Sports	435	258	25	115
Legal Services	121	121	73	99
Manufacturing Industries	103	58	129	67
Architecture/Surveying	88	64	30	34
Catering Services	76	82	30	30
Tourism	54	17	22	10
Traditional Chinese Medicine	2	6	0	0
Others	2 035	1 772	264	245
Total	14 183	11 997	7 926	8 886

Monthly Remuneration	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22 (As at February 2022)
Below \$20,000	6 095	5 100	1 667	1 941
\$20,000 - \$39,999	4 190	3 645	3 495	3 913
\$40,000 - \$79,999	2 580	2 207	1 923	2 059
\$80,000 or above	1 318	1 045	841	973
Total	14 183	11 997	7 926	8 886

QMAS

Industry/Sector	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22 (As at February 2022)
Information Technology and Telecommunications	163	159	550	432
Financial and Accounting Services	141	213	579	392
Architecture, Surveying, Engineering and Construction	27	47	128	140
Academic Research and Education	40	37	169	111
Manufacturing Industries	21	33	113	96
Commerce and Trade	30	48	121	88
Business Support and Human Resources	23	21	134	62
Human Health and Veterinary Services	19	19	78	57
Legal Services	33	45	64	53
Logistics and Transportation	9	9	34	20
Arts and Culture	26	18	16	17
Broadcasting and Entertainment	16	18	47	15
Sports	13	7	15	6
Catering and Tourism	5	3	9	5
Others	26	39	116	46
Total	592	716	2 173	1 540

Note 1: Numbers of applications approved are numbers of quotas allotted. The annual quota under QMAS was increased from 1 000 to 2 000 in 2020, and further increased to 4 000 in October 2021.

Note 2: The industry/sector under QMAS refers to the category to which the applicants belong as classified by the Immigration Department (ImmD) and the Advisory Committee on Admission of Quality Migrants and Professionals during the selection exercise. Successful applicants are not required to have secured an offer of employment before entering Hong Kong. Therefore, ImmD does not maintain statistics on persons allotted quotas by their monthly remuneration.

Technology Talent Admission Scheme (TechTAS)

Industry/Sector	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22 (As at February 2022)
Artificial Intelligence	10	14	26	16
Biotechnology	2	6	17	8
Data Analytics	4	8	15	6
Financial Technologies	14	10	14	3
Material Science	10	11	13	4
Cybersecurity	3	5	8	1
Robotics	5	8	11	3
5G Communications*	Not applicable	0	11	4
The Internet of Things*		0	4	1
Integrated Circuit Design*		0	2	3
Green Technology*		0	1	2
Digital Entertainment*		0	0	0
Microelectronics*		0	0	0
Total	48	62	122	51

* In January 2020, the Government expanded the coverage of TechTAS to include 6 new technology areas (i.e. 5G communications, the Internet of Things, integrated circuit design, green technology, digital entertainment and microelectronics).

Monthly Remuneration	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22 (As at February 2022)
Below \$20,000	0	0	3	0
\$20,000 - \$39,999	22	32	67	25
\$40,000 - \$79,999	21	21	40	19
\$80,000 or above	5	9	12	7
Total	48	62	122	51

Immigration Arrangements for Non-local Graduates (IANG)

The statistics on applications approved for coming to or staying in Hong Kong under the IANG are tabulated as follows:

Financial Year	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22 (As at February 2022)
Number of applications approved	10 318	10 320	7 620	6 780

Non-local graduates who submit applications to ImmD within 6 months after the date of their graduation (i.e. the date shown on their graduation certificates) are regarded as non-local fresh graduates. They are not required to have secured an offer of employment upon application and may be granted 12 months' stay on time limitation only without other conditions of stay, provided that they meet the normal immigration requirements. They are free to take up and change employment during their permitted stay without the need to seek prior approval from ImmD.

On the other hand, those who submit applications beyond 6 months of the date of their graduation are regarded as returning non-local graduates. If they wish to return to work in Hong Kong, they are required to have secured an offer of employment upon application with the job at a level commonly taken up by degree holders and the remuneration package commensurate with the prevailing market level. They will be granted 12 months' stay on time limitation only without other conditions of stay if they meet the normal immigration requirements.

As over 90% of those coming to or staying in Hong Kong under IANG are non-local fresh graduates who are not required to have secured an offer of employment upon application, ImmD does not maintain statistics on the industries or income levels of entrants admitted under IANG at the time of application.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB023

(Question Serial No. 0741)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (2) Control upon Entry, (3) Control after Entry, (4) Personal Documentation

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (K W AU)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Would the Government please inform this Committee of the following?

1. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, passenger clearance services at many control points have been suspended, whereas the staff size under Programme (2) is over 5 400, accounting for over half of the Department's estimates of expenditure. Please tabulate the original establishment (including the number and ranks of staff) of all passenger control points and the current establishment involved in actual operation. Please also provide the annual passenger flow during normal periods and the actual number of passengers of last year for reference.
2. Immigration staff have been deployed to support anti-epidemic work. Please provide the number and ranks of the staff involved; the types of anti-epidemic work to which they have provided support and the periods involved; and the implications of such deployment for the Department's estimates of expenditure.
3. Given that many public services have been affected by the pandemic, what measures are in place to facilitate application for documents and visas from members of the public and visitors? What electronic or on-line services have already been put in place? What are the services that still require members of the public and visitors to attend an Immigration Office in person for application? What are the reasons for application in person?
4. The Immigration Department (ImmD) keeps identity card information and movement records. Can such information be linked to systems of other government departments under special circumstances or with the authorisation of the data subject on account of significant public interest or improvement in public administration efficiency? For instance, in the case of contact-tracing work during the COVID-19 pandemic, where public health overrides privacy protection concerns, how do the authorities make available ImmD's systems and data to the Department of Health for linkage in order to streamline the procedures for verifying personal particulars? Or, during application for electronic consumer vouchers, authorisation needs to be obtained from members of the public for access to their records kept by the Government, including movement records and the

declarations of permanent departure from Hong Kong of the Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes Authority.

Asked by: Hon KAN Wai-mun, Carmen (LegCo internal reference no.: 3)

Reply:

1. The staff establishment of the Immigration Department (ImmD) at various immigration control points in the financial years of 2019-20 and 2022-23 are set out at Annex.

The numbers of inbound and outbound passenger trips at various immigration control points from 2017 to 2019 are 299 million, 315 million and 301 million respectively.

From 2020 to 2021, due to the suspension of passenger clearance services at most immigration control points amid the pandemic, the number of inbound and outbound passenger trips at various immigration control points were 24.2 million and 1.95 million respectively.

At present, passenger clearance services are still provided at the control points at Hong Kong International Airport, Shenzhen Bay and Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port, while all cargo clearance services at control points continue to operate throughout the pandemic. In addition, the cross-boundary cargo clearance services at the Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point came into operation on 26 August 2020 with operating hours from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., while the cross-boundary cargo clearance operating hours at the Shenzhen Bay Control Point have been extended from 6:30 a.m. – midnight to 24 hours with effect from 10 December 2020. On the whole, the operating hours of cross-boundary cargo clearance services had in fact increased rather than reduced in the past two years. As for harbour control, the passenger clearance services at Kai Tak Cruise Terminal resumed for Hong Kong residents between 30 July 2021 and 6 January 2022 following the resumption of “cruise-to-nowhere” itineraries. The Harbour Control Section and the River Trade Terminal have also been in operation all along to conduct immigration clearance on incoming and outgoing vessels.

