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### Replies to initial questions raised by Legislative Council Members in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2024-25

**Director of Bureau : Secretary for Security**

**Session No. : 16**

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**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**(Question Serial No. 3024)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

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

Programme: (2) Internal Security

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The third round of the Fire Safety Improvement Works Subsidy Scheme (FSWS) closed for application on 30 September 2023. It is noted that the public have responded positively to it. It is mentioned in Matters Required Special Attention in 2024-25 that the Bureau will continue to implement the FSWS in 2024-25. Will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. What is the total number of applications received and the number of eligible applications last year?
2. How many domestic units are expected to be able to benefit from the new provision?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Chun-ying (LegCo internal reference no.: 38)

Reply:

To assist owners of old buildings in complying with the requirements of the Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance (Cap 572), the Government, in partnership with the Urban Renewal Authority ("URA"), implemented a \$2-billion Fire Safety Improvement Works Subsidy Scheme ("FSWS") in 2018, providing subsidies for carrying out fire safety improvement works. Subsequently, the Government increased the funding for the FSWS to a total of \$5.5 billion. It is estimated that the entire FSWS can benefit about 6 000 to 6 500 target buildings.

The URA rolled out 2 rounds of application in 2018 and 2020 respectively. Since then, the URA launched the third round of application from April to September 2023 to assist more owners in need to enhance the fire safety standard of their buildings. There were 2 249 and 734 applications meeting the basic application requirements in the first and second rounds of the FSWS applications respectively. The URA issued letters of Approval-in-Principle to the applicants of the above 2 983 applications, and contacted them about the commencement of the fire safety improvement works. For the third round, the URA received 1 604 applications [**Note**], including 1 307 applications meeting the basic application requirements. The URA is processing the applications and will issue to the applicants letters of Approval-in-Principle in due course.

**Note:** The number of applications includes duplicate applications submitted by applicants and applications not meeting the basic application requirements, amounted to 297.

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**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB002**

**(Question Serial No. 2464)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The Immigration Department receives and handles a huge number of non-refoulement claims every year. In this connection, regarding the past 3 years:

1. how many claims were received and what were the nationalities involved?
2. how many cases were determined?
3. how many cases were withdrawn?
4. how many cases are under screening?
5. how many cases are pending judicial review?
6. how many criminal offences were committed by claimants under screening, broken down by police district and crime category?
7. what were the expenditures (on legal assistance, accommodation allowance and food assistance etc.) and manpower for handling non-refoulement claimants and the work details?
8. what is the average administration fee and legal costs required for handling each case?
9. what measures are in place to combat abuses of the screening mechanism?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hak-kan (LegCo internal reference no.: 6)

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 overall policy objective of handling non-refoulement claims, under the premise of preventing potential abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism from entering Hong Kong, is to ensure as far as possible high efficiency in processing the claims and relevant appeals while meeting the high standards of fairness required by law, and to remove unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong as soon as possible. As at end-February 2024, the number of non-refoulement claims handled by the Immigration Department (ImmD) is as follows:

Year	Claims received	Claims determined	Claims withdrawn or no further action can be taken	Pending claims
Commencement of 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	1 257	1 727	70	201
2023	2 135	1 437	59	840
2024 (January to February)	667	446	15	1 046
<b>Total</b>	<b>25 607</b>	<b>24 063</b>	<b>7 197</b>	

As at end-February 2024, ImmD received 25 607 claims and the breakdown by nationality is as follows:

Nationality	Number of claims
Vietnamese	6 149
Indonesian	4 610
Indian	4 044
Pakistani	3 082
Bangladeshi	2 395
Filipino	2 070
Nepalese	497
Thai	334
Sri Lankan	269
Other countries	2 157
<b>Total</b>	<b>25 607</b>

5. According to the Judiciary, there were 1 675, 1 439 and 2 089 applications for leave to apply for judicial review (JR) related to non-refoulement claims filed with the Court of First Instance (CFI) in 2021, 2022 and 2023 respectively. The Judiciary has all along been adopting a stringent approach in handling leave applications for JR. As at 31 January 2024, among the leave applications to apply for JR related to non-refoulement claims filed from 2021 to 2023, 1 371 cases were disposed of, with leave granted in only 23 cases, representing 1.7% of the cases disposed of.

6. According to the Police's record, since 2021, the number of non-ethnic Chinese (NEC) persons on recognizance and issued with Form No. 8 (mainly non-refoulement claimants) who were arrested for criminal offences is tabulated below with breakdown by police region/police district:

<b>Police region/ police district</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024 (January to February)</b>
<b>Hong Kong Island Region</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>26</b>
Central District	36	47	36	8
Wan Chai District	85	73	69	7
Western District	31	22	19	3
Eastern District	31	16	26	8
<b>Kowloon East Region</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>7</b>
Wong Tai Sin District	13	5	12	2
Sau Mau Ping District	9	6	10	3
Kwun Tong District	11	5	10	1
Tseung Kwan O District	12	7	9	1
<b>Kowloon West Region</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>62</b>
Yau Tsim District	226	155	192	28
Mong Kok District	99	65	61	7
Sham Shui Po District	117	98	94	19
Kowloon City District	72	47	39	8
<b>New Territories North Region</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>11</b>
Border District	9	2	0	0
Yuen Long District	91	89	83	10
Tuen Mun District	24	27	28	1
Tai Po District	9	3	6	0
<b>New Territories South Region</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>6</b>
Tsuen Wan District	17	8	11	1
Shatin District	10	1	7	2
Kwai Tsing District	17	5	14	2
Lantau District	8	3	8	1
Airport District	1	2	2	0
<b>Marine Region</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Hong Kong overall</b>	<b>929</b>	<b>687</b>	<b>745</b>	<b>112</b>

Since 2021, the number of NEC persons on recognizance and issued with Form No. 8 (mainly non-refoulement claimants) who were arrested for criminal offences is tabulated below with breakdown by crime category:

<b>Offence</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024 (January to February)</b>
Shop theft	254	145	193	37
Serious drug offences	92	85	99	6
Wounding and serious assault	90	51	75	6
Miscellaneous thefts	134	99	71	15
Serious immigration offences (Note 1)	50	29	38	3
Criminal damage	37	25	33	9

Offence	2021	2022	2023	2024 (January to February)
Burglary	22	27	18	2
Others (Note 2)	250	226	218	34
<b>Total</b>	<b>929</b>	<b>687</b>	<b>745</b>	<b>112</b>

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

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

In addition, according to ImmD’s record, since 2021, the number of NEC persons on recognizance and issued with Form No. 8 (mainly non-refoulement claimants) who were arrested for taking unlawful employment contrary to section 38AA of the Immigration Ordinance (Cap. 115) are tabulated below.

Year	Number of persons arrested
2021	438
2022	454
2023	484
2024 (January to February)	52

7 – 8. Major expenditures / estimated expenditures on handling non-refoulement claims and related work since 2021-22 are tabulated below:

Year	Screening of claims and handling of appeals/petitions* (\$ million)	Repatriation of unsubstantiated claimants # (\$ million)	Publicly-funded legal assistance (PFLA) (\$ million)	Humanitarian assistance (\$ million)	Total@ (\$ million)
2021-22	298	47	142	579	<b>1 067</b>
2022-23	305	50	108	590	<b>1 052</b>
2023-24 (Estimate)	389	57	171	784	<b>1 400</b>
2023-24 (Revised estimate)	335	57	120	583	<b>1 095</b>
2024-25 (Estimate)	364	59	144	583	<b>1 150</b>

\* Includes staff costs of ImmD in screening claims and expenditures of the Torture Claims Appeal Board (TCAB) in handling appeals, etc.

# Only the expenditure on the dedicated manpower for the repatriation of unsubstantiated 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, ImmD does not maintain a separate breakdown relating to unsubstantiated claimants.

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

In 2024-25, the Government will continue to adopt measures to enhance the handling of non-refoulement claims and successively enhance the efficiency on all fronts, especially in expediting the removal of unsubstantiated claimants at full steam, in order to ensure meeting the policy objectives and serving the public interests. Through stepping up the handling of non-refoulement claims, the Government managed to record an 18% drop in the estimated expenditure for 2024-25 as compared with the original estimate for 2023-24. At the same time, the Government has taken into account various factors in formulating the estimates, including related expenditures in screening claims and handling appeals, as well as fulfilling the relevant legal obligations of providing PFLA and humanitarian assistance for claimants, etc. The current estimate is higher than the revised estimate in last year, which is mainly attributable to the upsurge in the number of NEC IIs in the second half of 2023, leading to an increase in the number of new claims and claimants in Hong Kong. With the strengthened joint enforcement actions taken by the law enforcement agencies in Guangdong and Hong Kong, the number of NEC IIs arrested in Hong Kong has reduced significantly. The figure in February 2024 has decreased by nearly 90% from the peak in October 2023 and the number of new claims received in the same month has also dropped by nearly 70% from the peak in January 2024. The Government will continue to spare no efforts in intercepting NEC IIs at source. At the same time, when formulating 2024-25 estimate, the Government has to allocate sufficient resources to cope with different expenditures in handling non-refoulement claims and related work so as to fulfill the relevant legal obligations. The Government will continue to monitor the related expenditures. Under the premise of preventing potential abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism from entering Hong Kong, we will continue to adopt a multi-pronged strategy by ensuring as far as possible high efficiency in processing claims and relevant appeals while meeting the high standards of fairness required by law, and removing unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong as soon as possible.

The Government does not maintain the average administrative cost and expenditure on PFLA involved in handling each case.

As regards manpower, the number of posts in ImmD responsible for work related to screening claims and repatriation, the number of TCAB members and the number of posts in TCAB Secretariat since 2021-22 are tabulated below:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of posts in ImmD for screening claims, handling appeals and relevant legal proceedings*</b>	<b>Number of posts in ImmD for repatriating unsubstantiated claimants *</b>	<b>Number of TCAB members</b>	<b>Number of posts in TCAB Secretariat</b>
2021-22	207	72	73	36
2022-23	207	72	75	35
2023-24	207	81	77 <sup>^</sup>	35
2024-25 (Estimate)	207	81	77 <sup>^</sup>	35

\* ImmD will, subject to the actual operation, flexibly deploy internal manpower to handle non-refoulement claims.

<sup>^</sup> Number of members as at 29 February 2024, which is subject to adjustment as necessary.

Since 2021-22, the non-civil servant posts in the Legal Assistance Scheme for Non-refoulement Claimants of Duty Lawyer Service are as follows:

Rank	Number of posts in 2021-22	Number of posts in 2022-23	Number of posts in 2023-24	Number of posts in 2024-25 (Estimate)
Chief Court Liaison Officer	1	1	1	1
Assistant Chief Court Liaison Officer	2	2	2	2
Senior Court Liaison Officer	5	5	5	5
Court Liaison Officer	17	22	17	22
Senior Personal Secretary	2	2	2	2
Personal Secretaries I / II	4	4	4	4
Senior Accounting Officer	1	1	1	1
Accounting Officer	1	1	1	1
Office Assistant	1	1	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>39</b>

The civil service establishment and non-civil servant posts of the Pilot Scheme Office for Provision of PFLA for Non-refoulement Claimants since 2021-22 are as follows:

	Number of posts in 2021-22	Number of posts in 2022-23	Number of posts in 2023-24	Number of posts in 2024-25 (Estimate)
<b>Civil servant posts</b>				
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	1	1	1	1
<b>Non-civil servant posts</b>				
Number	5	5	4	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>

9. The Government attaches great importance to the issue relating to non-refoulement claims and has all along adopted a multi-pronged strategy. The Security Bureau amended the legislation in 2023 to include the Nei Kwu Correctional Institution as a place of detention of ImmD, thereby increasing the total number of detention capacity by 33% to 900. ImmD is committed to making gainful use of the existing facilities to detain claimants who pose higher security risks to the community in accordance with the law. On the other hand, since the introduction of the updated removal policy with effect from 7 December 2022, ImmD will proceed with the removal of unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong upon dismissal of their JR or relevant leave applications pertaining to their non-refoulement claims by CFI, irrespective of whether there are outstanding court proceedings. Since the implementation of the updated policy until February 2024, ImmD has removed a total of 2 204 claimants from Hong Kong, including 240 under the updated policy. The number in 2023 has significantly increased by 63% compared to 2022.

The Government will continue to adopt measures to enhance the handling of non-refoulement claims, including:

- (a) On interception at source, apart from cooperating with relevant Mainland authorities to strengthen intercepting IIs at source, the Government will, through profile analysis of obvious abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism and via the Advance Passenger Information System to be rolled out in phases starting from the third quarter of 2024, enhance identification of potential abusers and prevent their entry into Hong Kong;
- (b) ImmD continues to maintain high efficiency in screening non-refoulement claims;
- (c) Through streamlined process, TCAB will enhance its efficiency in handling appeal cases, with the target of reducing the average processing time from over seven months in the past to around four months;
- (d) On the management of detention facilities, various legislative amendments to enhance treatments of immigration detainees have been implemented starting from November 2023, so as to further uphold discipline and order at detention facilities;
- (e) Strengthening enforcement actions against immigration offences, including illegal employments, with a target to carry out not less than 12 000 operations on the targeted establishments every year, in order to lower the economic incentives of the claimants; and
- (f) On removal operations, the government will continue to fully implement the updated removal policy so as to enhance the efficiency and efforts in removing unsubstantiated claimants, with the target of removing no less than 1 200 unsubstantiated claimants per year.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB003**

**(Question Serial No. 3033)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

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

Programme: (2) Internal Security  
(3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the working dogs of the disciplined services, will the Bureau inform this Committee of the following over the past 3 years:

- (1) the disciplined services departments which currently use working dogs to perform duties and a breakdown of the number of dogs by name of department;
- (2) the details of the guidelines formulated by various disciplined services departments on the use of working dogs to perform duties;
- (3) the details of the duties performed by working dogs under various disciplined services departments;
- (4) the general weekly working hours for working dogs under various disciplined services departments;
- (5) whether the disciplined services departments have set a retirement age for their working dogs; if so, what are the details; if not, what are the reasons;
- (6) the expenditure and manpower involved in managing the working dogs in various disciplined services departments each year;
- (7) the respective numbers of working dogs injured, died and euthanised each year and the reasons for that;
- (8) the current number of retired working dogs; whether the Government has provided them support for their living (e.g. medical services); if so, what are the details; if not, what are the reasons; and
- (9) which disciplined services quarters currently allow the keeping of working dogs/retired working dogs?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hak-kan (LegCo internal reference no.: 44)

Reply:

- (1) During the period from 2021 to 2023, the Correctional Services Department (CSD), the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED), the Fire Services Department (FSD) and the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) used working dogs to perform duties. The respective numbers of dogs as at 31 December of the relevant years were as follows:

Department	Number of Dogs		
	2021	2022	2023
CSD	58	60	59
C&ED	40	44	51
FSD	6	9	9
HKPF	138	148	155

The Immigration Department and the Government Flying Service did not use working dogs in their operation.

- (2) The disciplined services departments have their own established guidelines for managing and taking care of working dogs. The guidelines set out in detail the relevant procedures and requirements for using working dogs to perform duties, covering areas such as the scope of their routine duties, meal arrangements, rest schedules, management of their rest stations, retirement plans and work safety. The guidelines aim to ensure that working dogs can perform their duties in accordance with the standard procedures while safeguarding the health and safety of working dogs and officers.
- (3) The details of the duties performed by the working dogs of the various disciplined services departments are as follows:

Department	Details of duties
CSD	To perform duties in correctional institutions including carrying out security patrols, detection of and search for explosive substances and contraband (including dangerous drugs, alcohol, tobacco and mobile phones, etc.) to prevent them from being smuggled into the correctional institutions.
C&ED	To be deployed to the airport, container terminals, land boundary control points, railway stations and ferry terminals for supporting passenger baggage and cargo clearance and such clearance services on cross-boundary conveyances, as well as detecting prohibited/controlled articles including drugs, explosives, banknotes, firearms, tobacco, etc.
FSD	To assist in the search for missing or trapped persons in rubble or mountainous areas during rescue operations, and assist in the search for containers of accelerant and clothes or other objects during fire investigations.
HKPF	To assist in patrols, tracing and detection of explosives, drugs, firearms and ammunition according to operational needs.

- (4) The relevant work and training of the working dogs of various disciplined services departments are mainly arranged during working hours by the respective dog handlers. Dog handlers will ensure that working dogs have sufficient rest time during and after each operation. The weekly working hours of the working dogs of various disciplined services departments are as follows:

Department	General weekly working hours	
CSD	18 hours	
C&ED	48 hours	
FSD	<u>Rescue dogs</u> Work on a five-day week and an off-duty on-call roster	<u>Fire investigation dogs</u> Work on a “24 hours on, 48 hours off” shift system
HKPF	48 hours	

- (5) Depending on the health conditions of individual working dogs and veterinary advice, the working dogs of various disciplined services departments generally retire at the age of 7 to 9 for the sake of safeguarding their health and maintaining service quality at a high level.
- (6) The respective manpower involved in managing working dogs in various disciplined services departments as at 31 December of the relevant year in each of the years from 2021 to 2023 were as follows:

Department	Number of staff		
	2021	2022	2023
CSD	26	26	25
C&ED	40	44	51
FSD	6	6	6
HKPF	130	131	142

The various disciplined services departments have not maintained a breakdown of the relevant expenditures.

- (7) During the period from 2021 to 2023, none of the working dogs of various disciplined services departments were seriously injured or killed due to work-related activities. The CSD and the HKPF handed over 2 and 8 working dogs suffering from ill health respectively to registered veterinary surgeons or veterinary surgeons of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department for assistance in performing euthanasia on them. The C&ED and the FSD did not have any relevant cases in the past 3 years.

- (8) The numbers of retired working dogs and the details of the support for their living (e.g. medical services) provided by the Government from 2021 to 2023 are set out below:

Department	Number of retired working dogs in the past 3 years	Details of the support for the living of retired working dogs
CSD	12	Retired working dogs are generally adopted by dog handlers or departmental staff. The CSD and the HKPF also allow eligible members of the public to adopt retired working dogs. The disciplined services departments will provide adopters with information regarding the caring of retired working dogs, including tips on their health, feeding, hygiene, shelters and how to get along with them. Adopters will be responsible for supporting the living of retired working dogs including the costs incurred.
C&ED	30	
FSD	0	
HKPF	66	

- (9) In general, the disciplined services departments will pay heed to the views of residents of quarters in deciding whether or not to allow working dogs or retired working dogs to be kept in individual quarters. The existing arrangements of various disciplined services departments are set out below:

Department	Arrangements for keeping working dogs/retired working dogs in quarters of disciplined services departments
CSD	In general, keeping dogs is allowed in quarters for married staff managed by the CSD. However, as some of these quarters are residential units within private housing estates, the regulations on dog keeping are subject to the terms of the Deed of Mutual Covenant of individual housing estates.
C&ED	Keeping of working dogs/retired working dogs is allowed in the Wong Tai Sin Sheung Fung Street Customs Staff Quarters.
FSD	Keeping of dogs, including working dogs/retired working dogs, is allowed in the quarters for officer rank staff of the FSD.
HKPF	Keeping of retired police dogs is allowed in the Junior Police Officers Quarters at Fan Garden, Fanling.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB004**

**(Question Serial No. 0275)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

As mentioned under Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024-25, the Bureau will continue to oversee the operation of a unified screening mechanism, the implementation of the enhanced measures for the handling of non-refoulement claims, and the removal of unsubstantiated claimants, as well as continuously provide publicly-funded legal assistance for non-refoulement claimants. In this connection, please advise this Committee on the following:

- (1) the staff establishment and estimated expenditures of the Government for the handling of non-refoulement claims in the past 5 years;
- (2) the number of non-refoulement claims received by the Government, the number of unsubstantiated claims and the number of claimants who had resorted to appeal and judicial review in the past 5 years, broken down by gender, age and nationality;
- (3) details of the expenditures on publicly-funded legal assistance, humanitarian assistance and other services provided by the Government for non-refoulement claimants in the past 5 years;
- (4) the number of unsubstantiated claimants repatriated and the financial expenditures incurred in the past 5 years;
- (5) given that every year the Government has to spend a huge sum of public money on processing non-refoulement claims and related work, what measures are in place to further prevent and combat the abuse of non-refoulement claims? If there is any, what are the details and the estimated expenditures involved?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Pui-leung (LegCo internal reference no.: 15)

Reply:

(1), (3) and (4) Major expenditures / estimated expenditures on handling non-refoulement claims and related work since 2019-20 are tabulated below:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Screening of claims and handling of appeals/petitions* (\$ million)</b>	<b>Repatriation of unsubstantiated claimants # (\$ million)</b>	<b>Publicly-funded legal assistance (PFLA) (\$ million)</b>	<b>Humanitarian assistance (\$ million)</b>	<b>Total<sup>@</sup> (\$ million)</b>
2019-20	344	45	93	482	<b>964</b>
2020-21	311	47	95	540	<b>992</b>
2021-22	298	47	142	579	<b>1 067</b>
2022-23	305	50	108	590	<b>1 052</b>
2023-24 (Estimate)	389	57	171	784	<b>1 400</b>
2023-24 (Revised estimate)	335	57	120	583	<b>1 095</b>
2024-25 (Estimate)	364	59	144	583	<b>1 150</b>

\* Includes staff costs of the Immigration Department (ImmD) in screening claims and expenditures of the Torture Claims Appeal Board (TCAB) in handling appeals, etc.

# Only the expenditure on the dedicated manpower for the repatriation of unsubstantiated 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, ImmD does not maintain a separate breakdown relating to unsubstantiated claimants.

<sup>@</sup> Individual items may not add up to total due to rounding up.

In 2024-25, the Government will continue to adopt measures to enhance the handling of non-refoulement claims and successively enhance the efficiency on all fronts, especially in expediting the removal of unsubstantiated claimants at full steam, in order to ensure meeting the policy objectives and serving the public interests. Through stepping up the handling of non-refoulement claims, the Government managed to record an 18% drop in the estimated expenditure for 2024-25 as compared with the original estimate for 2023-24. At the same time, the Government has taken into account various factors in formulating the estimates, including related expenditures in screening claims and handling appeals, as well as fulfilling the relevant legal obligations of providing PFLA and humanitarian assistance for claimants, etc. The current estimate is higher than the revised estimate in last year, which is mainly attributable to the upsurge in the number of non-ethnic Chinese (NEC) illegal immigrants (IIs) in the second half of 2023, leading to an increase in the number of new claims and claimants in Hong Kong. With the strengthened joint enforcement actions taken by the law enforcement agencies in Guangdong and Hong Kong, the number of NEC IIs arrested in Hong Kong has reduced significantly. The figure in February 2024 has decreased by nearly 90% from the peak in October 2023 and the number of new claims received in the same month has also dropped by nearly 70% from the peak in January 2024. The Government will continue to spare no efforts in intercepting NEC IIs at source. At the same time, when formulating 2024-25 estimate, the Government has to allocate sufficient resources to cope with different expenditures in handling non-refoulement claims and related work so as to fulfill the relevant

legal obligations. The Government will continue to monitor the related expenditures. Under the premise of preventing potential abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism from entering Hong Kong, we will continue to adopt a multi-pronged strategy by ensuring as far as possible high efficiency in processing claims and relevant appeals while meeting the high standards of fairness required by law, and removing unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong as soon as possible.

As regards manpower, the number of posts in ImmD responsible for work related to screening claims and repatriation, 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 unsubstantiated 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	207	72	75	35
2023-24	207	81	77 <sup>^</sup>	35
2024-25 (Estimate)	207	81	77 <sup>^</sup>	35

\* ImmD will, subject to the actual operation, flexibly deploy internal manpower to handle non-refoulement claims.

<sup>^</sup> Number of members as at 29 February 2024, which is subject to adjustment as necessary.

Since 2019-20, the non-civil servant posts in the Legal Assistance Scheme for Non-refoulement Claimants of Duty Lawyer Service are 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	Number of posts in 2023-24	Number of posts in 2024-25 (Estimate)
Chief Court Liaison Officer	2	2	1	1	1	1
Assistant Chief Court Liaison Officer	2	1	2	2	2	2
Senior Court Liaison Officer	5	6	5	5	5	5
Court Liaison Officer	13	13	17	22	17	22
Senior Personal Secretary	4	4	2	2	2	2
Personal Secretaries I / II	5	5	4	4	4	4
Senior Accounting Officer	1	1	1	1	1	1

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	Number of posts in 2023-24	Number of posts in 2024-25 (Estimate)
Accounting Officer	1	1	1	1	1	1
Office Assistant	2	2	1	1	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>39</b>

The civil service establishment and non-civil servant posts of the Pilot Scheme Office for Provision of PFLA for Non-refoulement Claimants since 2019-20 are as follows:

	Number of posts in 2019-20	Number of posts in 2020-21	Number of posts in 2021-22	Number of posts in 2022-23	Number of posts in 2023-24	Number of posts in 2024-25 (Estimate)
<b>Civil servant posts</b>						
Chief Executive Officer	1	1	1	1	1	1
Senior Executive Officer	1	1	1	1	1	1
Executive Officer I	3	3	3	3	3	3
Assistant Clerical Officer	4	4	4	4	4	4
Workman II	2	2	1	1	1	1
<b>Non-civil servant posts</b>						
Number	7	5	5	5	4	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>

Over the past five years, the number of unsubstantiated claimants removed by ImmD is as follows:

Year	Number of persons repatriated
2019	1 618
2020	632
2021	753
2022	1 097
2023	1 786
2024 (January to February)	353

(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 overall policy objective of handling non-refoulement claims, under the premise of preventing potential abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism from entering Hong Kong, is to ensure as far as possible high efficiency in processing the claims and relevant appeals while meeting the high standards of fairness required by law, and to remove unsubstantiated claimants from

Hong Kong as soon as possible. As at end-February 2024, the number of non-refoulement claims handled by ImmD is as follows:

Year	Claims received	Claims determined	Claims withdrawn or no further action can be taken	Pending claims
Commencement of 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	1 257	1 727	70	201
2023	2 135	1 437	59	840
2024 (January to February)	667	446	15	1 046
<b>Total</b>	<b>25 607</b>	<b>24 063</b>	<b>7 197</b>	

As at end-February 2024, ImmD received 25 607 claims and the breakdown by nationality is as follows:

Nationality	Number of claims
Vietnamese	6 149
Indonesian	4 610
Indian	4 044
Pakistani	3 082
Bangladeshi	2 395
Filipino	2 070
Nepalese	497
Thai	334
Sri Lankan	269
Other countries	2 157
<b>Total</b>	<b>25 607</b>

Among the above claims received by ImmD, as broken down by gender, male and female claimants accounted for 59% and 41% respectively; as broken down by age, 7% of the claimants were aged below 18, 13% aged between 18 and 30, 42% aged between 31 and 40, and 38% aged over 40.

As for the 23 973 non-refoulement claims not substantiated by ImmD (including 216 claims subsequently substantiated by TCAB), the breakdown by nationality is as follows:

<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Non-refoulement claims not substantiated by ImmD</b>
Vietnamese	4 574
Indonesian	4 055
Pakistani	3 773
Indian	3 664
Bangladeshi	2 625
Filipino	1 933
Nepalese	694
Sri Lankan	420
Nigerian	362
Thai	264
Others	1 609
<b>Total</b>	<b>23 973</b>

Among the above claims not substantiated by ImmD, as broken down by gender, male and female claimants accounted for 62% and 38% respectively; as broken down by age, 7% of the claimants were aged below 18, 11% aged between 18 and 30, 40% aged between 31 and 40, and 42% aged over 40.

Since 2019-20, the number of appeals received by TCAB is as follows:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of appeals received</b>
2019	1 517
2020	870
2021	2 098
2022	1 727
2023	1 395
2024 (January to February)	394
<b>Total</b>	<b>8 001</b>

Among the 8 001 appeals received by TCAB, the breakdown by nationality is as follows:

<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Number of appeals</b>
Indonesian	2 274
Vietnamese	1 857
Filipino	902
Bangladeshi	741
Pakistani	733
Indian	627
Thai	191
Sri Lankan	87
Nepalese	78
Other countries	511
<b>Total</b>	<b>8 001</b>

Among the above appeals received by TCAB, as broken down by gender, male and female appellants accounted for 47% and 53% respectively. TCAB does not maintain the breakdown by age.

According to the Judiciary, the number of applications for leave to apply for judicial review (JR) related to non-refoulement claims filed with the Court of First Instance (CFI) from 2019 to 2023 is tabulated below:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of applications for leave to apply for JR</b>
2019	3 727
2020	2 367
2021	1 675
2022	1 439
2023	2 089
<b>Total</b>	<b>11 297</b>

The Judiciary does not maintain the breakdown by gender, age and nationality of the above applications.

(5) The Government attaches great importance to the issue relating to non-refoulement claims and has all along adopted a multi-pronged strategy. The Security Bureau (SB) amended the legislation in 2023 to include the Nei Kwu Correctional Institution as a place of detention of ImmD, thereby increasing the total number of detention capacity by 33% to 900. ImmD is committed to making gainful use of the existing facilities to detain claimants who pose higher security risks to the community in accordance with the law. On the other hand, since the introduction of the updated removal policy with effect from 7 December 2022, ImmD will proceed with the removal of unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong upon dismissal of their JR or relevant leave applications pertaining to their non-refoulement claims by CFI, irrespective of whether there are outstanding court proceedings. Since the implementation of the updated policy until February 2024, ImmD has removed a total of 2 204 claimants from Hong Kong, including 240 under the updated policy. The number in 2023 has significantly increased by 63% compared to 2022.

The Government will continue to adopt measures to enhance the handling of non-refoulement claims, including:

- (a) On interception at source, apart from cooperating with relevant Mainland authorities to strengthen intercepting IIs at source, the Government will, through profile analysis of obvious abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism and via the Advance Passenger Information System to be rolled out in phases starting from the third quarter of 2024, enhance identification of potential abusers and prevent their entry into Hong Kong;
- (b) ImmD continues to maintain high efficiency in screening non-refoulement claims;
- (c) Through streamlined process, TCAB will enhance its efficiency in handling appeal cases, with the target of reducing the average processing time from over seven months in the past to around four months;

- (d) On the management of detention facilities, various legislative amendments to enhance treatments of immigration detainees have been implemented starting from November 2023, so as to further uphold discipline and order at detention facilities;
- (e) Strengthening enforcement actions against immigration offences, including illegal employments, with a target to carry out not less than 12 000 operations on the targeted establishments every year, in order to lower the economic incentives of the claimants; and
- (f) On removal operations, the Government will continue to fully implement the updated removal policy so as to enhance the efficiency and efforts in removing unsubstantiated claimants, with the target of removing not less than 1 200 unsubstantiated claimants per year.

The above tasks have been included in the daily expenditures of SB and ImmD.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB005**

**(Question Serial No. 3276)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

It is mentioned in Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024-25 that the Government will continue to oversee the implementation of the Pilot Scheme on Immigration Facilitation for Visitors Participating in Short-term Activities in Designated Sectors (Pilot Scheme) and keep its effectiveness under review. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- (1) the respective numbers of applications received and approved since the implementation of the Pilot Scheme, with a detailed breakdown by the 12 sectors and places of origin of the applicants;
- (2) the staff establishment and estimated expenditure for handling the Pilot Scheme at present;
- (3) whether the Government has assessed the impetus provided by the Pilot Scheme to the economic development of Hong Kong; if so, what are the details; if not, what are the reasons; and
- (4) whether the Government will consider further expanding the scope of sectors covered by the Pilot Scheme, as well as regularising the Pilot Scheme; if so, what are the details; if not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Pui-leung (LegCo internal reference no.: 48)

Reply:

The Government launched a two-year Pilot Scheme on Immigration Facilitation for Visitors Participating in Short-term Activities in Designated Sectors (Pilot Scheme) on 1 June 2022 to provide immigration facilitation for visitors participating in short-term activities in designated sectors, with a view to facilitating business, promoting development of relevant sectors and raising Hong Kong's international profile. Organisations authorised by relevant government bureaux or departments may invite relevant non-local talent in their sectors to come to Hong

Kong to participate in specified short-term activities as visitors. The invited persons do not need to apply for employment visas or entry permits from the Immigration Department (ImmD) and can receive remuneration. Our reply to the various parts of the question is as follows:

(1) As at December 2023, the Pilot Scheme has benefited 13 218 non-local talent, facilitating their entry into Hong Kong as visitors to participate in various short-term events and activities. Non-local talent invited by the authorised organisations need not make applications to ImmD. The statistics of the beneficiaries by sector and place of origin are tabulated below:

Sector	(As at December 2023)											Total
	Mainland China	United States	United Kingdom	Japan	Taiwan, China	Korea	Australia	Malaysia	Thailand	Singapore	Others	
Medical and Healthcare	103	80	44	28	19	36	37	14	15	21	148	<b>545</b>
Higher Education	1 285	444	137	53	70	77	95	11	4	73	432	<b>2 681</b>
Arts and Culture	136	191	65	89	3	32	31	3	19	8	402	<b>979</b>
Sports	1 759	209	412	347	447	284	220	337	326	226	3 813	<b>8 380</b>
Heritage	57	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	<b>59</b>
Creative Industries	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Innovation and Technology	16	29	19	9	2	2	15	1	1	2	35	<b>131</b>
Hong Kong Laureate Forum	49	8	9	1	1	9	2	1	2	5	35	<b>122</b>
Aviation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
International/Mega Events	18	6	31	69	9	14	39	12	6	2	110	<b>316</b>
Finance <sup>^</sup>	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>2</b>
Development and Construction <sup>^</sup>	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 427</b>	<b>968</b>	<b>717</b>	<b>596</b>	<b>551</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>337</b>	<b>4 977</b>	<b>13 218</b>

Note: The statistics by place of origin and sector are compiled on a quarterly basis, thus the statistics for the first quarter of 2024 are not yet available.

<sup>^</sup> New sectors after the expansion of the Pilot Scheme on 1 February 2023.

(2) Under the Pilot Scheme, authorised organisations will issue invitations to non-local talent and no application to ImmD will be involved. The Visa and Policies Branch of ImmD handles the work relating to the Pilot Scheme, including monitoring of the operation of the scheme etc., through flexible deployment of its existing manpower and resources. As such, separate figures in respect of staff establishment and expenditure for handling the Pilot Scheme are not available.

(3) and (4) As a knowledge-based economy, talent has always been one of the cornerstones of Hong Kong's success. To meet our development needs, in addition to devoting substantial resources to education to nurture local talent, the Government has also endeavoured to attract talent from around the world (including those who come to Hong Kong and participate in short-term activities as visitors), with a view to complementing our progressive evolution to a high value-added and diversified economy, as well as enhancing our global competitiveness.

The Pilot Scheme allows eligible non-local talent to come to Hong Kong as visitors and participate in specified short-term activities in areas such as business, scientific research, culture, academic exchange and sports. Through the abovementioned facilitation measures, the Pilot Scheme helps bring non-local talent to Hong Kong for exchange, thereby raising Hong Kong's international profile and giving full play to our strength as a place to "connect and excel" under "One Country, Two Systems".

Launched on 1 June 2022, the two-year Pilot Scheme was expanded to cover 12 sectors after review in February 2023. The Government is currently conducting a comprehensive review of the implementation of the Pilot Scheme, which covers the scope of the scheme and the duration of the invitees' participation in specified short-term activities, and whether to regularise the Pilot Scheme, with a view to ensuring that it can achieve the policy objectives in an effective and sustainable manner.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**(Question Serial No. 2326)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the details of non-refoulement claims, please advise this Committee on:

1. What are the figures of applications received, screened, withdrawn and appeal cases in the past 3 years (please tabulate by claimant's nationality and ground)?
2. From lodging a claim to being arranged for repatriation, what is the average waiting time of each claimant in each of the past 3 years?
3. What are the expenditure and staff establishment used for handling non-refoulement claimants and the work details?
4. What measures are in place to prevent abuses of the relevant mechanism?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Wing-yan, Joephy (LegCo internal reference no.: 27)

Reply:

(1) The Government implemented the Unified Screening Mechanism (USM) in March 2014 to screen non-refoulement claims on all applicable grounds in one go, i.e. the person claims that if he is removed, he will be subject to torture, arbitrarily deprived of his life and/or subject to inhuman treatment and/or persecuted, etc. The overall policy objective of handling non-refoulement claims, under the premise of preventing potential abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism from entering Hong Kong, is to ensure as far as possible high efficiency in processing the claims and relevant appeals while meeting the high standards of fairness required by law, and to remove unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong as soon as possible. As at end-February 2024, the number of non-refoulement claims handled by the Immigration Department (ImmD) is as follows:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Claims received</b>	<b>Claims determined</b>	<b>Claims withdrawn or no further action can be taken</b>	<b>Pending claims</b>
Commencement of USM				6 699
2014 (March to December)	4 634	826	889	9 618

<b>Year</b>	<b>Claims received</b>	<b>Claims determined</b>	<b>Claims withdrawn or no further action can be taken</b>	<b>Pending claims</b>
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	1 257	1 727	70	201
2023	2 135	1 437	59	840
2024 (January to February)	667	446	15	1 046
<b>Total</b>	<b>25 607</b>	<b>24 063</b>	<b>7 197</b>	

As at end-February 2024, ImmD received 25 607 claims and the breakdown by nationality is as follows:

<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Number of claims</b>
Vietnamese	6 149
Indonesian	4 610
Indian	4 044
Pakistani	3 082
Bangladeshi	2 395
Filipino	2 070
Nepalese	497
Thai	334
Sri Lankan	269
Other countries	2 157
<b>Total</b>	<b>25 607</b>

Since 2021-22, the number of appeals received by the Torture Claims Appeal Board (TCAB) is as follows:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of appeals received</b>
2021	2 098
2022	1 727
2023	1 395
2024 (January to February)	394
<b>Total</b>	<b>5 614</b>

Among the 5 614 appeals received by TCAB, the breakdown by nationality is as follows:

<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Number of appeals</b>
Indonesian	1 958
Vietnamese	1 416

<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Number of appeals</b>
Filipino	653
Bangladeshi	405
Indian	394
Pakistani	348
Thai	174
Sri Lankan	40
Nepalese	37
Other countries	189
<b>Total</b>	<b>5 614</b>

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

<b>Year</b>	<b>Screening of claims and handling of appeals/petitions* (\$ million)</b>	<b>Repatriation of unsubstantiated claimants # (\$ million)</b>	<b>Publicly-funded legal assistance (PFLA) (\$ million)</b>	<b>Humanitarian assistance (\$ million)</b>	<b>Total@ (\$ million)</b>
2019-20	344	45	93	482	<b>964</b>
2020-21	311	47	95	540	<b>992</b>
2021-22	298	47	142	579	<b>1 067</b>
2022-23	305	50	108	590	<b>1 052</b>
2023-24 (Estimate)	389	57	171	784	<b>1 400</b>
2023-24 (Revised estimate)	335	57	120	583	<b>1 095</b>
2024-25 (Estimate)	364	59	144	583	<b>1 150</b>

\* Includes staff costs of ImmD in screening claims and expenditures of TCAB in handling appeals, etc.

# Only the expenditure on the dedicated manpower for the repatriation of unsubstantiated 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, ImmD does not maintain a separate breakdown relating to unsubstantiated claimants.

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

In 2024-25, the Government will continue to adopt measures to enhance the handling of non-refoulement claims and successively enhance the efficiency on all fronts, especially in expediting the removal of unsubstantiated claimants at full steam, in order to ensure meeting the policy objectives and serving the public interests. Through stepping up the handling of non-refoulement claims, the Government managed to record an 18% drop in the estimated expenditure for 2024-25 as compared with the original estimate for 2023-24. At the same time, the Government has taken into account various factors in formulating the estimates, including related expenditures in screening claims and handling appeals, as well as fulfilling the relevant legal obligations of providing PFLA and humanitarian assistance for claimants, etc. The current estimate is higher than the revised estimate in last year, which is mainly

attributable to the upsurge in the number of non-ethnic Chinese (NEC) illegal immigrants (IIs) in the second half of 2023, leading to an increase in the number of new claims and claimants in Hong Kong. With the strengthened joint enforcement actions taken by the law enforcement agencies in Guangdong and Hong Kong, the number of NEC IIs arrested in Hong Kong has reduced significantly. The figure in February 2024 has decreased by nearly 90% from the peak in October 2023 and the number of new claims received in the same month has also dropped by nearly 70% from the peak in January 2024. The Government will continue to spare no efforts in intercepting NEC IIs at source. At the same time, when formulating 2024-25 estimate, the Government has to allocate sufficient resources to cope with different expenditures in handling non-refoulement claims and related work so as to fulfill the relevant legal obligations. The Government will continue to monitor the related expenditures. Under the premise of preventing potential abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism from entering Hong Kong, we will continue to adopt a multi-pronged strategy by ensuring as far as possible high efficiency in processing claims and relevant appeals while meeting the high standards of fairness required by law, and removing unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong as soon as possible.

As regards manpower, the number of posts in ImmD responsible for work related to screening claims and repatriation, 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 unsubstantiated 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	207	72	75	35
2023-24	207	81	77 <sup>^</sup>	35
2024-25 (Estimate)	207	81	77 <sup>^</sup>	35

\* ImmD will, subject to the actual operation, flexibly deploy internal manpower to handle non-refoulement claims.

<sup>^</sup> Number of members as at 29 February 2024, which is subject to adjustment as necessary.