Although the staff establishment of various immigration control points has not reduced accordingly amid the COVID-19 pandemic, in view of the drop in the demand for passenger clearance services, ImmD has made flexible internal redeployment of the resources of control points (including manpower and equipment) to other sections, such as the Foreign Domestic Helpers Section, Extension Section, International Co-operation Section, Castle Peak Bay Immigration Centre, Removal Assessment and Litigation Section, Information and Liaison Section, Task Force, and Systems Support Section, etc., to cope with the increased workload arising from the pandemic.

Besides, ImmD has deployed dedicated teams to handle the additional work arising from the implementation of anti-epidemic measures, including assisting passengers to complete quarantine arrangements before arriving in Hong Kong, conducting spot checks at the dwelling places of persons subject to compulsory quarantine to ensure compliance with compulsory quarantine, etc. Staff at control points have also been deployed to the Government’s Contact Tracing Office to help step up efforts in close

contact tracing and help carry out the Government's "restriction-testing declaration" operations in numerous specified "restricted areas". ImmD will continue to proactively provide support to the Government to carry out various anti-epidemic work through flexible manpower deployment, including helping manage the newly commissioned community isolation and treatment facilities.

2. In response to the increasing severity of the pandemic, ImmD proactively mobilised its staff to take part in anti-epidemic work with all-out efforts. Since 2020, ImmD has deployed a total of 3 127 staff (including 781 staff at officer level, 2 306 staff at rank and file level and 40 civilian staff) to support anti-epidemic work. Subject to needs, the types of anti-epidemic work that ImmD has participated in include tracing the movements of close contacts, managing community vaccination centres, conducting "restriction-testing declaration" and compulsory testing operations, managing quarantine hotels as well as community isolation and treatment facilities, and supporting the command centre set up by the Emergency Support Unit under the Security Bureau, etc.

ImmD has supported anti-epidemic work through flexible deployment of existing resources, which did not have implications for the Department's overall estimates of expenditure.

3. In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, ImmD has introduced various facilitation measures for application for documents and visas, and appealed to applicants to submit their applications through ImmD's homepage or mobile application, or by post or drop-in box in order to avoid the gathering of crowds.

Facilitation Measures for Application for and Collection of Personal Documents

ImmD introduced the Next Generation Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Passport in May 2019 and has provided additional means for submitting HKSAR passport applications. Apart from submitting applications through the Internet, by post or drop-in box, or in person, members of the public may also submit applications through the ImmD Mobile Application or Travel Document Submission Kiosks in a self-service manner. With effect from October 2020, ImmD has put in place a new measure for collection of HKSAR passports. Members of the public may choose to collect their HKSAR passports at Passport Collection Kiosks in a self-service manner. There is no need to make any appointment for the application for and collection of HKSAR passports in a self-service manner, which is convenient and quick. Moreover, to shorten the queuing time, applicants may make an appointment booking through the Internet or by phone.

Applicants overseas or in the Mainland who submit applications for an HKSAR passport directly to ImmD by whichever means may choose to collect their passports at the Chinese Diplomatic and Consular Missions (CDCMs) (with effect from October 2020) or Mainland Offices of the HKSAR Government (with effect from November 2021).

Apart from applications for replacement of an HKSAR passport, members of the public may also submit their first applications for an HKSAR passport through the 5 Mainland Offices of the HKSAR Government with effect from November 2021, and submit their applications for replacement of a Document of Identity for Visa Purposes (Doc/I) or Re-entry Permit with effect from September and November 2021 respectively.

Meanwhile, for replacement of an HKSAR passport, Doc/I or Re-entry Permit which has been damaged or lost, or for amendment of personal particulars in the documents, ImmD will handle such applications on a case-by-case basis. Applicants must submit their applications in person at an Immigration Office, a Mainland Office of the HKSAR Government or a CDCM for furnishing supporting documents, producing the existing documents or reporting the details of the loss or damage to ImmD.

As regards the application for and collection of identity cards, given the relevant requirements under the Registration of Persons Regulations (Cap. 177A), applicants need to have their photographs and fingerprints taken at relevant offices of ImmD. To enhance service standards and facilitate members of the public in maintaining social distance during the pandemic, applicants are encouraged to make an appointment for application and fill in the forms in advance through the ImmD Mobile Application or the Internet. They may also choose to collect their identity cards at Self-service Collection Kiosks installed at the Registration of Persons Offices in a self-service manner.

Facilitation Measures for Application for and Collection of Visas

ImmD has stepped up the efforts in introducing various digital services during the pandemic. Apart from launching the “Smart Renewal” service in March 2021, ImmD introduced “e-Visas” with effect from 28 December 2021 to replace sticker-type labels. Applicants may download or print the “e-Visas” by themselves upon payment. From the same day, ImmD has launched in phases the “one-stop” electronic services for visa application to allow applicants to complete the entire application process from application submission, payment to visa collection online, sparing them the need to attend an Immigration Office in person for going through the formalities.

4. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, ImmD has been making extensive use of information technology to assist relevant government bureaux and departments in taking various anti-epidemic and relief measures. For instance, in compliance with the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (Cap. 486) and other relevant laws and regulations, ImmD has used stored personal data to assist the Contact Tracing Offices in tracing close contacts with a view to breaking the virus transmission chains in the community as soon as possible. Moreover, to further facilitate the entry of members of the public and visitors through the Return2hk Scheme and the Come2hk Scheme, ImmD has incorporated into its immigration control system the “Green” QR code, a clearance mechanism which enables members of the public to undergo the Department of Health’s inspection and ImmD’s clearance procedures at designated counters or e-channels in one go, thereby shortening their waiting time for returning to Hong Kong and enhancing clearance efficiency. For the Cash Payout Scheme and the first round

of the Consumption Voucher Scheme implemented in 2020 and 2021 respectively, ImmD also used stored personal data, such as movement records and conditions of stay in Hong Kong, to assist the Treasury in verifying the identity and eligibility of applicants so as to speed up the disbursement of cash and consumption vouchers to members of the public.