Since 2019-20, the non-civil servant posts in the Legal Assistance Scheme for Non-refoulement Claimants of Duty Lawyer Service are 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	Number of posts in 2023-24	Number of posts in 2024-25 (Estimate)
Chief Court Liaison Officer	2	2	1	1	1	1
Assistant Chief Court Liaison Officer	2	1	2	2	2	2

Senior Court Liaison Officer	5	6	5	5	5	5
Court Liaison Officer	13	13	17	22	17	22
Senior Personal Secretary	4	4	2	2	2	2
Personal Secretaries I / II	5	5	4	4	4	4
Senior Accounting Officer	1	1	1	1	1	1
Accounting Officer	1	1	1	1	1	1
Office Assistant	2	2	1	1	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>39</b>

The civil service establishment and non-civil servant posts of the Pilot Scheme Office for Provision of PFLA for Non-refoulement Claimants since 2019-20 are as follows:

	Number of posts in 2019-20	Number of posts in 2020-21	Number of posts in 2021-22	Number of posts in 2022-23	Number of posts in 2023-24	Number of posts in 2024-25 (Estimate)
<b>Civil servant posts</b>						
Chief Executive Officer	1	1	1	1	1	1
Senior Executive Officer	1	1	1	1	1	1
Executive Officer I	3	3	3	3	3	3
Assistant Clerical Officer	4	4	4	4	4	4
Workman II	2	2	1	1	1	1
<b>Non-civil servant posts</b>						
Number	7	5	5	5	4	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>

(2) and (4) The Government attaches great importance to the issue relating to non-refoulement claims and has all along adopted a multi-pronged strategy. The Security Bureau amended the legislation in 2023 to include the Nei Kwu Correctional Institution as a place of detention of ImmD, thereby increasing the total number of detention capacity by 33% to 900. ImmD is committed to making gainful use of the existing facilities to detain claimants who pose higher security risks to the community in accordance with the law. On the other hand, since the introduction of the updated removal policy with effect from 7 December 2022, ImmD will proceed with the removal of unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong upon dismissal of their judicial review (JR) or relevant leave applications pertaining to their non-refoulement claims by the Court of First Instance, irrespective of whether there are outstanding court proceedings. Since the implementation of the updated policy until

February 2024, ImmD has removed a total of 2 204 claimants from Hong Kong, including 240 under the updated policy. The number in 2023 has significantly increased by 63% compared to 2022.

The Government will continue to adopt measures to enhance the handling of non-refoulement claims, including:

- (a) On interception at source, apart from cooperating with relevant Mainland authorities to strengthen intercepting IIs at source, the Government will, through profile analysis of obvious abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism and via the Advance Passenger Information System to be rolled out in phases starting from the third quarter of 2024, enhance identification of potential abusers and prevent their entry into Hong Kong;
- (b) ImmD continues to maintain high efficiency in screening non-refoulement claims;
- (c) Through streamlined process, TCAB will enhance its efficiency in handling appeal cases, with the target of reducing the average processing time from over seven months in the past to around four months;
- (d) On the management of detention facilities, various legislative amendments to enhance treatments of immigration detainees have been implemented starting from November 2023, so as to further uphold discipline and order at detention facilities;
- (e) Strengthening enforcement actions against immigration offences, including illegal employments, with a target to carry out not less than 12 000 operations on the targeted establishments every year, in order to lower the economic incentives of the claimants; and
- (f) On removal operations, the Government will continue to fully implement the updated removal policy so as to enhance the efficiency and efforts in removing unsubstantiated claimants, with the target of removing not less than 1 200 unsubstantiated claimants per year.

ImmD does not maintain statistics on the time required between the lodging of claims by claimants and arrangement for repatriation upon rejection or withdrawal of their claims. In general, ImmD's processing time of each claim is about 10 weeks. Around 95% of the unsubstantiated claimants will lodge an appeal to TCAB. TCAB will enhance its efficiency in handling appeal cases as far as possible through streamlined process, with the target of reducing the average processing time of appeal cases by TCAB from over seven months in the past to around four months. If unsubstantiated claimants lodge an application for JR, their time of remaining in Hong Kong will be longer and hence cannot be generalised.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB007**

**(Question Serial No. 1595)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Frontier Closed Area and Permits

There are 7 land control points between Hong Kong and Shenzhen, and each has its respective closed area. In this connection, please advise this Committee on the following:

1. Given the Sha Tau Kok opening-up plan, the study of contactless clearance in the Loop, and the popularity of the arrangement of direct access by passengers and vehicles at Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point among the public, will the Government consider further launching a review on the scope of closed areas in order to provide the public with more options for direct access to various land control points?
2. With the implementation of the Sha Tau Kok opening-up plan and the organisation of fun day activities by the North District Council in the area, has the Government considered streamlining the application for Sha Tau Kok Closed Area Permits?
3. There are views that closed areas have made the residents in San Tin unable to access Lok Ma Chau Station directly. They have to transit through the Mainland via the Lok Ma Chau Spur Line and return to Hong Kong where they can take the East Rail Line. Will the Government put forward any improvement proposals?

4. The Budget Speech has mentioned the plan to develop an Airport City. Will this involve a review of the regulations concerning the airport restricted area so as to tie in with the plan?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Yuet-ming (LegCo internal reference no.: 19)

Reply:

1. Frontier Closed Area (FCA) helps maintain boundary control between Hong Kong and the Mainland by law enforcement agencies for combating illegal immigration and other cross-boundary criminal activities. When enhancing the existing Boundary Control Points (BCPs) or developing new ones, the HKSAR Government will, as far as practicable, limit the coverage of the FCA to a scope necessary for maintaining public order. We will also take into consideration the planning of individual BCPs in examining the coverage of the FCA needed so as to tie in with the development of the relevant BCPs and areas.
2. The Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) has streamlined the application for Sha Tau Kok Closed Area Permits (CAPs) as far as possible. Applicants are only required to provide the most basic information in their applications for its vetting and approval. The HKPF launched the electronic Closed Area Permit (e-CAP) system on 1 December last year to facilitate online application of e-CAPs by the public and the issuance of e-CAPs. The system is currently available for use by visitors to the Sha Tau Kok FCA, cross-boundary students and Government officers. In the light of the feedback received, the HKPF is now enhancing the functions of the online platform to make it more user-friendly. The e-CAP system will be progressively expanded within this year in order to accept applications from business corporations/organisations, the media, residents and visitors. It is expected that full implementation will take place in the third quarter of 2024.
3. The Lok Ma Chau MTR station and the adjacent public transport interchange aim to provide transport service to cross-boundary passengers using the Lok Ma Chau Spur Line BCP so as to ensure safe and efficient operation of the BCP. For the above purpose, the Lok Ma Chau MTR Station is currently designed for passengers to enter and exit Hong Kong via the Lok Ma Chau Spur Line BCP only. As such, passengers who travel to Lok Ma Chau Spur Line BCP by bus, minibus or taxi cannot head back to

other locations in Hong Kong by MTR. Residents of San Tin may take trains at stations other than Lok Ma Chau Station, such as Sheung Shui Station and Yuen Long Station.

4. Having consulted the Transport and Logistics Bureau, our reply is as follows:

The Government supports the Airport City vision and blueprint put forward by the Airport Authority Hong Kong (AAHK). The Airport City, which consists of different elements including the Three- Runway System and various development projects on the Airport Island and the Hong Kong Port Island of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB), will fully capitalise on the unique geographical advantages of the Hong Kong International Airport to serve the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and the world. The AAHK is actively pressing ahead with the various projects under the Airport City vision, among which the first hotel and 3 office towers of SKYCITY were commissioned in 2022. The works of the automated carparks on the Hong Kong Port Island of the HZMB and the Airportcity Link connecting the HZMB Hong Kong Port and SKYCITY have also commenced. Relevant subsidiary legislation will be amended in due course to reflect the changes in the restricted area arising from the Airport City developments.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB008**

**(Question Serial No. 1596)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Internal Security

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Management of bicycle theft cases

There are reports and views that cases of theft of bicycles or their parts and components occur in Hong Kong, particularly in the New Territories, from time to time, but people may not take the initiative to report the cases to the Police if the amount of money involved is not large. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee:

1. of the number and detection rate of bicycle-related thefts in 2023, with a tabulated breakdown by 18 districts;
2. whether the Government has policies or measures in place to combat bicycle-related thefts at present; if so, whether an assessment of their effectiveness has been conducted; and
3. further to the above question, of the measures that are currently in place or will soon be put in place to enhance the security of bicycle parking spaces?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Yuet-ming (LegCo internal reference no.: 20)

Reply:

1) The numbers of bicycle theft cases by police district in 2023 are as follows:

Police district	Number of cases
Central	0
Wan Chai	11
Western	7
Eastern	7
Wong Tai Sin	8
Sau Mau Ping	7
Kwun Tong	2
Tseung Kwan O	49
Yau Tsim	21
Mong Kok	19
Sham Shui Po	31
Kowloon City	12
Border	3
Yuen Long	120
Tuen Mun	38
Tai Po	151
Tsuen Wan	30
Sha Tin	126
Kwai Tsing	10
Lantau	22
Airport	0
Marine Region	5
Total	679

The detection rate of bicycle theft cases in Hong Kong in 2023 was 18.7%.

2) and 3) Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) closely monitor the crime situation of bicycle thefts. Apart from stepping up patrols at relevant black spots, the HKPF also actively conduct investigation and take intelligence-led enforcement actions. For example, the Police monitor online bicycle resale platforms to detect people who have stolen bicycles and disguised themselves as second-hand bicycles sellers on such platforms to sell off the stolen bicycles for profit, and take follow-up actions as appropriate. Moreover, publicity campaigns on prevention of bicycle thefts are launched from time to time to remind members of the public to park their bicycles in authorized bicycle parking spaces, and secure the wheels of their bicycles to the fixtures in the parking spaces with strong locks. The public are also advised not to park their bicycles on the streets or in dark places with low passenger flow to avoid falling prey to thieves.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**(Question Serial No. 1602)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Streamlined Clearance Arrangements

Streamlined clearance is an important measure to promote our integration into the overall national development and to facilitate the flow of people. In this regard, will the Government inform this Committee of, as at present:

1. what is the follow-up work regarding streamlined clearance at the Huanggang Port and Man Kam To Control Point, which are under redevelopment and soon to be redeveloped respectively?
2. what are the latest arrangements and follow-up work relating to the future extension of operating hours at various land control points?
3. as the cross-boundary passenger throughput at the Heung Yuen Wai Control Point has already exceeded the designed limit, will consideration be given to discuss with other departments for an upgrading plan?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Yuet-ming (LegCo internal reference no.: 26)

Reply:

1. In planning for the redevelopment of existing boundary control points (BCPs) and the development of new BCPs in the future, the SAR Government will actively explore the adoption of new clearance mode to enhance passenger clearance efficiency, including implementing the “collaborative inspection and joint clearance” mode in new land BCPs projects.

“Collaborative inspection and joint clearance” is a new clearance mode. Under this clearance mode, automatic channels/counters of both sides will be set up side by side within their respective jurisdiction at the boundary inside the port, such that outbound and inbound visitors only need to queue up once to have their documents inspected and their identities verified once to pass through the immigration facilities of both sides in order to complete the respective immigration procedures, thereby greatly enhancing the overall clearance experience and efficiency.

At present, the governments of Hong Kong and Shenzhen have reached preliminary consensus on implementing the “collaborative inspection and joint clearance” mode at the new Huanggang Port and discussion on the operational details is underway.

2. In view of the resumption of normal travel between the Mainland and Hong Kong since early February last year, the governments of Hong Kong and Shenzhen have been closely monitoring the demand for clearance services at various land BCPs. On the basis of the 24-hour passenger clearance services currently provided at Lok Ma Chau Control Point and Hong Kong Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port, the HKSAR Government will liaise with the Mainland authorities on extending the operating hours of the passenger clearance services of individual land BCPs as and when necessary to further facilitate the flow of people between the two sides.

3. According to the information provided by the Development Bureau in 2017, the designed daily handling capacity of the Heung Yuen Wai BCP is 30 000 passenger trips. The Heung Yuen Wai BCP has been very popular among the public since its commissioning, with an average daily passenger throughput of about 34 000 in 2023. Although its utilisation is higher than its designed capacity, the relevant departments have been taking various measures in the light of the actual situation, including flexible deployment of manpower, optimization of workflow, and effective use of information technology, etc., to enhance the handling capacity and efficiency of the control point in coping with the cross-boundary passenger flow. We will continue to closely monitor the operation of the control point.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB010**

**(Question Serial No. 0375)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

In Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024-25, it is mentioned that the Bureau will “monitor the need for extending the operating hours of control points to further facilitate passenger and cargo flow”. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. In respect of facilitating passenger flow, given some land control points had operated extended service hours during the Lunar New Year period, what were the additional manpower and expenditure involved, broken down by control point and date;
2. Regarding whether it will be necessary to extend the service hour of various land control points (particularly Shenzhen Bay Port and Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point) to 24-hour clearance in the future so as to further facilitate passenger flow, what is the specific plan at present and what are the estimated manpower and expenditure involved;
3. In respect of facilitating cargo flow, whether the Government has compiled statistics on the cross-boundary goods vehicles flow at each land control point in the past financial year; and based on such statistics, whether it will give priority consideration to extend the operating hours of certain land control points, or even operating them overnight?

Asked by: Hon CHOW Man-kong (LegCo internal reference no.: 10)

Reply:

In consultation with the Transport and Logistics Bureau, the consolidated reply is as follows:

1. Lo Wu Control Point and Shenzhen Bay Control Point had extended the service hours on 9 and 11 February, and between 9 and 13 February, respectively. The manpower and expenditure involved are subsumed under the overall expenditure of various relevant departments. We do not maintain a breakdown of the relevant figures.
2. In view of the resumption of normal travel between the Mainland and Hong Kong since early February last year, the governments of Hong Kong and Shenzhen have been closely

monitoring the demand for clearance services at various land BCPs. On the basis of the 24-hour passenger clearance services currently provided at Lok Ma Chau Control Point and Hong Kong Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port, the HKSAR Government will liaise with the Mainland authorities on extending the operating hours of the passenger clearance services of individual land BCPs as and when necessary to further facilitate the flow of people between the two sides.

3. The numbers of cross-boundary goods vehicles crossing various land BCPs between April 2022 and March 2023 are as follows:

Lok Ma Chau	Man Kam To	Heung Yuen Wai	Shenzhen Bay	HZMB	Total <sup>Note</sup>
523 209	592 117	348 740	1 017 829	238 459	2 720 354

Note: The above table does not include the Sha Tau Kok Control Point which has ceased operation. Cargo clearance services at the Sha Tau Kok Control Point have been suspended since March 2022 to facilitate the redevelopment of the Sha Tau Kok Port.

The HKSAR Government has been liaising with the land freight transport industry to ensure smooth operation of cross-boundary goods vehicle transport, and will liaise with the Mainland authorities regarding clearance arrangements as and when necessary, taking into account factors such as the situation of cargo clearance, the demand for clearance services and resources of the land BCPs.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB011**

**(Question Serial No. 0376)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the task of taking forward the Advance Passenger Information System, would the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. given that the Bureau will “oversee the timely development of the system by the Immigration Department for rolling out in the third quarter of 2024”, what is the current progress of system development and the costs committed (except manpower and development expenses) so far;
2. whether it has assessed the Government’s savings on policing costs (particularly on handling the issues relating to non-refoulement claimants) upon rolling out the system in the future;
3. whether it has set aside additional manpower and expenditure for updating and enhancing the system upon its rollout as scheduled in the current year, so as to ensure that it will keep abreast with the times and help to cope with the post-pandemic trend of substantial increase in the number of travellers, the identification of potential non-refoulement claimants, as well as the increasing threats of terrorism and extremism in various parts of the world; if so, what are the details? If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon CHOW Man-kong (LegCo internal reference no.: 11)

Reply:

1. The Immigration Department (ImmD) is actively conducting system testing in respect of the Advance Passenger Information system (the API system). Upon completion of testing, the API system is expected to roll out in third quarter of 2024. As at February 2024, the expenditures involved are around \$21 million.

2. The implementation of the API system will facilitate ImmD to enhance its immigration clearance and enforcement capabilities to prevent undesirables, including potential non-refoulement claimants, from boarding flights heading to Hong Kong. During the check-in procedure, airlines are required to transmit all travellers' (including passengers' and crew members') API data to ImmD via the API system. The collection of API data can effectively provide visibility on the types and profiles of travellers prior to their arrival, so that ImmD can immediately conduct risk assessment of border security with the analytic tools of the system. ImmD does not maintain an estimation of policing costs.

3. ImmD will from time to time review the manpower and expenditures of its service, and apply for funding via the established mechanism when necessary, with a view to ensuring its service is kept up to date.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB012**

**(Question Serial No. 0377)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

In Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024-25, the Government mentions that it will “sustain the provision of publicly-funded legal assistance to non-refoulement claimants”. As the issue of non-refoulement claimants has aroused considerable public concern, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. the expenditure involved in providing publicly-funded legal assistance to non-refoulement claimants in the past year;
2. the estimated expenditure relating to non-refoulement claimants (including but not limited to the provision of publicly-funded legal assistance) in the coming year; if it's still higher than that of the preceding year, what are the reasons and what measures are in place to continue to compress related estimated expenditure?

Asked by: Hon CHOW Man-kong (LegCo internal reference no.: 12)

Reply:

(1) and (2) Major expenditures / estimated expenditures on handling non-refoulement claims and related work in 2023-24 and 2024-25 are tabulated below:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Screening of claims and handling of appeals/petitions* (\$ million)</b>	<b>Repatriation of unsubstantiated claimants # (\$ million)</b>	<b>Publicly-funded legal assistance (PFLA) (\$ million)</b>	<b>Humanitarian assistance (\$ million)</b>	<b>Total@ (\$ million)</b>
2023-24 (Estimate)	389	57	171	784	<b>1 400</b>
2023-24 (Revised estimate)	335	57	120	583	<b>1 095</b>
2024-25 (Estimate)	364	59	144	583	<b>1 150</b>

*\* Includes staff costs of the Immigration Department (ImmD) in screening claims and expenditures of the Torture Claims Appeal Board in handling appeals, etc.*

*# Only the expenditure on the dedicated manpower for the repatriation of unsubstantiated 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, ImmD does not maintain a separate breakdown relating to unsubstantiated claimants.*

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

In 2024-25, the Government will continue to adopt measures to enhance the handling of non-refoulement claims and successively enhance the efficiency on all fronts, especially in expediting the removal of unsubstantiated claimants at full steam, in order to ensure meeting the policy objectives and serving the public interests. Through stepping up the handling of non-refoulement claims, the Government managed to record an 18% drop in the estimated expenditure for 2024-25 as compared with the original estimate for 2023-24. At the same time, the Government has taken into account various factors in formulating the estimates, including related expenditures in screening claims and handling appeals, as well as fulfilling the relevant legal obligations of providing PFLA and humanitarian assistance for claimants, etc. The current estimate is higher than the revised estimate in last year, which is mainly attributable to the upsurge in the number of non-ethnic Chinese (NEC) illegal immigrants (IIs) in the second half of 2023, leading to an increase in the number of new claims and claimants in Hong Kong. With the strengthened joint enforcement actions taken by the law enforcement agencies in Guangdong and Hong Kong, the number of NEC IIs arrested in Hong Kong has reduced significantly. The figure in February 2024 has decreased by nearly 90% from the peak in October 2023 and the number of new claims received in the same month has also dropped by nearly 70% from the peak in January 2024. The Government will continue to spare no efforts in intercepting NEC IIs at source. At the same time, when formulating 2024-25 estimate, the Government has to allocate sufficient resources to cope with different expenditures in handling non-refoulement claims and related work so as to fulfill the relevant legal obligations. The Government will continue to monitor the related expenditures. Under the premise of preventing potential abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism from entering Hong Kong, we will continue to adopt a multi-pronged strategy by ensuring as far as possible high efficiency in processing claims and relevant appeals while meeting the high standards of fairness required by law, and removing unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong as soon as possible.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB013**

**(Question Serial No. 2724)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the humanitarian assistance provided by the Government to non-refoulement claimants (including allowances for temporary accommodation, food, transportation, basic utilities, etc.), please inform this Committee of the following:

1. the number of non-refoulement claimants receiving humanitarian assistance from the Social Welfare Department and the total expenditure involved in each of the past 10 years;
2. the number of non-refoulement claimants granted fee waivers by the Hospital Authority and the total expenditure involved in each of the past 10 years; and
3. the number of unsuccessful claimants sent back to their places of origin by the Immigration Department and the total cost involved in each of the past 10 years.

Asked by: Hon HONG Wen, Wendy (LegCo internal reference no.: 11)

Reply:

Having consulted the Health Bureau and the Social Welfare Department (SWD), our reply is as follows:

(1) Over the past 10 years, the number of service users and expenditures incurred by SWD on providing humanitarian assistance for non-refoulement claimants through service contractor are as follows:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of service users (as at 31 March)</b>	<b>Expenditure on humanitarian assistance (\$ million)</b>
2014-15	8 594	254
2015-16	12 671	489
2016-17	13 738	729
2017-18	12 365	587
2018-19	10 842	531

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of service users (as at 31 March)</b>	<b>Expenditure on humanitarian assistance (\$ million)</b>
2019-20	10 711	482
2020-21	12 194	540
2021-22	12 582	579
2022-23	12 252	590
2023-24 (Revised estimate)	12 351 (as at 29 February 2024)	583

(2) In terms of healthcare services, non-refoulement claimants are by definition Non-Eligible Persons (NEP). The Hospital Authority (HA) will, on the premise that medical services for local residents are not affected, provide NEPs with medical services. NEPs who receive medical services from the HA are required to pay medical fees which are determined on a cost recovery principle. To ensure rational use of limited public resources, there is in general no waiving of medical fees for NEPs unless there are exceptional circumstances and financial hardship. The number of persons involved and expenditures for each year in waiving the medical fees for non-refoulement claimants by the HA in the past 10 years are tabulated below:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of persons approved (as at 31 March)</b>	<b>Amount waived (\$ million)</b>
2014-15	13 346	31
2015-16	17 627	44
2016-17	19 870	56
2017-18	20 598	66
2018-19	18 961	76
2019-20	17 625	57
2020-21	17 910	63
2021-22	18 756	84
2022-23	17 901	80
2023-24 (as at 31 January 2024)	15 715	66 (actual expenditure)

(3) The Government implemented the Unified Screening Mechanism in March 2014. Over the past ten years, the number of unsubstantiated claimants removed by the Immigration Department (ImmD) is as follows:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of persons repatriated</b>
2014	650
2015	1 734
2016	1 706
2017	2 520
2018	2 527
2019	1 618
2020	632
2021	753

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of persons repatriated</b>
2022	1 097
2023	1 786
2024 (January to February)	353

ImmD has deployed dedicated manpower to expedite the repatriation of unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong since 2019-20. The related manpower expenditure is tabulated below. 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, ImmD does not maintain a separate breakdown relating to unsubstantiated claimants.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Major expenditure on repatriation of unsubstantiated claimants (\$ million)</b>
2014-15	-
2015-16	-
2016-17	-
2017-18	-
2018-19	-
2019-20	45
2020-21	47
2021-22	47
2022-23	50
2023-24 (Revised estimate)	57

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB014**

**(Question Serial No. 3163)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

According to the information of the Security Bureau, only around 1.3% of the non-refoulement claims can be substantiated since the implementation of the Unified Screening Mechanism in 2014. Despite the multi-pronged strategy all along adopted by the Government, including preventing potential abusers of the mechanism from entering Hong Kong, enhancing the processing efficiency of non-refoulement claims, and removing unsubstantiated claimants as soon as possible based on high standards of fairness, there are still almost 15 000 claimants remaining in Hong Kong on different grounds. In this connection, please advise this Committee on the following:

1. Please specify the numbers of non-refoulement claims received, determined (substantiated or unsubstantiated), withdrawn or that no further action could be taken, and pending screening;
2. Please specify the numbers of claimants arrested for taking up unlawful employment/committing criminal offences each year for the past 5 years (by category of crimes);
3. Please specify the expenditures used for handling non-refoulement claims and the actual expenditures of the Legal Assistance Scheme for Non-refoulement Claimants each year for the past 5 years;
4. The numbers of non-ethnic Chinese illegal immigrants intercepted and non-refoulement claimants have both surged since the full resumption of normal travel with the international community in 2023. What measures are in place to further prevent illegal immigrants from entering into Hong Kong, and to prevent and combat abuses of the non-refoulement mechanism?

Asked by: Hon HONG Wen, Wendy (LegCo internal reference no.: 41)

Reply:

(1) The Government implemented the Unified Screening Mechanism (USM) in March 2014 to screen non-refoulement claims on all applicable grounds in one go. The overall policy

objective of handling non-refoulement claims, under the premise of preventing potential abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism from entering Hong Kong, is to ensure as far as possible high efficiency in processing the claims and relevant appeals while meeting the high standards of fairness required by law, and to remove unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong as soon as possible. As at end-February 2024, the number of non-refoulement claims handled by the Immigration Department (ImmD) is as follows:

Year	Claims received	Claims determined	Claims withdrawn or no further action can be taken	Pending claims
Commencement of 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	1 257	1 727	70	201
2023	2 135	1 437	59	840
2024 (January to February)	667	446	15	1 046
<b>Total</b>	<b>25 607</b>	<b>24 063</b>	<b>7 197</b>	

Among the 24 063 claims determined by ImmD, 306 were substantiated (including 216 substantiated by the Torture Claims Appeal Board (TCAB) on appeal).

(2) According to the Police's record, since 2019, the number of non-ethnic Chinese (NEC) persons on recognizance and issued with Form No. 8 (mainly non-refoulement claimants) who were arrested for criminal offences is tabulated below with breakdown by crime category:

Offence	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024 (January to February)
Shop theft	200	250	254	145	193	37
Serious drug offences	86	112	92	85	99	6
Wounding and serious assault	59	92	90	51	75	6
Miscellaneous thefts	58	98	134	99	71	15
Serious immigration offences (Note 1)	49	38	50	29	38	3
Criminal damage	29	36	37	25	33	9
Burglary	17	36	22	27	18	2
Others (Note 2)	159	272	250	226	218	34
<b>Total</b>	<b>657</b>	<b>934</b>	<b>929</b>	<b>687</b>	<b>745</b>	<b>112</b>

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

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

In addition, according to ImmD’s record, since 2019, the number of NEC persons on recognizance and issued with Form No. 8 (mainly non-refoulement claimants) who were arrested for taking unlawful employment contrary to section 38AA of the Immigration Ordinance (Cap. 115) are tabulated below.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of persons arrested</b>
2019	215
2020	156
2021	438
2022	454
2023	484
2024 (January to February)	52

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

<b>Year</b>	<b>Screening of claims and handling of appeals/petitions* (\$ million)</b>	<b>Repatriation of unsubstantiated claimants # (\$ million)</b>	<b>Publicly-funded legal assistance (PFLA) (\$ million)</b>	<b>Humanitarian assistance (\$ million)</b>	<b>Total@ (\$ million)</b>
2019-20	344	45	93	482	<b>964</b>
2020-21	311	47	95	540	<b>992</b>
2021-22	298	47	142	579	<b>1 067</b>
2022-23	305	50	108	590	<b>1 052</b>
2023-24 (Estimate)	389	57	171	784	<b>1 400</b>
2023-24 (Revised estimate)	335	57	120	583	<b>1 095</b>
2024-25 (Estimate)	364	59	144	583	<b>1 150</b>

\* Includes staff costs of ImmD in screening claims and expenditures of TCAB in handling appeals, etc.

# Only the expenditure on the dedicated manpower for the repatriation of unsubstantiated 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, ImmD does not maintain a separate breakdown relating to unsubstantiated claimants.

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

PFLA is currently provided by “Legal Assistance Scheme for Non-refoulement Claimants by the Duty Lawyer Service” (Duty Lawyer Scheme) and the Pilot Scheme for Provision of PFLA for non-refoulement Claimants (the Pilot Scheme). The expenditures of the above two schemes since 2019-20 are tabulated below:

Yar	Duty Lawyer Scheme's expenditure (\$ million)	The Pilot Scheme's expenditure (\$ million)	Total PFLA expenditures (The sum of the two schemes) (\$ million) #
2019-20	68	25	93
2020-21	69	26	95
2021-22	87	56	142
2022-23	70	38	108
2023-24 (Estimate)	110	61	171
2023-24 (Revised Estimate)	79	41	120
2024-25 (Estimate)	104	41	144
<b>Total</b>	<b>587</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>873</b>

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

In 2024-25, the Government will continue to adopt measures to enhance the handling of non-refoulement claims and successively enhance the efficiency on all fronts, especially in expediting the removal of unsubstantiated claimants at full steam, in order to ensure meeting the policy objectives and serving the public interests. Through stepping up the handling of non-refoulement claims, the Government managed to record an 18% drop in the estimated expenditure for 2024-25 as compared with the original estimate for 2023-24. At the same time, the Government has taken into account various factors in formulating the estimates, including related expenditures in screening claims and handling appeals, as well as fulfilling the relevant legal obligations of providing PFLA and humanitarian assistance for claimants, etc. The current estimate is higher than the revised estimate in last year, which is mainly attributable to the upsurge in the number of NEC IIs in the second half of 2023, leading to an increase in the number of new claims and claimants in Hong Kong. With the strengthened joint enforcement actions taken by the law enforcement agencies in Guangdong and Hong Kong, the number of NEC IIs arrested in Hong Kong has reduced significantly. The figure in February 2024 has decreased by nearly 90% from the peak in October 2023 and the number of new claims received in the same month has also dropped by nearly 70% from the peak in January 2024. The Government will continue to spare no efforts in intercepting NEC IIs at source. At the same time, when formulating 2024-25 estimate, the Government has to allocate sufficient resources to cope with different expenditures in handling non-refoulement claims and related work so as to fulfill the relevant legal obligations. The Government will continue to monitor the related expenditures. Under the premise of preventing potential abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism from entering Hong Kong, we will continue to adopt a multi-pronged strategy by ensuring as far as possible high efficiency in processing claims and relevant appeals while meeting the high standards of fairness required by law, and removing unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong as soon as possible.

(4) In view of the general resumption of international flights in the Mainland after the pandemic, the Mainland visa-issuing authorities abroad have resumed issuing visas to Mainland China to foreigners since March 2023. Coupled with rumors inducing IIs to come to Hong Kong, the number of NEC IIs intercepted has increased significantly in the second half of 2023. The number of non-refoulement claims received has also soared prominently

in end 2023 and January 2024. That said, with the continuous efforts of different parties in combating smuggling activities on various fronts, the number of NEC IIs arrested in Hong Kong has gradually decreased in the fourth quarter of 2023. The figure in February 2024 has significantly dropped by nearly 90% from the peak in October 2023. The number of new claims received in February 2024 has also decreased significantly by nearly 70% from the peak in January 2024.

The Government has taken the following measures in response to the surge in NEC IIs:

- (a) On intercepting at source, after discussions between the Mainland and Hong Kong, Mainland law enforcement agencies (LEAs) have been strictly examining the purposes of suspicious NEC persons for entry into the Mainland and would refuse their entry in case of suspicion. The Security Bureau (SB) also met with the Consulates-General of different countries in Hong Kong, expressed great concern about the influx of NEC IIs into Hong Kong and secured their agreement to fully collaborate. Since 2016, Hong Kong has also been conducting dedicated operations with Mainland law enforcement units as well as the public security authorities of Guangdong, Guangxi, Yunnan and Xinjiang provinces to collaborate in cracking down smuggling of NEC persons into Hong Kong through the Mainland.
- (b) On enforcement and intelligence, a one-month anti-illegal immigration joint operation in Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao, the “Operation Clear Bay”, was launched under the co-ordination of the Office of the Leading Group for Combating Smuggling of Guangdong Province from September to October 2023. Local LEAs arrested a total of 405 persons. The Mainland and local LEAs also conducted dedicated operations and mounted two dedicated joint operations, “Mungoshunt-3”, each lasting for a few days in November 2023. ImmD and the Police arrested a total of 122 persons. The arrested persons in the two operations were mainly NEC IIs, and included 10 persons and 5 persons respectively for aiding and abetting others to land in Hong Kong unlawfully and remain in Hong Kong. The Mainland and local LEAs have also continued to strengthen intelligence exchange; tighten the issuance of visas to Mainland China and control over the entry of NEC tourists into the Mainland; investigate syndicates organising cross-boundary illegal immigration; conduct interception at black spots in the Mainland and joint patrols at sea to deter NEC IIs from entering Hong Kong. The Guangdong provincial security unit has also uncovered a number of cases involving smuggling into Hong Kong, and arrested a number of persons involved in organising smuggling operations and NEC persons who intended to smuggle.
- (c) In May 2023, the Police upgraded its Crime Wing Working Group on NEC Involvement in Organized Crime and Triad Activities to a steering committee. The steering committee, chaired by a Senior Assistant Commissioner of Police, strengthens the review of the relevant crime situation and intelligence collection; enhances co-ordination; and formulates more strategic enforcement actions. After the conviction of individual NEC person on recognisance and issued with Form No. 8 of an offence in Hong Kong, the prosecution will also provide to the Court the crime statistics or case laws of the relevant group and invite the Court to consider enhancing the sentence as a result of the accused’s status.

In view that some NEC IIs would work illegally after making non-refoulement claims, ImmD is committed to combating illegal employment in order to lower their economic incentives.

In 2023, ImmD conducted a total of 13 052 inspections, representing a 1.4% increase compared to 2022; and arrested 628 NEC illegal workers, representing a 26% increase compared to 2022. The Government will continue to conduct surprise inspections on black spots where IIs hide and engage in illegal employment and to step up efforts in publicising that employment of illegal workers is a serious offence punishable by a maximum fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment of 10 years.

On preventing and combating abusers of non-refoulement claims, the Government attaches great importance to the issue relating to non-refoulement claims and has all along adopted a multi-pronged strategy. SB amended the legislation in 2023 to include the Nei Kwu Correctional Institution as a place of detention of ImmD, thereby increasing the total number of detention capacity by 33% to 900. ImmD is committed to making gainful use of the existing facilities to detain claimants who pose higher security risks to the community in accordance with the law. On the other hand, since the introduction of the updated removal policy with effect from 7 December 2022, ImmD will proceed with the removal of unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong upon dismissal of their judicial review or relevant leave applications pertaining to their non-refoulement claims by the Court of First Instance, irrespective of whether there are outstanding court proceedings. Since the implementation of the updated policy until February 2024, ImmD has removed a total of 2 204 claimants from Hong Kong, including 240 under the updated policy. The number in 2023 has significantly increased by 63% compared to 2022.

The Government will continue to adopt measures to enhance the handling of non-refoulement claims, including:

- (a) On interception at source, apart from cooperating with relevant Mainland authorities to strengthen intercepting IIs at source, the Government will, through profile analysis of obvious abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism and via the Advance Passenger Information System to be rolled out in phases starting from the third quarter of 2024, enhance identification of potential abusers and prevent their entry into Hong Kong;
- (b) ImmD continues to maintain high efficiency in screening non-refoulement claims;
- (c) Through streamlined process, TCAB will enhance its efficiency in handling appeal cases, with the target of reducing the average processing time from over seven months in the past to around four months;
- (d) On the management of detention facilities, various legislative amendments to enhance treatments of immigration detainees have been implemented starting from November 2023, so as to further uphold discipline and order at detention facilities;
- (e) Strengthening enforcement actions against immigration offences, including illegal employments, with a target to carry out not less than 12 000 operations on the targeted establishments every year, in order to lower the economic incentives of the claimants; and
- (f) On removal operations, the Government will continue to fully implement the updated removal policy so as to enhance the efficiency and efforts in removing unsubstantiated

claimants, with the target of removing no less than 1 200 unsubstantiated claimants per year.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB015**

**(Question Serial No. 0131)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Internal Security

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Supported by the Beat Drugs Fund, the Healthy School Programme (HSP) has been implemented for over 10 years. It aims to strengthen students' resolve to stay away from drugs through a wide range of personal growth activities and voluntary school drug testing. The personal data and test results of students obtained under the HSP will not be passed to the Police and other law enforcement agencies. Furthermore, participating students will not be charged with drug abuse on the ground that they have been tested positive or have admitted taking drugs. In this connection, will the Government advise this Committee on the following:

- (1) the number of secondary schools in Hong Kong and the number of secondary schools participating in the HSP, broken down by 18 districts, in each of the past 5 years;
- (2) the staff establishment, emolument expenditure and total expenditure of the HSP in the past 5 years;
- (3) whether it has kept record of the number of voluntary school drug tests conducted and the number of positive test results in the past 5 years; if so, what are the details; if not, what are the reasons; and
- (4) the numbers of reported drug abusers aged below 16, 16 to 20, and 21 to 25 respectively in each of the past 5 years, and among them how many are students?

Asked by: Hon LAI Tung-kwok (LegCo internal reference no.: 18)

Reply:

The "Healthy School Programme with a Drug Testing Component" (the Programme) is a school-based anti-drug education initiative, aiming at enhancing the physical and mental health and well-being of students and fostering their resolve to refuse drugs through participating in diversified personal growth activities and voluntary school drug testing, thereby promoting the cultivation of healthy and drug-free school culture.

- (1) When the Programme was launched in the 2011/12 school year, only 43 schools joined it. The number has increased to 237 at present, which is about half of the 519 secondary

schools in Hong Kong. The numbers of participating schools under the Programme in the past five years are tabulated as follows –

Region	District Council district	Number of participating schools				
		2019/20 school year	2020/21 school year	2021/22 school year	2022/23 school year	2023/24 school year
Hong Kong Island	Central & Western	2	2	2	2	2
	Wan Chai	7	8	8	8	8
	Eastern	9	6	6	9	10
	Southern	1	2	2	6	6
Kowloon	Sham Shui Po	9	9	9	15	16
	Yau Tsim Mong	7	8	8	8	9
	Kowloon City	6	6	6	7	8
	Wong Tai Sin	11	12	12	16	16
	Kwun Tong	5	6	6	10	10
New Territories	Tsuen Wan	7	8	8	8	8
	Tuen Mun	22	23	23	28	29
	Yuen Long	19	20	20	20	22
	North	8	8	8	12	14
	Tai Po	19	19	19	19	20
	Sai Kung	7	8	10	12	13
	Sha Tin	12	13	14	15	17
	Kwai Tsing Islands	16	17	17	21	22
	7	7	7	7	7	
<b>Total number of participating schools</b>		<b>174</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>237</b>
<b>Total number of secondary schools in Hong Kong</b>		<b>521</b>	<b>522</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>516</b>	<b>519</b>

(2) The Programme is funded by the Beat Drugs Fund (BDF) and it is not an expenditure under Head 151. The grants allocated to schools and the relevant non-governmental organisations (NGOs) for implementing the Programme in the past five years are tabulated as follows –

BDF Grants (\$ million)	2019/20 school year	2020/21 school year	2021/22 school year	2022/23 school year	2023/24 school year
Grants that can be used for subsidising salaries of staff	17.03	75.20	48.17	39.88	94.02
<b>Total grants</b>	<b>32.13</b>	<b>123.17</b>	<b>86.54</b>	<b>75.70</b>	<b>158.65</b>

The Programme is school-based and the amount of grants received by each school is subject to the proposal that the school submits in a year. Hence, the total amount of grants allocated by the BDF for implementing the Programme varies from year to year. Over the past five

years, the BDF allocated around \$450,000 on average to each participating school per school year (including the subsidy for salaries of staff).

(3) The purpose of the voluntary drug testing is not to identify drug-taking students, but to enhance the resolve of students who have not taken any drugs to continue to stay away from drugs, and triggering the motivation of those abusing drugs to seek help. Schools are required to explain to students and their parents/guardians the drug testing scheme, and distribute the consent form for them to choose to take part. The statistics on voluntary drug testing in each of the past five years are tabulated as follows –

	<b>2019/20 school year</b>	<b>2020/21 school year</b>	<b>2021/22 school year</b>	<b>2022/23 school year</b>	<b>2023/24 school year</b>
<b>Number of students consented to participate in drug testing</b>	41 402	38 401	39 555	42 706	Information will be available at the end of school year
<b>Number of confirmed cases</b>	2	1	2	0	

There are comprehensive support programmes to handle and follow-up cases of any possible results of the testing, including counselling, treatment, rehabilitation, and referrals. If a student is troubled by drugs (including confirmed cases in drug testing), the NGO responsible for arranging the drug test will, subject to the student’s welfare needs, co-ordinate suitable counselling, treatment and rehabilitation services for the student, including to convene a multi-disciplinary case conference to formulate a support programme.

(4) According to the information from the Central Registry of Drug Abuse, the numbers of reported drug abusers aged below 16, 16 to 20, and 21 to 25 respectively in each of the past five years, and out of them, those who were reported as students are set out in the table below –

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Number of reported drug abusers by age group</b>					<b>Among them, who were reported as students</b>				
	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
<b>Aged below 16</b>	75	99	191	149	112	43	74	149	119	93
<b>Aged 16 to 20</b>	419	510	698	595	547	80	143	221	180	162
<b>Aged 21 to 25</b>	505	475	617	598	476	11	26	53	47	44

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB016**

**(Question Serial No. 2699)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: Not Specified

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

In 2023, did the Security Bureau engage external lawyers for consultancy services in accordance with the Stores and Procurement Regulations of the Government without first seeking assistance from the Department of Justice? If so, what were the nature of such services and the expenditures incurred?

Asked by: Hon LAM San-keung (LegCo internal reference no.: 23)

Reply:

The Security Bureau did not engage any external lawyers for consultancy services without first seeking assistance from the Department of Justice in 2023.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB017**

**(Question Serial No. 1751)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The new Huanggang Port is expected to complete in 2026. The governments of Hong Kong and Shenzhen have reached preliminary consensus on implementing the “collaborative inspection and joint clearance” mode such that outbound and inbound visitors will only be required to queue up to have their documents inspected and their identities verified once to travel to and from the two places. In this connection, please inform this Committee of the following:

- (1) the estimated construction cost of the new Huanggang Port;
- (2) the estimated annual operating expenditure for the implementation of “collaborative inspection and joint clearance” in the new Huanggang Port;
- (3) whether study will be conducted for the implementation of “collaborative inspection and joint clearance” in more control points in the future?

Asked by: Hon LAM Shun-chiu, Dennis (LegCo internal reference no.: 30)

Reply:

(1) Currently, the basement structure of the new Huanggang Port is under construction and is expected to be completed by the end of this year. Meanwhile, the Hong Kong and Shenzhen governments are discussing the design of the Hong Kong Port Area (HKPA) of the new Huanggang Port, with a view to commencing the construction of the superstructure as soon as possible after the completion of the basement structure. The target is to strive for completion of the new Huanggang Port building by late 2025.

Regarding the expenditure on the new Huanggang Port, the Shenzhen Municipal Government has agreed in principle to bear the design and construction costs for the entire project (including the HKPA). The HKSAR Government will bear on its own the costs of other capital non-works items for the HKPA, such as furniture and equipment and information systems for the operation at the control point by various departments. As the HKPA is still at the design stage, estimate of the relevant expenditure is not yet available. Relevant departments of the HKSAR Government will follow the established procedures to seek funding for the related items from the Legislative Council as appropriate.

(2) The governments of Hong Kong and Shenzhen have reached preliminary consensus on implementing the “collaborative inspection and joint clearance” mode at the new Huanggang Port and discussion on the operational details is underway. At present, the relevant expenditure estimate is not yet available.