ImmD's staff establishment at various immigration control points

Financial Year 2019-20

Rank	Number of posts																	
	Airport	Lo Wu	Hung Hom	Lok Ma Chau Spur Line	West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link	Lok Ma Chau	Man Kam To	Sha Tau Kok	Shenzhen Bay	Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port	Heung Yuen Wai	Harbour Control	Macau Ferry Terminal	China Ferry Terminal	River Trade Terminal	Tuen Mun Ferry Terminal	Kai Tak Cruise Terminal	Total
Chief Immigration Officer	6	4	1	4	2	2	1	1	4	3	2	1	1	1	0	1	1	35
Senior Immigration Officer	32	19	4	5	15	8	4	4	8	21	11	8	9	8	5	3	4	168
Immigration Officer	109	91	16	32	58	45	12	6	41	79	34	32	23	23	13	5	15	634
Chief Immigration Assistant	99	69	7	21	31	11	3	0	8	16	16	14	22	14	4	0	2	337
Senior Immigration Assistant	617	492	44	154	269	249	31	24	266	294	95	7	100	93	4	13	52	2 804
Immigration Assistant	83	49	16	30	25	57	31	13	53	83	42	40	30	22	10	8	18	610
Executive Officer I	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Executive Officer II	2	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
Clerical Officer	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
Assistant Clerical Officer	5	4	1	1	2	2	1	2	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	28
Clerical Assistant	11	4	2	2	2	2	3	2	0	2	1	6	2	5	3	0	1	48
Office Assistant	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Statistical Officer II	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Driver	7	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
Workman II	7	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	19
Total	980	738	93	250	407	378	87	53	387	503	204	109	189	168	40	30	94	4 710

Financial Year 2022-23^{Note}

Rank	Number of posts																	
	Airport	Lo Wu	Hung Hom	Lok Ma Chau Spur Line	West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link	Lok Ma Chau	Man Kam To	Sha Tau Kok	Shenzhen Bay	Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port	Heung Yuen Wai	Harbour Control	Macau Ferry Terminal	China Ferry Terminal	River Trade Terminal	Tuen Mun Ferry Terminal	Kai Tak Cruise Terminal	Total
Chief Immigration Officer	6	4	1	4	2	3	1	1	4	3	2	1	1	1	0	1	1	36
Senior Immigration Officer	33	19	4	5	15	9	4	4	11	21	11	8	9	8	5	3	4	173
Immigration Officer	115	91	16	32	58	46	12	6	55	79	34	32	23	23	13	5	15	655
Chief Immigration Assistant	99	69	7	21	31	11	3	0	10	16	16	14	22	14	4	0	2	339
Senior Immigration Assistant	633	492	44	154	269	249	31	24	332	294	95	7	100	93	4	13	52	2 886
Immigration Assistant	84	48	16	30	25	57	31	13	62	83	42	40	30	22	10	8	18	619
Executive Officer I	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Executive Officer II	2	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
Clerical Officer	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
Assistant Clerical Officer	5	4	1	1	2	2	1	2	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	28
Clerical Assistant	11	4	2	2	2	2	3	2	0	2	1	6	2	5	3	0	1	48
Office Assistant	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Statistical Officer II	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Driver	7	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
Workman II	6	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	18
Total	1003	737	93	250	407	381	87	53	481	503	204	109	189	168	40	30	94	4 829

Note: To meet future operational needs, ImmD has created the following posts between the financial years of 2020-21 and 2022-23:

Airport Control Point

The creation of 10 posts was approved in the financial year of 2020-21 to carry out immigration control and related work at dedicated service counters in the arrivals and departures halls of Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA);

The creation of 6 posts was approved in the financial year of 2021-22 to facilitate the provision of round-the-clock clearance services at HKIA VIP Lounges newly provided by the Hong Kong Airport Authority, which was offset by the deletion of 4 posts of the Airport Control Point and 1 post of the Lo Wu Control Point (in addition to the deletion of a post of a non-control point section);

The creation of 11 posts was approved in the financial year of 2022-23 to support the operation of the Intermodal Transfer Terminal at HKIA.

Lok Ma Chau Control Point

The creation of 3 three-year time-limited posts (in addition to the creation of a two-year time-limited post of a non-control point section) was approved in the financial year of 2020-21 for conducting the initial study for introducing innovative clearance modes at land boundary control points and the Lok Ma Chau Loop in the future, and for coordinating the work relating to the redevelopment of the Lok Ma Chau Control Point, with a view to fostering the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

Shenzhen Bay Control Point

The creation of 94 posts was approved in the financial year of 2020-21 to meet the additional manpower needs arising from the implementation of 24-hour clearance in phases at the Shenzhen Bay Control Point.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**SB024****(Question Serial No. 0137)**Head: (70) Immigration DepartmentSubhead (No. & title): (001) SalariesProgramme: (3) Control after EntryControlling Officer: Director of Immigration (K W AU)Director of Bureau: Secretary for SecurityQuestion:

Regarding the reduction in the staff establishment by 249 posts in 2022-23, please inform this Committee of the details of the posts to be deleted and the impact of the reduction in posts on the screening of non-refoulement claimants, the handling of their judicial reviews and appeals/petitions as well as the repatriation work.

Asked by: Hon LAI Tung-kwok (LegCo internal reference no.: 9)Reply:

There will be a net decrease of 249 non-directorate posts in the Immigration Department (ImmD) in 2022-23. A breakdown of these posts by rank is as follows:

Rank	Number of Posts
Assistant Principal Immigration Officer	+1
Chief Immigration Officer	+3
Senior Immigration Officer	-9
Immigration Officer	-166
Chief Immigration Assistant	+8
Senior Immigration Assistant	+4
Immigration Assistant	+4
Clerical Officer	-86
Assistant Clerical Officer	-3
Personal Secretary I	+1
Photographer II	-6
Total	-249

The posts to be deleted in 2022-23 are mainly time-limited posts created or extended between 2018-19 and 2022-23, including those for implementing the Territory-wide Identity Card Replacement Exercise and those for assisting the Treasury in implementing the Cash

Payout Scheme and the Consumption Voucher Scheme (CVS) in 2021, etc. The newly created posts in 2022-23 are mainly deployed for assisting in organising and conducting firearms and ammunition training; enhancing training on national studies, national security and counter-terrorism; supporting the operation of the Intermodal Transfer Terminal at Hong Kong International Airport; and assisting the Treasury in implementing a new round of CVS, etc. Staffing for handling non-refoulement claims is not involved.

ImmD will, having regard to the actual operational circumstances and needs, make flexible and suitable manpower deployment to ensure that the relevant work will be carried out smoothly and effectively.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB025

(Question Serial No. 0269)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Pre-entry Control

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (K W AU)

Director of Bureau: Not Specified

Question:

Regarding the Immigration Arrangements for Non-local Graduates (IANG), would the Government please inform this Committee of:

- (1) the numbers of non-local graduates who graduated from local tertiary institutions in the past 3 years (please list the numbers of these graduates by bachelor's degree, master's degree and doctorate); and
- (2) the number of applications received from non-local graduates who applied to stay and work in Hong Kong through the IANG in the past 3 years, and the numbers of such applications approved.
- (3) Have the authorities reviewed the IANG in a timely manner so as to assess whether the IANG is effective and meets the policy objective of attracting outstanding talent from outside to stay and work in Hong Kong?

Asked by: Hon LAM Kin-fung, Jeffrey (LegCo internal reference no.: 3)

Reply:

(1)

According to information provided by the Education Bureau and the Home Affairs Bureau, a breakdown of the numbers of non-local graduates of publicly-funded programmes in the academic years from 2018/19 to 2020/21 by level of study is as follows:

Level of study	Number of graduates		
	2018/19 Academic Year	2019/20 Academic Year	2020/21 Academic Year
University Grants Committee-funded programmes			
Bachelor's degree programmes	2 419	2 545	2 696
Taught postgraduate programmes	55	61	50
Research postgraduate programmes	1 985	1 956	2 163
(i) <i>Doctor of Philosophy programmes</i>	1 650	1 617	1 832
(ii) <i>Master of Philosophy programmes</i>	335	339	331
Other publicly-funded programmes			
Bachelor's degree programmes	20	11	20
Total	4 479	4 573	4 929

The Government does not maintain statistics on non-local graduates of all self-financing post-secondary programmes.

(2)

The statistics on applications received and approved for staying in/coming to Hong Kong under the Immigration Arrangements for Non-local Graduates (IANG) in the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

Financial year	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22 (as at February 2022)
Number of applications received	10 533	8 222	7 248
Number of applications approved	10 320	7 620	6 780

Note: Applications approved in a financial year may not totally be the applications received in the same year.

(3)

IANG has been well received since its introduction in 2008. As at February 2022, there were 106 016 applications approved under IANG, facilitating non-local graduates' career development in Hong Kong and enriching Hong Kong's talent pool. As mentioned in the 2021 Policy Address Supplement, the Government will explore the extension of IANG to cover graduates of Hong Kong universities' campuses in the Greater Bay Area Mainland cities so as to attract talent nurtured by these institutions to stay in/come to Hong Kong for employment, thereby further enhancing Hong Kong's human capital and competitiveness.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB026

(Question Serial No. 0271)

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses

Programme: (4) Personal Documentation

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (K W AU)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

With regard to the introduction of the Territory-wide Identity Card Replacement Exercise (Replacement Exercise) by the Immigration Department, please inform this Committee of:

- 1) the progress of the Replacement Exercise and the expenditure and manpower involved in the past 3 years;
- 2) the respective numbers of persons who should, have had and have yet to have their identity cards replaced in the past 3 years, and their age distribution;
- 3) the details of the Government's publicity work in promoting identity card replacement and the expenditure and manpower involved/to be involved in the past year and the next 3 years.
- 4) Has the pandemic hindered the progress of the Replacement Exercise?

Asked by: Hon LAM Kin-fung, Jeffrey (LegCo internal reference no.: 5)

Reply:

The Territory-wide Identity Card Replacement Exercise (Replacement Exercise) was launched on 27 December 2018 and originally expected to complete by end-2022. As at end-February 2022, around 5.02 million identity card holders had already replaced their identity cards. Identity card holders who have been called up for identity card replacement and whose call-up periods have expired belong to the age groups of 1955 to 1982, 1985 to 1986, 2005 to 2007 and 2012 to 2018. Among them, about 83% have already replaced their identity cards.

To perform the work relating to the Replacement Exercise, the Immigration Department (ImmD) has obtained approval for creating 956 posts (including 353 time-limited civil service posts and 603 contract staff). The total expenditures on the Replacement Exercise in the past 3 financial years are tabulated as follows:

Financial year	Expenditure (\$million)
2019-20	442
2020-21	461
2021-22	441 (revised estimate)

In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, the services of 9 Smart Identity Card Replacement Centres were suspended on several occasions in the past 2 years to reduce the gathering of applicants and the risk of spreading the virus. As the card replacement progress has been hampered by the pandemic, ImmD will extend the Replacement Exercise to early 2023. To this end, ImmD will extend the existing posts under the Replacement Exercise and create 57 new posts (including 3 time-limited civil service posts and 54 contract staff) in 2022-23 to continue implementing the Replacement Exercise.

Regarding the publicity work, ImmD promotes the Replacement Exercise and provides the relevant details to members of the public through various channels, including television, radio, train and bus bodies, large outdoor billboards, newspapers, magazines, websites, social media, mobile apps, posters, leaflets, press releases and press conferences, etc. Since the publicity work is part of the daily work of the Replacement Exercise, ImmD does not keep a breakdown of the manpower involved. The expenditures/estimated expenditures on publicity work in 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 are tabulated as follows:

Financial year	Expenditure/Estimate expenditure (\$million)
2021-22	15
2022-23	17
2023-24	6

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB027

(Question Serial No. 0262)

Head: (31) Customs and Excise Department

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses

Programme: ()

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Customs and Excise (Ms Louise HO)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The estimated provision for 2022-2023 is \$452.1 million higher than the revised estimate for last year, mainly due to the net increase of 71 posts. On the other hand, the value of dutiable commodities seized has increased over 70% to millions of dollars in 2021. In this regard, will the Government inform this Committee of:

1. the distribution of ranks and the nature of work of the 71 posts increased; and
2. the types of seizures involved and reasons for the increase, and how much manpower was involved in the prosecution.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Chun-ying (LegCo internal reference no.: 31)

Reply:

1. In 2022-23, the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) plans to effect a net increase of 71 posts under Programme (1) Control and Enforcement. Among the posts to be created, one of them is a directorate post for implementing the recommendation of the Report on the Grade Structure Review for the Disciplined Services Grades on creating 1 Deputy Commissioner post to strengthen the directorate support within C&ED. The net increase of the remaining 70 non-directorate posts, involving the creation of new posts and deletion of existing posts, seeks to provide manpower for (1) establishing a registration regime for dealers in precious metals and stones upon the implementation of the proposed amendments to the Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorist Financing Ordinance (Cap. 615) in future; (2) the customs clearance service at the Intermodal Transfer Terminal at the Hong Kong International Airport; and (3) services under the Trade Single Window upon its extension to Phase 2, etc.

Details of the net increase of posts under Programme (1) Control and Enforcement are as follows –

Rank	Number	
	Posts to be created	Posts to be deleted
Directorate post		
Deputy Commissioner of Customs and Excise	1	-
Non-directorate post		
Senior Superintendent of Customs and Excise	1	-
Superintendent of Customs and Excise	1	-
Assistant Superintendent of Customs and Excise	2	-
Senior Inspector of Customs and Excise	8	1
Inspector of Customs and Excise	21	6
Chief Customs Officer	19	6
Senior Customs Officer	21	5
Customs Officer	44	31
Senior Systems Manager	1	-
Systems Manager	1	-
Analyst / Programmer II	2	-
Personal Secretary I	1	-
Assistant Clerical Officer	-	1
Clerical Assistant	2	-
Office Assistant	-	1
Workman II	-	3
Sub-total:	125	54

2. In 2021, under the COVID-19 pandemic, smugglers made use of sea and air cargo shipments more often. C&ED had stepped up the corresponding risk assessment, intelligence analysis and enforcement (including prosecution) actions, and quashed a number of major cases of smuggling dutiable commodities. The value of dutiable commodities seized, involving illicit cigarettes mostly, was around \$292 million, representing a significant increase of nearly 13 times compared to that of \$21 million in 2020.

C&ED does not maintain a breakdown of the manpower involved in the work above.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**SB028****(Question Serial No. 0135)**Head: (31) Customs and Excise DepartmentSubhead (No. & title): ()Programme: (1) Control and EnforcementControlling Officer: Commissioner of Customs and Excise (Ms Louise HO)Director of Bureau: Secretary for SecurityQuestion:

It is anticipated that 68 new posts will be created in 2022-23. Please inform this Committee of the ranks of these posts to be created and their job descriptions.