(3) In planning for the redevelopment of existing boundary control points (BCPs) and the development of new BCPs in the future, the HKSAR Government will actively explore the adoption of new clearance mode to enhance passenger clearance efficiency, including implementing the “collaborative inspection and joint clearance” mode in new land BCPs projects.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB018**

**(Question Serial No. 0298)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Internal Security

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

It is mentioned in Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024-25 that the Government will take forward the gradual opening of the Sha Tau Kok (STK) Frontier Closed Area (except Chung Ying Street) for promoting cultural and eco-tourism whilst ensuring adequate security controls. In this regard, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. How many individual visitors and tour group visitors have participated in the first phase Opening-up of STK Pier and the second phase Opening-up of STK projects respectively? Please tabulate by month.
2. To take forward the opening-up of STK project, what are the staff establishment and expenditure involved in the past 3 financial years, and how about those expected to be involved in the coming financial year?
3. When will the next phase of the project be expected to commence at the earliest? What are the details of the project, areas to be opened up and the quota of visitors?
4. On the premise that specific conditions are met and upon balancing the security risks, will the Government consider opening up Chung Ying Street partially on a pilot basis during the next phase of the project, so as to capitalise on its historical and tourism value?

Asked by: Hon LAU Ip-keung, Kenneth (LegCo internal reference no.: 12)

Reply:

1. During the implementation of the first phase Opening-up of Sha Tau Kok (STK) Pier Scheme between June 2022 and December 2023, the numbers of participating tour groups and visitors<sup>1</sup> were as follows:

<b>Month</b>	<b>Number of tour groups</b>	<b>Number of visitors</b>
June 2022	53	1 464
July 2022	57	1 495
August 2022	46	1 274
September 2022	57	2 108
October 2022	75	2 882
November 2022	54	2 083
December 2022	64	2 746
January 2023	51	2 127
February 2023	31	1 406
March 2023	39	1 772
April 2023	51	2 216
May 2023	45	1 963
June 2023	32	1 286
July 2023	46	1 985
August 2023	34	1 519
September 2023	32	1 279
October 2023	28	1 153
November 2023	31	1 257
December 2023	44	1 874
<b>Total</b>	<b>870</b>	<b>33 889</b>

During the Second Phase Opening-up of STK (excluding Chung Ying Street), the numbers of individual visitors and tour group visitors involved<sup>1</sup> since its launch in January 2024 are as follows:

<b>Month</b>	<b>Number of individual visitors</b>	<b>Number of tour group visitors</b>	<b>Total number of visitors</b>
January 2024	9 909	4 268	14 177
February 2024	9 424	4 513	13 937
<b>Total</b>	<b>19 333</b>	<b>8 781</b>	<b>28 114</b>

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<sup>1</sup> Based on the number of applications for Closed Area Permits.

2. As the opening-up projects of STK form an integral part of the work of the Security Bureau (SB), a breakdown of the relevant staff establishment and expenditure is not available.
3. The SB and relevant departments have been closely monitoring the implementation of the opening-up project. The project has been operating smoothly and the feedback of both tourists and local residents are positive. We will keep various arrangements of the project and views of stakeholders under review and report the implementation outcomes and the next step of work in the Legislative Council Panel on Security meeting in July.

Taking into account the implementation experience over the past 2 months, and having consulted local views, we will introduce the following enhancement measures from April onwards –

- (i) In view of the high demand for individual visitor quotas, we will increase the daily quota by 300 (i.e. to 600 in total).

In response to public demand on 24 February, the SB increased the individual visitor quota by 1 000 on that day to support the Sha Tau Kok Lantern Festival Fun Day organised by the North District Office. A total of 1 045 individual visitors and 579 tour group visitors entered Sha Tau Kok for sightseeing on that day, and the situation was in good order in general. This successful experience shows that there is room for increasing the daily quota for individual visitors; and

- (ii) Regarding the daily quota of 700 for group tour visitors, given its low utilisation on weekdays, it is certain that such number of tour groups on weekdays will not adversely affect the local community. As such, we will remove the quota for tour groups from Mondays to Fridays (excluding public holidays).

In addition, taking into account the patronage and local views, the Transport Department (TD) will adjust the kaito ferry service for island-hopping tours from April onwards, streamlining the routes and frequencies and introducing other improvement measures,

in order to make it more convenient for both tourists and local residents. The TD will also continue to enhance land transport services. We will keep the implementation of the opening-up projects under review, so as to improve the arrangements and better meet the needs of both tourists and the local residents.

4. As Chung Ying Street straddles the boundary between Hong Kong and Shenzhen, due to security considerations, over the past decades only people with actual residential, living or working needs to enter Chung Ying Street are issued with Closed Area Permits for access to Chung Ying Street in Hong Kong through the Chung Ying Street Checkpoint. The issue of opening up Chung Ying Street is relatively complex. Although it cannot be included in the opening-up project at this stage, we will keep an open mind and explore relevant arrangements, ensuring that, while facilitating the development of tourism, security requirements are met and risks remain controllable.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB019**

**(Question Serial No. 0299)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Internal Security

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

It is mentioned in Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024-25 that the legislative exercise on enhancing the protection of cybersecurity of critical infrastructure will be taken forward. At the same time, the provision for 2024-25 is \$174.6 million (19.2%) higher than the revised estimate for 2023-24. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. What is the progress of the legislative exercise on enhancing the protection of cybersecurity of critical infrastructure? Whether the relevant bill can be introduced into the Legislative Council in the second half of this legislative year as scheduled?
2. What will be the staff establishment and the expenditure for taking forward the legislative exercise on enhancing the protection of cybersecurity of critical infrastructure? Whether the expenditure is related to the increase in the revised estimate?
3. Whether the Government has any plan to set up a dedicated agency to carry out work relating to the protection of cybersecurity of critical infrastructure? If yes, what is the size and staff establishment of the agency; if not, whether the Government has assessed if the existing resources are sufficient to cope with the enforcement situation after the implementation of the legislation?

Asked by: Hon LAU Ip-keung, Kenneth (LegCo internal reference no.: 13)

Reply:

- 1) To enhance the protection of cybersecurity of critical infrastructure, the Government has proposed to define the cybersecurity obligations of the operators of critical infrastructure. In formulating the cybersecurity standards, reference will be made to the standards adopted in other jurisdictions and internationally.

The Security Bureau (SB), together with the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer and the Police Force, consulted the cybersecurity industry in the first quarter of 2023, and met with major operators of critical infrastructure in the

second and third quarters of 2023 to exchange initial views on the proposed legislative framework. SB is working on the legislative proposals and the code of practice. This will be followed by consultation with the Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Security and the relevant stakeholders. The target is to introduce the bill into the LegCo within 2024.

- 2-3) In 2024-25, we will continue to make use of the existing resources to prepare for the legislative exercise. Subject to the finalisation of the bill, we plan to set up a dedicated office to take forward the implementation of the legislation. Arrangements will be made in accordance with the Government's established procedures on manpower and set-up required for the office in due course, so as to carry out the relevant work on the protection of cybersecurity of critical infrastructure after the enactment of the legislation.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**(Question Serial No. 1509)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

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

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The estimate of expenditure for 2024-25 is 6.0% higher than the original estimate for 2023-24. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. What are the details of the increased estimate?
2. What were the details of the expenditures on daily maintenance, staffing and boundary-crossing arrangements of the control points in the past 3 years? Please specify in table form.
3. What is the specific timetable for coordinating the promotion and implementation of co-location arrangement at the new Huanggang Port? What are the details of the estimated expenditure?
4. Has the Government calculated the estimated expenditure if innovative modes of clearance, such as "co-location arrangement" and "collaborative inspection and joint clearance", are to be introduced at the control points? What are the savings in labour cost? What is the efficiency of the new modes?
5. Will the Government extend the operating hours of the control points and extend the service hours of relevant public transportation as soon as possible? If so, what are the details? If not, what are the reasons?
6. What are the details of the engineering feasibility study on the Sha Tau Kok Control Point redevelopment project, the estimated expenditure and the clearance mode to be adopted?

Asked by: Hon LAU Kwok-fan (LegCo internal reference no.: 50)

Reply:

1. Regarding Programme (3) Immigration Control, the estimate of expenditure for 2024-25 is \$20.5 million (6.0%) higher than the original estimate for 2023-24. The major items of increase are set out below:
  - Increased expenditure on legal, translation and interpretation service fee and other hire of service fees \$7.27 million
  - Increased expenditure on the remunerations of committee members handling appeals/petitions lodged by unsuccessful non-refoulement claimants and other committee members \$4.86 million
  - Annual salary increment of civil servants and staff \$4.56 million

- Other increased departmental expenses \$3.81 million

2. The expenditures on daily maintenance, staffing and boundary-crossing arrangements of various control points are subsumed under the overall expenditure of the relevant departments. We do not maintain a breakdown of the relevant figures.
3. The Hong Kong and Shenzhen governments have obtained the Central Government's support for the implementation of co-location arrangement at the redeveloped Huanggang Port. Currently, the basement structure of the new Huanggang Port is under construction and is expected to be completed by the end of this year. Meanwhile, the Hong Kong and Shenzhen governments are discussing the design of the Hong Kong Port Area (HKPA) of the new Huanggang Port, with a view to commencing the construction of the superstructure as soon as possible after the completion of the basement structure. The target is to strive for completion of the new Huanggang Port building by late 2025.

Regarding the expenditure on the new Huanggang Port, the Shenzhen Municipal Government has agreed in principle to bear the design and construction costs for the entire project (including the HKPA). The HKSAR Government will bear on its own the costs of other capital non-works items for the HKPA, such as furniture and equipment and information systems for the operation at the control point by various departments. As the HKPA is still at the design stage, estimate of the relevant expenditure is not yet available. Relevant departments of the HKSAR Government will follow the established procedures to seek funding for the related items from the Legislative Council as appropriate.

4. In planning for the redevelopment of existing boundary control points (BCPs) and the development of new BCPs in the future, the HKSAR Government will actively explore the adoption of new clearance mode to enhance passenger clearance efficiency, including implementing the "collaborative inspection and joint clearance" mode in new land BCPs projects.

"Collaborative inspection and joint clearance" is a new clearance mode. Under this clearance mode, automatic channels/counters of both sides will be set up side by side within their respective jurisdiction at the boundary inside the port, such that outbound and inbound visitors only need to queue up once to have their documents inspected and their identities verified once to pass through the immigration facilities of both sides in order to complete the respective immigration procedures, thereby greatly enhancing the overall clearance experience and efficiency.

At present, the governments of Hong Kong and Shenzhen have reached preliminary consensus on implementing the "collaborative inspection and joint clearance" mode at the new Huanggang Port and discussion on the operational details, including manpower arrangement, is underway.

5. In view of the resumption of normal travel between the Mainland and Hong Kong since early February last year, the governments of Hong Kong and Shenzhen have been closely monitoring the demand for clearance services at various land BCPs. On the basis of the 24-hour passenger clearance services currently provided at Lok Ma Chau Control Point and Hong Kong Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port, the HKSAR

Government will liaise with the Mainland authorities on extending the operating hours of the passenger clearance services of individual land BCPs as and when necessary to further facilitate the flow of people between the two sides.

6. The engineering feasibility study on the Sha Tau Kok redevelopment project has been commissioned. The scope of study covers road infrastructure, public transportation, land requirement, area of the control point, land ownership, environmental assessment, heritage conservation, etc. According to the preliminary estimate of the Civil Engineering and Development Department, the estimated cost of the study is about \$13 million. The HKSAR Government and the Shenzhen Municipal Government will continue to press ahead with the redevelopment project.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB021**

**(Question Serial No. 1931)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

It is mentioned under this Programme that the Government will monitor the need for extending the operating hours of control points to further facilitate passenger and cargo flow. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. the cross-boundary passenger throughput at various land boundary control points (BCPs) in the past 3 years;
2. the staff establishment and day-to-day expenditure of the land BCPs; and
3. whether there is a specific timetable for increasing the number of land BCPs with 24-hour clearance; if so, what are the details; if not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon LEE Chun-keung (LegCo internal reference no.: 15)

Reply:

1. The numbers of inbound and outbound passenger trips at various land boundary control points (BCPs) in the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

Control Point <sup>Notes 1 &amp; 2</sup>	2021	2022	2023
Lo Wu <sup>Note 3</sup>	10 179	0	45 334 772
Lok Ma Chau Spur Line <sup>Note 3</sup>	13 955	0	40 845 069
West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link	0	0	19 653 992
Lok Ma Chau	0	0	8 397 262
Man Kam To	0	0	1 029 876
Shenzhen Bay	836 891	927 608	22 685 338
Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge	122 698	192 883	21 570 170
Heung Yuen Wai <sup>Notes 3 &amp; 4</sup>	10 470	301	12 450 061
Total	994 193	1 120 792	171 966 540

Note 1:

The following BCPs had suspended services during the COVID-19 epidemic with details as follows:

- Lo Wu (services suspended from 4 February 2020 to 5 February 2023)
- Lok Ma Chau Spur Line (services suspended from 4 February 2020 to 7 January 2023)
- West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (services suspended from 30 January 2020 to 14 January 2023)
- Lok Ma Chau (services suspended from 4 February 2020 to 5 February 2023)
- Man Kam To (services suspended from 30 January 2020 to 7 January 2023)
- Heung Yuen Wai (full operation, including cargo and passenger clearance services, commenced since 6 February 2023)

Note 2:

The above table does not include the Hung Hom Control Point and Sha Tau Kok Control Point, both of which have ceased operation. The Hung Hom Control Point has ceased to operate since 30 January 2020 upon suspension of the Intercity Through Train services. Passenger clearance services at the Sha Tau Kok Control Point have been suspended since 30 January 2020 to facilitate the redevelopment of the Sha Tau Kok Port.

Note 3:

During the above services suspension periods, the Lo Wu Control Point, Lok Ma Chau Spur Line Control Point and Heung Yuen Wai BCP were opened as “BCP Polling Stations” on 19 December 2021 to facilitate registered electors in the Mainland to return to Hong Kong for voting in the 2021 Legislative Council General Election.

Note 4:

The Mainland medical support team arrived Hong Kong SAR via the Heung Yuen Wai BCP on 16 March 2022.

2. The staff establishment and day-to-day expenditure of various land BCPs are subsumed under the overall expenditure of the relevant departments. We do not maintain a breakdown of the relevant figures.

3. In view of the resumption of normal travel between the Mainland and Hong Kong since early February last year, the governments of Hong Kong and Shenzhen have been closely monitoring the demand for clearance services at various land BCPs. On the basis of the 24-hour passenger clearance services currently provided at Lok Ma Chau Control Point and Hong Kong Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port, the HKSAR Government will liaise with the Mainland authorities on extending the operating hours of the passenger clearance services of individual land BCPs as and when necessary to further facilitate the flow of people between the two sides.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**(Question Serial No. 1622)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The HKSAR Government has implemented the unified screening mechanism since March 2014 to determine claims for non-refoulement protection on all applicable grounds against expulsion, return or surrender from Hong Kong to another country. In this connection, please provide the following information to this Committee regarding the non-refoulement claim mechanism since it came into operation:

1. what are the annual statistics on non-refoulement claims?
2. what are the major expenditures incurred for the handling of non-refoulement claims and related work each year?
3. how many cases of non-refoulement claims were screened and the rate of substantiated cases each year?
4. how many non-refoulement claimants are currently stuck in Hong Kong? What are the reasons for that? What is the distribution by nationalities?

Asked by: Hon LEE Hoey Simon (LegCo internal reference no.: 13)

Reply:

(1) and (3) The Government implemented the Unified Screening Mechanism (USM) in March 2014 to screen non-refoulement claims on all applicable grounds in one go. The overall policy objective of handling non-refoulement claims, under the premise of preventing potential abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism from entering Hong Kong, is to ensure as far as possible high efficiency in processing the claims and relevant appeals while meeting the high standards of fairness required by law, and to remove unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong as soon as possible. As at end-February 2024, the number of non-refoulement claims handled by the Immigration Department (ImmD) is as follows:

Year	Claims received	Claims determined	Claims withdrawn or no further action can be taken	Pending claims
Commencement of 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	1 257	1 727	70	201
2023	2 135	1 437	59	840
2024 (January to February)	667	446	15	1 046
<b>Total</b>	<b>25 607</b>	<b>24 063</b>	<b>7 197</b>	

Among the 24 063 claims determined by ImmD, 306 were substantiated (including 216 substantiated by the Torture Claims Appeal Board (TCAB) on appeal).

(2) Major expenditures / estimated 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 unsubstantiated claimants # (\$ million)	Publicly-funded legal assistance (PFLA) (\$ million)	Humanitarian assistance (\$ million)	Total@ (\$ million)
2019-20	344	45	93	482	<b>964</b>
2020-21	311	47	95	540	<b>992</b>
2021-22	298	47	142	579	<b>1 067</b>
2022-23	305	50	108	590	<b>1 052</b>
2023-24 (Estimate)	389	57	171	784	<b>1 400</b>
2023-24 (Revised estimate)	335	57	120	583	<b>1 095</b>
2024-25 (Estimate)	364	59	144	583	<b>1 150</b>

\* Includes staff costs of ImmD in screening claims and expenditures of TCAB in handling appeals, etc.

# Only the expenditure on the dedicated manpower for the repatriation of unsubstantiated 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, ImmD does not maintain a separate breakdown relating to unsubstantiated claimants.

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

In 2024-25, the Government will continue to adopt measures to enhance the handling of non-refoulement claims and successively enhance the efficiency on all fronts, especially in expediting the removal of unsubstantiated claimants at full steam, in order to ensure meeting the policy objectives and serving the public interests. Through stepping up the handling of non-refoulement claims, the Government managed to record an 18% drop in the estimated expenditure for 2024-25 as compared with the original estimate for 2023-24. At the same time, the Government has taken into account various factors in formulating the estimates, including related expenditures in screening claims and handling appeals, as well as fulfilling the relevant legal obligations of providing PFLA and humanitarian assistance for claimants, etc. The current estimate is higher than the revised estimate in last year, which is mainly attributable to the upsurge in the number of non-ethnic Chinese (NEC) illegal immigrants (IIs) in the second half of 2023, leading to an increase in the number of new claims and claimants in Hong Kong. With the strengthened joint enforcement actions taken by the law enforcement agencies in Guangdong and Hong Kong, the number of NEC IIs arrested in Hong Kong has reduced significantly. The figure in February 2024 has decreased by nearly 90% from the peak in October 2023 and the number of new claims received in the same month has also dropped by nearly 70% from the peak in January 2024. The Government will continue to spare no efforts in intercepting NEC IIs at source. At the same time, when formulating 2024-25 estimate, the Government has to allocate sufficient resources to cope with different expenditures in handling non-refoulement claims and related work so as to fulfill the relevant legal obligations. The Government will continue to monitor the related expenditures. Under the premise of preventing potential abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism from entering Hong Kong, we will continue to adopt a multi-pronged strategy by ensuring as far as possible high efficiency in processing claims and relevant appeals while meeting the high standards of fairness required by law, and removing unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong as soon as possible.

(4) According to ImmD's information, as at end-February 2024, there were over 15 500 claimants remaining in Hong Kong, including about 1 050 claimants with their claims pending determination by ImmD, about 1 300 claimants with their appeals against ImmD's decision pending determination by TCAB, about 8 000 claimants with on-going applications to the Court of First Instance for judicial review after their claims/appeals were rejected/dismissed by ImmD/TCAB or other litigation proceedings, as well as about 1 700 claimants being imprisoned, remanded, involved in ongoing prosecution or investigation process, or remaining in Hong Kong due to other reasons. For the 3 450 or so remaining claimants, removal was being arranged. The breakdown by nationality of the aforesaid non-refoulement claimants is tabulated below:

<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Number of claimants (as at end-February 2024)</b>
Vietnamese	3 054
Indonesian	3 049
Pakistani	2 352
Bangladeshi	1 925
Indian	1 925
Filipino	1 393
Sri Lankan	287
Nigerian	227
Nepali	225

<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Number of claimants (as at end-February 2024)</b>
Others	1 082
<b>Total</b>	<b>15 519</b>

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**(Question Serial No. 1623)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The number of non-refoulement claimants being stuck in Hong Kong stands high and the HKSAR Government has stepped up action for interception at source in recent years. In this connection, please advise this Committee on the following:

1. what were the actions taken for interception at source and their effectiveness in the past year?
2. what were the distributions of non-refoulement claimants by means of entry in the last 5 years?
3. How many undesirable persons, such as potential non-refoulement claimants, were intercepted and denied entry into Hong Kong upon their arrival by flight in the last 5 years and what were their nationalities?
4. The Government set up the platform of Pre-arrival Registration for Indian Nationals in 2017 targeting at Indian nationals coming to Hong Kong for economic purposes. Just over a year after the implementation of the platform, the number of non-refoulement claims lodged by Indian nationals has decreased by 74%, showing remarkable outcomes. Will the Government adopt similar measures targeting at other regions where there are serious abuses of the non-refoulement claims mechanism?

Asked by: Hon LEE Hoey Simon (LegCo internal reference no.: 14)

Reply:

(1) In view of the general resumption of international flights in the Mainland after the pandemic, the Mainland visa-issuing authorities abroad have resumed issuing visas to Mainland China to foreigners since March 2023. Coupled with rumors inducing illegal immigrants (IIs) to come to Hong Kong, the number of non-ethnic Chinese (NEC) IIs intercepted has increased significantly in the second half of 2023. The number of non-refoulement claims received has also soared prominently in end 2023 and January 2024. That said, with the continuous efforts of different parties in combating smuggling activities on various fronts, the number of NEC IIs arrested in Hong Kong has gradually decreased in

the fourth quarter of 2023. The figure in February 2024 has significantly dropped by nearly 90% from the peak in October 2023.

The Government has taken the following measures in response to the surge in NEC IIs:

- (a) On intercepting at source, after discussions between the Mainland and Hong Kong, Mainland law enforcement agencies (LEAs) have been strictly examining the purposes of suspicious NEC persons for entry into the Mainland and would refuse their entry in case of suspicion. The Security Bureau also met with the Consulates-General of different countries in Hong Kong, expressed great concern about the influx of NEC IIs into Hong Kong and secured their agreement to fully collaborate. Since 2016, Hong Kong has also been conducting dedicated operations with Mainland law enforcement units as well as the public security authorities of Guangdong, Guangxi, Yunnan and Xinjiang provinces to collaborate in cracking down smuggling of NEC persons into Hong Kong through the Mainland.
- (b) On enforcement and intelligence, a one-month anti-illegal immigration joint operation in Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao, the “Operation Clear Bay”, was launched under the co-ordination of the Office of the Leading Group for Combating Smuggling of Guangdong Province from September to October 2023. Local LEAs arrested a total of 405 persons. The Mainland and local LEAs also conducted dedicated operations and mounted two dedicated joint operations, “Mungoshunt-3”, each lasting for a few days in November 2023. The Immigration Department (ImmD) and the Hong Kong Police Force (the Police) arrested a total of 122 persons. The arrested persons in the two operations were mainly NEC IIs, and included 10 persons and 5 persons respectively for aiding and abetting others to land in Hong Kong unlawfully and remain in Hong Kong. The Mainland and local LEAs have also continued to strengthen intelligence exchange; tighten the issuance of visas to Mainland China and control over the entry of NEC tourists into the Mainland; investigate syndicates organising cross-boundary illegal immigration; conduct interception at black spots in the Mainland and joint patrols at sea to deter NEC IIs from entering Hong Kong. The Guangdong provincial security unit has also uncovered a number of cases involving smuggling into Hong Kong, and arrested a number of persons involved in organising smuggling operations and NEC persons who intended to smuggle.
- (c) In May 2023, the Police upgraded its Crime Wing Working Group on NEC Involvement in Organized Crime and Triad Activities to a steering committee. The steering committee, chaired by a Senior Assistant Commissioner of Police, strengthens the review of the relevant crime situation and intelligence collection; enhances co-ordination; and formulates more strategic enforcement actions. After the conviction of individual NEC person on recognisance and issued with Form No. 8 of an offence in Hong Kong, the prosecution will also provide to the Court the crime statistics or case laws of the relevant group and invite the Court to consider enhancing the sentence as a result of the accused’s status.

In view that some NEC IIs would work illegally after making non-refoulement claims, ImmD is committed to combating illegal employment in order to lower their economic incentives. In 2023, ImmD conducted a total of 13 052 inspections, representing a 1.4% increase compared to 2022; and arrested 628 NEC illegal workers, representing a 26% increase

compared to 2022. The Government will continue to conduct surprise inspections on black spots where illegal immigrants hide and engage in illegal employment and to step up efforts in publicising that employment of illegal workers is a serious offence punishable by a maximum fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment of 10 years.

(2) Over the past five years, the number of non-refoulement claims received by ImmD is as follows:

Year	Claims received
2019	1 213
2020	1 223
2021	2 528
2022	1 257
2023	2 135
2024 (January to February)	667

ImmD does not maintain the means of entry of the above persons. One of the major sources of persons making non-refoulement claims is IIs. Based on the IIs intercepted in 2023, they entered Hong Kong mainly by sea (over 90%), while the remaining entered Hong Kong illegally by land.

(3) and (4) Over the past five years, the number of persons refused entry by region in the airport control point is tabulated as follows:

Region \ Year	Africa	Asia and the Pacific Region (Other than Mainland China)	Europe	Mainland China	North America	South America	Total
2019	890	6 322	137	146	36	142	7 673
2020	104	1 029	111	1 333	15	29	2 621
2021	8	326	78	9	8	3	432
2022	76	1 644	46	40	19	19	1 844
2023	368	4 636	134	106	40	64	5 348
2024 (January to February)	61	957	13	12	5	3	1 051

Apart from the pre-arrival registration arrangement applicable to Indian passport holders, currently, nationals of most major source countries of non-refoulement claimants are required to apply for visit visa for travelling to Hong Kong. The Government will review the policies from time to time and make adjustments as and when necessary. In addition, the Government will strengthen the interception at source and further enhance identification of potential abusers of non-refoulement claim mechanism and prevent their entry into Hong Kong through profile analysis of obvious abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism and the Advance Passenger Information System to be rolled out in phases starting from the third quarter of 2024. By then, the airlines have to provide travellers' data to ImmD before the aircraft takes off.

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

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB024**

**(Question Serial No. 1624)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The number of non-refoulement claimants being stuck in Hong Kong stands high and the HKSAR Government has expedited the screening of non-refoulement claimants in recent years. In this connection, please advise this Committee on the following:

1. What actions were taken to expedite the screening of non-refoulement claimants and their effectiveness in the past year?
2. How much expenditure was incurred for the provision of publicly funded legal assistance to non-refoulement claimants (including lodging appeals) in the past 5 years?
3. How many appeals to the Torture Claims Appeal Board were lodged by the claimants and what was their success rate in the past 5 years?
4. How many applications for leave for judicial review were filed by the claimants and what was their success rate in the past 5 years? What was the average processing time?

Asked by: Hon LEE Hoey Simon (LegCo internal reference no.: 15)

Reply:

(1) Over the years, the Government has adopted a multi-pronged strategy in handling non-refoulement claims. The overall policy objective of handling non-refoulement claims, under the premise of preventing potential abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism from entering Hong Kong, is to ensure as far as possible high efficiency in processing the claims and relevant appeals while meeting the high standards of fairness required by law, and to remove unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong as soon as possible.

Over the past year, the Immigration Department (ImmD) has maintained high efficiency in screening non-refoulement claims, while ensuring that the high standards of fairness as required by law are met. Through flexible staff deployment and optimised workflow, the average processing time of each claim is about 10 weeks, representing a substantial reduction of about 60% when compared with the processing time in the peak period. In the second

half of 2023, there was a significant increase in the number of non-ethnic Chinese (NEC) illegal immigrants (IIs) intercepted in Hong Kong, resulting in an upsurge in the number of new claims received. With the continuous efforts of different parties in combating smuggling activities on various fronts, the number of NEC IIs arrested in Hong Kong has gradually decreased in the fourth quarter of 2023. The figure in February 2024 has significantly dropped by nearly 90% from the peak in October 2023. The number of new claims received in February 2024 has also decreased by nearly 70% from the peak in January 2024. ImmD will continue to flexibly redeploy manpower and allocate more resources in screening non-refoulement claims, with a view to ensuring that new claims received can be handled instantly.

On the handling of appeal cases related to non-refoulement claims, the Torture Claims Appeal Board (TCAB) has gradually streamlined the process since 2023 in order to expedite the processing of appeal cases. As a result, the target of completing no less than 3 000 cases in 2023 has been achieved. To further enhance its efficiency in handling appeal cases, TCAB has rolled out new measures in the first quarter of 2024, such as setting target processing time for individual procedures, following up more closely the progress of handling appeal cases, etc., with the target of reducing the average processing time of appeal cases by TCAB from over seven months in the past to around four months this year.

(2) Since 2019-20, the expenditures on publicly-funded legal assistance (PFLA) provided for non-refoulement claimants are tabulated below:

<b>Year</b>	<b>PFLA (\$ million)</b>
2019-20	93
2020-21	95
2021-22	142
2022-23	108
2023-24 (Estimate)	171
2023-24 (Revised estimate)	120
2024-25 (Estimate)	144

(3) Since 2019-20, the number of appeals received by TCAB is as follows:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of appeals received</b>
2019	1 517
2020	870
2021	2 098
2022	1 727
2023	1 395
2024 (January to February)	394
<b>Total</b>	<b>8 001</b>

Among the above 8 001 appeals received by TCAB, 6 427 cases were determined. Among which, 36 cases were substantiated by TCAB, accounting for 0.6% of the determined cases.

(4) According to the Judiciary, the number of applications for leave to apply for judicial review (JR) related to non-refoulement claims filed with the Court of First Instance (CFI)

from 2019 to 2023, the number of leave granted among these applications and the average processing time (from date of filing of leave application to date of decision) are as follows:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of applications for leave to apply for JR related to non-refoulement claims filed</b>	<b>Number of leave granted<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Average processing time (from date of filing of leave application to date of decision)<sup>4</sup></b>
2019	3 727	65 <sup>2</sup>	1 217 days
2020	2 367	12	826 days
2021	1 675	10 <sup>3</sup>	269 days
2022	1 439	8	170 days
2023	2 089	5	99 days

**Remarks:**

<sup>1</sup> Statistics on the outcome of leave applications filed in a year reflect the position as at 31 January 2024. Such statistics may vary at different report generation date and time since they are live data subject to changes upon conclusion of the outstanding leave applications.

<sup>2</sup> Include 7 cases of leave granted by the Court of Appeal.

<sup>3</sup> Include 1 case of leave granted by the Court of Appeal.

<sup>4</sup> Statistics on the average processing time reflect the position as at 31 January 2024. Such figures may vary at different report generation date and time. The Judiciary only maintains statistics on the average processing time of leave applications at CFI of the High Court and such statistics only take into account the number of leave applications with leave granted or leave refused as at report generation date, but exclude those withdrawn or outstanding leave applications.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB025**

**(Question Serial No. 1625)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The number of non-refoulement claimants being stuck in Hong Kong stands high and the HKSAR Government has stepped up action to expedite the removal of unsubstantiated claimants in recent years. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. what actions were taken to expedite the removal of unsubstantiated claimants and their effectiveness in the past year?
2. According to the updated removal policy implemented since December 2022, the Immigration Department will generally proceed with the removal of an unsubstantiated claimant with outstanding court proceedings after the Court of First Instance's dismissal of his/her application for leave for judicial review pertaining to the non-refoulement claim made by the claimant. Since the implementation of the measure, how many claimants have been removed under the above circumstances?
3. How many non-refoulement claimants have left Hong Kong over the past 5 years and what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon LEE Hoey Simon (LegCo internal reference no.: 16)

Reply:

(1) – (3) Over the past five years, the number of unsubstantiated claimants removed by the Immigration Department (ImmD) is as follows:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of persons repatriated</b>
2019	1 618
2020	632
2021	753
2022	1 097
2023	1 786
2024 (January to February)	353

Since the introduction of the updated removal policy with effect from 7 December 2022, ImmD will proceed with the removal of unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong upon dismissal of their judicial review or relevant leave applications pertaining to their non-refoulement claims by the Court of First Instance, irrespective of whether there are outstanding court proceedings. Since the implementation of the updated policy until February 2024, ImmD has removed a total of 2 204 claimants from Hong Kong, including 240 under the updated policy. The number in 2023 has significantly increased by 63% compared to 2022.

By adopting a multi-pronged strategy, ImmD has all along been maintaining close liaison with relevant stakeholders including the relevant Consulates-General and airlines in such aspects as arranging special flights for large-scale removal operations as and when necessary, so as to expedite the removal of unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong. For instance, ImmD has deployed officers to conduct a total of 24 removal operations since November 2022 with in-flight escort of unsubstantiated claimants who were uncooperative and refused to be removed with a view to implementing forced repatriation and combating the delaying tactics of unsubstantiated claimants. ImmD also carried out 9 large-scale removal operations over the same period, removing a total of 225 unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong. At end-August 2023, the Secretary for Security also paid a visit to Vietnam to witness the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding by ImmD of Hong Kong and the Immigration Department of Vietnam, which covers, among others, enhanced co-operation of both parties in respect of verification and repatriation of non-refoulement claimants.

ImmD will remain committed to removing unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong as soon as practicable for maintaining effective immigration control and safeguarding public interest.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**(Question Serial No. 1626)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

During the epidemic, the Government has built 7 mobile cabin facilities, providing more than 20 000 beds. Now that the epidemic has subsided, there are suggestions in the community that these mobile cabin facilities can be put to better use as reception centres or semi-open camps to accommodate non-refoulement claimants. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of whether it has conducted any relevant feasibility study? If so, what are the details; if not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon LEE Hoey Simon (LegCo internal reference no.: 17)

Reply:

The Government has earlier announced that the community isolation facilities (CIFs) in Tam Mei, Yuen Long; San Tin and Tsing Yi have gradually been converted for other short-term uses, and part of the CIFs in the southern end of Loop have been transferred to other suitable locations for reconfiguration and reuse, in order to cater for the planned innovation and technology development in the Loop. The Government will continue to make subsequent arrangements for other community isolation and treatment facilities, releasing the sites in phases or utilising the facilities for other purposes. Announcements will be made and the implementation of related work will be carried out in a timely and orderly manner.

Regarding the suggestion of converting CIFs into shelters or semi-open camps to centrally accommodate non-refoulement claimants, the Government must carefully consider the use of resources, and the legal and security aspects.

On the use of resources front, the Government must take into account the efficient use of public money and the sustainability of the policy, with a view to meeting the policy objectives and serving the public interests. The construction and design of the CIFs are mainly to isolate persons infected with COVID-19 or their close contacts, in order to reduce the impacts brought by the pandemic to the society. These facilities are completely different from the Castel Peak Bay Immigration Centre as well as other correctional institutions currently deployed for detention in terms of hardware, security design and other related ancillary

facilities. To convert these CIFs into detention facilities would involve large-scale alternation works. Operating these facilities in the mode of shelters or semi-open camps would also require vast amount of manpower in managing and sufficient resources in sustaining the daily operations, involving substantial public resources (including land and other financial resources), which we must carefully consider.

On the legal front, in detaining a non-refoulement claimant, the Government is required to follow the relevant laws, legal principles established by the Court under the common law, such as proportionality and reasonableness as well as the detention policy, and take into account the individual case circumstances, including whether the individual concerned can be removed from Hong Kong or the final determination of the claim can be obtained within a reasonable time; whether the individual concerned has previously committed a serious crime and if so whether he/she is likely to pose a threat or security risk to the community if not being detained; and whether there is any risk of the individual absconding, offending or re-offending, etc.

On the security front, the risks and security issues brought by large scale detention of claimants cannot be underestimated. In the past, Vietnamese migrants were involved in gang-fighting in the closed camps day after day, and even triggered several riots which led to deaths and casualties. Currently, claimants come from different countries, with different cultures and religious backgrounds, which will pose greater security risks. Even if the facilities are operated as shelters or semi-open camps as mentioned in the question, the Government still needs to maintain the security of the centre/camp.

We have taken into consideration factors including financial resources, law and security, and considered that the suggestion of using CIFs/Mobile Cabin Facilities to accommodate or detain claimants is not appropriate. The Government will continue to gainfully make use of the existing detention facilities to detain claimants who pose higher security risks to the community

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB027**

**(Question Serial No. 2540)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the handling of non-refoulement claims lodged in Hong Kong, please advise this Committee on the following:

- (1) the number of non-refoulement claims handled by the Immigration Department (ImmD) each year (a breakdown by claims received, determined, withdrawn, no further action could be taken, and pending screening) since the unified screening mechanism came into operation;
- (2) a breakdown of substantiated claims by nationality, gender and age;
- (3) a breakdown of unsubstantiated claims by nationality, gender and age;
- (4) the average handling time required for each claim by year since the mechanism came into operation;
- (5) the number of non-refoulement-related applications for leave to apply for judicial review filed with the Court of First Instance of the High Court in the past 5 years;
- (6) the number of applications for leave to apply for judicial review or to appeal granted by the Court of First Instance, Court of Appeal and Court of Final Appeal each year in the past 5 years; and
- (7) the number of unsubstantiated claimants removed from Hong Kong in the past 5 years.

Asked by: Hon LEE Tsz-king, Dominic (LegCo internal reference no.: 8)

Reply:

(1) – (3) The Government implemented the Unified Screening Mechanism (USM) in March 2014 to screen non-refoulement claims on all applicable grounds in one go. The overall policy objective of handling non-refoulement claims, under the premise of preventing potential abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism from entering Hong Kong, is to ensure as far as possible high efficiency in processing the claims and relevant appeals while meeting the high standards of fairness required by law, and to remove unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong as soon as possible. As at end-February 2024, the number of non-refoulement claims handled by the Immigration Department (ImmD) is as follows:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Claims received</b>	<b>Claims determined</b>	<b>Claims withdrawn or no further action can be taken</b>	<b>Pending claims</b>
Commencement of 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	1 257	1 727	70	201
2023	2 135	1 437	59	840
2024 (January to February)	667	446	15	1 046
<b>Total</b>	<b>25 607</b>	<b>24 063</b>	<b>7 197</b>	

Among the 24 063 claims determined by ImmD, 306 were substantiated (including 216 substantiated by the Torture Claims Appeal Board (TCAB) on appeal). The breakdown by nationality is as follows:

<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Substantiated non-refoulement claims</b>
Pakistani	43
Yemeni	43
Rwandan	24
Egyptian	21
Somali	21
Indonesian	20
Bangladeshi	17
Congo (Democratic Republic of )	15
Cameroonian	13
Burundian	12
Afghanistani	9
Zimbabwean	9
Nepalese	7
Ethiopian	6
Nationals of Central African Republic	5
Indian	5
Sri Lankan	5
Iranian	4
Ugandan	4
Gambian	2
Kenyan	2
Nigerian	2

<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Substantiated non-refoulement claims</b>
Sudanese	2
Togolese	2
Ukrainian	2
Venezuelan	2
Belarusian	1
Colombian	1
Eritrean	1
Filipino	1
Moroccan	1
Nigerien	1
Syrian	1
Thai	1
Vietnamese	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>306</b>

Among the above substantiated claims, as broken down by gender, male and female claimants accounted for 60% and 40% respectively; as broken down by age, 22% of the claimants were aged below 18, 14% aged between 18 and 30, 26% aged between 31 and 40, and 38% aged over 40.

As for the 23 973 non-refoulement claims not substantiated by ImmD (including 216 claims subsequently substantiated by TCAB), the breakdown by nationality is as follows:

<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Non-refoulement claims not substantiated by ImmD</b>
Vietnamese	4 574
Indonesian	4 055
Pakistani	3 773
Indian	3 664
Bangladeshi	2 625
Filipino	1 933
Nepalese	694
Sri Lankan	420
Nigerian	362
Thai	264
Others	1 609
<b>Total</b>	<b>23 973</b>

Among the above claims not substantiated by ImmD, as broken down by gender, male and female claimants accounted for 62% and 38% respectively; as broken down by age, 7% of the claimants were aged below 18, 11% aged between 18 and 30, 40% aged between 31 and 40, and 42% aged over 40.

(4) ImmD strives to ensure the screening procedures are highly efficient and achieve the high standards of fairness through flexible staff deployment and optimised workflow. The average processing time of each claim is about 10 weeks, representing a substantial reduction

of about 60% when compared with the processing time in the peak period. ImmD will continue to flexibly redeploy manpower and allocate more resources in screening non-refoulement claims, with a view to ensuring that new claims received can be handled instantly.

(5) – (6) According to the Judiciary, the number of applications for leave to apply for judicial review (JR) related to non-refoulement claims filed with the Court of First Instance (CFI) from 2019 to 2023 is tabulated below:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of applications for leave to apply for JR related to non-refoulement claims filed</b>
2019	3 727
2020	2 367
2021	1 675
2022	1 439
2023	2 089

The numbers of leave granted for JR related to non-refoulement claims by CFI and the Court of Appeal (CA) from 2019 to 2023 are as follows<sup>1 2</sup>:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of leave granted for JR related to non-refoulement claims by CFI</b>	<b>Number of leave granted for JR related to non-refoulement claims by CA</b>
2019	29	7
2020	46	5
2021	50	13
2022	44	16
2023	34	4

Remarks :

<sup>1</sup> The Court of Final Appeal did not grant leave to appeal in any appeal cases against JR decision related to non-refoulement claims from 2019 to 2023.

<sup>2</sup> The statistics may vary at different report generation date and time since they are live data.

(7) Over the past five years, the number of unsubstantiated claimants removed by ImmD is as follows :

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of persons repatriated</b>
2019	1 618
2020	632
2021	753
2022	1 097
2023	1 786
2024 (January to February)	353

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**(Question Serial No. 2548)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

There are views that many offenders of wounding cases are non-refoulement claimants issued with “going-out passes” (officially known as Form No. 8). In this regard, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- (1) the total number of non-ethnic Chinese (NEC) persons on recognizance and issued with Form No. 8, and the number of non-refoulement claimants among them in each of the past 5 years;
- (2) the number of NEC persons on recognizance and issued with Form No. 8 arrested for criminal offences, broken down by Police Region/District, in each of the past 5 years;
- (3) the number of NEC persons on recognizance and issued with Form No. 8 arrested for criminal offences, broken down by type of offence, in each of the past 5 years; and
- (4) the number of NEC persons on recognizance and issued with Form No. 8 arrested for taking up unlawful employment, contrary to section 38AA of the Immigration Ordinance (Cap. 115) in each of the past 5 years?

Asked by: Hon LEE Tsz-king, Dominic (LegCo internal reference no.: 16)

Reply:

(1) Over the past five years (as at 31 December of respective years), the number of non-ethnic Chinese (NEC) persons on recognizance and issue with Form No. 8 and among those who are non-refoulement claimants are as follows:

<b>Year</b>	<b>NEC persons on recognizance</b>	<b>Among those who are non-refoulement claimants</b>
2019	12 816	12 471
2020	14 190	12 939
2021	15 066	14 336
2022	15 228	14 472

Year	NEC persons on recognizance	Among those who are non-refoulement claimants
2023	15 283	14 505

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

Police region/ police district	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024 (January to February)
<b>Hong Kong Island Region</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>26</b>
Central District	40	31	36	47	36	8
Wan Chai District	49	80	85	73	69	7
Western District	18	34	31	22	19	3
Eastern District	14	22	31	16	26	8
<b>Kowloon East Region</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>7</b>
Wong Tai Sin District	6	9	13	5	12	2
Sau Mau Ping District	2	4	9	6	10	3
Kwun Tong District	8	3	11	5	10	1
Tseung Kwan O District	10	6	12	7	9	1
<b>Kowloon West Region</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>564</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>62</b>
Yau Tsim District	183	243	226	155	192	28
Mong Kok District	62	107	99	65	61	7
Sham Shui Po District	103	149	117	98	94	19
Kowloon City District	41	65	72	47	39	8
<b>New Territories North Region</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>11</b>
Border District	0	5	9	2	0	0
Yuen Long District	48	102	91	89	83	10
Tuen Mun District	24	28	24	27	28	1
Tai Po District	4	2	9	3	6	0
<b>New Territories South Region</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>6</b>
Tsuen Wan District	6	21	17	8	11	1
Shatin District	12	9	10	1	7	2
Kwai Tsing District	15	11	17	5	14	2
Lantau District	3	2	8	3	8	1
Airport District	9	0	1	2	2	0
<b>Marine Region</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Hong Kong overall</b>	<b>657</b>	<b>934</b>	<b>929</b>	<b>687</b>	<b>745</b>	<b>112</b>

(3) According to the Police's record, since 2019, the number of NEC persons on recognizance and issued with Form No. 8 (mainly non-refoulement claimants) who were arrested for criminal offences is tabulated below with breakdown by crime category:

<b>Offence</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024 (January to February)</b>
Shop theft	200	250	254	145	193	37
Serious drug offences	86	112	92	85	99	6
Wounding and serious assault	59	92	90	51	75	6
Miscellaneous thefts	58	98	134	99	71	15
Serious immigration offences (Note 1)	49	38	50	29	38	3
Criminal damage	29	36	37	25	33	9
Burglary	17	36	22	27	18	2
Others (Note 2)	159	272	250	226	218	34
<b>Total</b>	<b>657</b>	<b>934</b>	<b>929</b>	<b>687</b>	<b>745</b>	<b>112</b>

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

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

(4) According to the Immigration Department’s record, since 2019, the number of NEC persons on recognizance and issued with Form No. 8 (mainly non-refoulement claimants) who were arrested for taking unlawful employment contrary to section 38AA of the Immigration Ordinance (Cap. 115) is tabulated below.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of persons arrested</b>
2019	215
2020	156
2021	438
2022	454
2023	484
2024 (January to February)	52

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**(Question Serial No. 2553)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the expenditure and manpower involved in processing the non-refoulement claims lodged in Hong Kong, will the Government inform this Committee of the following in respect of the past 5 years and 2024-25:

- (1) the actual expenditure, revised estimated expenditure or estimated expenditure for the handling of non-refoulement claims and related work in each year;
- (2) the actual or estimated number of posts in the Immigration Department responsible for the work relating to screening claims and repatriation, the number of Torture Claims Appeal Board (TCAB) members and the actual or estimated number of posts in the TCAB Secretariat in each year;
- (3) the actual expenditure, revised estimated expenditure or estimated expenditure on the "Legal Assistance Scheme for Non-refoulement Claimants by the Duty Lawyer Service" (Duty Lawyer Scheme) and the Pilot Scheme for Provision of Publicly-funded Legal Assistance for Non-refoulement Claimants (Pilot Scheme) in each year; and
- (4) the actual or estimated number of posts in various ranks in respect of the civil service establishment and non-civil service posts under the Duty Lawyer Scheme and the Pilot Scheme in each year?

Asked by: Hon LEE Tsz-king, Dominic (LegCo internal reference no.: 21)

Reply:

(1) – (4) Major expenditures / estimated expenditures on handling non-refoulement claims and related work since 2019-20 are tabulated below:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Screening of claims and handling of appeals/petitions* (\$ million)</b>	<b>Repatriation of unsubstantiated claimants # (\$ million)</b>	<b>Publicly-funded legal assistance (PFLA) (\$ million)</b>	<b>Humanitarian assistance (\$ million)</b>	<b>Total<sup>@</sup> (\$ million)</b>
2019-20	344	45	93	482	<b>964</b>

<b>Year</b>	<b>Screening of claims and handling of appeals/petitions* (\$ million)</b>	<b>Repatriation of unsubstantiated claimants # (\$ million)</b>	<b>Publicly-funded legal assistance (PFLA) (\$ million)</b>	<b>Humanitarian assistance (\$ million)</b>	<b>Total@ (\$ million)</b>
2020-21	311	47	95	540	<b>992</b>
2021-22	298	47	142	579	<b>1 067</b>
2022-23	305	50	108	590	<b>1 052</b>
2023-24 (Estimate)	389	57	171	784	<b>1 400</b>
2023-24 (Revised estimate)	335	57	120	583	<b>1 095</b>
2024-25 (Estimate)	364	59	144	583	<b>1 150</b>

\* Includes staff costs of the Immigration Department (ImmD) in screening claims and expenditures of the Torture Claims Appeal Board (TCAB) in handling appeals, etc.

# Only the expenditure on the dedicated manpower for the repatriation of unsubstantiated 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, ImmD does not maintain a separate breakdown relating to unsubstantiated claimants.

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

PFLA is currently provided by "Legal Assistance Scheme for Non-refoulement Claimants by the Duty Lawyer Service" (Duty Lawyer Scheme) and the Pilot Scheme for Provision of PFLA for non-refoulement Claimants (the Pilot Scheme). The expenditures of the above two schemes since 2019-20 are tabulated below:

<b>Yar</b>	<b>Duty Lawyer Scheme's expenditure (\$ million)</b>	<b>The Pilot Scheme's expenditure (\$ million)</b>	<b>Total PFLA expenditures (The sum of the two schemes) (\$ million) #</b>
2019-20	68	25	93
2020-21	69	26	95
2021-22	87	56	142
2022-23	70	38	108
2023-24 (Estimate)	110	61	171
2023-24 (Revised Estimate)	79	41	120
2024-25 (Estimate)	104	41	144

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

In 2024-25, the Government will continue to adopt measures to enhance the handling of non-refoulement claims and successively enhance the efficiency on all fronts, especially in expediting the removal of unsubstantiated claimants at full steam, in order to ensure meeting

the policy objectives and serving the public interests. Through stepping up the handling of non-refoulement claims, the Government managed to record an 18% drop in the estimated expenditure for 2024-25 as compared with the original estimate for 2023-24. At the same time, the Government has taken into account various factors in formulating the estimates, including related expenditures in screening claims and handling appeals, as well as fulfilling the relevant legal obligations of providing PFLA and humanitarian assistance for claimants, etc. The current estimate is higher than the revised estimate in last year, which is mainly attributable to the upsurge in the number of non-ethnic Chinese (NEC) illegal immigrants (IIs) in the second half of 2023, leading to an increase in the number of new claims and claimants in Hong Kong. With the strengthened joint enforcement actions taken by the law enforcement agencies in Guangdong and Hong Kong, the number of NEC IIs arrested in Hong Kong has reduced significantly. The figure in February 2024 has decreased by nearly 90% from the peak in October 2023 and the number of new claims received in the same month has also dropped by nearly 70% from the peak in January 2024. The Government will continue to spare no efforts in intercepting NEC IIs at source. At the same time, when formulating 2024-25 estimate, the Government has to allocate sufficient resources to cope with different expenditures in handling non-refoulement claims and related work so as to fulfill the relevant legal obligations. The Government will continue to monitor the related expenditures. Under the premise of preventing potential abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism from entering Hong Kong, we will continue to adopt a multi-pronged strategy by ensuring as far as possible high efficiency in processing claims and relevant appeals while meeting the high standards of fairness required by law, and removing unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong as soon as possible.

As regards manpower, the number of posts in ImmD responsible for work related to screening claims and repatriation, 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 unsubstantiated 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	207	72	75	35
2023-24	207	81	77^	35
2024-25 (Estimate)	207	81	77^	35

\* ImmD will, subject to the actual operation, flexibly deploy internal manpower to handle non-refoulement claims.

^ Number of members as at 29 February 2024, which is subject to adjustment as necessary.

Since 2019-20, the non-civil servant posts in the Duty Lawyer Scheme of the Duty Lawyer Service are as follows:

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Number of posts in 2019-20</b>	<b>Number of posts in 2020-21</b>	<b>Number of posts in 2021-22</b>	<b>Number of posts in 2022-23</b>	<b>Number of posts in 2023-24</b>	<b>Number of posts in 2024-25 (Estimate)</b>
Chief Court Liaison Officer	2	2	1	1	1	1
Assistant Chief Court Liaison Officer	2	1	2	2	2	2
Senior Court Liaison Officer	5	6	5	5	5	5
Court Liaison Officer	13	13	17	22	17	22
Senior Personal Secretary	4	4	2	2	2	2
Personal Secretaries I / II	5	5	4	4	4	4
Senior Accounting Officer	1	1	1	1	1	1
Accounting Officer	1	1	1	1	1	1
Office Assistant	2	2	1	1	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>39</b>

The civil service establishment and non-civil servant posts of the Pilot Scheme Office since 2019-20 are as follows:

	<b>Number of posts in 2019-20</b>	<b>Number of posts in 2020-21</b>	<b>Number of posts in 2021-22</b>	<b>Number of posts in 2022-23</b>	<b>Number of posts in 2023-24</b>	<b>Number of posts in 2024-25 (Estimate)</b>
<b>Civil servant posts</b>						
Chief Executive Officer	1	1	1	1	1	1
Senior Executive Officer	1	1	1	1	1	1
Executive Officer I	3	3	3	3	3	3
Assistant Clerical Officer	4	4	4	4	4	4
Workman II	2	2	1	1	1	1
<b>Non-civil servant posts</b>						
Number	7	5	5	5	4	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB030**

**(Question Serial No. 3270)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point (HYW BCP) officially commissioned passenger clearance service in 2023 after the resumption of normal travel between Hong Kong and the Mainland. In this connection, please inform this Committee of the following:

- (1) what is the designed maximum daily passenger flow of the HYW BCP?
- (2) what is the average daily maximum passenger flow at HYW BCP at present?
- (3) Please set out which 10 days have the highest passenger flow in 2023 with dates and the numbers of passengers.
- (4) HYW BCP is very popular among tourists and coach parking spaces are always full. What measures are in place to improve the congested situation at HYW BCP?

Asked by: Hon LEE Tsz-king, Dominic (LegCo internal reference no.: 43)

Reply:

In consultation with the Transport and Logistics Bureau, the consolidated reply is as follows:

- (1) According to the information provided by the Development Bureau in 2017, the designed daily handling capacity of the HYW BCP is 30 000 passenger trips. Although its utilisation is higher than its designed capacity, the relevant departments have been taking various measures in the light of the actual situation, including flexible deployment of manpower, optimization of workflow, and effective use of information technology, etc., to enhance the handling capacity and efficiency of the control point in coping with the cross-boundary passenger flow. We will continue to closely monitor the operation of the control point.
- (2) The average daily inbound and outbound passenger trips at the HYW BCP in 2023 was about 34 000.
- (3) In 2023, the top ten days with the highest inbound and outbound passenger trips at HYW BCP are tabulated below:

Date	Inbound and outbound passenger trips
12 November 2023	74 860
26 November 2023	74 794
19 November 2023	73 883
5 November 2023	73 631
25 November 2023	73 269
31 December 2023	73 099
23 October 2023	72 168
22 October 2023	71 111
18 November 2023	70 804
10 December 2023	69 066

- (4) During the planning of the HYW BCP Public Transport Interchange (HYW PTI), various operational facilities, including boarding and alighting facilities for franchised buses, green minibuses, taxis and local non-franchised buses (NFBs), had been arranged in different areas having regard to the operational needs of different public transport services. Among these facilities, there are a total of 9 parking spaces for local NFBs to pick up and drop off passengers. The Government has also reserved an area in the vicinity of the HYW BCP providing 30 temporary parking spaces for local NFBs where necessary. In addition, the Transport Department (TD) has reminded the relevant service providers that tour coaches should, as far as possible, enter the HYW PTI to pick up passengers only after all tour group members have assembled, so as to better utilise the parking spaces and speed up the vehicular flow. As observed by the TD during the recent Lunar New Year period, the operation of the boarding and alighting spaces was generally smooth.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**(Question Serial No. 1118)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Director of Bureau's Office

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The HKSAR Government has mentioned that for the legislation of Article 23 of the Basic Law, one of the major tasks is to conduct explanatory work effectively. Please advise this Committee on the following:

- (1) the estimated expenditure and plan for the above work in 2024-25;
- (2) The Government has set up a number of dedicated teams to carry out explanatory work at different levels for the legislation of Article 23 of the Basic Law. Upon enactment of the legislation, will these dedicated teams continue to operate, so as to strengthen the explanatory work to individuals and rectify biased and misleading remarks in good time? If so, what are the details? If not, why?

Asked by: Hon LEE Wai-king, Starry (LegCo internal reference no.: 4)

Reply:

The work of the Security Bureau (SB) related to the Basic Law Article 23 legislation is part of the work in safeguarding national security, and is not within the scope of Head 151. Relevant expenditure will not be disclosed. SB will ensure that there will be sufficient funds to take forward the work concerned.

The Government has established the "Response and Rebuttal Team" for the Basic Law Article 23 legislation exercise. The primary objective is to provide timely rebuttals to smears encountered during the legislative process. Since there are still misinformation and slanders from time to time, there is a need for the continued operation of the "Response and Rebuttal Team", the modus operandi of which is a useful reference for us to effectively clarifying and rebutting future smears in various aspects. SB will continue to adopt this effective approach in handling similar issues of concern (including those relating to the implementation of laws safeguarding national security) in future.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**(Question Serial No. 0065)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Internal Security

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Under this Programme, one of the matters requiring special attention of the Security Bureau in 2024-25 is to “continue to implement the Fire Safety Improvement Works Subsidy Scheme”. Please inform this Committee of the expenditure involved in the work on improving fire safety in buildings in the past financial year, including the application and approval status of the third round of the Fire Safety Improvement Works Subsidy Scheme, as well as the expenditure involved. What is the estimated expenditure for the new financial year? Has the Government maintained statistics on the number of buildings in Hong Kong that still need to undergo relevant improvement works at present? In which districts are these buildings located?

Asked by: Hon NG Kit-chong, Johnny (LegCo internal reference no.: 17)

Reply:

To assist owners of old buildings in complying with the requirements of the Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance (Cap. 572) (“the Ordinance”), the Government, in partnership with the Urban Renewal Authority (“URA”), implemented a \$2-billion Fire Safety Improvement Works Subsidy Scheme (“FSWS”) in 2018, providing subsidies for carrying out fire safety improvement works. Subsequently, the Government increased the funding for the FSWS to a total of \$5.5 billion. In 2018 and 2020, the URA rolled out 2 rounds of applications. Since then, the URA launched the third round of application from April to September 2023, to assist more owners in need to enhance the fire safety standard of their buildings.

There were 2 249 and 734 applications meeting the basic application requirements in the first and second rounds of the FSWS applications respectively. The URA issued letters of Approval-in-principle to the applicants of the above 2 983 applications, and contacted them about the commencement of fire safety improvement works. For the third round, the URA received 1 307 applications meeting the basic application requirements. The UAR is processing the applications and will issue to the applicants letters of Approval-in-principle in

due course. On the amount of subsidy, as at 29 February 2024, the URA disbursed about \$72 million of subsidy to the owners of 162 buildings.

In accordance with the estimated cash flow requirements of the FSWS, the Government disbursed \$0.65 billion of funding to the URA in 2023-24 and plans to disburse \$0.78 billion of funding to the URA in 2024-25.

As regards the buildings that need to undergo fire safety improvement works, about 14 000 target buildings are regulated under the Ordinance. As at the end of 2023, the Fire Services Department and the Buildings Department inspected about 10 900 target buildings and issued a total of over 359 400 Fire Safety Directions (“Direction”) to specify the required fire safety improvement works. Of these Directions, around 60% have yet to be complied with or followed up, requiring the carrying out of relevant fire safety improvement works. The buildings concerned are distributed in all 18 districts in Hong Kong.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**(Question Serial No. 1334)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the screening of non-refoulement claims in the past 3 years:

1. how many claims were received, and what were the nationalities involved;
2. how many claims were substantiated and unsubstantiated respectively;
3. how many cases were determined, withdrawn or where “no further action could be taken” respectively;
4. how many cases were pending screening;
5. in the past 3 years, how many claimants were repatriated due to claims unsubstantiated, and what was the expenditure incurred? What were the major difficulties in handling these cases?
6. Since the implementation of the updated removal policy on 7 December 2022, is there any improvement in the removal efficiency of unsubstantiated claimants? What measures are in place to further prevent and combat the abuse of the non-refoulement claim mechanism?

Asked by: Hon QUAT Elizabeth (LegCo internal reference no.: 2)

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 overall policy objective of handling non-refoulement claims, under the premise of preventing potential abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism from entering Hong Kong, is to ensure as far as possible high efficiency in processing the claims and relevant appeals while meeting the high standards of fairness required by law, and to remove unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong as soon as possible. As at end-February 2024, the number of non-refoulement claims handled by the Immigration Department (ImmD) is as follows:

Year	Claims received	Claims determined	Claims withdrawn or no further action can be taken	Pending claims
Commencement of 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	1 257	1 727	70	201
2023	2 135	1 437	59	840
2024 (January to February)	667	446	15	1 046
<b>Total</b>	<b>25 607</b>	<b>24 063</b>	<b>7 197</b>	

As at end-February 2024, ImmD received 25 607 claims and the breakdown by nationality is as follows:

Nationality	Number of claims
Vietnamese	6 149
Indonesian	4 610
Indian	4 044
Pakistani	3 082
Bangladeshi	2 395
Filipino	2 070
Nepalese	497
Thai	334
Sri Lankan	269
Other countries	2 157
<b>Total</b>	<b>25 607</b>

Among the 24 063 claims determined by ImmD, 306 were substantiated (including 216 substantiated by the Torture Claims Appeal Board (TCAB) on appeal).

(5) Major expenditures / estimated expenditures on handling non-refoulement claims and related work since 2021-22 are tabulated below:

Year	Screening of claims and handling of appeals/petitions* (\$ million)	Repatriation of unsubstantiated claimants # (\$ million)	Publicly-funded legal assistance (PFLA) (\$ million)	Humanitarian assistance (\$ million)	Total@ (\$ million)
2021-22	298	47	142	579	<b>1 067</b>

<b>Year</b>	<b>Screening of claims and handling of appeals/petitions* (\$ million)</b>	<b>Repatriation of unsubstantiated claimants # (\$ million)</b>	<b>Publicly-funded legal assistance (PFLA) (\$ million)</b>	<b>Humanitarian assistance (\$ million)</b>	<b>Total@ (\$ million)</b>
2022-23	305	50	108	590	<b>1 052</b>
2023-24 (Estimate)	389	57	171	784	<b>1 400</b>
2023-24 (Revised estimate)	335	57	120	583	<b>1 095</b>
2024-25 (Estimate)	364	59	144	583	<b>1 150</b>

\* Includes staff costs of ImmD in screening claims and expenditures of TCAB in handling appeals, etc.

# Only the expenditure on the dedicated manpower for the repatriation of unsubstantiated 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, ImmD does not maintain a separate breakdown relating to unsubstantiated claimants.

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

In 2024-25, the Government will continue to adopt measures to enhance the handling of non-refoulement claims and successively enhance the efficiency on all fronts, especially in expediting the removal of unsubstantiated claimants at full steam, in order to ensure meeting the policy objectives and serving the public interests. Through stepping up the handling of non-refoulement claims, the Government managed to record an 18% drop in the estimated expenditure for 2024-25 as compared with the original estimate for 2023-24. At the same time, the Government has taken into account various factors in formulating the estimates, including related expenditures in screening claims and handling appeals, as well as fulfilling the relevant legal obligations of providing PFLA and humanitarian assistance for claimants, etc. The current estimate is higher than the revised estimate in last year, which is mainly attributable to the upsurge in the number of non-ethnic Chinese (NEC) illegal immigrants (IIs) in the second half of 2023, leading to an increase in the number of new claims and claimants in Hong Kong. With the strengthened joint enforcement actions taken by the law enforcement agencies in Guangdong and Hong Kong, the number of NEC IIs arrested in Hong Kong has reduced significantly. The figure in February 2024 has decreased by nearly 90% from the peak in October 2023 and the number of new claims received in the same month has also dropped by nearly 70% from the peak in January 2024. The Government will continue to spare no efforts in intercepting NEC IIs at source. At the same time, when formulating 2024-25 estimate, the Government has to allocate sufficient resources to cope with different expenditures in handling non-refoulement claims and related work so as to fulfill the relevant legal obligations. The Government will continue to monitor the related expenditures. Under the premise of preventing potential abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism from entering Hong Kong, we will continue to adopt a multi-pronged strategy by ensuring as far as possible high efficiency in processing claims and relevant appeals while meeting the high standards of fairness required by law, and removing unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong as soon as possible.

Over the past three years, the number of unsubstantiated claimants removed by ImmD is as follows:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of persons repatriated</b>
2021	753
2022	1 097
2023	1 786
2024 (January to February)	353

The Government spares no efforts in expediting the removal of unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong in accordance with the law, but the removal inevitably involves factors which are beyond the full control of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, including a number of unsubstantiated claimants had lodged applications for leave to apply for judicial review (JR) to the Court in recent years; the processing time of the re-entry travel documents by the relevant Consulates-General of the major source countries; and the uncooperativeness of the claimants in the application of the re-entry travel documents or during ImmD's removal operations, etc.

By adopting a multi-pronged strategy, ImmD has all along been maintaining close liaison with relevant stakeholders including the relevant Consulates-General and airlines in such aspects as arranging special flights for large-scale removal operations as and when necessary, so as to expedite the removal of unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong. For instance, ImmD has deployed officers to conduct a total of 24 removal operations since November 2022 with in-flight escort of unsubstantiated claimants who were uncooperative and refused to be removed with a view to implementing forced repatriation and combating the delaying tactics of unsubstantiated claimants. ImmD also carried out 9 large-scale removal operations over the same period, removing a total of 225 unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong. At end-August 2023, the Secretary for Security also paid a visit to Vietnam to witness the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding by ImmD of Hong Kong and the Immigration Department of Vietnam, which covers, among others, enhanced co-operation of both parties in respect of verification and repatriation of non-refoulement claimants.

(6) The Government attaches great importance to the issue relating to non-refoulement claims and has all along adopted a multi-pronged strategy. Since the introduction of the updated removal policy with effect from 7 December 2022, ImmD will proceed with the removal of unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong upon dismissal of their JR or relevant leave applications pertaining to their non-refoulement claims by the Court of First Instance, irrespective of whether there are outstanding court proceedings. Since the implementation of the updated policy until February 2024, ImmD has removed a total of 2 204 claimants from Hong Kong, including 240 under the updated policy. The number in 2023 has significantly increased by 63% compared to 2022. On the other hand, the Security Bureau amended the legislation in 2023 to include the Nei Kwu Correctional Institution as a place of detention of ImmD, thereby increasing the total number of detention capacity by 33% to 900. ImmD is committed to making gainful use of the existing facilities to detain claimants who pose higher security risks to the community in accordance with the law.

The Government will continue to adopt measures to enhance the handling of non-refoulement claims, including:

- (a) On interception at source, apart from cooperating with relevant Mainland authorities to strengthen intercepting IIs at source, the Government will, through profile analysis of obvious abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism and via the Advance Passenger Information System to be rolled out in phases starting from the third quarter of 2024, enhance identification of potential abusers and prevent their entry into Hong Kong;
- (b) ImmD continues to maintain high efficiency in screening non-refoulement claims;
- (c) Through streamlined process, TCAB will enhance its efficiency in handling appeal cases, with the target of reducing the average processing time from over seven months in the past to around four months;
- (d) On the management of detention facilities, various legislative amendments to enhance treatments of immigration detainees have been implemented starting from November 2023, so as to further uphold discipline and order at detention facilities;
- (e) Strengthening enforcement actions against immigration offences, including illegal employments, with a target to carry out not less than 12 000 operations on the targeted establishments every year, in order to lower the economic incentives of the claimants; and
- (f) On removal operations, the Government will continue to fully implement the updated removal policy so as to enhance the efficiency and efforts in removing unsubstantiated claimants, with the target of removing not less than 1 200 unsubstantiated claimants per year.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**(Question Serial No. 1335)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Currently, non-refoulement claimants whose claims are under processing by the Immigration Department will receive a recognizance form (which is commonly known as “going-out pass”) and can temporarily stay in Hong Kong. In this connection, please inform this Committee of the following:

1. the latest figures on claimants in Hong Kong, with a breakdown by (a) nationality, (b) nature of stay (i.e. illegal entry, overstaying or entry refused), and (c) screening status (e.g. pending screening/appeal/judicial review);
2. details of claimants who are arrested, prosecuted and convicted for criminal offences during their stay in Hong Kong (with a breakdown by police district and category of crimes); and
3. what are the staff establishment, administrative and legal assistance expenses involved?

Asked by: Hon QUAT Elizabeth (LegCo internal reference no.: 3)

Reply:

(1) According to the information of the Immigration Department (ImmD), as at end-February 2024, there were over 15 500 claimants remaining in Hong Kong, including about 1 050 claimants with their claims pending determination by ImmD, about 1 300 claimants with their appeals against ImmD’s decision pending determination by the Torture Claims Appeal Board (TCAB), about 8 000 claimants with on-going applications to the Court of First Instance for judicial review after their claims/appeals were rejected/dismissed by ImmD/TCAB or other litigation proceedings, as well as about 1 700 claimants being imprisoned, remanded, involved in ongoing prosecution or investigation process, or remaining in Hong Kong due to other reasons. For the 3 450 or so remaining claimants, removal was being arranged. The breakdowns by nationality and status in Hong Kong of the aforesaid non-refoulement claimants are tabulated below:

<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Number of claimants (as at end-February 2024)</b>
Vietnamese	3 054
Indonesian	3 049
Pakistani	2 352
Bangladeshi	1 925
Indian	1 925
Filipino	1 393
Sri Lankan	287
Nigerian	227
Nepali	225
Others	1 082
<b>Total</b>	<b>15 519</b>

<b>Status in Hong Kong</b>	<b>Number of claimants (as at end-February 2024)</b>
Illegal immigrants (IIs)	6 796
Overstayers	7 428
Others	1 295
<b>Total</b>	<b>15 519</b>

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

<b>Police region/ police district</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024 (January to February)</b>
<b>Hong Kong Island Region</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>26</b>
Central District	40	31	36	47	36	8
Wan Chai District	49	80	85	73	69	7
Western District	18	34	31	22	19	3
Eastern District	14	22	31	16	26	8
<b>Kowloon East Region</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>7</b>
Wong Tai Sin District	6	9	13	5	12	2
Sau Mau Ping District	2	4	9	6	10	3
Kwun Tong District	8	3	11	5	10	1
Tseung Kwan O District	10	6	12	7	9	1
<b>Kowloon West Region</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>564</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>62</b>
Yau Tsim District	183	243	226	155	192	28
Mong Kok District	62	107	99	65	61	7
Sham Shui Po District	103	149	117	98	94	19
Kowloon City District	41	65	72	47	39	8
<b>New Territories North Region</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>11</b>
Border District	0	5	9	2	0	0

Police region/ police district	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024 (January to February)
Yuen Long District	48	102	91	89	83	10
Tuen Mun District	24	28	24	27	28	1
Tai Po District	4	2	9	3	6	0
<b>New Territories South Region</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>6</b>
Tsuen Wan District	6	21	17	8	11	1
Shatin District	12	9	10	1	7	2
Kwai Tsing District	15	11	17	5	14	2
Lantau District	3	2	8	3	8	1
Airport District	9	0	1	2	2	0
<b>Marine Region</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Hong Kong overall</b>	<b>657</b>	<b>934</b>	<b>929</b>	<b>687</b>	<b>745</b>	<b>112</b>

Since 2019, the number of NEC persons on recognizance and issued with Form No. 8 (mainly non-refoulement claimants) who were arrested for criminal offences is tabulated below with breakdown by crime category:

Offence	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024 (January to February)
Shop theft	200	250	254	145	193	37
Serious drug offences	86	112	92	85	99	6
Wounding and serious assault	59	92	90	51	75	6
Miscellaneous thefts	58	98	134	99	71	15
Serious immigration offences (Note 1)	49	38	50	29	38	3
Criminal damage	29	36	37	25	33	9
Burglary	17	36	22	27	18	2
Others (Note 2)	159	272	250	226	218	34
<b>Total</b>	<b>657</b>	<b>934</b>	<b>929</b>	<b>687</b>	<b>745</b>	<b>112</b>

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

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

In addition, according to ImmD’s record, since 2019, the number of NEC persons on recognizance and issued with Form No. 8 (mainly non-refoulement claimants) who were arrested for taking unlawful employment contrary to section 38AA of the Immigration Ordinance (Cap. 115) are tabulated below.

Year	Number of persons arrested
2019	215
2020	156
2021	438

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of persons arrested</b>
2022	454
2023	484
2024 (January to February)	52

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

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

<b>Year</b>	<b>Screening of claims and handling of appeals/petitions* (\$ million)</b>	<b>Repatriation of unsubstantiated claimants # (\$ million)</b>	<b>Publicly-funded legal assistance (PFLA) (\$ million)</b>	<b>Humanitarian assistance (\$ million)</b>	<b>Total<sup>@</sup> (\$ million)</b>
2019-20	344	45	93	482	<b>964</b>
2020-21	311	47	95	540	<b>992</b>
2021-22	298	47	142	579	<b>1 067</b>
2022-23	305	50	108	590	<b>1 052</b>
2023-24 (Estimate)	389	57	171	784	<b>1 400</b>
2023-24 (Revised estimate)	335	57	120	583	<b>1 095</b>
2024-25 (Estimate)	364	59	144	583	<b>1 150</b>

\* Includes staff costs of ImmD in screening claims and expenditures of TCAB in handling appeals, etc.

# Only the expenditure on the dedicated manpower for the repatriation of unsubstantiated 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, ImmD does not maintain a separate breakdown relating to unsubstantiated claimants.

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

In 2024-25, the Government will continue to adopt measures to enhance the handling of non-refoulement claims and successively enhance the efficiency on all fronts, especially in expediting the removal of unsubstantiated claimants at full steam, in order to ensure meeting the policy objectives and serving the public interests. Through stepping up the handling of non-refoulement claims, the Government managed to record an 18% drop in the estimated expenditure for 2024-25 as compared with the original estimate for 2023-24. At the same time, the Government has taken into account various factors in formulating the estimates, including related expenditures in screening claims and handling appeals, as well as fulfilling the relevant legal obligations of providing PFLA and humanitarian assistance for claimants, etc. The current estimate is higher than the revised estimate in last year, which is mainly attributable to the upsurge in the number of NEC IIs in the second half of 2023, leading to an increase in the number of new claims and claimants in Hong Kong. With the strengthened joint enforcement actions taken by the law enforcement agencies in Guangdong and Hong

Kong, the number of NEC IIs arrested in Hong Kong has reduced significantly. The figure in February 2024 has decreased by nearly 90% from the peak in October 2023 and the number of new claims received in the same month has also dropped by nearly 70% from the peak in January 2024. The Government will continue to spare no efforts in intercepting NEC IIs at source. At the same time, when formulating 2024-25 estimate, the Government has to allocate sufficient resources to cope with different expenditures in handling non-refoulement claims and related work so as to fulfill the relevant legal obligations. The Government will continue to monitor the related expenditures. Under the premise of preventing potential abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism from entering Hong Kong, we will continue to adopt a multi-pronged strategy by ensuring as far as possible high efficiency in processing claims and relevant appeals while meeting the high standards of fairness required by law, and removing unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong as soon as possible.

As regards manpower, the number of posts in ImmD responsible for work related to screening claims and repatriation, 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 unsubstantiated 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	207	72	75	35
2023-24	207	81	77 <sup>^</sup>	35
2024-25 (Estimate)	207	81	77 <sup>^</sup>	35

\* ImmD will, subject to the actual operation, flexibly deploy internal manpower to handle non-refoulement claims.

<sup>^</sup> Number of members as at 29 February 2024, which is subject to adjustment as necessary.

Since 2019-20, the non-civil servant posts in the Legal Assistance Scheme for Non-refoulement Claimants of Duty Lawyer Service are 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	Number of posts in 2023-24	Number of posts in 2024-25 (Estimate)
Chief Court Liaison Officer	2	2	1	1	1	1
Assistant Chief Court Liaison Officer	2	1	2	2	2	2
Senior Court Liaison Officer	5	6	5	5	5	5
Court Liaison Officer	13	13	17	22	17	22

Senior Personal Secretary	4	4	2	2	2	2
Personal Secretaries I / II	5	5	4	4	4	4
Senior Accounting Officer	1	1	1	1	1	1
Accounting Officer	1	1	1	1	1	1
Office Assistant	2	2	1	1	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>39</b>

The civil service establishment and non-civil servant posts of the Pilot Scheme Office for Provision of PFLA for Non-refoulement Claimants since 2019-20 are as follows:

	Number of posts in 2019-20	Number of posts in 2020-21	Number of posts in 2021-22	Number of posts in 2022-23	Number of posts in 2023-24	Number of posts in 2024-25 (Estimate)
<b>Civil servant posts</b>						
Chief Executive Officer	1	1	1	1	1	1
Senior Executive Officer	1	1	1	1	1	1
Executive Officer I	3	3	3	3	3	3
Assistant Clerical Officer	4	4	4	4	4	4
Workman II	2	2	1	1	1	1
<b>Non-civil servant posts</b>						
Number	7	5	5	5	4	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB035**

**(Question Serial No. 2374)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Internal Security

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

In the Policy Address delivered last year, the Chief Executive mentioned that the Government would strengthen the promotion of national security education, press ahead to draw up legislative options for the legislation of Article 23 of the Basic Law, and complete the legislative exercise within 2024 in order to fulfill our constitutional duty. In fact, many young people who were arrested or sentenced to imprisonment during the “black-clad violence” had fallen prey to false information and had been incited to commit acts of violence. Given the significance of the legislation on Article 23 of the Basic Law, the business sector is naturally concerned about how they should work with it. Meanwhile, some international businesses may worry that the provisions relating to “theft of state secrets” will affect the day-to-day operation of chambers of commerce, think tanks, as well as economic research, etc. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. Will the Government further explain the Basic Law Article 23 legislation to foreign enterprises before and after the legislative process, and persuade them to use Hong Kong as a base for expanding their reach to other cities in the Greater Bay Area, such that they can benefit from our efficient and outstanding business operating environment while taking advantage of the development of our country?
2. Will the Government work together with local chambers of commerce, such as the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce, the Hong Kong Exporters' Association and the Chinese Manufacturers' Association of Hong Kong, to further explain and promote Article 23 of the Basic Law to their member enterprises?
3. In order to promote businesses' support to the implementation of Article 23 in the future, will the Government consider developing some codes of practice and provide them for the reference of local enterprises, so as to facilitate them to undertake appropriate due-diligence procedures in their daily operation or before making important business decisions?
4. What plans do the Government have to further promote the legislation to the public, in particular to counter the smearing by certain ill-intentioned foreign media? Apart from

making clarifications promptly and proactively, what other measures does the Government have in place to deal with such smearing?

Asked by: Hon SHANG Hailong (LegCo internal reference no.: 21)

Reply:

The work of the Security Bureau related to the Basic Law Article 23 legislation is part of the work in safeguarding national security, and is not within the scope of Head 151.

During the public consultation on Basic Law Article 23 legislation, the HKSAR Government had held nearly 30 consultation sessions to meet with representatives from various sectors to provide detailed briefings on the proposals in the consultation document. Participants of the consultation sessions include representatives from local and international businesses sectors (including local and overseas chambers of commerce), as well as Consuls-General. Moreover, we disseminated latest updates through our Economic and Trade Offices, and clarified misunderstandings among certain individuals regarding the Basic Law Article 23 legislation.

In addition, in order to facilitate different sectors of the community to understand the need for legislation, the legislative principles and the contents of the legislation, and enable them to obtain correct information, other than promptly and proactively rebutting smears from overseas media with ulterior motives, we also produced various publicity items, such as leaflets, thematic webpage, infographics, Announcements in the Public Interest and media interviews to explain in greater depth areas of public concerns.

After the completion of the legislative work, we will continue to monitor the concerns expressed by various sectors regularly on the implementation of the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance, and explain the latest situation in Hong Kong to people from various sectors (including the business sector), as well as to respond to their concerns regarding laws on safeguarding national security.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB036**

**(Question Serial No. 0154)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Matters requiring special attention of the Security Bureau in 2024-25 include: to monitor the need for extending the operating hours of control points to further facilitate passenger and cargo flow; co-ordinate the development and implementation of co-location arrangement at the new Huanggang Port; and continue to oversee the implementation of the Pilot Scheme on Immigration Facilitation for Visitors Participating in Short-term Activities in Designated Sectors and keep its effectiveness under review. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. whether the Government has in place any relevant plan or communication mechanism for handling the large number of cross-boundary travellers during major public holidays or mega events? If so, what are the details? If not, why?
2. Over the past 3 years, how many people in total have entered Hong Kong under the Pilot Scheme on Immigration Facilitation for Visitors Participating in Short-term Activities in Designated Sectors? What are their places of origin?

Asked by: Hon SO Cheung-wing (LegCo internal reference no.: 24)

Reply:

- (1) Prior to major long holidays, the HKSAR Government will announce through press releases and social media apps the expected passenger flow during the holiday period, and encourage the public and passengers to plan their trips in advance and make good use of boundary control points (BCPs) with less passenger traffic, while appealing to Mainland visitors and Hong Kong residents planning to enter or leave Hong Kong to cross the boundary during non-peak hours as far as possible, with a view to minimising the congestion at land BCPs during the morning and evening peak hours during holiday periods. In view of the surge in passenger and vehicular flow during festive periods, the Inter-departmental Joint Command Centre, composed of relevant departments including the Customs and Excise Department, the Hong Kong Police Force, and the Immigration Department (ImmD), will be activated during the period to monitor the situation at BCPs and take contingency actions where necessary. Manpower will be deployed flexibly to open more e-Channels, counters and vehicle clearance kiosks to facilitate passenger and vehicular movement, so as to ensure the smooth operation of BCPs.

In addition, since the resumption of normal travel of persons between the Mainland and Hong Kong (i.e. since February 2023), the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau has convened a total of 6 meetings in respect of Labour Day in 2023, National Day in 2023 and Chinese New Year holidays on the Mainland in 2024 to co-ordinate the preparation work of various departments of the HKSAR Government and relevant organisations for the arrival of visitors to Hong Kong during Golden Week. Where necessary, the Chief Secretary for Administration will convene the meeting on cross-boundary transport arrangements for large-scale events to co-ordinate the work of relevant bureaux and departments on special boundary-crossing and transport arrangements during festive periods.

- (2) The Government launched a 2-year Pilot Scheme on Immigration Facilitation for Visitors Participating in Short-term Activities in Designated Sectors (Pilot Scheme) on 1 June 2022 to provide immigration facilitation for visitors participating in short-term activities in designated sectors, with a view to facilitating business, promoting development of relevant sectors and raising Hong Kong's international profile.

Organisations authorised by the relevant government bureaux or departments can issue invitation letters to relevant non-local talents in their sectors. Invited persons may come to Hong Kong and participate in specified short-term activities as visitors without the need to apply for employment visas or entry permits from ImmD. As at December 2023, the Pilot Scheme has benefited 13 218 non-local talents, facilitating their entry into Hong Kong as visitors to participate in various short-term events and activities, such as Asian Financial Forum and Hong Kong International Dragon Boat Races etc. The statistics of the beneficiaries by place of origin are set out in the following table:

<b>Place of origin</b>	<b>Number of non-local talents who came to Hong Kong to participate in specified short-term activities (As at December 2023)</b>
Mainland China	3 427
U.S.A.	968
United Kingdom	717
Japan	596
Taiwan, China	551
Korea	454
Australia	439
Malaysia	379
Thailand	373
Singapore	337
Others	4 977
<b>Total</b>	<b>13 218</b>

Note: The statistics by place of origin are compiled on a quarterly basis, thus the statistics for the first quarter of 2024 are not yet available.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**(Question Serial No. 2059)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Internal Security

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Under Programme (2) Internal Security, the provision for the Security Bureau for 2024-25 is \$174.6 million (19.2%) higher than the revised estimate for 2023-24. This is mainly due to the increased cash flow requirement for the Fire Safety Improvement Works Subsidy Scheme and the increased provision for departmental expenses. Please advise this Committee of:

- the details of the increased provision;
- the operating expenses on implementing anti-drug trafficking and drug abuse activities, as well as preventive education and publicity in the past 3 years.

Asked by: Hon TANG Ka-piu (LegCo internal reference no.: 17)

Reply:

Regarding Programme (2) Internal Security, the estimate of expenditure for 2024-25 is \$174.6 million (19.2%) higher than the revised estimate for 2023-24. The main details are as follows:

- Implementation of the Fire Safety Improvement Works Subsidy Scheme \$130 million
- Increase in general departmental expenses \$37.68 million  
(including increase in other hired service costs and operational expenses of offices)
- Increase in expenditure on salaries for civil servants and contract staff<sup>Note</sup> \$6.92 million

Note: The increase is partly offset by a net decrease of 1 post.

The Narcotics Division (ND) of the Security Bureau has been combating the drug problem by collaborating with the Action Committee Against Narcotics, various bureaux/departments or agencies (including the Education Bureau, the Department of Health, the Hospital Authority, the Social Welfare Department, the Hong Kong Police Force, the Customs and Excise Department, the Correctional Services Department, etc.) and other stakeholders through a multi-pronged strategy, comprising preventive education and publicity (PE&P),

treatment and rehabilitation, legislation and law enforcement, external co-operation and research. Out of them, PE&P is the first line of defence of anti-drug work.