Asked by: Hon LAI Tung-kwok (LegCo internal reference no.: 7)Reply:

In 2022-23, the Customs and Excise Department plans to effect an overall net increase of 68 non-directorate posts, involving the creation of new posts and deletion of existing posts, in order to provide manpower for (1) establishing a registration regime for dealers in precious metals and stones upon the implementation of the proposed amendments to the Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorist Financing Ordinance (Cap. 615) in future; (2) the customs clearance service at the Intermodal Transfer Terminal at the Hong Kong International Airport; and (3) services under the Trade Single Window upon its extension to Phase 2, etc. Details are as follows –

Rank	Number	
	Posts to be created	Posts to be deleted
Senior Superintendent of Customs and Excise	1	-
Superintendent of Customs and Excise	1	-
Assistant Superintendent of Customs and Excise	2	-
Senior Inspector of Customs and Excise	8	1
Inspector of Customs and Excise	21	6
Chief Customs Officer	19	6
Senior Customs Officer	21	5
Customs Officer	44	31
Senior Systems Manager	1	-

Rank	Number	
	Posts to be created	Posts to be deleted
Systems Manager	1	-
Analyst / Programmer II	2	-
Personal Secretary I	1	-
Assistant Clerical Officer	-	2
Clerical Assistant	2	1
Office Assistant	-	1
Workman II	-	3
	124	56

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB029

(Question Serial No. 0012)

Head: (31) Customs and Excise Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Control and Enforcement

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Customs and Excise (Ms Louise HO)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

In 2021, there was a substantial increase in both the quantity and value of smuggled goods seized in smuggling cases detected by the Customs and Excise Department and the Hong Kong Police Force when compared with 2020. How much additional resources will be allocated by the Department for combating smuggling activities in the coming year, and what are the Department's new measures and strategies against smuggling activities?

Asked by: Hon WONG Chun-sek, Edmund (LegCo internal reference no.: 8)

Reply:

The Government's law enforcement agencies (LEAs), including the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) and the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF), have all along been tackling different types of smuggling activities under intelligence-based strategies, through inter-departmental collaboration and co-operation with their counterparts in the Mainland and other places.

Under the COVID-19 pandemic, smugglers made use of sea and air cargo shipments more often, and commonly smuggled articles of higher value and in larger quantities on a single occasion. LEAs have adopted targeted tactics to combat smuggling activities in light of the latest smuggling trend. In 2021, anti-smuggling law enforcement operations taken by C&ED and HKPF delivered notable results. The quantity and value of articles seized both increased when compared to those in 2020.

To combat syndicate-level smuggling activities, LEAs will continue to strengthen intelligence exchange and the conduct of joint operations with their counterparts in the Mainland and other places. They will step up investigation on masterminds of smuggling syndicates and their source of funds, and invoke the Organized and Serious Crimes Ordinance (Cap. 455) as appropriate for confiscating the relevant crime proceeds. In suppressing smuggling by sea, LEAs will continue to strengthen collaboration with their counterparts in the Mainland, including issuing instant notifications on vessels suspected to be used for smuggling, as well as stepping up efforts to smash storehouses used for storing smuggled goods and detain speedboats suspected to be used for smuggling, so as to further enhance the effectiveness of enforcement.

LEAs will continue to deploy existing resources flexibly and adjust their strategies in a timely manner in response to the evolving smuggling trend, in order to enhance the effectiveness of their work. Resources involved in strengthening anti-smuggling have been subsumed under C&ED's recurrent expenses. C&ED does not maintain a breakdown of the relevant figures.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB030

(Question Serial No. 0535)

Head: (30) Correctional Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: Not specified

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Correctional Services (WONG Kwok-hing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

1. Among the respective numbers of persons in custody (PICs) as at the end of 2019, 2020 and 2021, how many of them were (i) Hong Kong permanent residents aged 18-30; (ii) Hong Kong permanent residents aged below 18; and (iii) Hong Kong permanent residents under statutory supervision for taking part in the riots against the 2019 extradition bill?

2. Please provide the respective numbers of PICs taking the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination and being awarded a bachelor's degree or a master's degree in each of the past 3 years. How many of them were minors in custody? What measures have been taken by the Correctional Services Department (CSD) to minimise the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on PICs' learning?

3. It is learnt that CSD has formulated a number of rehabilitation programmes for PICs in recent years, including the Youth Lab, educational activities under "Understanding History is the Beginning of Knowledge", the "Change Lab" and the "Walk with YOUth Programme" jointly organised with the Hong Kong Police Force, etc. Please provide an overview of the Department's work for assisting PICs in developing correct values, understanding the Constitution, the Basic Law and the Hong Kong National Security Law, and turning over a new leaf and re-integrating into society; the number of participants; and information on the effectiveness of such work.

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Mei-fun, Priscilla (LegCo internal reference no.: 9)

Reply:

1. A breakdown of the respective numbers of persons in custody (PICs) as at the end of 2019, 2020 and 2021 is as follows:

	As at 31 December 2019	As at 31 December 2020	As at 31 December 2021
(i) Hong Kong permanent residents aged 18-30	1 422	1 479	1 787
(ii) Hong Kong permanent residents aged below 18	54	121	187
(iii) Hong Kong permanent residents under statutory supervision due to their involvement in cases relating to the black-clad violence in 2019	3	38	89

2. In the past 3 years, there were a total of 28 young PICs (i.e. those aged below 21) taking the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE) and 20 adult PICs being awarded 19 bachelor's degrees and 1 master's degree. The numbers of the relevant PICs are tabulated below:

	HKDSE	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree
2021	7	5	-
2020	9	9	-
2019	14	5	1
Total counts	30 ^{Note}	19	1
	(involving a total of 28 young PICs)	(involving a total of 20 adult PICs)	

^{Note:} In the past 3 years, a total of 2 young PICs sat for the HKDSE more than once.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, educational classes for young PICs have been conducted as usual for most of the time. At times when the severe epidemic situation renders it impossible to conduct educational classes as usual, teachers would provide young PICs with learning materials including study notes, exercises, tests, etc. for self-study so as to keep up their learning progress, and would offer guidance according to individual needs. Since adult PICs have all along been allowed to pursue further studies in their spare time on a self-learning basis, the pandemic has less impact on their learning.

3. Since the outbreak of the black-clad violence in 2019, a large number of radical lawbreakers involved in serious offences have been remanded or convicted. In order to help them disengage from radical thoughts and behaviours, and re-establish correct values, the Correctional Services Department (CSD) has assigned dedicated case managers to assess these PICs against several "characteristics of radicalisation", so as to identify the special rehabilitation needs of each PIC in the course of "de-radicalisation". The Department would then match them with appropriate rehabilitation programmes based on 3 focused rehabilitation directions, namely understanding Chinese history and national education, psychological reconstruction and re-establishment of values, life planning and rebuilding of family relationships, with a view to setting targets by stage for them to achieve de-radicalisation progressively. In addition to regularly assessing each case and reviewing

the progress of rehabilitation, case managers would provide assistance to the PICs concerned and adjust their rehabilitation programmes as and when necessary. Besides, the Department works closely with different rehabilitation synergistic partners and community stakeholders to provide rehabilitation programmes according to the 3 focused rehabilitation directions mentioned above, in a bid to further enhance, both in terms of breadth and depth, the implementation of the rehabilitation programmes.