The Government attaches great importance to enhancing community awareness of drug abuse, drug harms and drug trafficking, as well as encouraging early help seeking of drug abusers. As a whole, the ND actively implements anti-drug promotion through different media and channels, including those targeting individual drugs and crimes and also overarching ones. ND launched a brand-new anti-drug publicity theme in September 2022, which includes an anti-drug logo, anti-drug ambassadors Agent Don't and Agent Hope, an anti-drug slogan "Let's Stand Firm. Knock Drugs Out!", a TV programme and theme song, and a set of TV and radio Announcements in the Public Interest (APIs). Over the years, the ND produces TV APIs and animated videos for more commonly abused drugs from time to time to remind the public of drug harms. For example, in order to enhance the public understanding of the harmful effects of cocaine abuse, the ND launched a new TV API and the corresponding radio API in January 2024, which describes abusing cocaine as sinking deep into a quagmire. In the API, apart from showing the physical and mental harm of cocaine addiction, it also warns the public the enormous debt burden brought about by failure to quit taking cocaine. Furthermore, the ND also launched an animated video in September 2023 about a young person with bright prospects being controlled by his "inner demons" and paid a heavy price for a wrong decision to try cocaine. Both videos have been uploaded onto the ND's website. Responding to the listing of cannabidiol (CBD) as a dangerous drug under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance (Cap. 134) from 1 February 2023, the ND launched the "CBD, Not for Me!" TV and radio APIs. In addition, ND encouraged the public to dispose CBD products before the commencement of the legislation and warned the public about the criminal liability of committing crimes relating to CBD upon the commencement of the legislation through different publicity channels, including TV, radio, public transport, webpages, mobile apps and the social media accounts and website of the ND, etc. The ND, the Hong Kong Police Force, the Customs and Excise Department and the Correctional Services Department have also rolled out a series of social media and publicity initiatives against cannabis and drug trafficking.

For wider and more effective publicity targeting the general public, the ND adopts geo-targeting by placing advertisements at specific locations, such as the airport, MTR trains/stations, cinemas and outdoor panels. With regard to the drug situation, the ND will also strengthen collaboration with different parties such as other government bureaux/departments, key opinion leaders and media organisations to launch suitable anti-drug programmes and make appeal to different sectors of the community. The ND will continue to formulate its publicity strategy having regard to the social environment and drug situation, and will review and update the strategy from time to time.

The abovementioned anti-drug PE&P expenditure in 2021-22 was around \$22 million. Due to the resumption of normalcy after the pandemic as well as the drug situation prevailing at the time and the implementation of the new legislation on the control of CBD, the publicity expenditures in 2022-23 and 2023-24 were about \$30 million and \$29 million (revised estimate) respectively. As for 2024-25, the ND will suitably allocate resources to publicity having regard to experience of previous years and the latest drug situation.

Regarding enforcement, the Hong Kong Police Force and the Customs and Excise Department actively combat drug crimes. The relevant expenditures of the Hong Kong Police Force are reflected under Programme (2): Prevention and Detection of Crime of its Controlling Officer's Report (Head 122). The relevant expenditures of the Customs and Excise Department are reflected in its Controlling Officer's Report (Head 31) under Programme (1): Control and Enforcement, and Programme (2): Anti-narcotics Investigation.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB038**

**(Question Serial No. 2060)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: Not Specified

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the appointment details of disciplined services, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- (1) the numbers of staff in various disciplined services in the past 3 years by length of service and job category;
- (2) the numbers of vacancies in various disciplined services in the past 3 years by job category;
- (3) the numbers of leavers and the wastage rates of various disciplined services in the past 3 years by job category, length of service and reasons for staff wastage.

Asked by: Hon TANG Ka-piu (LegCo internal reference no.: 18)

Reply:

- (1) The numbers of staff of various discipline services by year between 2021-22 and 2023-24 are as follows:

Department	Tier	Length of service	No. of staff <sup>Note 1</sup>		
			2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Correctional Services Department (CSD) <small>Note 2</small>	Commander <small>Note 3</small>	≤ 10 years	-	-	-
		11-20 years	1	-	1
		21-30 years	1	4	4
		> 30 years	5	6	3
	Officer	≤ 10 years	522	530	444
		11-20 years	348	367	438
		21-30 years	142	142	145
		> 30 years	77	67	49
	Rank and File	≤ 10 years	2 156	2 235	2 097
		11-20 years	418	466	624
		21-30 years	1 520	1 277	1 139
		> 30 years	493	646	681

Department	Tier	Length of service	No. of staff <sup>Note 1</sup>		
			2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Customs and Excise Department (C&ED)	Commander <sup>Note 3</sup>	≤ 10 years	-	-	-
		11-20 years	-	-	-
		21-30 years	4	5	4
		> 30 years	3	3	4
	Inspector	≤ 10 years	558	541	547
		11-20 years	267	262	288
		21-30 years	266	251	239
		> 30 years	32	23	20
	Rank and File	≤ 10 years	2 801	2 819	2 653
		11-20 years	616	636	752
		21-30 years	1 122	1 087	995
		> 30 years	382	315	298
Fire Services Department (FSD)	Commander <sup>Note 3</sup>	≤ 10 years	-	-	-
		11-20 years	-	-	-
		21-30 years	8	10	12
		> 30 years	13	12	12
	Officer	≤ 10 years	607	591	592
		11-20 years	403	422	429
		21-30 years	260	258	255
		> 30 years	67	59	69
	Rank and File	≤ 10 years	4 105	4 217	4 288
		11-20 years	1 679	1 866	2 031
		21-30 years	2 249	2 197	1 977
		> 30 years	858	776	840
Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF)	Gazetted Officer <sup>Note 4</sup>	≤ 10 years	-	1	-
		11-20 years	69	81	88
		21-30 years	286	280	277
		> 30 years	77	74	76
	Inspector	≤ 10 years	1 378	1 340	1 317
		11-20 years	595	667	733
		21-30 years	276	245	242
		> 30 years	136	131	149
	Rank and File	≤ 10 years	9 341	8 587	8 293
		11-20 years	4 670	5 202	5 343
		21-30 years	7 619	7 261	6 613
		> 30 years	3 399	3 475	4 168
Immigration Department (ImmD)	Commander <sup>Note 3</sup>	≤ 10 years	-	-	-
		11-20 years	-	-	-
		21-30 years	1	4	5
		> 30 years	8	6	4
	Officer	≤ 10 years	1 323	1 258	1 168
		11-20 years	609	675	758
		21-30 years	141	130	166
		> 30 years	154	90	44

Department	Tier	Length of service	No. of staff <sup>Note 1</sup>		
			2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Immigration Department (ImmD)	Rank and File	≤ 10 years	2 659	2 660	2 685
		11-20 years	682	627	603
		21-30 years	1 165	1 073	1 108
		> 30 years	378	381	298
Government Flying Service (GFS)	Commander <small>Note 3</small>	≤ 10 years	-	-	-
		11-20 years	2	-	-
		21-30 years	1	3	3
		> 30 years	2	2	1
	Officer	≤ 10 years	156	163	166
		11-20 years	14	19	23
		21-30 years	50	40	24
		> 30 years	6	10	9

Note 1: “No. of staff” refers to the actual number of disciplined services staff of the department as at 1 April at the beginning of the year.

Note 2: Excluding Technical Instructors and Instructors.

Note 3: “Commander” refers to members holding the ranks of Chief Superintendent (of CSD and C&ED), Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Senior Principal Immigration Officer, and GFS Chief Pilot and above.

Note 4: “Gazetted Officer” refers to members holding the ranks of Superintendent and above.

(2) Vacancies of various disciplined services between 2021-22 and 2023-24 are as follows:

Department	Tier	Annual vacancies <sup>Note 5</sup>		
		2021-22 <sup>Note 6</sup>	2022-23 <sup>Note 6</sup>	2023-24 (As at 29 February 2024)
CSD <sup>Note 2</sup>	Commander <sup>Note 3</sup>	-1	2	3
	Officer	13	46	32
	Rank and File	504	587	580
C&ED	Commander <sup>Note 3</sup>	-	1	1
	Inspector	79	84	71
	Rank and File	145	386	479
FSD	Commander <sup>Note 3</sup>	-3	-3	-1
	Officer	121	132	144
	Rank and File	179	144	208
HKPF	Gazetted Officer <sup>Note 4</sup>	40	39	30
	Inspector	452	401	366
	Rank and File	5 284	5 471	5 754
ImmD	Commander <sup>Note 3</sup>	1	4	2
	Officer	331	174	102
	Rank and File	136	241	248
GFS	Commander <sup>Note 3</sup>	-	1	-
	Officer	32	42	44

Note 5: Vacancies = Actual establishment – Staff in service (including members on final leave)

Note 6: Vacancies as at 31 March of the year.

(3) The numbers of leavers and the wastage rates <sup>Note 7</sup> of various disciplined services between 2021-22 and 2023-24 are as follows:

By job category and length of service:

Department	Tier	Length of service	2021-22		2022-23		2023-24 (as at 29 February 2024)	
			No. of leavers	Wastage rate	No. of leavers	Wastage rate	No. of leavers	Wastage rate
CSD <sup>Note 2</sup>	Commander <sup>Note 3</sup>	≤ 10 years	-	-	-	-	-	-
		11-20 years	-	-	-	-	-	-
		21-30 years	-	-	-	-	1	12.5%
		> 30 years	1	14.3%	3	30%	2	25%
	Officer	≤ 10 years	9	0.8%	9	0.8%	11	1.0%
		11-20 years	10	0.9%	8	0.7%	5	0.5%
		21-30 years	15	1.4%	5	0.5%	8	0.7%
		> 30 years	19	1.7%	23	2.1%	11	1.0%
	Rank and File	≤ 10 years	70	1.5%	91	2.0%	90	2.0%
		11-20 years	1	0.02%	9	0.2%	9	0.2%
		21-30 years	69	1.5%	62	1.3%	61	1.3%
		> 30 years	48	1.0%	72	1.6%	118	2.6%
C&ED	Commander <sup>Note 3</sup>	≤ 10 years	-	-	-	-	-	-
		11-20 years	-	-	-	-	-	-
		21-30 years	-	-	-	-	1	12.5%
		> 30 years	-	-	1	12.5%	1	12.5%
	Inspector	≤ 10 years	6	0.5%	6	0.6%	13	1.2%
		11-20 years	7	0.6%	13	1.2%	9	0.8%

Department	Tier	Length of service	2021-22		2022-23		2023-24 (as at 29 February 2024)	
			No. of leavers	Wastage rate	No. of leavers	Wastage rate	No. of leavers	Wastage rate
C&ED	Inspector	21-30 years	6	0.5%	20	1.9%	21	1.9%
		> 30 years	13	1.2%	6	0.6%	6	0.5%
	Rank and File	≤ 10 years	91	1.8%	110	2.3%	105	2.2%
		11-20 years	16	0.3%	24	0.5%	14	0.3%
		21-30 years	24	0.5%	23	0.5%	35	0.7%
		> 30 years	75	1.5%	73	1.5%	82	1.7%
FSD	Commander Note 3	≤ 10 years	-	-	-	-	-	-
		11-20 years	-	-	-	-	-	-
		21-30 years	-	-	-	-	-	-
		> 30 years	4	19%	3	13.6%	3	12.5%
	Officer	≤ 10 years	7	0.5%	5	0.4%	14	1%
		11-20 years	10	0.7%	6	0.5%	8	0.6%
		21-30 years	14	1%	6	0.5%	9	0.7%
		> 30 years	22	1.6%	23	1.7%	18	1.3%
	Rank and File	≤ 10 years	120	1.3%	158	1.7%	165	1.8%
		11-20 years	46	0.5%	55	0.6%	33	0.4%
		21-30 years	50	0.6%	53	0.6%	58	0.6%
		> 30 years	219	2.5%	194	2.1%	172	1.9%
HKPF	Gazetted Officer Note 4	≤ 10 years	-	-	-	-	-	-
		11-20 years	-	-	-	-	1	0.2%
		21-30 years	6	1.4%	8	1.8%	5	1.1%
		> 30 years	24	5.6%	10	2.3%	14	3.2%

Department	Tier	Length of service	2021-22		2022-23		2023-24 (as at 29 February 2024)	
			No. of leavers	Wastage rate	No. of leavers	Wastage rate	No. of leavers	Wastage rate
HKPF	Inspector	≤ 10 years	34	1.4%	25	1.0%	14	0.6%
		11-20 years	10	0.4%	9	0.4%	5	0.2%
		21-30 years	11	0.5%	8	0.3%	4	0.2%
		> 30 years	29	1.2%	13	0.5%	9	0.4%
	Rank and File	≤ 10 years	237	0.9%	194	0.8%	208	0.9%
		11-20 years	41	0.2%	43	0.2%	75	0.3%
		21-30 years	103	0.4%	102	0.4%	102	0.4%
		> 30 years	311	1.2%	203	0.8%	361	1.5%
ImmD	Commander Note 3	≤ 10 years	-	-	-	-	-	-
		11-20 years	-	-	-	-	-	-
		21-30 years	-	-	-	-	-	-
		> 30 years	3	33.3%	2	20.0%	-	-
	Officer	≤ 10 years	17	0.8%	14	0.7%	20	0.9%
		11-20 years	22	1.0%	17	0.8%	15	0.7%
		21-30 years	3	0.1%	4	0.2%	7	0.3%
		> 30 years	74	3.3%	46	2.1%	24	1.1%
	Rank and File	≤ 10 years	74	1.5%	89	1.9%	100	2.1%
		11-20 years	19	0.4%	22	0.5%	11	0.2%
		21-30 years	15	0.3%	23	0.5%	13	0.3%
		> 30 years	105	2.1%	109	2.3%	90	1.9%
GFS	Commander Note 3	≤ 10 years	-	-	-	-	-	-
		11-20 years	-	-	-	-	-	-

Department	Tier	Length of service	2021-22		2022-23		2023-24 (as at 29 February 2024)	
			No. of leavers	Wastage rate	No. of leavers	Wastage rate	No. of leavers	Wastage rate
GFS	Commander Note 3	21-30 years	1	100%	-	-	1	50%
		> 30 years	-	-	1	33.3%	-	-
	Officer	≤ 10 years	3	3%	6	5.8%	15	8.8%
		11-20 years	-	-	-	-	1	25%
		21-30 years	3	10%	6	12.2%	5	11.4%
		> 30 years	2	9.1%	11	7.1%	4	9.1%

Note 7: Wastage rate = Wastage figure (including retirement and end-of-contract leavers and unnatural wastage)/ Department's actual number of staff of the respective ranks as at 1 April of the year.

By reason for leaving the services:

Department	Tier	Reason for leaving	2021-22		2022-23		2023-24 (as at 29 February 2024)	
			No. of leavers	Wastage rate Note 8	No. of leavers	Wastage rate Note 8	No. of leavers	Wastage rate Note 8
CSD <sup>Note 2</sup>	Commander <sup>Note 3</sup>	Retirement <sup>Note 9</sup>	1	14.3%	3	30%	3	37.5%
		Resignation	-	-	-	-	-	-
		Others <sup>Note 10</sup>	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Officer	Retirement <sup>Note 9</sup>	33	3.0%	25	2.3%	19	1.8%
		Resignation	18	1.7%	16	1.4%	13	1.2%
		Others <sup>Note 10</sup>	2	0.2%	4	0.4%	3	0.3%
	Rank and File	Retirement <sup>Note 9</sup>	109	2.4%	128	2.8%	171	3.8%
		Resignation	56	1.2%	66	1.4%	70	1.5%
		Others <sup>Note 10</sup>	23	0.5%	40	0.9%	37	0.8%
C&ED	Commander <sup>Note 3</sup>	Retirement <sup>Note 9</sup>	-	-	1	12.5%	2	25.0%
		Resignation	-	-	-	-	-	-
		Others <sup>Note 10</sup>	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Inspector	Retirement <sup>Note 9</sup>	18	1.6%	24	2.2%	24	2.2%
		Resignation	13	1.2%	21	1.9%	22	2.0%
		Others <sup>Note 10</sup>	1	0.1%	-	-	3	0.3%
	Rank and File	Retirement <sup>Note 9</sup>	95	1.9%	92	1.9%	113	2.4%
		Resignation	84	1.7%	93	1.9%	65	1.4%
		Others <sup>Note 10</sup>	27	0.5%	45	0.9%	58	1.2%

Department	Tier	Reason for leaving	2021-22		2022-23		2023-24 (as at 29 February 2024)	
			No. of leavers	Wastage rate Note 8	No. of leavers	Wastage rate Note 8	No. of leavers	Wastage rate Note 8
FSD	Commander Note 3	Retirement Note 9	4	19%	3	13.6%	3	12.5%
		Resignation	-	-	-	-	-	-
		Others Note 10	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Officer	Retirement Note 9	32	2.4%	28	2.1%	24	1.8%
		Resignation	19	1.4%	12	0.9%	23	1.7%
		Others Note 10	2	0.1%	-	-	2	0.1%
	Rank and File	Retirement Note 9	248	2.8%	228	2.5%	205	2.2%
		Resignation	133	1.5%	192	2.1%	156	1.7%
		Others Note 10	54	0.6%	40	0.4%	67	0.7%
HKPF	Gazetted Officer Note 4	Retirement Note 9	28	6.5%	17	3.9%	19	4.3%
		Resignation	2	0.5%	1	0.2%	1	0.2%
		Others Note 10	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Inspector	Retirement Note 9	38	1.6%	17	0.7%	11	0.5%
		Resignation	40	1.7%	32	1.3%	18	0.7%
		Others Note 10	6	0.3%	6	0.3%	3	0.1%
	Rank and File	Retirement Note 9	364	1.5%	263	1.1%	412	1.7%
		Resignation	210	0.8%	193	0.8%	191	0.8%
		Others Note 10	118	0.5%	86	0.4%	143	0.6%

Department	Tier	Reason for leaving	2021-22		2022-23		2023-24 (as at 29 February 2024)	
			No. of leavers	Wastage rate Note 8	No. of leavers	Wastage rate Note 8	No. of leavers	Wastage rate Note 8
ImmD	Commander Note 3	Retirement Note 9	3	33.3%	2	20.0%	-	-
		Resignation	-	-	-	-	-	-
		Others Note 10	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Officer	Retirement Note 9	74	3.3%	48	2.2%	25	1.2%
		Resignation	42	1.9%	30	1.4%	38	1.8%
		Others Note 10	-	-	3	0.1%	3	0.1%
	Rank and File	Retirement Note 9	111	2.3%	122	2.6%	99	2.1%
		Resignation	77	1.6%	107	2.3%	80	1.7%
		Others Note 10	25	0.5%	14	0.3%	35	0.7%
GFS	Commander Note 3	Retirement Note 9	1	100%	1	33.3%	-	-
		Resignation	-	-	-	-	1	50%
		Others Note 10	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Officer	Retirement Note 9	5	9.8%	16	10.3%	10	14.3%
		Resignation	3	3%	7	6.1%	10	7.3%
		Others Note 10	-	-	-	-	5	13.2%

Note 8: Wastage rate = Wastage figure/ Department's actual number of staff of the respective ranks as at 1 April of the year (regardless of length of service).

Note 9: Retirement figures include members engaged under the civil service's Further Employment Beyond Retirement Age and the Continued Service of Police Officers Beyond Prescribed Retirement Age Scheme.

Note 10: Other reasons for leaving the services include transfer, dismissal, termination of service, death, retirement on invaliding and compulsory retirement, etc.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB039**

**(Question Serial No. 2849)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Internal Security

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

A Response and Rebuttal Team headed by the Secretary for Security has been set up for the legislation of Article 23 of the Basic Law.

1. What is the current staffing establishment of the team?
2. In face of the extra workload before, during and after the legislative process, will additional resources and manpower be allocated to handle it? If so, what are the details? If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon WONG Ying-ho, Kennedy (LegCo internal reference no.: 25)

Reply:

The work of the Security Bureau (SB) related to the Basic Law Article 23 legislation is part of the work in safeguarding national security, and is not within the scope of Head 151. Breakdown of the relevant manpower and expenditure will not be disclosed. SB will ensure that there will be sufficient funds to take forward the work concerned.

The Government has established the "Response and Rebuttal Team" for the Basic Law Article 23 legislation exercise. The primary objective is to provide timely rebuttals to smears encountered during the legislative process. Since there are still misinformation and slanders from time to time, there is a need for the continued operation of the "Response and Rebuttal Team", the modus operandi of which is a useful reference for us to effectively clarifying and rebutting future smears in various aspects. SB will continue to adopt this effective approach in handling similar issues of concern (including those relating to the implementation of laws safeguarding national security) in future.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**(Question Serial No. 2850)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

One of the matters requiring attention this year is to sustain the provision of publicly-funded legal assistance to non-refoulement claimants.

1. What was the expenditure involved in providing publicly-funded legal assistance to non-refoulement claimants (including lodging appeals) in the past year;
2. What is the estimated expenditures relating to non-refoulement claims (including but not limited to screening of claims and handling of appeals, provision of publicly-funded legal assistance and humanitarian assistance to claimants) in the coming year?
3. What was the number of non-refoulement claimants remained in Hong Kong last year; how many non-ethnic Chinese (NEC) persons with “going-out passes” were suspected of taking up unlawful employment contrary to the Immigration Ordinance and how many were arrested for committing criminal offences? Please tabulate by category of crime.

Asked by: Hon WONG Ying-ho, Kennedy (LegCo internal reference no.: 26)

Reply:

(1) – (2) Major expenditures / estimated expenditures on handling non-refoulement claims and related work in 2023-24 and 2024-25 are tabulated below:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Screening of claims and handling of appeals/petitions* (\$ million)</b>	<b>Repatriation of unsubstantiated claimants # (\$ million)</b>	<b>Publicly-funded legal assistance (PFLA) (\$ million)</b>	<b>Humanitarian assistance (\$ million)</b>	<b>Total@ (\$ million)</b>
2023-24 (Estimate)	389	57	171	784	<b>1 400</b>
2023-24 (Revised estimate)	335	57	120	583	<b>1 095</b>
2024-25 (Estimate)	364	59	144	583	<b>1 150</b>

\* *Includes staff costs of the Immigration Department (ImmD) in screening claims and expenditures of the Torture Claims Appeal Board in handling appeals, etc.*

# *Only the expenditure on the dedicated manpower for the repatriation of unsubstantiated 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, ImmD does not maintain a separate breakdown relating to unsubstantiated claimants.*

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

In 2024-25, the Government will continue to adopt measures to enhance the handling of non-refoulement claims and successively enhance the efficiency on all fronts, especially in expediting the removal of unsubstantiated claimants at full steam, in order to ensure meeting the policy objectives and serving the public interests. Through stepping up the handling of non-refoulement claims, the Government managed to record an 18% drop in the estimated expenditure for 2024-25 as compared with the original estimate for 2023-24. At the same time, the Government has taken into account various factors in formulating the estimates, including related expenditures in screening claims and handling appeals, as well as fulfilling the relevant legal obligations of providing PFLA and humanitarian assistance for claimants, etc. The current estimate is higher than the revised estimate in last year, which is mainly attributable to the upsurge in the number of non-ethnic Chinese (NEC) illegal immigrants (IIs) in the second half of 2023, leading to an increase in the number of new claims and claimants in Hong Kong. With the strengthened joint enforcement actions taken by the law enforcement agencies in Guangdong and Hong Kong, the number of NEC IIs arrested in Hong Kong has reduced significantly. The figure in February 2024 has decreased by nearly 90% from the peak in October 2023 and the number of new claims received in the same month has also dropped by nearly 70% from the peak in January 2024. The Government will continue to spare no efforts in intercepting NEC IIs at source. At the same time, when formulating 2024-25 estimate, the Government has to allocate sufficient resources to cope with different expenditures in handling non-refoulement claims and related work so as to fulfill the relevant legal obligations. The Government will continue to monitor the related expenditures. Under the premise of preventing potential abusers of the non-refoulement claim mechanism from entering Hong Kong, we will continue to adopt a multi-pronged strategy by ensuring as far as possible high efficiency in processing claims and relevant appeals while meeting the high standards of fairness required by law, and removing unsubstantiated claimants from Hong Kong as soon as possible.

(3) According to ImmD's record, as at end-2023, there were over 15 200 claimants remaining in Hong Kong. In addition, the number of NEC persons on recognizance and issued with Form No. 8 (mainly non-refoulement claimants) who were arrested for taking unlawful employment contrary to section 38AA of the Immigration Ordinance (Cap. 115) in 2023 is 484.

According to the Police's record, the number of NEC persons on recognizance and issued with Form No. 8 (mainly non-refoulement claimants) who were arrested for criminal offences in 2023 is tabulated below with breakdown by crime category:

<b>Offence</b>	<b>2023</b>
Shop theft	193
Serious drug offences	99
Wounding and serious assault	75

<b>Offence</b>	<b>2023</b>
Miscellaneous thefts	71
Serious immigration offences (Note 1)	38
Criminal damage	33
Burglary	18
Others (Note 2)	218
<b>Total</b>	<b>745</b>

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

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

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**(Question Serial No. 2851)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Internal Security

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Cyber security remains a matter of public concern in the new financial year.

1. What are the ongoing efforts and new measures taken by the Government on combating cyber crimes especially preventing online scams? In particular, will publicity and education be strengthened? If so, what are the details? If not, what are the reasons?
2. The estimate for this year is 15.8% higher than that of last year. What items will the increased provision be allocated to and what is the breakdown of expenditures? What proportion is earmarked for tackling cyber crimes?

Asked by: Hon WONG Ying-ho, Kennedy (LegCo internal reference no.: 27)

Reply:

1. The Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) has been taking proactive measures on all fronts to combat deception and technology crimes. "Cyber Security and Technology Crime" will continue to be among the Commissioner's Operational Priorities in 2024, while "Quick Cash Crime", one of the Operational Priorities in 2023, will be modified to "Deception and Quick Cash Crime". The Commercial Crime Bureau (CCB) and its Anti-Deception Coordination Centre (ADCC), the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau (CSTCB), the Financial Intelligence and Investigation Bureau (FIIB) and crime investigation units of various Police Regions and Districts are all dedicated to cracking down on scams and technology crimes.

The HKPF is committed to work with relevant stakeholders and make use of technology to combat online deception. Among other things, a designated working group was set up with the Office of the Communications Authority and mobile network operators in September 2022. Upon the HKPF's request, mobile network operators have blocked or filtered over 7 600 online deception-related websites as at end-January 2024.

Furthermore, the HKPF rolled out various anti-deception measures with the Hong Kong Monetary Authority and the banking industry last year, including launching the "Fast Payment System (FPS) Suspicious Proxy ID Alert" in November. With the FPS platform connected to the "Scameter" now, during online fund transfer via FPS, the

matching function of the database can identify payees whose information is related to scam reports. In such cases, an alert message will appear on the confirmation page. As at 31 January 2024, the system has issued more than 264 000 alerts, warning off the high-risk transfers of nearly \$410 million. The HKPF will continue to strengthen publicity, while realising the extension of the mechanism to other platforms.

In addition, the HKPF set up an Anti-Deception Alliance (Alliance) with 10 major banks in end-November 2023, for which banks would station their staff at the Police Headquarters to communicate and co-operate with the HKPF in a more direct and immediate manner on the pursuit and interception of fraudulent funds and upstream scam intervention. From its official launch date on 27 November 2023 up to end-January 2024, 95% of the stop payment requests were responded to by banks within 2 hours, which is far more efficient than before. Regarding upstream scam intervention, the Alliance has successfully dissuaded 162 people from transferring funds to fraudsters as at end-January. As for interception of fraudulent payments, the ADCC continues to help minimise the loss of victims, and from its inception up to end-2023, it has successfully intercepted over \$12.5 billion payment to scammers.

The CSTCB launched a one-stop scam and pitfall search engine “Scameter”, and its mobile application “Scameter+” in September 2022 and February 2023 respectively. As at 31 January 2024, the “Scameter+” application has recorded over 228 000 downloads, the search engine has recorded a total of 2.3 million searches and issued around 400 000 alerts on frauds and cyber security risks. In February this year, some automation elements were incorporated into the “Scameter+” application to issue alerts to users browsing suspicious websites and receiving suspicious calls. A public reporting mechanism has also been introduced to enable members of the public to report suspicious websites or calls through the application to further enrich the database.

The HKPF has been adopting a multi-agency approach by collaborating with other government departments, regulatory agencies and industry stakeholders to conduct various anti-crime publicity and education campaigns. The HKPF will also continue to promote anti-deception messages through a multi-channel, extensive publicity strategy both online and offline, which include broadcasting anti-scam videos and TV specials, organising anti-scam talks, developing teaching materials for primary and secondary schools, setting up WhatsApp channel and accounts on other social media platforms such as Xiaohongshu, holding press conferences to explain the latest defrauding tricks, organising large-scale publicity campaigns, etc.

Recent anti-deception publicity and education campaigns of the HKPF include Project SILVERSHIELD launched in June 2023, under which ambassadors were recruited and trained jointly with other government departments, public and private organisations, so as to promote the message of “Scams are rampant; Tell everyone” with the aid of community power. To raise public awareness against phishing scams, the HKPF launched a new round of anti-deception campaigns in August and invited a celebrated musician to write a song to promote scam prevention. As August was also the Anti-money laundering Month, a series of anti-deception publicity activities were held to remind members of the public not to “rent, lend or sell” their bank accounts to others. In December 2023, the HKPF organised the Anti-Scam Charity Run, the first of its kind using anti-deception as the theme, which attracted more than 1 700 participants. In late January 2024, the HKPF held the Cyber Defenders’ Carnival 2024 at HarbourChill Wan

Chai to raise cyber security awareness with a total of 8 000 participants. In February 2024, the HKPF organised “The Little Grape Carnival” in the West Kowloon Cultural District featuring “The Little Grape’s Sea, Land and Air Parade” on 18 February, attracting the participation of over 25 000 people. The HKPF’s latest campaigns involve different types of “product placements” such as printing anti-deception messages on the coffee sleeves of café chains. In addition, the anti-deception ferry “Ping On” which commenced service in this February will use a new promotion channel to disseminate anti-deception messages. The HKPF will continue to step up publicity to raise public awareness of deception and technology crime prevention.

2. Regarding Programme (2) Internal Security, the estimate of expenditure for 2024-25 is \$147.7 million (15.8%) higher than the original estimate for 2023-24. The major items are set out below:

- Implementation of the Fire Safety Improvement Works Subsidy Scheme \$130 million
- Increase in general departmental expenses (such as increase in other hire of service fees and operational expenses of offices) \$14.27 million
- Increase in expenditure on salaries for civil service and contract staff \$3.43 million

Relevant personnel of the Security Bureau are responsible for policies on security, which cover work in combating cyber crime. We do not have a breakdown of the expenditure involved in this respect.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB042**

**(Question Serial No. 2852)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Internal Security

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

According to the Security Bureau, local terrorists have turned underground.

1. What is the current assessment of the level of threat of terrorist attacks in Hong Kong? What are the Government's responses and enhanced counter-terrorism measures in this regard?
2. Please specify the manpower and estimated expenditure on strengthening counter-terrorism work in 2024-25.
3. Will equipment be enhanced to combat terrorism? If so, what are the details? If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon WONG Ying-ho, Kennedy (LegCo internal reference no.: 28)

Reply:

1. Since the implementation of the Hong Kong National Security Law, social stability has been restored as a whole. In spite of the Police's success in cracking down on radicals and organisations advocating home-grown terrorism in recent years, there is still a trend for such activities to turn underground and become clandestine, and a small number of violent elements have made use of the internet to spread extremist ideas and incite radical behaviour, posing challenges to Hong Kong's security. At present, the threat of terrorist attacks faced by Hong Kong remains "moderate". The "moderate" level means there is a possibility of an attack, but there is no specific intelligence suggesting that Hong Kong is likely to be a target.

Regarding our anti-terrorism work, the HKSAR Government established the Inter-departmental Counter Terrorism Unit (ICTU) in April 2018, comprising members from the Hong Kong Police (HKPF), the Immigration Department (ImmD), the Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department (C&ED), the Correctional Services Department (CSD), the Fire Services Department (FSD) and the Government Flying Service (GFS). The ICTU endeavours to enhance Hong Kong's overall anti-terrorism and response capabilities in a comprehensive manner through intelligence gathering, enhanced training and counter-terrorism exercises, with a view to raising the anti-terrorism awareness of our personnel and further strengthening the co-operation and tacit understanding among departments in counter-

terrorism operations. At the same time, the ICTU has been promoting public education and publicity on counter-terrorism, including “Spot and Report”, and the Counter-terrorism Reporting Hotline and Counter-terrorism Reward have also been launched, in the hope of enabling members of the public and stakeholders from all walks of life to understand their own roles in the prevention of terrorist activities, and to respond promptly and report in a timely manner when encountering terrorist activities or violent attacks, so as to achieve the goal of “whole-of-community” participation in combating terrorism. The ICTU set up the Safe Community Hub with a counter-terrorism theme in October 2023 to further promote the “safe community” message to the general public through interactive and experiential activities. The Hub has been well-received by the public since its establishment and as at end-February 2024, a total of 63 activities have been organised, with around 2 000 visitors recorded.

2. According to its current establishment, ICTU has a total of 63 members coming from the HKPF, ImmD, C&ED, CSD, FSD and GFS respectively.

The ICTU will closely monitor the trend of global and local terrorism, and review the manpower and resource requirements of various departments in the ICTU in a timely manner to ensure that Hong Kong has sufficient counter-terrorism capability to meet the prevailing threats. In 2024-25, the ICTU will continue to deploy resources effectively and organise different types of public education and community activities regularly to strengthen our interaction and co-operation with members of the public and stakeholders in various sectors as well as enhancing their counter-terrorism awareness to further achieve the goal of “whole-of-community” participation in counter-terrorism.

The estimated expenditure on our counter-terrorism work involves details of the internal operations of government departments and is thus not suitable for public disclosure.

3. The HKPF will keep the equipment of its officers under constant review and will acquire and replace the necessary equipment based on operational needs. The expenditure incurred by the HKPF in acquiring various types of equipment and the related information involves details of the department’s operational deployment and is thus not suitable for public disclosure in order to avoid jeopardising operational effectiveness.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**(Question Serial No. 2853)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

1. How much Government expenditure in the new financial year is expected to be used for paying for the living expenses of torture claimants staying in Hong Kong?
2. How does the Government prevent abuses of the stored value food cards provided to the claimants, such as cashing in by selling their food cards at a price lower than the face value?
3. In the past year, did the Government carry out any investigation or enforcement action against the abuse of food cards? If so, what are the details; if not, what are the reasons?
4. Will the Government review the living expenses of the claimants? If so, what are the details; if not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon WONG Ying-ho, Kennedy (LegCo internal reference no.: 29)

Reply:

(1) and (4) Since 2006, the Government has been providing humanitarian assistance for non-refoulement claimants during their presence in Hong Kong 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. 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 interest. The Government's estimate of humanitarian assistance provided for claimants in 2024-25 amounts to \$583 million.

(2) and (3) The Government has been providing food assistance through electronic tokens (E-tokens) for claimants who are eligible to receive humanitarian assistance. For anti-counterfeiting and monitoring purposes, each E-token is printed with an invisible watermark logo of the food contractor, a unique serial number, information including the claimant's name, photo and signature, etc. for verification of his or her identity. Besides, claimants must present their own E-tokens and purchase receipts issued by the food contractor to the service contractor every month to verify their purchase situation. Claimants can only

purchase food items from the food contractors' outlets for their own use, with cigarettes and alcoholic drinks etc. being prohibited. In addition, the E-tokens and the purchased items are non-transferable and non-cashable.

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) has all along been monitoring the situation in accordance with the requirements stipulated in the contracts, through reviewing the reports submitted by the service contractor and the food contractor as well as conducting surprise visits. In case of suspected misuse of E-tokens, SWD, as well as the service contractor and food contractor, will follow-up and conduct investigations. For claimants who were found to have violated the terms and conditions of the E-tokens, the service contractor may suspend their use of E-tokens or change the means of provision to in-kind food according to their actual needs and individual circumstances. In the past year, a total of 12 claimants were suspended from the use of E-tokens and provided with in-kind food assistance in accordance with the actual needs as a result of suspected breach of relevant rules. In end 2023, SWD reviewed the mechanism of providing food assistance by the food contractor and implemented a series of enhanced measures, including setting purchase limits for those easily resalable food categories (such as rice and drinks) to prevent the claimants from bulk purchase for monetary gain as well as requiring the management of the food contractor to increase spot checks on the food outlets and enhance staff training for more effective identification of suspected abuse cases, etc.

In addition, in case of incidents involving criminal elements, SWD will refer the cases to the Police or relevant departments for handling. In the past year, SWD referred to the Police for investigation two cases which involved claimants who were suspected for reselling food items purchased with E-tokens for monetary gain.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**(Question Serial No. 1406)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Internal Security

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the work of the Narcotics Division (ND) of the Security Bureau (SB), will the Government inform this Committee of:

1. the expenditures of the ND of SB in the past 3 years;
2. the number of staff, ranks, proportion of permanent and supernumerary posts currently held by the ND of SB, as well as the expenditures involved;
3. the number, content and form of various anti-drug publicity activities provided in the past 3 years and those expected to be provided in 2024-25, as well as the expenditures involved, with a breakdown by type of drugs (including but not limited to No. 4 heroin, cannabis, CBD, methamphetamine, ketamine, cocaine and ecstasy-type drug)?

Asked by: Hon YUNG Hoi-yan (LegCo internal reference no.: 8)

Reply:

At present, there are 32 civil servants (including 3 directorate officers and 29 non-directorate officers) and another 3 contract staff members working in the Narcotics Division (ND) of the Security Bureau. There is no supernumerary post in ND. The expenditures for personal emolument in 2021-22 and 2022-23 are about \$30.12 million and \$31.09 million respectively, and the expenditures in 2023-24 (as at 29 February 2024) is about \$29.36 million.

The ND has been combating the drug problem by collaborating with the Action Committee Against Narcotics, various bureaux/departments or agencies (including the Education Bureau, the Department of Health, the Hospital Authority, the Social Welfare Department, the Hong Kong Police Force, the Customs and Excise Department, the Correctional Services Department, etc.) and other stakeholders through a multi-pronged strategy, comprising preventive education and publicity (PE&P), treatment and rehabilitation, legislation and law

enforcement, external co-operation and research. Out of them, PE&P is the first line of defence of anti-drug work.

The Government attaches great importance to enhancing community awareness of drug abuse, drug harms and drug trafficking, as well as encouraging early help seeking of drug abusers. As a whole, the ND actively implements anti-drug promotion through different media and channels, including those targeting individual drugs and crimes and also overarching ones. Therefore, it is not appropriate to provide breakdown or compare anti-drug promotional activities by drug types. ND launched a brand-new anti-drug publicity theme in September 2022, which includes an anti-drug logo, anti-drug ambassadors Agent Don't and Agent Hope, an anti-drug slogan "Let's Stand Firm. Knock Drugs Out!", a TV programme and theme song, and a set of TV and radio Announcements in the Public Interest (APIs). Over the years, the ND produces TV APIs and animated videos for more commonly abused drugs from time to time to remind the public of drug harms. For example, in order to enhance the public understanding of the harmful effects of cocaine abuse, the ND launched a new TV API and the corresponding radio API in January 2024, which describes abusing cocaine as sinking deep into a quagmire. In the API, apart from showing the physical and mental harm of cocaine addiction, it also warns the public the enormous debt burden brought about by failure to quit taking cocaine. Furthermore, the ND also launched an animated video in September 2023 about a young person with bright prospects being controlled by his "inner demons" and paid a heavy price for a wrong decision to try cocaine. Both videos have been uploaded onto the ND's website. Responding to the listing of cannabidiol (CBD) as a dangerous drug under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance (Cap. 134) from 1 February 2023, the ND launched the "CBD, Not for Me!" TV and radio APIs. In addition, ND encouraged the public to dispose CBD products before the commencement of the legislation and warned the public about the criminal liability of committing crimes relating to CBD upon the commencement of the legislation through different publicity channels, including TV, radio, public transport, webpages, mobile apps and the social media accounts and website of the ND, etc. The ND, the Hong Kong Police Force, the Customs and Excise Department and the Correctional Services Department have also rolled out a series of social media and publicity initiatives against cannabis and drug trafficking.

For wider and more effective publicity targeting the general public, the ND adopts geo-targeting by placing advertisements at specific locations, such as the airport, MTR trains/stations, cinemas and outdoor panels. With regard to the drug situation, the ND will also strengthen collaboration with different parties such as other government bureaux/departments, key opinion leaders and media organisations to launch suitable anti-drug programmes and make appeal to different sectors of the community. The ND will continue to formulate its publicity strategy having regard to the social environment and drug situation, and will review and update the strategy from time to time.

The publicity expenditures of the ND in 2021-22 were about \$22 million. Due to the resumption of normalcy after the pandemic as well as the drug situation prevailing at the time and the implementation of the new legislation on the control of CBD, the publicity expenditures in 2022-23 and 2023-24 were about \$30 million and \$29 million (revised estimate) respectively. As for 2024-25, the ND will suitably allocate resources to publicity having regard to experience of previous years and the latest drug situation.

- End -

**SB045**

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**(Question Serial No. 1409)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Internal Security

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Since 1 February 2023, cannabidiol (CBD) has been listed as a dangerous drug under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of, in relation to CBD, the number of prosecutions, the number of successful prosecutions, the number of cases successfully prosecuted and sentenced, the number of people involved, the number of minors involved, the age of the youngest involved, and the quantity of CBD seized, since the enactment of the legislation?

Asked by: Hon YUNG Hoi-yan (LegCo internal reference no.: 11)

Reply:

Since February 2023, cannabidiol (CBD) has been listed as a dangerous drug under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance. As at 29 February 2024, the law enforcement agencies (LEAs) seized more than 2 000 items of oils, skin care and pain relief products suspected of containing CBD. These involved 56 cases and 19 arrestees, including 2 arrestees under the age of 18, with the youngest arrestee being 16 years old.

The LEAs have instituted 2 prosecutions. The first case involved an incoming traveller who was convicted for possession of 2 personal care products containing CBD and other controlled items. The traveller had contravened the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance and was sentenced to a total of 2 months' imprisonment for 2 counts of possession of a dangerous drug and 1 count of possession of pipe fit and intended for the injection of a dangerous drug.