- On understanding Chinese history and national education, various educational activities under “Understanding history is the beginning of knowledge” have been launched by CSD, including Virtual Reality history learning activities, e-sports activities for history learning, and history and culture workshops, etc. These activities aim to assist young PICs to learn history in an interesting way through a diversified mode of learning, so as to enhance their sense of national identity, help them build positive values and reflect on the meaning of life, and guide them back on the right track. At the same time, in line with the curriculum reform, subjects such as Junior Secondary Chinese History are provided, and values education is strengthened, including moral and civic education, Basic Law education and National Security Law education, etc. to enhance young PICs’ law-abiding awareness.
- As regards psychological reconstruction and re-establishment of values, the Psychological Services Section of CSD has optimised the existing psychological counselling services and launched a new psychological counselling programme named “Youth Lab” to enable young PICs to undergo psychological rehabilitation and reconstruction, adjust their mode of thinking and enhance their law-abiding awareness. In addition, CSD plans to set up a psychological service centre, the “Change Lab”, in the community to provide community-based psychological counselling for young PICs after release, with a view to assisting young people under a statutory supervision order to build up confidence and psychological resilience, so that they can overcome difficulties and resist temptations.

As for adult PICs, CSD has introduced an integrated professional psychological assessment and treatment programme “Psychological Pathway to Change”, to provide adult PICs with personalised therapies comprising treatment components including handling mental health problems, extreme anti-social and violent mindset, psychological and emotional disturbances, difficulties in controlling impulsiveness, etc.

Besides, the Department has been assisting PICs to control their emotions through various media so as to help them de-radicalise. Examples of such media include the use of arts therapy as an intervention point. The “Zen Photography Workshop” hosted by a professional photographer has been organised to guide young PICs to express their feelings through photography, in order to alleviate their negative emotions, help them think over their problems from a different perspective and enhance their problem-solving ability.

CSD and the Hong Kong Police Force have jointly launched the “Walk with YOUth Programme”, under which a series of vibrant and sedentary rehabilitation activities have been organised for young PICs to help them establish correct values and promote law-abiding awareness, with a view to reducing the recidivism rate of young offenders.

Other than the above, CSD has arranged for various non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to participate in the implementation of rehabilitation programmes. For example, in view of the rapid spread of information on the Internet nowadays, the “Information Literacy Group” has been set up jointly with a NGO to teach PICs to judge the authenticity of online information and strengthen their critical thinking, so as to avoid being misled by biased information online. Moreover, the Department has, in collaboration with a NGO, organised the “Project Landing”, which aims at assisting PICs to de-radicalise, cultivate multi-perspective thinking, develop empathy skills and rebuild family relationships through individual and group therapeutic sessions, thereby reducing the likelihood of their recidivism of violent crimes.

- As for life planning and rebuilding of family relationships, clinical psychologists of CSD provide PICs with family-based psychological treatment service to mend family rifts or address other serious family problems. PICs’ families are invited to correctional institutions to receive professional psychological treatment service with the PICs so as to rebuild their relationships, and enable PICs to form stronger determination to turn over a new leaf through family support.

Besides, professionals from different sectors have been invited to participate in life planning programmes held in correctional institutions to assist PICs to prepare themselves for future employment/studies, and give them guidance on setting their life goals by sharing their own successful experience with them. PICs are also encouraged to set the right goals, start a meaningful life and contribute to society. To assist PICs who will soon be released to re-integrate smoothly into society, CSD organises the “Pre-release Re-integration Orientation Course”, during which information about the current job market situation and training on interview skills will be provided. Furthermore, CSD has collaborated with “Caring Employers” from the business sector to provide job matching service to PICs so that they can be offered suitable jobs before discharge. As regards young PICs who want to continue their studies after release, CSD will liaise with the schools at which they had studied prior to their imprisonment (secondary schools or universities) to help arrange for them to continue their studies in these schools as far as possible. If school places are not available in their original schools, CSD will liaise with the Education Bureau or other stakeholders to help secure school places from other schools, so as to enable them to resume their school life after discharge.

The above de-radicalisation rehabilitation programmes have received positive and favourable response from participants. As at 28 February 2022, about 250 PICs actively participated in these programmes on a voluntary basis. By drawing on the past successful experience, CSD will continue to establish a rehabilitation platform through active collaboration with various sectors of the community, so as to assist PICs to turn over a new leaf for a more harmonious and inclusive society.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB031

(Question Serial No. 0854)

Head: (30) Correctional Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Prison Management

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Correctional Services (WONG Kwok-hing)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

1. Please provide a breakdown by the number of complaints received by correctional institutions, the categories of complaints, the complainants, the content of complaints, the number of complaints entailing investigation, the number of complaints not entailing investigation, the number of substantiated complaints after investigation, the number of unsubstantiated complaints after investigation, and the number and rank of correctional officers subject to punishment for substantiated complaints after investigation in the past 5 years.
2. Please provide the number and content of programmes currently offered in rehabilitation centres. Are persons in custody (PICs) who are tertiary students provided with post-secondary programmes? If no, what is the content of the programmes provided to these PICs?
3. Where were the numbers of work injuries of PICs in various correctional institutions in the past 5 years? What were the average and median amounts of compensation for these work injuries? What was the level of recovery of each of these work injury cases after assessment? Are there any guidelines to follow? How does the Department ensure that PICs who engage in work are in compliance with occupational safety and health requirements?
4. What were the respective numbers of applications for official visits in different correctional institutions in the past 5 years? How many of these applications were approved? How many were rejected? What were the reasons for rejection?

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 7)

Reply:

1. In general, if the complaints lodged by persons in custody (PICs) involve matters of a relatively minor nature, such as the daily routines, general treatment, services or operations of an institution, the institutional management will take immediate follow-up actions.

As for complaints of a relatively serious nature, such as misconduct of staff or maladministration, the institutional management will refer them to the Complaints Investigation Unit (CIU) of the Correctional Services Department (CSD) for comprehensive investigation.

The numbers of complaint cases received from PICs and entailing comprehensive investigation by CIU in the past 5 years are tabulated as follows:

Cases entailing comprehensive investigation by CIU (complaints lodged by PICs)	2017 (Number of cases)	2018 (Number of cases)	2019 (Number of cases)	2020 (Number of cases)	2021 (Number of cases)
Use of unnecessary force	18	8	9	21	16
Misconduct of staff	34	21	33	49	34
Negligence of duty	7	7	15	40	25
Abuse of authority	14	8	11	19	12
Injustice in disciplinary action	8	13	11	28	28
Dissatisfaction with institutional policy/procedure	2	1	2	9	0
Total	83	58	81	166	115

The numbers of complaint cases received from PICs which were found substantiated/partly substantiated upon comprehensive investigation by CIU in the past 5 years are tabulated as follows:

Cases substantiated/partly substantiated upon comprehensive investigation by CIU (complaints lodged by PICs)	2017 (Number of cases)	2018 (Number of cases)	2019 (Number of cases)	2020 (Number of cases)	2021 (Number of cases)
Substantiated	1	1	1	4	1
Substantiated other than reported	0	1	0	1	2
Not fully substantiated	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1	2	1	5	3

A total of 3 Assistant Officers were subject to punishment for involvement in the substantiated/partly substantiated cases listed above in the past 5 years.

2. CSD provides half-day compulsory education for young PICs aged between 14 and 20, and arranges qualified teachers to teach the subjects. Having regard to the length of sentences and learning needs of young PICs, CSD provides young PICs undergoing

Phase I training at Rehabilitation Centres with the “Teen’s Programme”, covering 120 hours of basic education curriculum at the junior secondary school level (with subjects including Chinese, English, Mathematics, Life and Society) and 180 hours of vocational training. The programme is recognised by the Vocational Training Council.

CSD also provides young PICs with courses at the secondary school level. PICs who were studying post-secondary programmes before imprisonment may contact their tertiary institutions for suitable modes of study and learning materials. CSD would assist PICs upon their requests to continue to study the relevant programmes at correctional institutions. PICs may also enrol in distance learning courses offered by the Hong Kong Metropolitan University according to their interests and abilities. Correctional institutions would provide appropriate assistance to them.

3. Statistics of PICs rendered unfit for work for 4 or more days due to injuries arising from work accidents in the past 5 years are tabulated below:

Year	Number of accidents
2021	8
2020	4
2019	7
2018	9
2017	11

According to Rule 38 of the Prison Rules (Cap. 234A), all convicted adult PICs are required to engage in work (unless they have been certified by the Medical Officers seconded to CSD as unfit to work on medical grounds). As CSD does not have an employer-employee relationship with PICs and the daily necessities and medical services of PICs are provided by the Government, CSD has not provided insurance for PICs. If PICs sustain a certain degree of permanent disability or die due to injuries sustained at work while serving their sentences, the PICs or their representatives may apply to CSD for ex-gratia payment. All eligible cases are handled and approved under the established mechanism.

In the past 5 years, there were 3 applications for ex-gratia payment from PICs on the ground of work injuries. While 2 of them are being processed, the other has been handled with an ex-gratia payment of about \$80,000 granted to the PIC concerned who also filed a civil claim for which the legal proceedings are in progress. Besides, there were 2 cases in which PICs who had sustained injuries at work filed civil claims for damages, and both cases were concluded with out-of-court settlement. The total settlement amount is \$190,000. CSD cannot disclose detailed information about these cases due to the confidentiality agreements.

CSD has formulated a safety management system and associated guidelines in accordance with the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance (Cap. 59), the Code of Practice on Safety Management issued by the Commissioner for Labour under that Ordinance, as well as the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance (Cap. 509). These include the establishment of the Departmental Occupational Safety and Health

Steering Committee, the setting up of Occupational Safety and Health Committees and appointment of Occupational Safety and Health Officers in correctional institutions, regular safety audits conducted for correctional institutions, risk assessment of workplaces and work procedures, as well as the provision of training and personal protective equipment to all PICs who engage in work, etc.

4. CSD does not maintain statistics on the number of applications for official visits or the respective numbers of applications approved and rejected.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**SB032****(Question Serial No. 0898)**Head: (45) Fire Services DepartmentSubhead (No. & title): ()Programme: (3) Ambulance ServiceControlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (YEUNG Yan-kin, Andy)Director of Bureau: Secretary for SecurityQuestion:

There has been a shortage of manpower on various work fronts due to the large number of confirmed cases of infection since the outbreak of the fifth wave of the epidemic. Would the Government inform this Committee of:

1. the total number of ambulances and ambulance personnel serving the territory in the past 1 year; and whether additional manpower was recruited in the past 1 year in response to the fifth wave of epidemic; if yes, of the details.

Asked by: Hon CHOW Ho-ding, Holden (LegCo internal reference no.: 10)Reply:

The overall establishment of ambulanceman of the Fire Services Department (FSD) in the past year (as at 31 December) under Programme (3) Ambulance Service is tabulated as follows:

	2021
Establishment of ambulanceman #	3 122
Establishment of ambulance*	465^

Including the establishment of staff of each region and the establishment of staff with non-operational duties

* Including town ambulances, light ambulances, cross country ambulances and mini ambulances

^ 22 of them are ambulances additionally procured and are currently in transit

In response to the epidemic, the FSD recruited 22 Contract Ambulance Services Assistants I (Contingency Support) and 1 Contract Ambulance Services Assistant II (Contingency Support) to serve in the Hospital Transfer Fleet to assist in transferring confirmed elderly patients residing in residential care homes for the elderly and handling non-emergency transfer cases to relieve the pressure on emergency ambulance service. The FSD will

continue to closely monitor the demand for emergency ambulance service and review relevant resources from time to time to meet operational needs.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB033

(Question Serial No. 0688)

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Ambulance Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services (YEUNG Yan-kin, Andy)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The fifth wave of the epidemic has put strain on the ambulance service of the Fire Services Department, as reflected by a marked increase in its major service indicators, such as the numbers of emergency calls, turnouts to calls and emergency move-ups of ambulances to provide operational coverage. In this connection, would the Government advise this Committee on the following:

1. What is the staff establishment and wastage rate of ambulance personnel in the past 3 years? What is the number of recruits planned for the coming year?
2. Of the emergency ambulance service provided this year, what is the percentage of calls related to the COVID epidemic in the total number of calls?
3. In respect of each handled call related to the epidemic, what is the average number of personnel and vehicles turned out, as well as the average time taken for arriving at the scene and handling the case?
4. What are the details of the protective equipment currently provided for each of the personnel for tackling the epidemic, and the proportion of the provision for acquisition of protective equipment to that of Programme 3 in the coming year?
5. What is the number of ambulance personnel needed to be quarantined or confirmed with infection as well as the average number of days they were absent from duty, and the percentage of all such absent personnel in the total number of ambulance personnel as a result of handling calls related to the epidemic in the past 3 years (please provide a breakdown by month)?
6. In view of the slippage of performance in service delivery for emergency calls as compared to the same period of last year, what measures are the Government planning to take to improve the performance in the coming year in addition to increasing manpower so that the existing pressure on the handling of ambulance calls can be relieved?

7. How does the Government assess the effectiveness of first responder as a paramedic ambulance service with reference to the service indicators in Programme 1? For example, of the emergency ambulance calls in 2021 which saw a significant growth as against 2020, how many, in percentage terms, were related to the epidemic? Why does the Government substantially reduce the estimated number of calls in its targets for the coming year to 26 000 despite the likelihood of the epidemic to persist for some time? Will this add a much heavier burden to ambulance service? In what ways will the Government cope with the situation?
8. What is the work progress towards the goal to “explore the long-term arrangement for the provision of emergency ambulance service” for the coming year?

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Hei, Edward (LegCo internal reference no.: 7)

Reply:

1. The establishment and wastage of personnel of the Ambulance Stream of the Fire Services Department (FSD) in the past 3 years are tabulated below:

	2019-20		2020-21		2021-22	
	Establishment	Wastage	Establishment	Wastage	Establishment	Wastage*
Ambulance Stream (including Programmes (1), (2) and (3))	3 207	128	3 309	127	3 325	139

*As at 28 February 2022

The FSD expects to recruit 88 personnel of the Ambulance Stream in 2022-23.