The LEAs will step up various inspections, closely monitor global drug trends, and strengthen the inspection of travellers, cargoes and mail parcels from high risk regions based on intelligence and risk management, with a view to intercepting the flow of CBD products into Hong Kong and continue the efforts in combatting crimes involving CBD. The Security Bureau and the relevant LEAs will continue to take efforts in implementing preventive education and publicity work to remind the public of the offence of possession of cannabis and related products.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB046**

**(Question Serial No. 2463)**

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:

The Police announced in 2018 that dedicated investigation teams had been set up in the 22 Police Districts with criminal investigation teams across the territory to handle cases of animal cruelty. In this connection, please inform this Committee of the following:

1. The number of officers involved in handling cases of cruelty to animals in each Police District;
2. The numbers of cases received, handled and prosecuted over the past 3 years, respectively;
3. The training courses that the investigation teams have attended, including the content of these courses;
4. The frequency of liaison and co-operation with other government departments and organisations through the Animal Watch Scheme each year;
5. The strategies devised and activities organised under the Animal Watchers Programme in the past year, the respective expenditures, and whether evaluation was conducted; if so, the details; if not, the reasons; and
6. The measures that the Police will implement to adapt to the amendment of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Ordinance later this year, including whether there are plans to establish an animal police team to investigate animal cruelty cases in a more proactive and professional manner.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hak-kan (LegCo internal reference no.: 5)

Reply:

1. To combat acts of cruelty to animals, the Police Force has established dedicated crime investigation teams in 22 police districts to handle relevant cases. The Animal Crime Police Teams are comprised of officers with experiences in investigating and handling serious crimes. The establishment of Animal Crime Police Team varies in different police districts. In general, a team comprises 1 Inspector, 1 Sergeant and 4 to 6 Police

Constables. The Force will review the manpower deployment from time to time and make appropriate deployment to meet operational needs.

2. The numbers of cases on cruelty to animals reported to the Force, persons arrested and prosecutions instituted under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Ordinance for the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

	2021	2022	2023
Number of cases reported	88	54	74
Number of persons arrested	55	32	60
Number of prosecutions instituted	21	20	17 (as at third quarter)

3. On education and training, the Force has invited officers from the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) and Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) to explain to the trainees of training programmes the laws related to cruelty to animals, skills in handling animals, experience in case investigation, and the inter-departmental co-operation mechanism. The Force also organises seminars from time to time and invites relevant officers from AFCD, SPCA and the Animal Crime Police Teams to share their experience so that the officers of the Animal Crime Police Teams can have a better grasp of the latest situation and trend of cruelty to animals.
4. In collaboration with AFCD, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, SPCA, veterinarian associations and animal concern groups, the Force introduced the Animal Watch Scheme (the Scheme) in 2011 to combat cruelty to animals. Later on, the College of Veterinary Medicine and Life Sciences of City University of Hong Kong was also invited to join the Scheme. The Scheme aims at consolidating co-operation among various stakeholders through a multi-pronged approach of education, training, publicity, intelligence gathering and investigation, as well as enhancing the efficacy of the Force's efforts in the investigation of such cases. The Force does not maintain the other breakdown requested in the question.
5. To enlist public support and assistance in combating acts of cruelty to animals, the Force implemented the Animal Watchers Programme (AWP) in 2021, with a view to agglomerating the strengths of animals lovers at the community level and on online social media platforms in the 4 directions of education, publicity, intelligence-gathering and investigation; raising public awareness on prevention of cruelty to animals; and encouraging the public to report in a timely manner and provide information that could help investigations. Through organising territory-wide large-scale events involving different communities and age groups, AWP aims to strengthen the awareness and care of the general public on the issue of cruelty to animals and animal welfare, as well as to disseminate the message of prevention of cruelty to animals effectively to the public.

In 2023, AWP initiated the "Synergy for Great" initiative, collaborating with various organisations to introduce the "Life-wide Animal Care College" educational programmes. This initiative featured the "Adventure King Summer Camp", educational seminars, visits

to the veterinary medical centre, and the “Hang-in-there Charity Challenge” in observance of World Animal Day.

The expenditure involved falls under the Programme of “Maintenance of Law and Order in the Community”. No specific breakdown is available.

The Force will continue raise awareness of preventing cruelty to animals through AWP and adopt a multifaceted approach in evaluating its effectiveness by a variety of indicators, including the numbers of cases reported and persons arrested as well as the level of overall public engagement. At present, most of the cases of cruelty to animals are reported to the Force by members of the public who voluntarily offer information for investigation. This shows that AWP has a significant impact on enhancing police-community co-operation and raising public awareness of combating cruelty to animals.

6. The Animal Crime Police Teams are responsible for the law enforcement of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Ordinance (Cap. 169). A sharing platform is available among the Animal Crime Police Teams of different police districts for them to share their investigative experience. The Force also provides specialised trainings on handling of cases of animal cruelty to the investigating officers to ensure the officers can carry out comprehensive investigations into these cases. In addition, the Force, AFCD and SPCA have established a co-operation mechanism whereby AFCD and SPCA officers provide professional advice and assist in investigation at the scene of an animal cruelty case where necessary.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB047**

**(Question Serial No. 3123)**

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force  
Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses  
Programme: (3) Road Safety  
Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (SIU Chak-ye)  
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The Government has indicated the installation of 2 000 closed-circuit televisions (CCTVs) at various locations across the territory within the current year. In this connection, please advise this Committee:

- of the estimated expenditure;
- whether policy objectives, e.g. crime detection rate, have been devised for the installation of CCTVs; if so, the details; if not, the reasons; and
- whether collaboration with other government departments is considered for the joint installation of CCTVs to enhance law enforcement efficiency; if so, the details; if not, the reasons.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hak-kan (LegCo internal reference no.: 39)

Reply:

To further enhance law and order and combat crime in a holistic manner, the Government plans to install closed-circuit televisions (CCTVs) in public places with high crime rate and pedestrian flow in all 18 districts in Hong Kong, with a view to safeguarding public security and enhancing crime prevention and detection.

At the initial stage, CCTVs will be installed at 615 locations with high crime figures territory-wide. Among them, the Police Force will install the first 15 sets of CCTV cameras in Mong Kok during March and April 2024 for testing the technicality, and then progressively commence the installation of the remaining 600 sets of CCTV cameras in mid-2024 after optimisation of the operation.

The Force has obtained approval for the initial stage of installation which includes the installation of front cameras and related equipment, back-end devices, management systems, etc. The Government will continue to review the remaining stages of installation and further arrangements will be made upon taking the financial resources and operational experience into account. As the estimated expenditure involves internal operational details of the Government and is classified as sensitive information, it is not appropriate to disclose such information.

Overseas experience suggests that the use of CCTVs to assist in law enforcement in different countries and regions has yielded remarkable results. For example, Mainland China has recorded a decrease of more than 40% in the number of some serious offences; whilst other regions (e.g. the United Kingdom, Macao and Singapore) have also seen a significant increase in the number of crime cases detected with the use of CCTVs.

As regards the feasibility of other government departments using the CCTVs, given the varied operational needs of different departments, the Force will examine individual cases in accordance with the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance and facilitate the enforcement actions of different departments in ways such as arranging for relevant departments to watch or record videos shot by the CCTVs. The Force will strictly observe relevant legislation to ensure that privacy of members of the public is fully protected.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB048**

**(Question Serial No. 3124)**

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force  
Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses  
Programme: (4) Operations  
Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (SIU Chak-ye)  
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the Operations under this Programme, please advise this Committee of the following:

1. Details on the specific ranks, formations and duties in respect of the decrease of 228 posts under Programme (4), as well as the measures in place to maintain current service standards with reduced manpower.
2. Information on the joint exercises conducted on land or at sea by the Police with Mainland authorities and other government departments in the past year to tackle illegal immigration and smuggling activities. This should include the objectives and locations of these exercises, the departments involved and the number of law enforcement officers participating.
3. Information on drills conducted by the Police in the past year to ensure the security of critical infrastructure, including the objectives, the number of participants, the departments, organisations, and groups involved, as well as the related expenditure.
4. In response to emerging threats, such as increasing cyber attacks, acts that endanger national security and various forms of terrorist activities, please provide information on any review or development of contingency plans by the Police in the past year.
5. To enhance the Police's management and enforcement capabilities for public events, please provide the current staff establishment designated for such duties.
6. Given the Government's plan to hold monthly events, including pyrotechnic and drone shows, in the coming year, please advise whether the Police will adjust the current staff establishment for managing public events and develop new guidelines and contingency plans for these occasions.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hak-kan (LegCo internal reference no.: 40)

Reply:

1. In 2024-25, there will be a net decrease of 228 posts in the establishment under Programme (4) “Operations” (involving creation of 8 disciplined service posts reduction of 210 disciplined service posts and 26 civilian posts). Details on the number of posts to be reduced and the salaries involved are tabulated as follows:

Rank	Number of posts to be reduced	Police Pay Scale (PPS)/ Master Pay Scale (MPS)	Monthly salary for the rank in HK\$ (from 1 April 2023)
Police Constable	-210	PPS 4 – 17	28,095 – 41,155
<b>Total (police officers)</b>	<b>-210</b>		
Office Assistant	-2	MPS 1 – 6	14,735 – 20,165
Senior Typist	-1	MPS 11 – 15	27,405 – 34,060
Typist	-2	MPS 2 – 10	15,665 – 25,815
Cook	-21	MPS 5 – 8	18,965 – 22,895
<b>Total (civilian staff)</b>	<b>-26</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>-236</b>		

For operational effectiveness, it is inappropriate to disclose the details on the reduction of establishment in individual formations.

To continuously enhance its efficiency, the Police Force has developed comprehensive human resources and strategic plans that cover various aspects, including staff training and career development. Officers are encouraged to pursue self-advancement and strengthen their professional capacity so as to serve members of the public more effectively. The Force deploys resources flexibly in response to policing needs, ensuring that the community’s service demands are effectively met. In general, policing services will not be affected by the reduction in establishment.

2. To combat illegal immigration and smuggling, the Force has strengthened intelligence sharing and has been collaborating closely with local and Mainland law enforcement agencies. These efforts include intensifying land and sea patrols, especially at black spots for illegal activities in the border of both sides, thereby enabling the timely execution of coordinated anti-immigration and anti-smuggling operations.

In 2023, the Hong Kong Marine Police conducted a joint sea exercise with Mainland law enforcement agencies. The exercise, attended by a total of 87 officers, simulated illegal immigrants entering Hong Kong from the western boundary of Hong Kong’s territorial waters using a speedboat. Officers were required to accurately detect the navigation route and deploy enforcement launches to stop and search the suspicious speedboat. This exercise aimed to test and enhance the communication, coordination and response capabilities of commanders, Command Centres and responding officers from both administrations.

3. Over the past year, the Force has continued to address the latest trends in terrorist activities by collaborating with various government departments and organisations. These include the Fire Services Department, Customs and Excise Department, Correctional Services Department, Immigration Department, Civil Aviation Department, Leisure and Cultural Services Department, Civil Aid Service, St. John Ambulance Brigade, Airport Authority, air passenger carriers, MTR Corporation Limited, and various transportation, security and venue management companies. A total of 17 cross-agency counter-terrorism (CT) exercises were conducted. These exercises, which simulated serial terrorist attacks, tested the operational and coordination capabilities of frontline personnel in response to terrorist incidents or unforeseen events. They have successfully strengthened the CT response capabilities and contingency planning of the involved departments and organisations, thereby enhancing their coordination and cooperation through the experiences gained. The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the number of participants or the expenditure involved.
4. The Force will continue to optimise its CT strategies and operational plans, strategically deploy CT resources, and maintain close liaison with other law enforcement agencies, including those in the Mainland and overseas, for timely intelligence exchange and risk assessments.

Furthermore, to combat novel types of cyber attacks, the Force will enhance public-private partnerships, conduct regular cyber security exercises and assist the Government in enacting new legislation, thereby preventing illegal acts that endanger national security and advocate terrorism through the Internet.

In terms of public-private collaboration, the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau (CSTCB) has launched several initiatives. These include the establishment of the Cybercrime Policing Advisory Panel since December 2022, the hosting of the International Symposium on Cyber Policing in September 2023, and the establishment of the Cyber Security Action Task Force (CSATF) in February 2024. Tasked with facilitating the exchange of cyber intelligence and sharing professional knowledge, the CSATF aims to raise awareness and improve defense capabilities against cyber threats in the industry and the wider community, thereby safeguarding Hong Kong's cyber security and preventing the spread of terrorism online to ensure robust national security.

In March 2023, the CSTCB and the Government Computer Emergency Response Team Hong Kong jointly organised the 7th Inter-departmental Cyber Security Drill, with the participation of information technology officers from 68 government bureaux and departments. Preparations for the 8th Inter-departmental Cyber Security Drill, scheduled for April 2024, are currently underway. These drills are intended to strengthen cyber security awareness and defenses within the government and industry, with the goal of enabling Hong Kong to become a safer and more efficient smart city that provides effective defense against terrorism and ensures the protection of national security.

On the subject of enacting new legislation, the Force has been assisting the Law Reform Commission in exploring the proposal of introducing new statutory provisions to tackle five types of cybercrimes. It has also been assisting the Security Bureau in drafting

legislation to define the cyber security obligations of critical infrastructure operators, with the aim of introducing a bill to the Legislative Council within 2024. By enhancing the protection of local web-based and critical infrastructure information systems, these initiatives will help eliminate cyber security hazards posed by those who engage in illegal online activities or advocate terrorism through the Internet, thereby safeguarding national security, public safety, and public order.

5. In handling public order events (POEs), the Force will conduct a holistic risk assessment and consideration based on the purpose, nature and expected attendance of such events, as well as the strategies used and experience gained from similar past events, to formulate overall strategies and contingency plans. The Force will also deploy manpower flexibly (including mobilising officers from various frontline and supporting units) and implement crowd management measures in response to the specific circumstances and needs. The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the staff establishment involved in managing POEs.

The Force will continue to review its manpower, equipment and deployment as appropriate to enhance its management and enforcement capabilities in handling POEs.

6. The Force remains committed to maintaining close liaison with relevant government departments and community stakeholders to exchange views and assess the situation in a timely manner. It will closely monitor the situation in various districts, including the people flow, traffic, and law and order issues, with a view to examining operational needs and deploying police manpower accordingly, thereby ensuring the smooth and safe conduct of all POEs.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB049**

**(Question Serial No. 0271)**

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:

The Police attach great importance on animal welfare and have assigned a designated Animal Crime Police Team in each of the 22 police districts with crime investigation units to handle animal cruelty cases across the territory. In this connection, please advise this Committee of:

1. the total number of reported cases of cruelty to animals received by the Force, the types of animals involved, and the respective numbers of prosecutions and convictions in such cases for each of the past 5 years;
2. the staff establishment and estimated expenditure in respect of the Animal Crime Police Teams for each of the past 5 years, whether the current staff establishment is adequate for coping with their daily work, and whether there are any plans to strengthen the staff establishment;
3. regarding the continued implementation of the Animal Watchers Programme, as mentioned under Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024-25, the number and types of activities organised since the launch of the Programme, the number of participants and the expenditure involved, as well as whether the effectiveness of these activities has been evaluated; and
4. the number of police dogs trained and the expenditure involved for each of the past 5 years, as well as the expenditure earmarked this year for training police dogs.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Pui-leung (LegCo internal reference no.: 11)

Reply:

1. The numbers of cases on cruelty to animals reported to the Police Force, persons arrested, prosecutions instituted and persons convicted under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Ordinance for the past 5 years are tabulated as follows:

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Number of cases reported	60	70	88	54	74
Number of persons arrested	36	50	55	32	60
Number of prosecutions instituted	27	14	21	20	17 (as at third quarter)
Number of persons convicted	23	13	16	23	15 (as at third quarter)

The Force does not maintain other information requested in the question.

2. To more accurately represent the role of the specialised criminal investigation teams assigned to animal cruelty cases in various police districts, these groups have been officially named “Animal Crime Police Teams” effective from 28 February 2021. The establishment of an Animal Crime Police Team varies across different police districts. Generally, a team is comprised of 1 Inspector, 1 Sergeant, and 4 to 6 Police Constables. The Force will review the manpower deployment from time to time and make appropriate deployment to meet operational needs.

The expenditure of the Force for investigating such cases falls under the Programme of “Prevention and Detection of Crime”, and no specific breakdown is available.

3. To enlist public support and assistance in combating acts of cruelty to animals, the Force implemented the Animal Watchers Programme (AWP) in 2021, with a view to agglomerating the strengths of animal lovers at the community level and on social media platforms in the 4 directions of education, publicity, intelligence-gathering and investigation; raising public awareness on prevention of cruelty to animals; and encouraging the public to report in a timely manner and provide information that could help investigations. Through organising territory-wide large-scale events involving different communities and age groups, AWP aims to strengthen the awareness and care of the general public on the issue of cruelty to animals and animal welfare, as well as to disseminate the message of prevention of cruelty to animals effectively to the public.

In 2021, the Force organised several large-scale activities related to crime prevention, including an event titled “AWP Fight Poisoning Campaign”, a video competition named “AWP Plank Challenge”, and a public education event called “AWP Community Mobile Classroom”. In 2022, the Force launched a series of educational and promotional activities under the banner of “AWP x 25A”. These activities included the “AWP Colours in 25A” colouring and drawing contest, school promotions titled “Animal Care Corner”, and the “BYOP (Bring Your Own Pet) Treasure Hunt”. In 2023, AWP initiated the “Synergy for Great” initiative, collaborating with various organisations to

introduce the “Life-wide Animal Care College” educational programmes. This initiative featured the “Adventure King Summer Camp”, educational seminars, visits to the veterinary medical centre, and the “Hang-in-there Charity Challenge” in observance of World Animal Day.

The events organised from 2021 to 2023 saw the physical participation of over 125 000 people, with approximately 7.55 million online engagements (e.g. social media posts) recorded. The Force will continue its efforts to raise public awareness about preventing cruelty to animals through the AWP initiative. A multifaceted approach will be used to evaluate its effectiveness, using a variety of indicators such as the number of cases reported, the number of persons arrested and the level of public engagement. Currently, most animal cruelty cases are reported to the Force by members of the public who voluntarily provide information for investigations. This demonstrates that the AWP initiative has a significant impact on enhancing police-community cooperation and raising public awareness in the fight against animal cruelty.

The expenditure involved falls under the Programme “Maintenance of Law and Order in the Community”. No specific breakdown is available.

4. The average number of serving police dogs of the year for the past 5 years is as follows:

Year	Serving police dogs (average number of the year)
2019	133
2020	132
2021	137
2022	154
2023	152
2024 (as at February)	153

The expenditure of the Police Dog Unit (PDU) includes expenses on the daily operation of PDU bases, dog food, medication and dog training equipment, as well as salaries for dog handlers, supervising officers and civilian staff, and costs for equipment. The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure on training police dogs.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB050**

**(Question Serial No. 0272)**

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:

The provision for 2024-25 is \$459.5 million (8.8%) higher than the revised estimate for 2023-24, mainly due to the increased provisions for salaries, departmental expenses and a net increase of 7 posts. In this connection, please advise this Committee of the following:

1. The details of the additional posts, including the respective post titles, ranks, duties, payroll costs, and whether they are permanent or supernumerary, as well as the nature of the work involved;
2. Of the 90 276 crimes reported in 2023, a total of 28 060 were detected (resulting in a detection rate of 31.3%). Please explain in detail the reasons of this relatively low detection rate; and
3. As mentioned in Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024-25, the Police Force plans to strengthen its crime investigation capability by improving the existing criminal intelligence systems. Please provide details on the estimated expenditure and staff establishment required for enhancing these systems, as well as the expected completion date for the system upgrades.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Pui-leung (LegCo internal reference no.: 12)

Reply:

1. In 2024-25, there will be a net increase of 7 permanent posts in the Police Force (comprising an increase of 28 disciplined posts and a decrease of 3 disciplined posts and 18 civilian posts) under Programme (2) "Prevention and Detection of Crime" for the purpose of enhancing territory-wide anti-deception capability and discharging cyber security work in relation to the 15th National Games in 2025.

Details on the posts to be created are as follows:

Rank	Number of posts to be created	Police Pay Scale (PPS)	Monthly salary for the rank (HK\$) (from 1 April 2023)
Chief Inspector	1	PPS 44 – 49	100,200 – 123,905
Senior Inspector/ Inspector	4	PPS 24 – 43	50,500 – 96,600
Station Sergeant	3	PPS 24 – 33a	50,500 – 74,590
Sergeant	12	PPS 17 – 28	41,155 – 59,080
Police Constable	8	PPS 4 – 17	28,095 – 41,155
<b>Total (police officers)</b>	<b>28</b>		

Details on the posts to be reduced are as follows:

Rank	Number of posts to be reduced	Police Pay Scale (PPS)/ Master Pay Scale (MPS)/ Model Scale 1 Pay Scale (MOD)	Monthly salary for the rank (HK\$) (from 1 April 2023)
Senior Inspector/ Inspector	-1	PPS 24 – 43	50,500 – 96,600
Police Constable	-2	PPS 4 – 17	28,095 – 41,155
<b>Total (police officers)</b>	<b>-3</b>		
<b>Total (civilian officers)</b>	<b>-18</b>	MPS 1 – 24 MOD 3 – 13	14,735 – 52,410 15,690 – 19,175
<b>Total</b>	<b>-21</b>		

- In 2023, a total of 90 276 cases of crime were recorded in Hong Kong, representing an increase of 28.9% compared to 2022. The upsurge was mainly attributed to an increase in deception cases, and also, to the rise in traditional crimes following the resumption of social normalcy. The overall detection rate was 31.1%. Leaving deception cases aside, the detection rate was 46.2%.

There were 39 824 cases of deception in 2023, accounting for 44.1% of the total number of crimes. The proportion of deception cases relative to overall crimes has been increasing, rising from 15.4% in 2018 to 39.9% in 2022, and continued its upward trend in 2023.

The number of deception cases is on the increase worldwide. The public's extensive use of the Internet and social media for social networking, communication, online shopping, job hunting and investment has opened up new opportunities for scammers. Most deception cases fall under the category of technology crime, which often involve cross-territorial elements. Fraudsters can overcome geographical boundaries via the Internet, reach their victims, and instantly transfer crime proceeds overseas. By exploiting technological advancements, fraud syndicates constantly evolve their modus operandi, which poses challenges to anti-deception efforts. Consequently, deception

cases have maintained a relatively lower detection rate, ranging from 10.6% to 13.2% over the past 5 years.

In 2023, aside from deception, various types of theft and "naked chat" blackmail that fall under technology crimes, many traditional crimes (such as robbery, arson and burglary) saw a significant decrease compared to the figures in 2018 (i.e. before the "black-clad violence" and the epidemic). In fact, the figures even reached new lows not seen in years or on record, while the crime detection rate has relatively increased, even achieving the highest on record. This indicates that the overall law and order situation in Hong Kong is stable. Indeed, when compared to other international metropolises, the crime rate in Hong Kong has consistently remained at a very low level.

In 2024, the Force will continue to focus on fighting and preventing crimes, with an emphasis on combating deception cases. In addition to stepping up enforcement and enhancing prosecution efficiency, the Force will rigorously combat the use of stooge accounts by deception syndicates in committing crimes through applications for enhanced sentencing. Approaches such as interception of fraudulent payments and upstream scam intervention will be adopted to minimise victims' losses. Furthermore, the Force will continue to raise anti-deception awareness of the general public through online and offline publicity and actively seek to maintain close cooperation with stakeholders from various sectors, relevant government departments and other law enforcement agencies, including those in the Mainland and overseas.

3. To effectively prevent and detect crime, the Force periodically pursues the upgrading and enhancement of its relevant criminal intelligence computer systems. With a funding of \$698 million approved by the Finance Committee (FC) of the Legislative Council, the Force has developed and incrementally implemented a Financial Data Analytic Platform since 2023. This platform harnesses advanced technologies and big data analytics tools to strengthen the analytical capabilities of the financial intelligence system. The Force is also preparing for the development of a Centralised Digital Image Platform for the proper storage, processing, retrieval and sharing of multimedia files with intelligence or evidential value. In this regard, the Panel on Security of the Legislative Council will be consulted and funding approval will be sought from the FC in due course. The Force will continue to employ advanced technologies to enhance its capabilities in collecting and analysing criminal intelligence, and in combating organised and serious crime, technology crime and deception.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB051**

**(Question Serial No. 0273)**

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force  
Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses  
Programme: (4) Operations  
Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (SIU Chak-ye)  
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The provision for 2024-25 is \$772.0 million or 14.9% higher than the revised estimate for 2023-24. The increase is mainly due to the increased provisions for salaries and departmental expenses, as well as an increased cash flow requirement for capital items, partly offset by a net decrease of 228 posts. In this connection, please advise this Committee of the following:

1. The reasons for the net decrease of 228 posts, the payroll costs involved, and whether the work of the Police will be adjusted due to the reduction of posts; if so, the details; if not, the reasons;
2. The details of the increased cash flow requirement for capital items;
3. The measures that the Police will take to step up efforts in combating the Mainland illegal immigrants, given that the majority of those arrested or intercepted had illegally entered the territory by sea, as well as the respective manpower and estimated expenditures involved;
4. The reasons for a decrease of 170 officers trained in internal security duties, from 1 020 in 2023 to 850 in 2024 as estimated; whether efforts to ensure public order and public safety during major security and public events will be affected; and
5. The details of the criminal acts that may threaten the internal security of Hong Kong, the operations to be conducted to suppress such criminal acts as mentioned in Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024-25, as well as the respective manpower and estimated expenditures involved.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Pui-leung (LegCo internal reference no.: 13)

Reply:

1. In 2024-25, there will be a net decrease of 228 posts in the establishment under Programme (4) "Operations" (involving creation of 8 disciplined service posts and reduction of 210 disciplined service posts and 26 civilian posts). Details on the number of posts to be reduced and the salaries involved are tabulated as follows:

Rank	Number of posts to be reduced	Police Pay Scale (PPS)/ Master Pay Scale (MPS)	Monthly salary for the rank in HK\$ (from 1 April 2023)
Police Constable	-210	PPS 4 – 17	28,095 – 41,155
<b>Total (police officers)</b>	<b>-210</b>		
Office Assistant	-2	MPS 1 – 6	14,735 – 20,165
Senior Typist	-1	MPS 11 – 15	27,405 – 34,060
Typist	-2	MPS 2 – 10	15,665 – 25,815
Cook	-21	MPS 5 – 8	18,965 – 22,895
<b>Total (civilian staff)</b>	<b>-26</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>-236</b>		

In order to maintain the sustainability of our public finances, the Government has strictly controlled the civil service establishment since 2021-22. The Government will continue to implement this initiative, and maintain the target of zero-growth in the civil service establishment in 2024-25. The Police Force has enhanced effectiveness and efficiency through re-prioritisation, internal redeployment and streamlining of work processes, so that various new policies and initiatives can be taken forward. Posts which no longer have operational needs would also be deleted after a review of establishments.

The Force makes flexible deployment to meet the policing needs. In fact, the Force has formulated comprehensive human resources and strategic plans for staff training, career development, among others, to continuously enhance its capability. Officers are encouraged to make self-advancement and strengthen their own professional capacity so as to serve members of the public more effectively. In general, policing services will not be affected by the establishment adjustments.

2. On capital items, the Force has taken into account the actual progress and requirements of the project items (including the replacement and procurement of plant, crafts, vehicles and equipment) when assessing the annual cash flow requirements, so as to maintain its service level.
3. To intercept illegal immigration activities, the Force has implemented stringent security measures and enforcement actions along the land and sea boundaries. These include enhanced inspections at gathering blackspots of illegal immigrants, high-profile land and sea patrols, and the set-up of roadblocks at strategic locations. Additionally, the Force maintains close collaboration and intelligence sharing with relevant local and Mainland law enforcement agencies, conducting regular joint operations to combat illegal immigration. For example, the Marine Police of Hong Kong and Mainland law enforcement agencies have strengthened their joint sea patrols. Furthermore, the Force has undertaken inter-departmental operations, codenamed “Champion” and “Powerplayer”, in collaboration with the Immigration Department and the Labour Department. These operations aim to address the issue of illegal immigrants, their unlawful employment and other illicit activities in Hong Kong.

In response to the trends of illegal immigration activities, the Force will timely deploy manpower from all frontline and criminal investigation units to conduct enforcement actions throughout the territory. No specific staff establishment or estimated expenditures will be involved.

4. To ensure public order and safety, the Force is committed to providing internal security training to the police officers concerned. As the training cycle does not align perfectly with the financial year, each year, 5 or 6 companies (comprising 170 officers each) will receive internal security training. According to the established training cycle, there is a total of 1 020 trainees across 6 companies in 2023, a total of 850 trainees across 5 companies in 2024, and it will return to a total of 1 020 trainees across 6 companies in 2025. The number of trainees has remained at a reasonable and stable level.
5. Hong Kong has emerged from social disorder and the pandemic, advancing from stability to prosperity. Nevertheless, a small number of local radicals continue to operate in an underground and clandestine manner, and external forces persist in disseminating seditious materials through various channels, aiming to instigate anti-government sentiments and threaten Hong Kong's internal security.

To combat crimes that endanger internal security, the Force actively collaborates with various law enforcement agencies and stakeholders. This partnership enhances sector responsiveness to related crimes through improved training, strengthened intelligence analysis and regular drills. The Force will maintain sufficient manpower to uphold internal security and to prevent and respond swiftly to relevant offences. The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the estimated expenditures for such efforts.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB052**

**(Question Serial No. 0274)**

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force  
Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational Expenses  
Programme: Not specified  
Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (SIU Chak-ye)  
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The estimate of the amount required in 2024-25 for the salaries and expenses of the Hong Kong Police Force is \$27,812,933,000, representing an increase of \$2,340,115,000 over the revised estimate for 2023-24. Additionally, it is expected there will be a net decrease of 273 posts in the Force for 2024-25. In this connection, please provide the following details to this Committee:

1. The details of the posts to be created, including the total expenditure to be involved, as well as the details of the posts to be deleted and the total expenditure thus saved;
2. The total number, post titles, ranks, duties and payroll costs in respect of the current vacancies in the Force, as well as any measures and strategies that the Force intends to implement to strengthen its efforts on recruitment in the future; and
3. The Force has conducted the Police University Recruitment Express (PURE) at 11 local universities to facilitate students' entry into the Force and launched the PURE (Mainland) to recruit Hong Kong students studying in Mainland China. Please advise on the total number of students engaged, the number of applications received, and the number of students employed through these programmes since their inception, with a breakdown by local students and Hong Kong students studying in the Mainland. Please also indicate whether the effectiveness of these recruitment exercises has been reviewed; if so, the details; if not, the reason(s).

Asked by: Hon CHAN Pui-leung (LegCo internal reference no.: 14)

Reply:

1. In 2024-25, there will be a net decrease of 273 posts in the Police Force, involving creation of 58 posts and reduction of 331 posts.

Details on the 58 posts to be created and the salaries involved are set out in the following table:

Rank	Number of posts to be created	Police Pay Scale (PPS)/ Master Pay Scale (MPS)	Monthly salary for the rank in HK\$ (from 1 April 2023)
Senior Superintendent	1	PPS 54 – 54b	150,265 – 159,130
Superintendent	2	PPS 50 – 53	128,510 – 144,440
Chief Inspector	3	PPS 44 – 49	100,200 – 123,905
Senior Inspector/Inspector	8	PPS 24 – 43	50,500 – 96,600
Station Sergeant	3	PPS 24 – 33a	50,500 – 74,590
Sergeant	17	PPS 17 – 28	41,155 – 59,080
Police Constable	18	PPS 4 – 17	28,095 – 41,155
<b>Total (police officers)</b>	<b>52</b>		
Supplies Assistant	1	MPS 1 – 10	14,735 – 25,815
Police Translator I	1	MPS 22 – 27	47,795 – 60,065
Police Translator II	1	MPS 10 – 21	25,815 – 45,640
Senior Traffic Warden	1	MPS 13 – 16	30,870 – 35,775
Traffic Warden	2	MPS 6 – 12	20,165 – 29,120
<b>Total (civilian staff)</b>	<b>6</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>		

Details on the 331 posts to be reduced and the salaries involved are set out in the following table:

Rank	Number of posts to be reduced	Police Pay Scale (PPS)/ Master Pay Scale (MPS)/ Model Scale 1 Pay Scale (MOD)	Monthly salary for the rank in HK\$ (from 1 April 2023)
Senior Inspector/Inspector	-2	PPS 24 – 43	50,500 – 96,600
Police Constable	-213	PPS 4 – 17	28,095 – 41,155
<b>Total (police officers)</b>	<b>-215</b>		
Calligraphist	-1	MPS 3 – 15	16,695 – 34,060
Office Assistant	-21	MPS 1 – 6	14,735 – 20,165
Supervisor of Typing Services	-1	MPS 17 – 24	37,585 – 52,410
Senior Typist	-3	MPS 11 – 15	27,405 – 34,060
Typist	-23	MPS 2 – 10	15,665 – 25,815
Artisan	-7	MPS 5 – 8	18,965 – 22,895
Cook	-21	MPS 5 – 8	18,965 – 22,895
Property Attendant	-10	MOD 3 – 13	15,690 – 19,175
Workman I	-9	MOD 3 – 13	15,690 – 19,175
Workman II	-20	MOD 0 – 8	14,730 – 17,355
<b>Total (civilian staff)</b>	<b>-116</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>-331</b>		

2. At present, there are approximately 6 000 vacancies for police officers in the Force. Details on the rank categories mainly involved are as follows:

Rank category	Police Pay Scale (PPS)/ Master Pay Scale (MPS)	Monthly salary for the rank in HK\$ (from 1 April 2023)
Inspectorate	PPS 24 – 49	50,500 – 123,905
Junior officer	PPS 4 – 33a	28,095 – 74,590

The Force has been adopting proactive recruitment strategies to attract high calibre candidates who have the competence to become a police officer, the affection for the Motherland and Hong Kong, and the passion to serve the public.

The Force regularly reviews its recruitment policy to ensure that the entry requirements are up-to-date while the Force’s competitiveness in the human resources market is maintained. With effect from 5 May 2023, the Force has adjusted the entry requirements. For the positions of police constable (including auxiliary police constable) and probationary inspector, the minimum height and weight requirements have been removed to align with other disciplined services. Applicants are also allowed to pass the visual acuity test with the use of spectacles or contact lenses, while the requirement for colour perception test remains unchanged. Moreover, for the position of police constable (including auxiliary police constable), applicants may choose to sit for a Recruit Police Constable Written Examination newly introduced by the Force.

Meanwhile, the Force has disseminated recruitment and publicity information through various media and social networking platforms, and has organised regular recruitment activities and projects, such as the Police Recruitment Experience and Assessment Day, Police Mentorship Programme, Police University Recruitment Express (PURE), Hong Kong Police University Recruitment Express (Mainland) (PURE (Mainland)), Diploma of Applied Education – Police Cadet Training, Auxiliary Undergraduate Scheme, Police Recruitment Buddies Scheme, Sportsmen’s Programme for Recruitment, Experience and Development, Auxiliary Police Recruitment Express, education and careers expo as well as publicity videos featuring “Recruitment Spokespersons”, etc.

The Force will adjust the approach of recruitment publicity in light of general social conditions such as the economic situation and demand in the labour market.

3. To facilitate university students’ entry into the Force, the Force has been conducting publicity work on university campuses. The Force has organised the PURE at 11 local universities since 2022, offering recruitment information and conducting selection process. As at 31 March 2024, a total of 594 local university students have applied for the position of probationary inspector, 44 students have applied for the position of police constable and 424 students have applied for the position of auxiliary police constable through the PURE. Among them, 701 applicants are at various stages of the recruitment process, and 50 applicants have joined the Force as probationary inspectors, police constables or auxiliary police constables.

The Force has launched the PURE (Mainland) since November 2022 in view of the rising number of Hong Kong students studying in the Mainland in recent years, which

aims to recruit them and facilitate early commencement of foundation training upon their graduation and return to Hong Kong. The Force sent delegations to Shanghai, Wuhan, Guangdong, Fujian, Chengdu and Beijing to deliver recruitment talks, provide recruitment related information, conduct on-site selection processes and organise a series of online and offline publicity campaigns for Hong Kong students studying in universities thereat. A total of 2 898 Hong Kong students studying in the Mainland participated in the activities, amongst which 852 students applied and participated in the on-site selection processes, and 852 applications (266 for the position of probationary inspector, 551 for the position of police constable and 35 for the position of auxiliary police constable) were received. As at 31 March 2024, 527 applicants are at various stages of the recruitment process, and 47 applicants have joined the Force as police constables or auxiliary police constables.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB053**

**(Question Serial No. 3089)**

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

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 2024-25 that the Force will continue to adopt a multi-agency approach to address the problems of juvenile delinquency and youth involvement in crime and drugs. Please advise this Committee of the following:

Please provide the actual number of collaborations among various types of organisations in combating juvenile delinquency, and indicate whether the effectiveness of the current multi-agency approach has been evaluated; if so, the details; if not, the reason(s); and

Regarding the youth crime situation, please detail the types of crimes involved, drug-related cases, and the number of convictions, disaggregated by age group (under 13, 13-15, 16-18, and 19-21) for the past 3 years.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Pui-leung (LegCo internal reference no.: 38)

Reply:

According to the categorisation by the Police Force, the number of youths arrested for committing criminal offences over the past 3 years, broken down by type of crime, is tabulated as follows (the number of youths arrested are divided into the age groups of 10-15 and 16-20 for statistical purposes):

Juveniles (aged 10-15)	2021	2022	2023
Wounding and serious assault	174	197	196
Shop theft	99	68	106
Indecent assault	65	68	99
Criminal damage	156	126	93
Miscellaneous thefts	84	91	92
Deception	12	9	39
Unlawful society offences	38	71	37
Arson	32	18	25
Disorderly conduct/fighting in a public place	18	28	24
Serious drug offences	89	43	18
Offence against public order	61	26	13
Robbery	28	4	13
Possession of offensive weapon	20	13	12
Others	238	223	268
Total number of juveniles arrested	1 114	985	1 035

Young persons (aged 16-20)	2021	2022	2023
Deception	155	331	550
Wounding and serious assault	198	190	233
Serious drug offences	341	255	160
Criminal damage	179	152	125
Miscellaneous thefts	136	80	123
Shop theft	108	73	90
Indecent assault	56	63	70
Disorderly conduct/fighting in a public place	51	49	63
Offence against public order	59	22	45
Unlawful society offences	48	55	32
Robbery	33	15	26
Possession of offensive weapon	42	20	20
Arson	5	10	11
Others	496	474	458
Total number of young persons arrested	1 907	1 789	2 006

In the past 10 years, the figures of youths arrested for committing criminal offences fluctuated, and the figure of 2023 represents a decrease of 11.7% from the average figure of the past 10 years.

The Force has consistently focused on juvenile crime by dedicating significant resources to deter youth from engaging in illegal activities. Initiatives include establishing the “Leadership Institute on Narcotics” and the Junior Police Call. Moreover, the Force has been working closely with the Education Bureau and the education sector to step up the crime prevention publicity and education targeting young students. Since February last year, the Force has partnered with the Education Bureau to routinely develop teaching materials and offer crime prevention training for primary and secondary school teachers in Hong Kong. In this vein, the Force has produced the “Youth Crime Prevention Booklet” series for 2 consecutive years to aid educators and parents in crime prevention education. In January 2024, the Force contributed to the Po Leung Kuk Teacher Development Day by sharing strategies to address youth crime and the latest crime prevention insights with 1 000 primary school principals and teachers. Additionally, the Force is scheduled to participate in the teacher development days of 5 secondary schools between March and April. Furthermore, the Force visited the Education University of Hong Kong in January 2024 to engage with 220 prospective teachers, who are pursuing diplomas or master’s degrees in education, on subjects including digital literacy, anti-drug initiatives and child protection. This aims to shed light on the trends in youth crime for more effective crime prevention education. In addition, the Force will organise the anti-cannabis month again in April and launch an all-new drama titled “KOL Interactive Anti-Drug Drama” to convey the anti-drug messages to campuses and the community in a lively manner.

For drug cases, the number of both juveniles and young persons arrested in connection with serious drug offences, mainly involving drug trafficking and possession of dangerous drugs, has shown a downward trend in the past 2 years. In 2023, specifically, the number of young students arrested in connection with serious drug cases dropped by nearly 50% to 48, which is attributed to the Force’s increasing collaboration with schools, parents, non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders in launching anti-drug publicity and education for students. The number of arrested non-students dropped by 36%.

The Force does not maintain a breakdown of other figures related to arrested youths as requested in the question.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB054**

**(Question Serial No. 3090)**

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 mentioned under Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024-25 that the Police Force will review anti-crime publicity programmes with a view to identifying themes that address specific crime problems for Force-wide implementation. In this connection, please advise this Committee of:

1. the staff establishment and estimated expenditure for anti-crime publicity programmes for each of the past 3 years; additionally, provide details regarding the resources allocated for such work in the current year; and
2. the specific criminal behaviours targeted by the programmes in addressing specific crime problems; and whether there is a timeline for the Police to initiate a review and implement the programmes this year; if so, the details; if not, the reason(s).

Asked by: Hon CHAN Pui-leung (LegCo internal reference no.: 39)

Reply:

1-2. The Publicity Sub-Committee of the Fight Crime Committee (FCC) annually reviews the results of the previous year's publicity programmes at the beginning of each financial year. It then determines the themes for the upcoming year, taking into account crime statistics, trends and matters of public concern. The themes are subject to FCC's endorsement following discussion and are subsequently implemented by the Police Force. The Force organises anti-crime publicity campaigns through various channels, including large-scale territory-wide activities, district talks, promotional videos and events co-organised with different stakeholders. Furthermore, the Publicity Sub-Committee also co-ordinates promotional activities conducted by the District FCCs, the Junior Police Call and the Senior Police Call.

In 2023-24, the Publicity Sub-Committee devised 4 themes for the fight crime publicity campaigns, namely, "Beware of Deception", "Let's Stand Firm. Knock Drugs Out!", "Enhance Law-Abiding Awareness Among Young People" and "Protect Children from Physical and Sexual Abuse." For 2024-25, the themes are "Beware of Deception"

“Let’s Stand Firm. Knock Drugs Out!”, “Enhance Law-Abiding Awareness Among Young People” and “Beware of Burglary and Theft.”

Since the anti-crime publicity programmes are implemented by various formations at the headquarters, regional and district levels, the Force does not maintain a detailed breakdown of staff establishment and the estimated expenditure for these initiatives.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB055**

**(Question Serial No. 3191)**

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:

The Police Force will strengthen its response in tackling deceptions and frauds through the e-Crime Processing and Analysis Hub (e-Hub) and Anti-Deception Coordination Centre (ADCC). Please advise this Committee of:

1. The total number of deception and fraud cases reported to the Police last year, the types of deceptions and frauds, the total amount of money involved, and, among such cases, the respective numbers of prosecutions and convictions; and
2. The staff establishment and the expenditure involved in respect of the e-Hub and ADCC.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Pui-leung (LegCo internal reference no.: 44)

Reply:

1. In 2023, the number of deceptions and frauds reported to the Police Force, the amount of losses, the detection rate and the number of persons arrested are tabulated as follows:

Number of cases	39 824
Amount involved (HK\$)	\$9.18 billion
Detection rate	11.9%
Number of persons arrested	7 043

The common types of deception and fraud reported to the Force as well as the amount involved in 2023 are tabulated as follows:

	Number of cases	Amount of losses (HK\$ million)
Online Deception	27 314	5,345.9
Common types of online scam		
E-Shopping Fraud	8 950	190.5
Online Investment Fraud	5 105	3,267.4
Phishing Scam	4 322	102.4
Online Employment Fraud	3 518	760.2
Social Media Deception	3 372	745.4
Email Scam	208	163.6
Telephone Deception	3 213	1,102.8
Guess Who	2 237	188.7
Pretend Officials	969	913.8
Detained Son	7	0.3

The Force does not maintain the statistics on the number of related prosecutions or convictions.

- In 2023-24, the staff establishment of the Anti-Deception Coordination Centre expanded from 49 in the previous financial year, with 32 being permanent establishment and 17 seconded from different Force formations, to 90. The number of permanent establishment increased by 5 to 37, and the remainder were filled by 53 officers on secondment from different Force formations or Post-retirement Service Contracts. Meanwhile, the establishment of the e-Crime Processing and Analysis Hub will expand from 26 since its inception in September 2022 to 28. Of these, 1 is a permanent post and the remainder are filled by officers on secondment from different Force formations.

The Force will periodically review the manpower and resources allocated to various formations and adjust the establishment in light of the latest crime trends and policing needs.

The relevant expenditures form part of the total expenditure under Programme (2) "Prevention and Detection of Crime". The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditures involved.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB056**

**(Question Serial No. 2328)**

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:

Under the Brief Description, it is mentioned that the Police will organise anti-crime publicity programmes to address specific crime problems, including “Social Media Deception”, “E-shopping Fraud”, “Naked Chat Blackmail”, “Email Scam”, “Online Employment Fraud”, “Online Investment Fraud”, “Telephone Deception” (including Pretend Officials Telephone Deception), etc. In this connection, please advise this Committee of:

1. in tabular form, the number of each type of frauds reported, the age range of the victims, their educational backgrounds and the amount of losses for the past 3 years;
2. the detection rate of online deception cases involving collaboration with overseas and Mainland criminal investigation agencies targeting cross-boundary criminal activities for the past 3 years;
3. the staff establishment and expenditure to be involved for anti-deception publicity in the coming year; and
4. specific plans and key performance indicators (KPIs) formulated to combat such crimes.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Wing-yan, Joephy (LegCo internal reference no.: 29)

Reply:

1. The common types of deception and fraud reported to the Police Force as well as the amount involved for each of the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

	Number of cases			Amount of losses (HK\$ million)		
	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023
Online Deception	13 859	19 599	27 314	2,965.8	3,073.8	5,345.9
Common types of online scam						
E-shopping Fraud	6 120	8 735	8 950	71.5	74.1	190.5
Online Investment Fraud	980	1 884	5 105	472.0	926.5	3,267.4
Phishing Scam (Note)			4 322			102.4
Online Employment Fraud	1 063	2 884	3 518	85.3	459.1	760.2
Social Media Deception	3 638	3 605	3 372	669.4	779.0	745.4
Email Scam	549	391	208	1,538.8	751.1	163.6
Telephone Deception	1 140	2 831	3 213	811.1	1,076.5	1,102.8
Guess Who	497	1 540	2 237	27.5	114.1	188.7
Pretend Officials	641	1 290	969	783.5	962.3	913.8
Detained Son	2	1	7	0.1	0.07	0.3

(Note) Figures related to phishing scam have been maintained by the Force since 2023.

The age range of the victims involved in telephone deception for each of the past 3 years is tabulated as follows:

	2021	2022	2023
Age of victims	12 to 96	14 to 100	15 to 107

The Force does not maintain breakdown statistics on the other details of the victims.

2. The Force spares no effort in combating cross-boundary criminal activities and maintains close liaison and collaboration with law enforcement agencies in the Mainland and overseas. This collaboration spans various areas, including the exchange of intelligence and experiences, professional training and joint operations. Additionally, the Force closely monitors global crime trends and draws on the experiences of both the Mainland and abroad in fighting crime to introduce suitable initiatives for Hong Kong. A recent example is the launch of the Anti-Deception Alliance last November.

On the enforcement front, the Force has conducted intelligence-led joint operations with law enforcement agencies worldwide to combat various types of crimes. In targeting online deception cases, the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau (CSTCB) and the Mainland public security authorities initiated a joint arrest operation, codenamed “Mengshi”, in June 2023. This operation neutralised two cross-boundary fraud syndicates and led to 19 arrests tied to at least 149 fraudulent cases involving more than \$60 million. In July, the CSTCB and the Mainland public security authorities executed another joint arrest operation, codenamed “Zhanzhen”, which disrupted a cross-border phishing fraud syndicate, culminating in 14 arrests. The Force does not maintain statistics on the detection rate of the cases concerned.

3. The expenditure incurred on anti-scam publicity and education forms part of the total expenditure under Programme 2 “Prevention and Detection of Crime”. The Force does not maintain the breakdown of the expenditure involved.

4. Deception syndicates utilise a multitude of stooge accounts to collect fraudulent payments and launder money. Therefore, targeting stooge accounts is a vital strategy in dismantling the fraud industry chain. In 2023, the Force arrested a total of 9 239 persons for involvement in various types of deception and money laundering offences, representing an increase of over 75% compared to 2022. Among these, about 6 500 were stooge account holders. The Force has reached a consensus with the Department of Justice to enhance evidence gathering and prosecution procedures for relatively simple and straightforward money laundering cases involving stooge accounts and to expedite prosecution. Moreover, the Force will continue to apply to the court for enhanced sentencing and has, since 2023, achieved a 20% increase in the sentences of 4 stooge account holders, leading to imprisonment terms ranging from 26 to 38 months.

In addition to stepping up enforcement and enhancing prosecution efficiency, the Force will rigorously combat the use of stooge accounts by deception syndicates in committing crimes through applications for enhanced sentencing. Approaches such as interception of fraudulent payments and upstream scam intervention will be adopted to minimise victims' losses. Furthermore, the Force will continue to raise anti-deception awareness of members of the public through online and offline publicity and actively seek to maintain close cooperation with stakeholders from various sectors, relevant government departments and other law enforcement agencies, including those in the Mainland and overseas, so as to create synergy in combating deception cases.

The Force has no plans to formulate KPIs for specific types of deceptions.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB057**

**(Question Serial No. 3243)**

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 Logistics Bureau (TLB). The reply was prepared by the Hong Kong Police Force and vetted by the TLB.]

Question:

1. Please provide the number of fixed penalty tickets (FPTs) for illegal parking issued by the Police Force under the Fixed Penalty (Traffic Contraventions) Ordinance (Cap. 237), broken down by month, for the past year.
2. Please provide the total amounts of fixed penalties paid by members of the public for illegal parking over the past 3 years.

Asked by: Hon CHOW Ho-ding, Holden (LegCo internal reference no.: 21)

Reply:

1.

Number of FPTs for illegal parking issued by the Police Force in 2023						
Month	January	February	March	April	May	June
Number	263 730	264 478	277 353	252 369	257 314	246 097
Month	July	August	September	October	November	December
Number	253 601	256 749	223 754	236 166	240 580	240 828
Total	3 013 019					

2.

Number of FPTs for illegal parking issued by the Force from 2021 to 2023			
Year	2021	2022	2023
Number of FPTs issued for illegal parking	3 302 160	3 363 471	3 013 019
Amount of fixed penalty received (\$ million)	\$1,057	\$1,076	\$964

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB058**

**(Question Serial No. 3245)**

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force  
Subhead (No. & title): ()  
Programme: Not specified  
Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (SIU Chak-ye)  
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

1. Please provide the number of reports received by the National Security Department each year since the enactment of the National Security Law (NSL).
2. Further to the above, please list the number of reports that were substantiated after further investigation, as well as the number of persons arrested each year.
3. Please provide the total number of persons arrested by the Police Force on suspicion of engaging in acts and activities that endanger national security, with a yearly breakdown since the NSL came into effect.
4. Further to the above, please provide the number of arrestees who have been convicted by court as of February 2024.

Asked by: Hon CHOW Ho-ding, Holden (LegCo internal reference no.: 23)

Reply:

The National Security Department (NSD) of the Police Force is a department established under Article 16 of the National Security Law (NSL) for safeguarding national security; its duties form part of the work in safeguarding national security and do not fall under Head 122.

The NSD of the Police Force launched the NSD Reporting Hotline on 5 November 2020. As at 8 March 2024, the Hotline has received more than 700 000 pieces of information in relation to national security.

Since the implementation of the NSL, as at 8 March 2024, a total of 291 persons (218 males and 73 females) aged 15 to 90 were arrested by the Police Force on suspicion of engaging in acts and activities endangering national security. Of these cases, over 170 persons and 5 companies were charged, of whom 112 persons have either been convicted or are awaiting sentencing.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY****SB059****(Question Serial No. 3246)**Head: (122) Hong Kong Police ForceSubhead (No. & title): ()Programme: (3) Road SafetyControlling 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 Logistics Bureau (TLB). The reply was prepared by the Hong Kong Police Force and vetted by the TLB.]

Question:

1. Please provide the number of illegal parking cases handled with tow trucks by the Police Force, with breakdown by Police Region, for the past 3 years.
2. Further to the above, please itemise the expenditures involved.

Asked by: Hon CHOW Ho-ding, Holden (LegCo internal reference no.: 24)Reply:

1. The table below lists the number of cases in which illegally parked vehicles were towed by the Police Force, with breakdown by Police Region, for the past 3 years:

Police Region	Number of cases in which illegally parked vehicles were towed away		
	2021	2022	2023
Hong Kong Island	702	643	641
Kowloon East	599	329	185
Kowloon West	921	1 395	1 495
New Territories South	572	390	269
New Territories North	203	230	222
Total	2 997	2 987	2 812

2. The Force does not maintain statistics on the expenditure involved in towing away illegally parked vehicles.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB060**

**(Question Serial No. 3247)**

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:

1. Please provide a list, categorised by type, of the number of online deception cases reported in each of the past 5 years.
2. Please provide a list, categorised by type, of the number of telephone deception cases reported in each of the past 5 years.
3. Please advise how the Police Force will combat online and telephone deception in the future.

Asked by: Hon CHOW Ho-ding, Holden (LegCo internal reference no.: 25)

Reply:

1. The number of cases of online deception, broken down by common types of online scam, reported to the Police Force for each of the past 5 years is tabulated as follows:

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Online Deception	5 157	10 716	13 859	19 599	27 314
Common types of online scam					
E-shopping Fraud	2 194	6 678	6 120	8 735	8 950
Online Investment Fraud	167	544	980	1 884	5 105
Phishing Scam (Note)					4 322
Online Employment Fraud	66	236	1 063	2 884	3 518
Social Media Deception	1 678	1 988	3 638	3 605	3 372
Email Scam	816	767	549	391	208

(Note) Figures related to phishing scam have been maintained by the Force since January 2023.

2. The number of cases of telephone deception, broken down by common types of scam, reported to the Force for each of the past 5 years is tabulated as follows:

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Telephone Deception	648	1 193	1 140	2 831	3 213
Guess Who	418	509	497	1 540	2 237
Pretend Officials	228	683	641	1 290	969
Detained Son	2	1	2	1	7

3. “Enhancing cyber security and fighting technology crime” remains one of the Commissioner’s Operational Priorities (COP) in 2024 and “combating quick cash crime” of the COP 2023 has been amended to “combating deception and quick cash crime”. The Force has been taking proactive measures on all fronts to combat deception and technology crimes. The Commercial Crime Bureau (CCB) and its Anti-Deception Coordination Centre (ADCC), the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau (CSTCB), the Financial Intelligence and Investigation Bureau and the crime investigation units of various Police Regions and Districts are all dedicated to cracking down on scams and technology-related crimes.

In collaboration with stakeholders, the Force is committed to leveraging technology in the fight against deception. The Force established a dedicated working group with the Office of the Communications Authority and mobile network operators, and since then, several initiatives have been implemented. Apart from blocking spoofed calls originating from outside local regions with the prefix “+852”, and sending text or voice alerts to users when they receive such calls, mobile network operators have blocked or filtered over 7 600 websites and nearly 3 200 telephone numbers associated with deception cases upon the Force’s request by January 2024, and have been on the technical front proactively identifying and blocking a significant volume of calls made using technical devices and suspending related services.

Last year, in collaboration with the Hong Kong Monetary Authority and the banking industry, the Force introduced various anti-deception measures. Notably, in November 2023, the Faster Payment System (FPS) Suspicious Proxy ID Alert was launched, connecting the FPS platform to the “Scameter” database. During online fund transfer via FPS, the matching function of the database can identify payees whose information is related to scam reports, and an alert message will appear on the confirmation page. By 31 January 2024, this mechanism had issued over 264 000 alerts, flagging high-risk transfers totaling nearly \$410 million. The Force will continue to step up publicity and implement such mechanism in other platforms.

In late November last year, the Force collaborated with 10 major banks in establishing the Anti-Deception Alliance (ADA), where bank representatives are deployed to work in the Police Headquarters to provide more direct and instant communication and assistance in intercepting fraudulent payments and issuing alerts. Since its official launch on 27 November 2023 until late January 2024, 95% of payment interception requests has been responded by banks within 2 hours, markedly improving efficiency. In respect of upstream scam intervention, the ADA has proactively prevented 162 persons from making further transfers to fraudsters by the end of January. For intercepting fraud proceeds, the ADCC continues to assist in minimising victims’ losses, intercepting over \$12.5 billion worth of fraud proceed since its inception until the end of last year.

The CSTCB launched a one-stop scam and pitfall search engine “Scameter” in September 2022 and the mobile application version “Scameter+” in February 2023. As at 31 January 2024, “Scameter+” has been downloaded more than 228 000 times, while the search engine has recorded over 2.3 million searches and issued approximately 400 000 alerts on frauds and cyber security risks. In February this year, automation elements were incorporated in “Scameter+”, enabling the application to issue alerts when users browse suspicious websites and receive suspicious calls. To further enrich the database of the search engine, a public “reporting” mechanism has been introduced, allowing members of the public to report suspicious websites or calls through the application.

In addition to stepping up enforcement and enhancing prosecution efficiency, the Force will rigorously combat the use of stooge accounts by deception syndicates in committing crimes through applications for enhanced sentencing. Approaches such as interception of fraudulent payments and upstream scam intervention will be adopted to minimise victims’ losses. Furthermore, the Force will continue to raise anti-deception awareness of members of the public through online and offline publicity and actively seek to maintain close cooperation with stakeholders from various sectors, relevant government departments and other law enforcement agencies, including those in the Mainland and overseas, so as to create synergy in combating deception cases.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY****SB061****(Question Serial No. 3260)**Head: (122) Hong Kong Police ForceSubhead (No. & title): ()Programme: (3) Road SafetyControlling 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 Logistics Bureau (TLB). The reply was prepared by the Hong Kong Police Force and vetted by the TLB.]

Question:

Fixed penalty tickets (FPTs) for illegal parking have recently been fully switched to electronic ticketing, thereby eliminating the issuance of handwritten tickets. In this connection, please advise on:

The increase in the annual total number of FPTs since the complete transition to electronic ticketing, compared to the period when all FPTs were issued by hand.

Asked by: Hon CHOW Ho-ding, Holden (LegCo internal reference no.: 39)

Reply:

Since March 2020, the Police Force has launched the e-Ticketing Scheme in phases across all police districts in the territory. Frontline enforcement officers have been able to access and input data on illegally parked vehicles via their mobile devices and instantly print out fixed penalty tickets (FPTs). This innovation aims to reduce human error in issuing handwritten FPTs and enhance overall enforcement accuracy. In the two years prior to the launch of the e-Ticketing Scheme, 2018 and 2019, the Force issued 2 026 513 and 1 424 744 FPTs respectively. The figures for FPTs issued by the Force for illegal parking over the past 4 years, following the introduction of the e-Ticketing Scheme, are listed in the table below:

Number of FPTs issued for illegal parking							
2020		2021		2022		2023	
Total	Electronic	Total	Electronic	Total	Electronic	Total	Electronic
2 707 869	1 068 795 (39.5%)	3 302 160	2 366 658 (71.7%)	3 363 471	3 075 398 (91.4%)	3 013 019	2 955 229 (98.1%)

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB062**

**(Question Serial No. 0378)**

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 estimated expenditure for the above Programme for 2024-25 is 8.8% higher than the revised estimate for 2023-24. Under “Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024-25”, the Government has noted that the Police will “maintain close liaison with counterparts in the Mainland, Macao and overseas jurisdictions in combatting cross-boundary and transnational crime and exchange of intelligence, skills and experience”. In this connection, please advise this Committee of the following:

1. Given the frequent cross-boundary population flows post-pandemic, has the Police studied the evolving trends in cross-boundary and transnational crime, including but not limited to deception and drug trafficking? Please provide details on the manpower and expenditure allocated to these initiatives over the past year;
2. the manpower and resources that will be allocated to study and combat cross-boundary and transnational crime in the coming year, and whether there will be a particular focus on the types of crime that are becoming more prevalent in Hong Kong, such as deception, with a specific emphasis on cyber deception; and
3. whether the Police have adopted and implemented skills and experiences from the Mainland, Macao and overseas jurisdictions in combating cross-boundary and transnational crime, especially deception. If so, please provide details and the estimated manpower and expenditure involved; if not, the reasons.

Asked by: Hon CHOW Man-kong (LegCo internal reference no.: 13)

Reply:

- 1-3. The Police Force spares no effort in combating cross-boundary criminal activities and maintains close liaison and collaboration with law enforcement agencies in the Mainland and overseas. This collaboration spans various areas, including the exchange of intelligence and experiences, professional training and joint operations. Additionally, the Force closely monitors global crime trends and draws on the experiences of both the Mainland and abroad in fighting crime to develop and implement measures suitable for

Hong Kong. A recent example is the launch of the Anti-Deception Alliance last November.

On the enforcement front, the Force has conducted intelligence-led joint operations with law enforcement agencies worldwide to combat various types of crimes. To combat triads and organised crime, authorities from Hong Kong, Guangdong and Macao mounted operation “THUNDERBOLT 2023” from June to September 2023, resulting in the arrest of 6 400 persons in Hong Kong. In targeting online deception cases, the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau (CSTCB) and Mainland public security authorities initiated a joint arrest operation, codenamed “Mengshi”, in June 2023. This operation neutralised two cross-boundary fraud syndicates and led to 19 arrests tied to at least 149 fraudulent cases involving more than \$60 million. In July, the CSTCB and the Mainland public security authorities executed another joint arrest operation, codenamed “Zhanzhen”, which disrupted a cross-border phishing fraud syndicate, culminating in 14 arrests. To address cross-boundary drug trafficking, the Narcotics Bureau conducted 8 joint operations with law enforcement agencies in the Mainland and overseas last year, netting a total of 110 arrests. These operations resulted in the seizure of 2.4 tonnes of cocaine, approximately 1.1 tonnes of “Ice” and around 14 kilograms of heroin, with a total market value of about \$5 billion.

In efforts to minimise the losses of fraud victims, the Anti-Deception Coordination Centre (ADCC) of the Commercial Crime Bureau has developed collaborations with Mainland and overseas law enforcement agencies to enhance its capability in intercepting crime proceeds. In October 2019, it established the International Stop-Payment Mechanism with the Financial Crimes Unit of INTERPOL. This mechanism allows most member states to make mutual stop-payment requests, thereby enabling the Force to combat cross-border deception more effectively. As of December 2023, the ADCC has successfully intercepted more than \$12.5 billion in 4 721 deception cases where payments had already been made to local and overseas banks.

On tackling money laundering, the Joint Financial Intelligence Unit (JFIU) of the Financial Intelligence and Investigation Bureau manages the suspicious transaction reporting regime for Hong Kong. Its role is to receive, analyse and maintain suspicious transaction reports, and to disseminate them to the appropriate investigation units. The JFIU also co-ordinates and communicates with JFIU stakeholders such as policy bureaux, financial regulators and professional bodies as well as Mainland and overseas financial intelligence units on the formulation of anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing policies and legislation, and also on intelligence exchange.

To foster international and public-private collaboration in policing, the Force organised the International Symposium on Cyber Policing in September 2023. The event was attended by over 200 individuals, including 110 senior law enforcement officers, members, experts and academics from the Mainland, Macao, INTERPOL and 35 overseas countries, along with approximately 100 local working partners of the Force. During the symposium, 18 distinguished scholars from renowned universities and experts from the cyber technology industry, specialising in digital finance, communications technology, and cybersecurity, were invited to deliver keynote speeches and lead panel discussions for in-depth exploration into issues related to cyber

policing, with an aim to better address the evolving trends of cybercrime in the context of globalisation.

The Force will continue to proactively exchange intelligence and hold working meetings with other law enforcement agencies, including those from the Mainland and abroad, to keep officers abreast of the latest crime trends and investigative techniques. This effort extends to a variety of crimes, notably online fraud, and is intended to strengthen international cooperation. To foster intelligence exchange with INTERPOL and law enforcement agencies of other countries for combating cross-border crimes, 1 Superintendent has been seconded to INTERPOL General Secretariat in Lyon, France, and 1 Superintendent, along with 1 Chief Inspector, to INTERPOL Global Complex for Innovation in Singapore. Last year, following a directive from the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering, the Financial Intelligence and Investigation Bureau worked with Singaporean counterparts and INTERPOL to lead a study on online scams and money laundering. This collaboration aims to enhance the exchange of intelligence and knowledge.

The expenditure for the above initiatives forms part of the total expenditure under Programme (2) “Prevention and Detection of Crime”. The Force does not maintain the breakdown of the expenditure involved.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB063**

**(Question Serial No. 0978)**

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force  
Subhead (No. & title): ()  
Programme: Not specified  
Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (SIU Chak-ye)  
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding efforts to combat absconding, please advise on:

- (a) the numbers of persons arrested, convicted and currently wanted for absconding since the National Security Law (NSL) took effect, with a breakdown by month; and
- (b) the most severe sentence handed down to those convicted of absconding since the enactment of the NSL, and the maximum and minimum penalties applicable.

Asked by: Hon HO Chun-yin, Steven (LegCo internal reference no.: 31)

Reply:

- (a) & (b) The National Security Department of the Police Force is a department established under Article 16 of the National Security Law for safeguarding national security; its duties form part of the work in safeguarding national security and do not fall under Head 122.

As at December 2023, of the 10 279 persons who were arrested in connection with the black-clad riots in 2019, 35 were wanted for failing to appear before the court and 26 did not report back to the Force while on Police bail pending further investigation. The Force does not maintain other information requested in the question.

Every individual must take responsibilities, including legal liabilities, for his or her action. The Force strongly condemns attempts to evade legal liabilities by jumping bail and absconding. In light of the actual circumstances, the Force will do their utmost to track down the whereabouts of the fugitive offenders through various means in accordance with the law and arrest them. The culprits will be held legally accountable for jumping bail and the investigation of the original cases will be carried on.

Section 9L of the Criminal Procedure Ordinance (Cap. 221) stipulates that a person admitted to bail who, without reasonable cause, fails to surrender to custody as shall have been appointed by a court, commits an offence which renders

the person liable on summary conviction to a fine of \$100,000 and to imprisonment for 6 months, and on conviction upon indictment to a fine of any amount and to imprisonment for 12 months.

In addition, the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance empowers the Secretary for Security to specify by gazette an individual who has absconded, and, depending on the situation and subject to certain conditions being fulfilled, the applicable measures to be taken. These include prohibiting the provision of funds to, or dealing with funds of, an absconder; suspending an absconder's qualification to practise, or the permission or registration required for operating businesses or employment; temporarily removing an absconder from holding the office of the director of a company; and cancelling the absconder's HKSAR passport.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB064**

**(Question Serial No. 3128)**

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:

Regarding the illegal trans-boundary operations by Mainland oyster farmers at Deep Bay, please advise on:

- (a) the manpower currently deployed by the Government to patrol in the waters around Urmston Road, the numbers of patrols conducted and the division of work; and
- (b) the numbers of enforcement actions against illegal activities of Mainland oyster farmers and their effectiveness over the past 3 years (2021-22 to 2023-24), as well as the penalties and fines imposed.

Asked by: Hon HO Chun-yin, Steven (LegCo internal reference no.: 41)

Reply:

- (a) The Deep Bay Sub-unit of Marine West Division of the Police Force is responsible for regular patrol and law enforcement in the waters at Deep Bay. The sub-unit currently has an establishment of 61 police officers, comprising 1 Inspector, 3 Station Sergeants, 16 Sergeants and 41 Police Constables, who are deployed to the Tsim Bei Tsui Marine Police Post, 2 Police barges and their respective patrol craft.

The numbers of “Anti-illegal Immigrant Operation” carried out by the Deep Bay Sub-unit and various Marine Police units in the waters at Deep Bay in 2021, 2022, 2023 and the first 2 months of 2024 are as follows:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of operations</b>
2021	468
2022	322
2023	825
2024 (as at 29 February 2024)	97

- (b) The numbers of Mainland illegal immigrants arrested by the Deep Bay Sub-unit and various Marine Police units in the waters at Deep Bay in 2021, 2022, 2023 and the first 2 months of 2024 are as follows:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of persons arrested</b>	<b>Supplementary notes</b>
2021	34	All illegal immigrants have been referred to the Immigration Department for action.  No refusal notice (ID122) was issued to Mainland oyster farmers who were suspected of breaching the requirements.
2022	29	
2023	36	
2024 (as at 29 February 2024)	4	

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB065**

**(Question Serial No. 1387)**

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): (000) General Departmental Expenses

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

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

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Since mid-2023, there was a steep increase in the number of young people interested in joining the Police Force. On one hand, this surge can be attributed to the diligent efforts of the Recruitment Division. On the other hand, it highlights the growing community recognition of the Force's contributions. It is stated in this Report that the estimated establishment will exceed 38 000 posts in 2024. In this connection, please advise this Committee of the following:

Should the Force be in a position to significantly expand its establishment, will it consider creating additional professional formations or further delineating police districts to enhance service quality, and increasing the estimates for such an expansion?

Asked by: Hon HO Kwan-yiu, Junius (LegCo internal reference no.: 17)

Reply:

In 2023-24 and 2024-25, the Police Force's establishment ceilings are set at 38 265 and 37 992 respectively. In 2024-25, there will be a net decrease of 273 posts in the Force, involving creation of 58 posts and reduction of 331 posts. To continuously enhance its efficiency, the Force has developed comprehensive human resources and strategic plans that cover various aspects, including staff training and career development. Officers are encouraged to pursue self-advancement and strengthen their professional capacity, so as to serve the public more effectively. The Force will deploy resources flexibly in response to policing needs, ensuring that the community's service demands are effectively met.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB066**

**(Question Serial No. 2114)**

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:

Regarding technology crime, please advise this Committee of the following:

- 1) The number of technology crime cases reported in each of the past 3 years (from 2021-22 to 2023-24), with a breakdown by type;
- 2) The number of technology crime cases detected in each of the past 3 years (from 2021-22 to 2023-24), along with the initiatives taken by the Police to better protect the public and to strengthen its efforts in combating technology crime; and
- 3) Since it is noted under Matters Requiring Special Attention that the Police will enhance their capability in tackling technology crime and financial investigation, please advise on the initiatives to be undertaken to achieve these goals, and whether, based on the trends in technology crime, additional manpower and resources will be allocated as required.

Asked by: Hon KAN Wai-mun, Carmen (LegCo internal reference no.: 35)

Reply:

- 1) The number of common technology crime cases reported to the Police Force in each of the past 3 years is tabulated as follows:

	Number of Cases		
	2021	2022	2023
Technology Crime	16 159	22 797	34 112
Online Deception	13 859	19 599	27 314
Common Types of Online Scam			
<i>Online Shopping Fraud</i>	6 120	8 735	8 950
<i>Online Investment Fraud</i>	980	1 884	5 105
<i>Phishing Scam (Note)</i>			4 322
<i>Online Employment Fraud</i>	1 063	2 884	3 518
<i>Social Media Deception</i>	3 638	3 605	3 372
<i>Email Scam</i>	549	391	208
Misuse of Computer	142	192	3 471
<i>Account Abuse</i>	123	168	3 434
<i>Hacking Activities</i>	18	24	37
<i>Distributed Denial-of-service Attacks</i>	1	0	0
Internet Blackmail	1 317	1 557	2 428
<i>Naked Chat</i>	1 159	1 402	2 117
<i>Other Internet Blackmail</i>	158	155	311

(Note): “Phishing scam” has been categorised within the technology crime statistics by the Force since January 2023.

- 2-3) The number of deception and technology crime cases is on the increase worldwide. The public’s extensive use of the Internet and social media for social networking, communication, online shopping, job hunting and investment has opened up new opportunities for scammers. Most deception cases fall under the category of technology crime, which often involve cross-territorial elements. Fraudsters can overcome geographical boundaries via the Internet, reach their victims, and instantly transfer crime proceeds overseas. Furthermore, fraud syndicates often operate from regions with weak rule of law, committing crimes remotely and complicating enforcement efforts. By exploiting technological advancements, these syndicates constantly evolve their modus operandi, which poses challenges to anti-deception efforts. Consequently, deception and technology crime cases have achieved a relatively lower detection rate, which ranged from 8.8% to 9.9% in the past 3 years.

The Force is committed to taking proactive measures to combat technology crime and money laundering activities, primarily through the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau (CSTCB) and the Financial Intelligence and Investigation Bureau (FIIB).

“Enhancing cyber security and combating technology crime” is among Commissioner’s Operational Priorities in 2024. The Force will continue to enhance its capability in combating technology crimes and handling cyber security incidents, as well as stepping up collaboration, intelligence exchange and law enforcement with relevant stakeholders

and law enforcement agencies, such as the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer and the Hong Kong Productivity Council. In addition, the Cybercrime Policing Advisory Panel (CPAP) of the CSTCB was set up in December 2022, comprising 12 panel members who are experts and leaders from the academia, the education sector, commercial chambers, the financial sector, the information technology sector, the telecommunications sector and various public entities. The CPAP assists the Force in formulating short, medium and long term strategic directions in order to strengthen the Force's digital policing capabilities in combating cybercrimes. As of December 2023, 4 meetings had been convened by the CPAP.

On another front, the CSTCB hosted the International Symposium on Cyber Policing in September 2023. The event was attended by over 200 individuals, including 110 senior law enforcement officers, members, experts and academics from the Mainland, Macao, INTERPOL and 35 overseas countries, along with approximately 100 local working partners of the Force. During the symposium, 18 distinguished scholars from renowned universities and experts from the cyber technology industry, specialising in digital finance, communications technology, and cybersecurity, were invited to deliver keynote speeches and lead panel discussions for in-depth exploration into issues related to cyber policing. The symposium not only provided a platform for international law enforcement and public and private organisations to exchange insights but also fostered international collaboration in policing to better address the evolving trends of cybercrime in the context of globalization. Additionally, the CSTCB has regularly conducted training programmes to bolster police officers' expertise in handling technology crime, with two courses accredited at Level 4 and one at Level 5 of the Qualifications Framework respectively.

On financial investigation, the Force has been strengthening its professional capability in financial intelligence analysis and financial investigations, including the founding of the Money Laundering Expert Cadre in October 2022, a volunteer secondary duty cadre with currently more than 50 officers to assist the frontline in investigating money laundering cases and to testify as expert witnesses in court hearings. With FIIB's Financial Data Analytic Platform, funded by a \$698 million allocation from the Legislative Council and incrementally implemented since 2023, the financial intelligence system's analytical capabilities have been significantly enhanced through advanced technologies and big data analytics tools. To combat money laundering, the Force will continue to enhance the knowledge and techniques of police officers and the industry stakeholders in financial investigation by consistently offering local and international courses, as well as refining the mechanism for collaborating with local financial institutions, international organisations and law enforcement agencies from the Mainland and abroad.

The Force will periodically review and the manpower and resources allocated to various formations and adjust the staff establishment in response to the latest crime trends.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**(Question Serial No. 2115)**

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:

In Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024-25 under Programme (2), the Police Force will maintain a high standard of investigation and provide professional service in all cases of domestic violence and continue to adopt a multi-disciplinary approach with other stakeholders in tackling the problem. In this connection, please inform this Committee of the following:

- 1) The number of cases involving domestic violence for each of the past 3 years (2021-22 to 2023-24), categorised by police division, case category and victim type (e.g. children); and
- 2) Details on how the Police Force will continue to adopt a multi-disciplinary approach with other stakeholders to tackle the problem of domestic violence when handling such cases.

Asked by: Hon KAN Wai-mun, Carmen (LegCo internal reference no.: 36)

Reply:

- 1) The Police Force attaches great importance to offences of domestic violence. Police officers will handle and investigate such cases with empathy, professionalism, fairness and impartiality.

Domestic violence refers to any cases involving assault or a breach of the peace that occurs between persons having marital or intimate partner relationships. These relationships refer to married, separated or divorced couples, cohabitants or former cohabitants, and lovers or former lovers.

Domestic Conflict Reports can be classified as “Domestic Violence (Crime)” (including more serious criminal cases such as murder, wounding, rape, indecent assault, criminal intimidation, etc.); “Domestic Violence (Miscellaneous)” (cases including common assault and a breach of the peace); and “Domestic Incidents” (cases not involving a breach of the peace or crime elements such as disputes and nuisance).

The numbers of Domestic Conflict Reports received by the Force in the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

	2021	2022	2023
Domestic Violence (Crime)	1 196	1 128	1 235
Domestic Violence (Miscellaneous)	470	437	470
Domestic Incidents	7 646	7 450	7 650
Total number of Domestic Conflict Reports	9 312	9 015	9 355

The numbers of cases involving Domestic Violence (Crime) categorised by gender of the victims in the past 3 years are set out below:

	2021	2022	2023
Male	278	287	315
Female	918	841	920

The Force does not maintain statistics on victim type.

The numbers of cases involving Domestic Violence (Crime) and Domestic Violence (Miscellaneous) categorised by police district in the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

Domestic Violence (Crime)																							
Year	Hong Kong Island Region				Kowloon East Region				Kowloon West Region				New Territories North Region				New Territories South Region				Marine Region	Total	
	Eastern District	Wan Chai District	Central District	Western District	Wong Tai Sin District	Kwun Tong District	Tseung Kwan O District	Sau Mau Ping District	Mong Kok District	Sham Shui Po District	Yau Tsim District	Kowloon City District	Tai Po District	Tuen Mun District	Yuen Long District	Border District	Tsuen Wan District	Kwai Tsing District	Shatin District	Lantau District	Airport District		
2023	50	25	16	33	73	37	30	55	71	121	85	73	99	84	132	21	36	69	87	31	3	4	1 235
2022	45	19	18	27	56	39	46	74	51	98	68	64	101	65	131	22	40	79	63	19	0	3	1 128
2021	39	37	24	38	52	53	48	77	67	88	73	68	69	71	132	10	46	91	87	23	1	2	1 196

Domestic Violence (Miscellaneous)																							
Year	Hong Kong Island Region				Kowloon East Region				Kowloon West Region				New Territories North Region				New Territories South Region				Marine Region	Total	
	Eastern District	Wan Chai District	Central District	Western District	Wong Tai Sin District	Kwun Tong District	Tseung Kwan O District	Sau Mau Ping District	Mong Kok District	Sham Shui Po District	Yau Tsim District	Kowloon City District	Tai Po District	Tuen Mun District	Yuen Long District	Border District	Tsuen Wan District	Kwai Tsing District	Shatin District	Lantau District	Airport District		
2023	12	4	5	12	24	9	11	22	25	59	30	35	65	29	57	4	23	19	13	10	2	0	470
2022	7	5	0	8	20	17	7	25	27	52	35	40	39	26	47	3	24	16	26	11	1	1	437
2021	6	11	11	14	18	9	9	31	23	39	38	36	40	23	49	12	36	27	28	9	0	1	470

- 2) Domestic violence is not only a crime but also a social issue. Therefore, a collective effort is needed to handle domestic violence cases. The Force has been handling such cases through an inter-departmental and multi-disciplinary approach, with a view to achieving the dual objectives of protecting the personal safety of the victims and their families as well as bringing the offenders to justice.

A referral mechanism has been established between the Force and the Social Welfare Department (SWD) since 2003 through which the Force, in general, having obtained the consent from victims of domestic violence cases, refers cases to the SWD for follow-up service. Non-consensual referrals are also made if an individual case is assessed as high-risk and a Superintendent of Police, after personally reviewing the case, decides that a referral is necessary to mitigate the risk of further deterioration. To strengthen communication between frontline police officers and social workers during the case referral process, the SWD will acknowledge receipt on receiving a police referral and inform the Force of the contact details of the responsible social worker. They will also inform whether the victims have accepted, among others, the follow-up service. Moreover, to facilitate the Force's work in seeking urgent professional advice and social work support for handling urgent and high-risk cases, a 24-hour Direct Referral Line has been set up between the SWD and the Force since October 2006. If needed, social workers will offer immediate professional advice and/or perform outreaching duties to assist the Force in handling emergencies.

The Force will continue to work closely with relevant government departments, non-governmental organisations and stakeholders from various professions. Efforts include organising seminars and workshops on preventing domestic violence, optimising policies and procedures related to handling of domestic violence cases and enhancing communication and collaboration among all parties.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**(Question Serial No. 0122)**

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 Hong Kong Police Force launched the “e-154 App” in June 2021 and allocated tablet computers, smartphones and portable printers to all police districts. This initiative aims to save time in taking statements and to enhance work efficiency and effectiveness among officers. In this connection, please advise this Committee of:

- (1) the number of statements taken via the “e-154 App” in each of the past 3 years;
- (2) the number of tablet computers, smartphones and portable printers allocated in each of the past 3 years, categorised by police district; and
- (3) the expenditure or revised estimates of expenditure related to the “e-154 App” in each of the past 3 financial years.

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

Reply:

- (1) The number of statements taken by the Police Force via the “e-154 App” in each of the past 3 years is tabulated as follows:

	From June to December 2021	2022	2023
Number of statements taken via the “e-154 App” (approximate)	260	5 500	37 200

- (2) The number of tablet computers, smartphones and portable printers allocated within the Force in each of the past 3 years is tabulated as follows:

	Quantity of equipment allocated (approximate)		
	2021	2022	2023
Tablet computers	760	1 050	320
Smartphones	300	500	180
Portable printers	230	270	360

The Force does not maintain a breakdown on the quantity of electronic equipment allocated by police district.

- (3) The recurrent expenditure involved for the system of the “e-154 App” in each of the past 3 financial years is tabulated as follows:

	2021-22 (Actual expenditure)	2022-23 (Actual expenditure)	2023-24 (Revised estimate)
Recurrent expenditure involved for the system of the “e-154 App” (HK\$) (Approx.)	1.6 million	2.7 million	3.3 million

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB069**

**(Question Serial No. 0127)**

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

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:

The Hong Kong Police Force has made a number of advancements in smart search and rescue projects, including the development of the HKSOS mobile application, which assists rescuers in locating persons in need. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- (1) The number of search and rescue cases involving mountaineering that required assistance for each of the past 5 years;
- (2) The development cost of the HKSOS app and the estimated maintenance expenditure for 2024-25;
- (3) The effectiveness of the HKSOS app in assisting rescuers with locating persons in need;
- (4) The total number of downloads of the HKSOS app since its launch; and
- (5) The strategies planned to promote the HKSOS app?

Asked by: Hon LAI Tung-kwok (LegCo internal reference no.: 14)

Reply:

- (1) The number of search and rescue cases involving mountaineering that required assistance in each of the past 5 years is tabulated as follows:

Year	Number of search and rescue cases involving mountaineering that required assistance
2019	473
2020	1 172
2021	1 065
2022	811
2023	625

- (2) The HKSOS mobile application, which received funding from the Administrative Computer Projects Committee in 2023 and had a development cost of around \$7 million, was officially launched on 20 January 2024. The estimated expenditure on the application maintenance for 2024-25 is approximately \$2.4 million.
- (3) The HKSOS app is specially designed for outdoor activities to assist the public in planning their journeys and safeguard their lives. When a member of the public calls for help through the application, the 999 Reporting Centre will immediately receive the itinerary and location shared by the member of the public, thereby assisting search and rescue personnel to locate the person in need of help as soon as possible. The app utilises the patented “Signal Radar” technology, which, even in areas without network coverage, allows rescue teams to detect the caller’s geolocation through a distinctive signal. Furthermore, the HKSOS app features an automatic accident detection function that identifies prolonged journeys and high-risk scenarios (e.g. route deviations and abnormal behaviour patterns). Upon detection, it promptly notifies the 999 Reporting Centre and the user’s emergency contacts, thereby offering optimal protection for its users.
- (4) Since the launch in January 2024, the HKSOS app has recorded more than 54 000 downloads as at 5 March 2024.
- (5) The Police Force has been promoting the HKSOS app through different channels, including large-scale outdoor events, advertisements on the bodies of buses and minibuses, television interviews and the Force’s social media platforms. The Force is committed to continuing to promote the HKSOS app on various fronts.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB070**

**(Question Serial No. 0128)**

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

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:

Regarding the 999 Reporting Centres (the Centres), will the Government advise this Committee of:

- (1) the number of calls received by the Centres for each of the past 5 years;
- (2) the number of calls received by the Centres that were classified as “emergency calls”, with a breakdown by category of “emergency calls” for each of the past 5 years;
- (3) the number of calls received by the Centres that were not classified as “emergency calls”, with a breakdown by category of such calls for each of the past 5 years;
- (4) the current capacity of the Centres to answer calls simultaneously; and
- (5) the staff establishment, salary expenditure and total expenditure of the Centres for each of the past 5 years?