2. The number of emergency calls handled by the FSD in 2021 was 715 194, of which 8 883 emergency calls were related to COVID-19, accounting for 1.24% of the total number of emergency calls.
3. Each COVID-19 related call is handled by one ambulance and three ambulance personnel. In 2021, the average Arrive-at-Scene (ARA) time and the handling time of an ambulance call related to COVID-19 (i.e. the time from the receipt of an ambulance call by the Fire Services Communications Centre to the completion of patient handover procedures at hospital by the ambulance personnel, but excluding the time taken for ambulance disinfection) are tabulated below:

	Average ARA time (minutes)	Average handling time (minutes)
Emergency calls#	9.32	66.68
Hospital transfer calls	19.82	95.79
Non-emergency calls	39.24	126.38

The FSD’s performance pledge is to have ambulance personnel to arrive at scene within the target response time of 12 minutes for 92.5% of all emergency calls.

4. The FSD provides all frontline personnel with protective gowns, surgical masks, N95 respirators, head-band type tight-fitting goggles, disposable face shields, disposable caps, gloves and rubber boots for handling ambulance calls related to COVID-19. For 2022-23, the FSD has earmarked \$17.43 million specifically for procuring personal protective equipment, accounting for 0.69% of the provision for Programme 3.
5. During the period from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2021, 10 ambulance personnel of the FSD were confirmed to be infected with COVID-19 while 190 ambulance personnel needed for quarantine. The average number of days of their absence from duty were around 15.3. The number of such personnel absent from duty accounted for approximately 6.02% of the total number of ambulance personnel.

From 1 January 2022 to present (3 March 2022), the accumulated number of infected ambulance personnel is approximately 500, constituting around 15.04% of the total number of ambulance personnel. As the epidemic is expected to continue for some time, details of relevant statistics (e.g. the number of ambulance personnel needed for quarantine, the average number of days of their absence from duty, etc.) are subject to verification.

6. The FSD will continue to closely monitor the demand for emergency ambulance service (EAS) and review relevant resources from time to time to meet operational needs. If necessary, the FSD will seek additional resources through the existing resource allocation mechanism to augment manpower and other resources.
7. The FSD will review the arrangement of first responder service from time to time under the premise that operational efficiency and the patients' benefit will not be affected. At present, the FSD dispatches fire personnel who are qualified as first responder to attend cases of cardiac arrest, choking, severe breathing difficulty, massive bleeding, loss of consciousness and other life-threatening conditions. They provide immediate basic life support to the patients before the arrival of ambulances, so as to increase their chance of survival. In 2021, the FSD handled a total of 33 578 first responder service cases, of which 0.45% involved patients infected with COVID-19. The FSD estimates that the number of emergency ambulance calls to be attended by first responders in 2022 is 26 000, representing an increase of 8.3% as compared to 24 000 in 2021. The FSD will deploy resources flexibly to cope with the impact brought by the recent fifth wave of the epidemic.
8. The FSD attaches great importance to the planning of EAS especially in tackling the challenges posed by an ageing population and the impact of COVID-19. Apart from continuously optimising resource management and utilising big data to enhance the efficiency in management, the FSD has also commissioned a consultancy firm to study the demand for EAS in the long run. In 2011 and 2015, the FSD commissioned a consultancy firm and the Efficiency Unit (EU) respectively to conduct comprehensive reviews on the demand for EAS in Hong Kong and the roles of ambulance personnel. The consultancy firm and the EU made a number of recommendations in areas including support for frontline personnel, service quality assurance and allocation of additional resources. The FSD made reference to these recommendations and made appropriate deployment of ambulance resources, with a view to providing efficient,

effective and advanced EAS to the public. Amidst an ageing population and the ever increasing demand for ambulance services, the FSD commissioned a consultancy firm in 2021-22 for conducting a comprehensive review and study on the future development of EAS, and updating the findings of a similar study in 2011, so as to explore the long-term arrangements for EAS. The study commenced in July 2021 and is expected for completion in the second quarter of 2022.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB034

(Question Serial No. 0015)

Head: (23) Auxiliary Medical Service
Subhead (No. & title): ()
Programme: (1) Auxiliary Medical Service
Controlling Officer: Chief Staff Officer (WONG Ying-keung)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Has the Government assessed the total number of duty attendances of the Auxiliary Medical Service (AMS) since the outbreak of the fifth wave of the epidemic in January this year? What are the emoluments, duty allowances and other kinds of allowances involved? Are the resources currently allocated to the AMS sufficient to cover the expenditure? Will the Government consider allocating more resources and increasing emoluments and different kinds of allowances for members of the AMS in order to overcome the impact of the epidemic? If yes, what are the details? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon WONG Chun-sek, Edmund (LegCo internal reference no.: 11)

Reply:

In view of the fifth wave of the epidemic, the Auxiliary Medical Service (AMS) has been flexibly adjusting manpower from time to time and at peak period, over 300 volunteer members and staff have been arranged daily to participate in anti-epidemic work.

Since 14 February 2020, apart from the original pay and allowances, duty volunteer members receive a special allowance of \$400. This special allowance is raised to \$600 starting from 1 February 2022 to further recognise their contribution on anti-epidemic work. The AMS will maintain close communication with other relevant bureaux and departments, and review from time to time our support measures to those participating in anti-epidemic work. The AMS does not compile any statistics on the actual expenditure on emoluments and allowances under the fifth wave of the epidemic.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SB035

(Question Serial No. 0136)

Head: (166) Government Flying Service
Subhead (No. & title): (291) Training Expenses for the Government Flying Service
Programme: (1) Government Flying Service
Controlling Officer: Controller, Government Flying Service (Captain West WU)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Please inform this Committee of how the Government Flying Service can strengthen its human resources to meet increasing service demand without increasing its manpower following the commencement of operation of the Kai Tak Division in 2022.

Asked by: Hon LAI Tung-kwok (LegCo internal reference no.: 8)

Reply:

To effectively support the operational needs of the Kai Tak Division, the Government Flying Service (GFS) created a total of 44 additional posts in 2019-20 and 2020-21, including Aircraft Engineering Grade, Aircraft Technician Grade, Air Crewman Officer Grade and General Grades. In order to ensure the availability of necessary human resources to cater for the long-term operational needs of the Kai Tak Division, GFS will continue to review its existing resources and expedite in-house training, recruitment and so on.

In addition, to meet ever increasing emergency service demand, GFS will closely monitor its resource allocation, including fleet maintenance, equipment upgrade and aircrew training. Taking into account the actual operation and needs of the department, GFS will duly deploy its human resources, streamline its workflow and consider various measures that will be conducive to the further improvement of operation and talent retention. At the same time, GFS will establish the Flight Simulator Training Centre to enhance efficiency and technical competency of pilot training, and increase the flexibility in the deployment of pilots for providing emergency flying services. All in all, GFS will ensure that the Kai Tak Division can create synergy and provide safe and professional flying services effectively.

- End -