Asked by: Hon LAI Tung-kwok (LegCo internal reference no.: 15)

Reply:

- (1) The number of calls received by the 999 Reporting Centres (the Centres) for each of the past 5 years is as follows:

	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
<b>Number of calls</b>	2 299 433	2 116 846	2 248 800	2 096 225	2 568 591

- (2) To ensure that the Police Force can deploy resources to handle cases in an optimal way based on the seriousness and urgency of the reported cases, the Centres categorise calls by subject matter, including “Emergency Reports”, “Non-emergency Reports”, “No Police Response”, “Nuisance Calls” and “Enquiries/Duplicated Calls”. Cases that fall into the “Emergency Reports” category include those concerning “Assault”, “Arson”, “Burglary”, “Robbery”, “Fire”, “Intruder alarm activated”, “Person drowning” and

“Bomb found”. The total number of calls received by the Centres that were classified as “Emergency Reports” for each of the past 5 years is as follows:

	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
<b>Emergency Reports</b>	84 276	75 559	80 737	80 634	81 659

The Force does not maintain the breakdown requested in the question.

- (3) In addition to “Emergency Reports”, the remaining categories are “Non-emergency Reports”, “No Police Response”, “Nuisance Calls” and “Enquiries/Duplicated Calls”. The number of calls for these categories for each of the past 5 years is as follows:

	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
<b>Non-emergency Reports</b>	555 049	544 000	543 521	462 318	449 037
<b>No Police Response</b>	398 904	325 406	360 546	412 754	461 213
<b>Nuisance Calls</b>	804 419	765 707	813 177	700 703	1 135 942
<b>Enquiries/Duplicated Calls</b>	456 785	406 174	450 819	439 816	440 740

- (4) All 999 calls made to the 999 Reporting Centres of the Regional Command and Control Centres (RCCCs) of the Force are answered by Police Communication Officers (PCOs), who provide 24-hour service in shifts. In 2023, the Centres received around 7 000 calls per day, with an average answer time of 7.8 seconds. The Force deploys manpower appropriately based on different circumstances to ensure sufficient staffing levels for prompt answering of calls.
- (5) The staff establishment at the RCCCs of the Force consists of police officers (officers at the rank of Superintendents, Inspectors, and Sergeants) and PCO grade officers (Senior PCOs and PCOs), who all provide 24-hour service in shifts. All calls made to the 999 Reporting Centres of the RCCCs are answered by PCOs who provide 24-hour service in shifts. Currently, 84 PCOs are assigned to answer 999 calls. The Force deploys manpower appropriately based on different circumstances. The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the salary expenditure and total expenditure of the Centres for each year.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB071**

**(Question Serial No. 3113)**

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 Police Force hosted a multi-day event, "The Little Grape Carnival" (the carnival), in February this year to foster public awareness about deception. During the carnival, the Police unveiled the *Anti-scam Picture Book for Young Children* (the picture book) and presented an anti-deception themed ferry named "Ping On", featuring mascots "The Little Grape", "Chai Chai" and the "Ping On Family" moored near the venue. In this connection, will the Government advise this Committee of the following?

- (1) Regarding the carnival, the expenditure involved, the estimated number of attendees and the actual number of attendees;
- (2) Regarding the picture book, the expenditure involved for its design and printing, the number of copies printed and the distribution strategy;
- (3) Regarding the ferry "Ping On", the expenditure involved and its expected service life; and
- (4) The distinctions between the anti-deception mascots "The Little Grape", "Chai Chai" and the "Ping On Family", and whether the Police have evaluated if the simultaneous presence of multiple anti-deception mascots could potentially confuse the public and affect the effectiveness of the anti-deception message.

Asked by: Hon LAI Tung-kwok (LegCo internal reference no.: 38)

Reply:

(1) to (3)

To enhance public anti-deception awareness, particularly among children, the Police Force held "The Little Grape Carnival", a large-scale outdoor installation art exhibition featuring "The Little Grape" the anti-scam mascot. This event took place from 17 to 23 February 2024 at the West Kowloon Cultural District. The carnival attracted over 10 000 visitors in the first two days, with a total exceeding 25 000 visitors recorded during the week-long event.

Additionally, the Force unveiled the newly released *Anti-scam Picture Book for Young Children* as part of the promotional campaign. Drawing on experiences and theories of early childhood education in Hong Kong, the picture book utilises colourful illustrations to enhance anti-deception awareness among children. To allow more children to access the picture book, 20 000 copies were produced by the Force through the Government Logistics Department following established procedures. These books have been distributed to approximately 1 000 kindergartens across the territory via each district's Police Community Relations Office, with 200 copies donated to public libraries and about 100 to children's wards or clinics. For easy access, the e-version of the children's picture book has been made available on the websites of the Force and the Education Bureau, as well as the Junior Police Call Application.

With the support of ferry operators, anti-scam mascots including "The Little Grape", "Chai Chai" and the "Ping On Family" will be featured on the anti-deception ferry Ping On for 1 year starting from February 2024. This 3-decker ferry, measuring approximately 65 metres in length, will operate general ferry services between Kwun Tong and North Point during the day and offer harbour cruises at night. The ferry's appearance is likely to attract public attention on both sides of Victoria Harbour, promoting anti-scam awareness among both citizens and tourists in an innovative way.

The expenditure for the above initiatives forms part of the total expenditure under the Programme of "Prevention and Detection of Crime". No specific breakdown is available.

(4)

Since mascots are generally effective at capturing public attention, they are used across various media platforms to promote the Force's initiatives. This strategy aims to broaden the reach of anti-scam and crime-prevention information, heighten public alertness to different types of crimes and make the Police's messages more relatable to everyday life.

The anti-scam mascot "The Little Grape", which is equivalent to the contraction of the saying "Beware of Liars" in Chinese, was unveiled in 2020. More than just reminding the public to "Stay Alert to Scams", it is crucial to instill the concept that "Ending Deception Starts with You". This encourages the public to share anti-deception messages with relatives and friends. With its adorable appearance and friendly character, "The Little Grape" captures children's attention and makes anti-deception education more engaging and understandable, enabling the Force to elevate public awareness against fraudulent activities.

"Chai Chai" was launched in 2021 to promote the Anti-Deception Coordination Centre (ADCC) and the "Anti-Scam Helpline 18222" hotline. The wording "ADCC18222" displayed on "Chai Chai" is designed to encourage the public to call 18222 for assistance in suspicious deception cases, and to stay informed about the latest deception techniques and scam alerts.

In 2022, the Marine Region launched a crime prevention theme "MARPOL wish you SAFE" and introduced the crime prevention mascots, the "Ping On Family". Inspired by the Cheung Chau Ping On Bun, which symbolises peace and safety, this theme demonstrates the Marine Police's commitment to keeping the maritime community safe and collaborating with the community to spread crime prevention and safety messages. The "Ping On Family"

represents the 6 key anti-crime messages disseminated by the Marine Region, namely “SECURE home”, “Scam SAFE”, “Property SAFE”, “SAFE at Sea”, “Grow Up SAFE” and “SAFE from Animal Cruelty”.

In addition to continuously reviewing the effectiveness of its publicity efforts, the Force will adjust its publicity strategy based on public response.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB072**

**(Question Serial No. 0836)**

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:

Modern technologies play a crucial role in crime detection, a fact highlighted by the Police Force's statement on "developing the Force's various information and intelligence systems, particularly through the use of modern technologies". In this connection, please advise this Committee of the following:

1. The estimated expenditure related to the introduction of modern technological systems by the Force for 2024-25;
2. Whether the Police plans to introduce systems specifically designed to combat the rising number of cyber crimes, such as those targeting telephone deception;
3. Whether the Police is collaborating with other government departments in turning services online, including inter-departmental coordination to streamline procedures for serving documents electronically.

Asked by: Hon LAM San-keung (LegCo internal reference no.: 8)

Reply:

1. The expenditures on the Police Force's various information and intelligence systems form part of the total expenditure under Programme (2) "Prevention and Detection of Crime" of the Force. The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditures involved.
2. To tackle the escalating trend of deception cases, the Force sustained its efforts over the past year to step up enforcement, intercept fraudulent payments and adopt the approach of upstream scam intervention to mitigate victims' losses. The Force also rolled out multiple anti-deception measures with important stakeholders and supervisory bodies, and continued to raise anti-deception awareness among members of the public through various approaches.

The Force is committed to leveraging technology in collaboration with relevant stakeholders in the fight against deception. A dedicated working group, established with the Office of the Communications Authority and telecommunications operators in September 2022, has since implemented several initiatives. These include blocking spoofed calls originating outside local regions with the “+852” prefix, alerting users about such calls through voice or text messages, and, upon the Force’s request, intercepting or filtering over 7 600 website links and close to 3 200 phone numbers associated with fraud by January 2024. On the technical front, telecommunications operators also proactively identify and block a significant volume of scam calls.

Last year, in collaboration with the Hong Kong Monetary Authority and the banking sector, the Force introduced various anti-deception measures. Notably, in November 2023, the Faster Payment System (FPS) Suspicious Proxy ID Alert was launched, connecting the FPS platform to the “Scameter” database. During online fund transfer via FPS, the matching function of the database can identify payees whose information is related to scam reports, and an alert message will appear on the confirmation page. By 31 January 2024, this mechanism had issued over 264 000 alerts, flagging high-risk transfers totaling nearly \$410 million. The Force will continue to step up publicity and implement such mechanism in other platforms. Meanwhile, in late November 2023, the Force collaborated with 10 major banks in establishing the Anti-Deception Alliance (ADA), where bank representatives were deployed to work in the Police Headquarters to provide more direct and instant communication and assistance in intercepting fraudulent payments and issuing alerts. From its official launch on 27 November 2023 to the end of January 2024, the response time for 95% of payment interception requests was reduced to within 2 hours, markedly improving efficiency. In respect of upstream scam intervention, the ADA has proactively prevented 162 persons from making further transfers to fraudsters by the end of January 2024. Successful interventions rose from a daily average of 1.2 cases before the ADA’s establishment to 3.5 cases in January 2024, marking a 1.9-fold increase.

In September 2022 and February 2023, the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau introduced a one-stop scam and pitfall search engine, “Scameter”, on the “CyberDefender” website (CyberDefender.hk) and its mobile version “Scameter+” respectively to enable members of the public to distinguish suspicious online platform accounts, payment accounts, phone numbers, email addresses and URLs, etc, and to provide anti-fraud tips. As at 31 January 2024, “Scameter+” has been downloaded more than 228 000 times, while “Scameter” has recorded over 2.3 million searches and issued approximately 400 000 fraud and cybersecurity risk alerts. In February 2024, automation elements were incorporated in “Scameter+”, enabling the application to issue alerts when users browse suspicious websites and receive suspicious calls. To further enrich the database of “Scameter+”, a public “reporting” mechanism has been introduced, allowing members of the public to report suspicious websites or calls through the application.

The Force remains dedicated to exploring advanced technological applications in the fight against various crimes, including deception and fraud.

3. The Force has been promoting the use of emails as an official mode of communication within the Government and with external parties or individuals to enhance cost-effectiveness and efficiency.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB073**

**(Question Serial No. 0301)**

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:

The provision for 2024-25 is \$772 million (14.9%) higher than the revised estimate for 2023-24. Despite this increase, there will be a net decrease of 228 posts. In this connection, please advise this Committee of:

1. The reason(s) and details for and a breakdown of the significant increase in the revised estimate;
2. For the reduced posts and establishment, the (i) formations, (ii) ranks of officers, (iii) duties undertaken and (iv) the payroll costs; and
3. The reason(s) for such a reduction in posts and establishment. Considering that one of the Programme's aims is to maintain the internal security of the territory, will this reduction affect the regular services provided?

Asked by: Hon LAU Ip-keung, Kenneth (LegCo internal reference no.: 15)

Reply:

1. The estimate for 2024-25 is higher than the revised estimate for 2023-24. This is mainly due to the increased provisions for salaries (including some vacancies expected to be filled in 2024-25), increased requirement in departmental expenses (including electricity charges, system maintenance charges and cleansing service charges), as well as increased cash flow requirement for capital items (including the replacement and procurement of plant, crafts, vehicles and equipment).
2. In 2024-25, there will be a net decrease of 228 posts in the establishment under Programme (4) "Operations" (including an increase of 8 disciplined service posts and a decrease of 210 disciplined service posts and 26 civilian posts). Details on the posts to be reduced and the salaries involved are tabulated as follows:

Rank	Number of posts to be reduced	Police Pay Scale (PPS)/ Master Pay Scale (MPS)	Monthly salary for the rank in HK\$ (from 1 April 2023)
Police Constable	-210	PPS 4 – 17	28,095 – 41,155
<b>Total (police officers)</b>	<b>-210</b>		
Office Assistant	-2	MPS 1 – 6	14,735 - 20,165
Senior Typist	-1	MPS 11 – 15	27,405 – 34,060
Typist	-2	MPS 2 – 10	15,665 – 25,815
Cook	-21	MPS 5 – 8	18,965 – 22,895
<b>Total (civilian staff)</b>	<b>-26</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>-236</b>		

3. To ensure fiscal sustainability, the Government has been strictly controlling the civil service establishment since 2021-22. In 2024-25, the Government will continue to adopt this approach to achieve zero growth in the civil service establishment. The Police Force has enhanced effectiveness and efficiency through reprioritisation, internal redeployment and streamlining of work processes in taking forward different new policies and initiatives. Posts deemed no longer essential for operation will be deleted following an establishment review.

The Force has formulated comprehensive human resources and strategic plans for staff training, career development, among others, to continuously enhance its capability. Officers are encouraged to make self-advancement and strengthen their own professional capacity so as to serve members of the public more effectively. The Force flexibly allocates resources to meet the policing needs and ensure community service needs are effectively met. In general, policing services will not be affected by the establishment adjustments.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB074**

**(Question Serial No. 0303)**

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:

One of the targets of this Programme is to prevent and detect crime, including syndicated fraud. In this connection, would the Government advise this Committee of the following:

1. In respect of reports on online/telephone deception cases received by the Force, in tabular form, (i) the number of requests for assistance received, (ii) the number of victims, (iii) the amounts involved and (iv) the detection rate for the past 3 years;
2. The staff establishment and expenditure for publicity on anti-scam campaigns for the past 3 financial years and the coming financial year;
3. Since the introduction of the “Scameter” and the upgraded “Scameter+”, (i) the number of downloads, (ii) the usage figures, (iii) the total number of database entries, (iv) the number of alerts issued, and (v) the number of enforcement actions taken; and
4. Under this Programme, the provision for 2024-25 is 8.8% higher than the revised estimate for 2023-24 with a net increase of 7 posts, please provide the amounts that are related to the prevention and detection of deception cases, along with the details.

Asked by: Hon LAU Ip-keung, Kenneth (LegCo internal reference no.: 17)

Reply:

1. The number of deceptions and frauds reported to the Police Force, the detection rate, the amount involved and the number of persons arrested for each of the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

	2021	2022	2023
Number of cases	19 249	27 923	39 824
Detection rate	10.6%	12.0%	11.9%
Amount involved (HK\$)	Over 6.4 billion	Over 4.8 billion	9.18 billion
Number of persons arrested	2 835	4 112	7 043

The common types of deception and fraud reported to the Force as well as the amount involved for each of the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

	Number of cases			Amount of losses (HK\$ million)		
	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023
Online Deception	13 859	19 599	27 314	2,965.8	3,073.8	5,345.9
Common types of online scam						
E-shopping Fraud	6 120	8 735	8 950	71.5	74.1	190.5
Online Investment Fraud	980	1 884	5 105	472.0	926.5	3,267.4
Phishing Scam (Note)			4 322			102.4
Online Employment Fraud	1 063	2 884	3 518	85.3	459.1	760.2
Social Media Deception	3 638	3 605	3 372	669.4	779.0	745.4
Email Scam	549	391	208	1,538.8	751.1	163.6
Telephone Deception	1 140	2 831	3 213	811.1	1,076.5	1,102.8
Guess Who	497	1 540	2 237	27.5	114.1	188.7
Pretend Officials	641	1 290	969	783.5	962.3	913.8
Detained Son	2	1	7	0.1	0.07	0.3

(Note) Figures related to phishing scam have been maintained by the Force since 2023.

The Force does not maintain any breakdowns on the numbers of victims and cases detected by the above-mentioned types of deception and fraud.

- “Enhancing cyber security and fighting technology crime” remains one of the Commissioner’s Operational Priorities (COP) in 2024 and “combating quick cash crime” of the COP 2023 has been amended to “combating deception and quick cash crime”. The Force has been taking proactive measures on all fronts to combat deception and technology crimes. The Commercial Crime Bureau (CCB) and its Anti-Deception Coordination Centre (ADCC), the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau (CSTCB), the Financial Intelligence and Investigation Bureau and the crime investigation units of various Police Regions and Districts are all dedicated to cracking down on scams and technology-related crimes.

As various formations of the Force are involved in anti-deception publicity and education, a separate breakdown of the manpower involved is not available. For ADCC, which is mainly tasked with the above-mentioned duties, the staff establishment has grown in each of the past 3 years: from 40 in 2021-22 to 49 in 2022-23, with 32 being permanent establishment and 17 on secondment from different Force formations. In 2023-24, the ADCC’s staff establishment expanded further to 90, with permanent establishment increasing by 5 to 37, and the remainder filled by 53 officers on secondment or Post-Retirement Service Contracts. In 2024-25, the number of permanent establishment in the ADCC will increase by 3 to 40. The Force will periodically review the manpower and resources of various formations and adjust the establishment as needed.

The above expenditure forms part of the total expenditure under Programme (2) “Prevention and Detection of Crime”. The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure involved.

3. In September 2022, the CSTCB launched a one-stop scam and pitfall search engine, “Scameter”, on the “CyberDefender” website (CyberDefender.hk), and launched its mobile application version, “Scameter+”, in February 2023 to enable members of the public to distinguish suspicious online platform accounts, payment accounts, phone numbers, email addresses and URLs, etc, and to provide anti-fraud tips. As at 31 January 2024, “Scameter+” has been downloaded more than 228 000 times, while the search engine has recorded 2.3 million searches and issued approximately 400 000 fraud and cybersecurity risk alerts.

In February 2024, automation elements were incorporated in “Scameter+”, enabling the application to issue alerts when users browse suspicious websites and receive suspicious calls. To further enrich the database, a public “reporting” mechanism has been introduced, allowing members of the public to report suspicious websites or calls through the application. The Force will review and update the database periodically to ensure the data remain accurate and up-to-date.

Both “Scameter” and “Scameter+” have been rolled out to facilitate the identification of suspicious information, such as platform accounts, phone numbers and URLs. As these initiatives do not directly involve law enforcement efforts, no enforcement figures are available.

4. In 2024-25, there will be a net increase of 7 posts under Programme (2) “Prevention and Detection of Crime” (including an increase of 28 disciplined services posts as well as a decrease of 3 disciplined services posts and 18 civilian posts). Among these, 11 disciplined services posts will be created to strengthen Hong Kong’s anti-deception capability. Since the estimated expenditure for the prevention and detection of deception cases falls under the Programme of “Prevention and Detection of Crime”, the Force does not maintain specific breakdown.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB075**

**(Question Serial No. 1506)**

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:

It is mentioned under Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024-25 that the Police will address illegal bookmaking due to the increasing severity of illegal gambling. In this connection, will the Government advise this Committee of the following?

1. The number of enforcement actions taken by the Police against illegal gambling for each year from 2018-19 to 2023-24;
2. The number of betting slips seized and the total amount involved in the aforementioned operations for each year from 2018-19 to 2023-24;
3. The types of illegal gambling (e.g. mahjong, soccer, horse racing, basketball, electronic sports) encountered in the aforementioned operations from 2018-19 to 2023-24, with a breakdown by year and category;
4. The manpower and expenditure dedicated to combating illegal bookmaking from 2018-19 to 2023-24; and
5. The number of persons sentenced to suspended imprisonment, fines and imprisonment among those convicted by the courts, as well as the administrative costs incurred, for each year from 2018-19 to 2023-24.

Asked by: Hon LAU Kwok-fan (LegCo internal reference no.: 47)

Reply:

- 1-2. The number of enforcement actions taken by the Police Force against illegal gambling offences (e.g. serious gambling offences such as operating or managing an unlawful gambling establishment, bookmaking, gambling in a gambling establishment, gambling in a street, etc.) and the amount of money seized over the past 5 years are set out below:

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Number of enforcement actions taken	560	680	742	788	793
Total value of betting slips / money seized (\$ million)	4.7	601.8	3,978.2	547.9	27.6

The Force does not maintain the other figures mentioned in the question.

3. The Force does not maintain the breakdown of the figures involved.
4. The expenditure of addressing illegal gambling forms part of the total expenditure under Programme (2) “Prevention and Detection of Crime”. The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure involved.
5. The Force does not maintain the number of convictions or other relevant information.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**(Question Serial No. 1507)**

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:

Despite periodic enforcement actions by the Police against illegal betting activities, there has been an upward trend in the number of people engaging in illegal bookmaking. In this connection, please advise on the following:

1. The manpower and expenditure allocated to the prevention and detection of illegal gambling for each of the past 5 years.
2. The number of illegal gambling cases investigated by the Police and the respective detection rates for each of the past 5 years.
3. The total amounts seized from the detection of illegal gambling for each of the past 5 years, specifying the amounts attributed to physical gambling and online betting, respectively.
4. The number of detected cases related to local, Mainland and overseas triad societies for each of the past 5 years.
5. The number of illegal gambling cases involving telephone or online deception detected by the Police in the past 5 years.

Asked by: Hon LAU Kwok-fan (LegCo internal reference no.: 48)

Reply:

1. The relevant expenditures form part of the total expenditure under Programme (2) "Prevention and Detection of Crime". The Police Force does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditures involved.
- 2-3, 5. The numbers of operations conducted, persons arrested and amounts seized by the Force in combating illegal gambling offences (including serious gambling activities such as operating or managing an unlawful gambling establishment and bookmaking, as well as gambling in a gambling establishment or on the street) in the past 5 years are set out below:

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Number of operations conducted	560	680	742	788	793
Number of persons arrested	3 296	5 198	5 731	6 781	6 101
Total amount of betting slips/cash seized (\$ million)	4.7	601.8	3,978.2	547.9	27.6

The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the number, the detection rate, or other specific figures requested in the question regarding all “illegal gambling” cases.

4. The number of cases involving “serious gambling offences” (including operating or managing an unlawful gambling establishment, and bookmaking) reported to the Force, as well as the number of those cases related to triads over the past 5 years, is tabulated as follows:

(Number of cases)	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Serious gambling offences	277	390	560	607	488
<i>Triad-related</i>	<i>156</i>	<i>208</i>	<i>233</i>	<i>323</i>	<i>305</i>

Combating triads, syndicated and organised crime is one of the Commissioner’s Operational Priorities. The Force has been strengthening and maintaining close liaison with local and overseas law enforcement agencies to mount intelligence-led enforcement operations and counter triad-personalities and their activities. At the same time, the Force also takes proactive measures to investigate, confiscate and freeze the proceeds of such crimes and to conduct large scale anti-triad operations. The police authorities of Hong Kong, Guangdong and Macao mounted a tripartite operation codenamed “THUNDERBOLT 2023” from June to September 2023. In Hong Kong, the Force arrested 6 400 persons suspected of committing offences such as those relating to triads, dangerous drugs and operating illegal gambling establishments.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB077**

**(Question Serial No. 1932)**

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

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

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

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

It is mentioned that the number of applicants for the position of police constable in the Police Force increased by 74% following the adjustment of the entry requirements in May 2023. In this connection, will the Government advise this Committee of the following?

1. The expenditure on all police recruitment campaigns and whether the effectiveness of these campaigns has been assessed;
2. Any specific strategies to be implemented for recruiting police officers, along with the details of these plans;
3. The number of auxiliary police officers who have been appointed as regular police officers in the past 5 years; and
4. (i) The wastage figures and wastage rates of police officers at various ranks, (ii) with a breakdown by reasons, and (iii) the average length of service of these officers over the past 5 years.

Asked by: Hon LEE Chun-keung (LegCo internal reference no.: 16)

Reply:

1. The Police Force has been adjusting its publicity strategy in light of general social conditions such as the economic situation and demand in the labour market. Different forms of collaboration have also been adopted in order to make more cost-effective use of resources for promoting recruitment. The Force does not maintain breakdown figures on the expenditure involved.
2. The Force has been adopting proactive recruitment strategies to attract high calibre candidates who have the competence to become a police officer, the affection for the Motherland and Hong Kong, and the passion to serve the public.

Meanwhile, the Force has disseminated recruitment and publicity information through various media and social networking platforms, and has organised regular recruitment activities and projects, such as the Police Recruitment Experience and Assessment Day, Police Mentorship Programme, Police University Recruitment Express, Hong Kong Police University Recruitment Express (Mainland), Diploma of Applied Education – Police Cadet Training, Auxiliary Undergraduate Scheme, Police Recruitment Buddies Scheme, Sportsmen’s Programme for Recruitment, Experience and Development, Auxiliary Police Recruitment Express, education and careers expo as well as publicity videos featuring “Recruitment Spokespersons”, etc.

The Force will continue to adjust its publicity strategy in light of general social conditions such as the economic situation and demand in the labour market.

3. The number of auxiliary police officers appointed as regular police officers since the financial year 2020-21 is tabulated as follows.

Financial year	No. of officers	
	Probationary Inspector	Police Constable
2020-21	21	20
2021-22	24	19
2022-23	26	14
2023-24	31	32

The Force does not maintain the relevant figures before the financial year 2020-21.

4. The wastage figures of police officers in the Force over the past 5 financial years are set out below:

Rank	Reasons of leaving	2019-20		2020-21		2021-22		2022-23		2023-24 (As at 29 February 2024)	
		No. of leavers	Wastage rate	No. of leavers	Wastage rate	No. of leavers	Wastage rate	No. of leavers	Wastage rate	No. of leavers	Wastage rate
Gazetted officer Note 1	Retirement or end of contract	54	11.8%	42	9.1%	28	6.5%	17	3.9%	19	4.3%
	Resignation	1	0.2%	2	0.4%	2	0.5%	1	0.2%	1	0.2%
	Others Note 2	0	0%	2	0.4%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Inspectorate officer	Retirement or end of contract	62	2.5%	62	2.5%	38	1.6%	17	0.7%	11	0.5%
	Resignation	28	1.1%	28	1.1%	40	1.7%	32	1.3%	18	0.7%
	Others Note 2	7	0.3%	5	0.2%	6	0.3%	6	0.3%	3	0.1%
Junior officer	Retirement or end of contract	708	2.7%	533	2.1%	364	1.5%	263	1.1%	412	1.7%
	Resignation	362	1.4%	206	0.8%	210	0.8%	193	0.8%	191	0.8%
	Others Note 2	91	0.3%	95	0.4%	118	0.5%	86	0.4%	143	0.6%

Note 1: Gazetted officers refer to those of the rank of superintendent or above.

Note 2: Other reasons for leaving include transfer, dismissal, termination of service, death, retirement on invaliding and compulsory retirement.

The number of leavers in the Force broken down by years of service in each of the past 5 years is set out below:

Rank	Years of service	No. of leavers				
		2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24 (As at 29 February 2024)
Gazetted officer <sup>Note 3</sup>	10 years or below	0	1	0	0	0
	11-20 years	0	0	0	0	1
	21-30 years	13	12	6	8	5
	Over 30 years	42	33	24	10	14
Inspectorate officer	10 years or below	26	28	34	25	14
	11-20 years	6	2	10	9	5
	21-30 years	18	11	11	8	4
	Over 30 years	47	54	29	13	9
Junior officer	10 years or below	367	227	237	194	208
	11-20 years	50	32	41	43	75
	21-30 years	124	109	103	102	102
	Over 30 years	620	466	311	203	361

Note 3: Gazetted officers refer to officers of the rank of superintendent or above.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB078**

**(Question Serial No. 1935)**

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 under this Programme that one of the primary responsibilities of the Police Force is to organise anti-crime publicity programmes to address specific crime problems, such as “Telephone Deception” (including Pretend Officials Telephone Deception). In this connection, will the Government provide this Committee with the following information?

1. In tabular form, (i) the number of reported telephone deception cases, (ii) the age range of the victims, and (iii) the amount of monetary losses for the past 5 years; and
2. Details of any targeted plans the Police intends to implement to strengthen enforcement actions against telephone deception in the coming year.

Asked by: Hon LEE Chun-keung (LegCo internal reference no.: 19)

Reply:

1. The number of telephone deception cases reported to the Police Force, along with the amount of monetary losses and the age range of the victims, for each of the past 5 years is tabulated as follows:

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Number of cases	648	1 193	1 140	2 831	3 213
Amount of losses (HK\$ million)	150.0	574.8	811.1	1,076.5	1,102.8
Age range of the victims	15-93	12-92	12-96	14-100	15-107

2. Deception syndicates utilise a multitude of stooze accounts to collect fraudulent payments and launder money. Therefore, targeting stooze accounts is a vital strategy in dismantling the fraud industry chain, which includes activities such as telephone deception. In 2023, the Force arrested a total of 9 239 persons for involvement in various types of deception and money laundering offences, representing an increase of

over 75% compared to 2022. Among these, about 6 500 were stooge account holders. The Force has reached a consensus with the Department of Justice to enhance evidence gathering and prosecution procedures for relatively simple and straightforward money laundering cases involving stooge accounts and to expedite prosecution. Moreover, the Force will continue to apply to the court for enhanced sentencing and has, since 2023, achieved a 20% increase in the sentences of 4 stooge account holders, leading to imprisonment terms ranging from 26 to 38 months.

To combat telephone deception, the Force established a dedicated working group with the Office of the Communications Authority and mobile network operators in September 2022, and since then, several initiatives have been implemented. Apart from blocking spoofed calls originating from outside local regions with the prefix “+852”, and sending text or voice alerts to users when they receive such calls, mobile network operators have blocked or filtered over 7 600 websites and nearly 3 200 telephone numbers associated with deception cases upon the Force’s request by January 2024, and have been on the technical front proactively identifying and blocking a significant volume of calls made using technical devices and suspending related services.

The Force has also been proactively using technology to prevent members of the public from being exposed to fraudulent calls. In February 2024, automation elements were incorporated in “Scameter+”, enabling the application to issue alerts when users browse suspicious websites and receive suspicious calls. To further enrich its database, a public “reporting” mechanism has been introduced, allowing members of the public to report suspicious websites or calls through the application. The Force will review and update the database periodically to ensure that the data remain accurate and up-to-date.

In addition to stepping up enforcement and enhancing prosecution efficiency, the Force will rigorously combat the use of stooge accounts by deception syndicates in committing crimes through applications for enhanced sentencing. Approaches such as interception of fraudulent payments and upstream scam intervention will be adopted to minimise victims’ losses. Furthermore, the Force will continue to raise anti-deception awareness of members of the public through online and offline publicity and actively seek to maintain close cooperation with stakeholders from various sectors, relevant government departments and other law enforcement agencies, including those in the Mainland and overseas, so as to create synergy in combating deception cases.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB079**

**(Question Serial No. 2555)**

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 Logistics Bureau (TLB). The reply was prepared by the Hong Kong Police Force and vetted by the TLB.]

Question:

The Hong Kong Police Force (the Police) has periodically carried out enforcement actions against the illegal use of electric mobility devices in various districts across the territory. In this connection, will the Government advise this Committee of the following:

- (1) The number of enforcement actions taken by the Police, with a breakdown by the 18 districts for each of the past 5 years;
- (2) The quantity of electric mobility devices detained, with a breakdown by type of such devices for each of the past 5 years;
- (3) The number of the persons arrested by the Police, with a breakdown by gender and age group for each of the past 5 years; and
- (4) The number of the persons arrested by the Police, with a breakdown by type of offence for each of the past 5 years.

Asked by: Hon LEE Tsz-king, Dominic (LegCo internal reference no.: 23)

Reply:

(1) to (4)

Combating the illegal use of electric mobility devices is among the Police Force's Selected Traffic Enforcement Priorities. The number of persons arrested, with breakdown by Police Region from 2019 to 2023, is tabulated as follows:

Police Region	The number of persons arrested in relation to the illegal use of electric mobility devices				
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Hong Kong Island	0	9	6	20	10
Kowloon East	0	39	49	21	21
Kowloon West	7	27	12	28	37
New Territories South	1	113	63	46	67
New Territories North	4	74	67	105	127
Marine (Cheung Chau)	0	12	10	16	5
Total	12	274	207	236	267

The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the figures as requested in the question.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB080**

**(Question Serial No. 2182)**

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: Not specified

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

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the police officer establishment, will the Government inform this Committee of:

1. the current establishment, the number of serving police officers and the number of vacancies in the Force;
2. the annual wastage figures and the number of police officers recruited for the past 3 years;
3. the estimated retirement figures for the next 2 years; and
4. the measures that the Police will implement to entice members of the public to join the Force, as well as the estimated relevant expenditure on manpower and publicity.

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Man-kwong (LegCo internal reference no.: 31)

Reply:

1. As at 29 February 2024, the establishment of police officers is tabulated as follows:

Actual establishment	Actual strength	Number of vacancies
33 260	27 110	6 150

2. The wastage figures of the Police Force are tabulated as follows:

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24 (as at 29 February 2024)
Wastage of police officers	806	615	798

The number of police officers recruited by the Force is tabulated as follows:

Police officers recruited	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Probationary Inspector	170	165	157
Police Constable	484	554	817
Police Constable (Auxiliary)	331	343	350
Total	985	1 062	1 324

3. Approximately 900 police officers are expected to reach their retirement age within the next 2 financial years.
4. The Force has been adopting proactive recruitment strategies to attract high calibre candidates who have the competence to become a police officer, the affection for the Motherland and Hong Kong, and the passion to serve the public.

The Force has disseminated recruitment and publicity information through various media and social networking platforms, and has organised regular recruitment activities and projects, such as the Police Recruitment Experience and Assessment Day, Police Mentorship Programme, Police University Recruitment Express, Police University Recruitment Express (Mainland), Diploma of Applied Education - Police Cadet Training, Auxiliary Undergraduate Scheme, Police Recruitment Buddies Scheme, Sportsmen’s Programme for Recruitment, Auxiliary Police Recruitment Express, education and careers expo as well as publicity videos featuring “Recruitment Spokespersons”, etc.

Apart from local publicity and recruitment campaigns, the Force has launched the Police University Recruitment Express (Mainland) since November 2022 in view of the rising number of Hong Kong students studying in the Mainland in recent years, which aims to recruit them and facilitate early commencement of foundation training upon their graduation and return to Hong Kong. Besides, the Force sent delegations to Wuhan, Guangdong, Fujian, Chengdu, Beijing and Shanghai to deliver recruitment talks, provide recruitment information and conduct on-site recruitment selection procedures for Hong Kong students studying in universities thereat.

Furthermore, the Force has been conducting publicity and recruitment campaigns in overseas cities such as London, Toronto and Sydney. In 2018, the Force extended the Police Mentorship Programme to include Hong Kong students from overseas universities, with a view to enhancing their understanding of policing work and encouraging them to join the Force upon graduation. Following the return to full normalcy of society after the pandemic, the Force will resume overseas recruitment campaigns in a progressive manner to attract high calibre candidates to become police officers and facilitate their participation in the recruitment process. It is the Force’s initial plan to resume publicity and recruitment campaigns overseas (such as the United Kingdom) later this year.

The Force regularly reviews its recruitment policy to ensure that the entry requirements are up-to-date while the Force’s competitiveness in the human resources market is

maintained. With effect from 5 May 2023, the Force has adjusted the entry requirements. For the positions of police constable (including auxiliary police constable) and probationary inspector, the minimum height and weight requirements have been removed to align with other disciplined services. Applicants are allowed to pass the visual acuity test with the use of spectacles or contact lenses, while the requirement for colour perception test remains unchanged. Moreover, for the position of police constable (including auxiliary police constable), applicants may choose to sit for a Recruit Police Constable Written Examination newly introduced by the Force.

The Force will continue to adjust its publicity strategy in light of general social conditions such as the economic situation and demand in the labour market. The Force does not maintain a breakdown on the expenditure involved.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY****SB081****(Question Serial No. 2183)**

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:

In view of the wide range of tactics adopted in fraud cases and an upward trend in the number of cases involving deception in recent years, will the Government inform this Committee of:

- 1 the number of fraud cases of various types, including “Social Media Deception”, “E-shopping Fraud”, “Naked Chat Blackmail”, “Email Scam”, “Online Employment Fraud”, “Online Investment Fraud” and “Telephone Deception” reported and successfully prosecuted in the past 3 years; and
- 2 the estimated manpower and expenditure of the Police for anti-deception publicity programmes in the coming year.

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Man-kwong (LegCo internal reference no.: 32)

Reply:

- 1 The numbers of deception and naked chat blackmail cases reported to the Police Force in each of the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

	Number of cases		
	2021	2022	2023
<b>Deception</b>	<b>19 249</b>	<b>27 923</b>	<b>39 824</b>
Online Deception	13 859	19 599	27 314
<i>Part of types of online scam</i>			
<i>E-shopping Fraud</i>	6 120	8 735	8 950
<i>Online Investment Fraud</i>	980	1 884	5 105
<i>Online Employment Fraud</i>	1 063	2 884	3 518
<i>Social Media Deception</i>	3 638	3 605	3 372
<i>Email Scam</i>	549	391	208
Telephone Deception	1 140	2 831	3 213
<b>Naked Chat Blackmail</b>	<b>1 159</b>	<b>1 402</b>	<b>2 117</b>

The Force does not maintain statistics on the number of prosecutions and convictions for the respective crimes.

- 2 The expenditure for anti-scam publicity and education forms part of the total expenditure under Programme (2) "Prevention and Detection of Crime". The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure involved.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB082**

**(Question Serial No. 1680)**

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:

Under the Indicators for this Programme, the number of juveniles arrested for crime in 2023 reached 1 035, an increase of about 5.1% compared to the 985 reported in 2022. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- 1) The number of juveniles arrested, categorised by type of crime, for the past 5 years;
- 2) The ratio of juveniles who have been arrested more than once; and
- 3) The provision allocated by the Police for the prevention of juvenile delinquency, and the proportion of such provision to the overall provision for the prevention and detection of crime?

Asked by: Hon LUK Hon-man, Benson (LegCo internal reference no.: 13)

Reply:

- 1) The number of juveniles (aged 10-15) arrested for committing criminal offences, categorised by type of crime, for the past 5 years is tabulated as follows:

Juveniles (aged 10-15)	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Wounding and serious assault	156	221	174	197	196
Shop theft	128	184	99	68	106
Indecent assault	62	36	65	68	99
Criminal damage	122	120	156	126	93
Miscellaneous thefts	120	89	84	91	92
Deception	9	16	12	9	39
Unlawful society offences	22	22	38	71	37
Arson	13	37	32	18	25
Disorder/fighting in public place	25	35	18	28	24
Serious drug offences	20	42	89	43	18
Offences against public order	231	156	61	26	13
Robbery	14	28	28	4	13
Possession of offensive weapons	38	45	20	13	12
Others	180	187	238	223	268
Total	1 140	1 218	1 114	985	1 035

- 2) The Police Force does not maintain the relevant figures.
- 3) The Force has consistently focused on juvenile crime by dedicating significant resources to deter youth from engaging in illegal activities. Initiatives include establishing the “Leadership Institute on Narcotics” and the Junior Police Call. Moreover, since February last year, the Force has partnered with the Education Bureau to routinely develop teaching materials and offer crime prevention training for primary and secondary school teachers in Hong Kong. In this vein, the Force has produced the “Youth Crime Prevention Booklet” series for 2 consecutive years to aid educators and parents in crime prevention education. In January 2024, the Force contributed to the Po Leung Kuk Teacher Development Day by sharing strategies to address youth crime and the latest crime prevention insights with 1 000 primary school principals and teachers. Additionally, the Force is scheduled to participate in the teacher development days of 5 secondary schools between March and April. Furthermore, the Force visited the Education University of Hong Kong in January 2024 to engage with 220 prospective teachers, who are pursuing diplomas or master’s degrees in education, on subjects including digital literacy, anti-drug initiatives and child protection. This aims to shed light on the trends in youth crime for more effective crime prevention education.

The expenditure for prevention of juvenile delinquency forms part of the total expenditure under the Programme (2) “Prevention and Detection of Crime”. The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure involved.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB083**

**(Question Serial No. 1681)**

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 revised financial provision for the prevention and detection of crime in 2023-24 has been substantially reduced by 13.7% as compared with that of 2022-23. Moreover, the estimated financial provision for 2024-25 is projected to decrease by 6.1% as compared with that of 2022-23. In this connection, please advise this Committee of the following:

- a) The reasons for the consecutive reductions in financial provisions over the past 2 financial years;
- b) Whether the decreased financial provisions for relevant project items will affect the overall efficiency in the prevention and detection of crime; and
- c) The provision utilised by the Police in the last 5 years for developing various information and intelligence system of the Force, particularly in strengthening crime investigation capabilities through the use of modern technologies.

Asked by: Hon LUK Hon-man, Benson (LegCo internal reference no.: 14)

Reply:

- a) The revised estimate for 2023-24 and the estimate for 2024-25 of the Police Force under the Programme (2) "Prevention and Detection of Crime" are lower than the actual expenditure for 2022-23. This is mainly due to the expected decrease in the operational expenses.
- b) The Force will conduct timely assessments and deploy resources flexibly based on actual needs, aiming to meet the community's demand for policing services and to prevent and detect crimes more effectively. In 2023, a total of 90 276 crimes were recorded in Hong Kong, marking an increase of 28.9% compared with 2022. The upsurge was mainly attributed to the increase in deception cases and the society's resumption of normalcy, which led to a rise in traditional crimes. The overall detection rate was 31.1%. Leaving deception cases aside, the detection rate was 46.2%, similar to those over the past 10 years.

- c) In keeping up with the times, the Force is committed to developing various information and intelligence systems by harnessing modern technology, aiming to strengthen its crime investigation capabilities. The expenditures related to the information and intelligence systems form part of the total expenditure under the Programme (2) "Prevention and Detection of Crime". No specific breakdown is available.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB084**

**(Question Serial No. 1682)**

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:

The indicators provided under this Programme show a significant increase in the number of “non-ethnic Chinese (including Vietnamese) illegal immigrants arrested/intercepted” and the number of “forged identity cards seized” in 2023. In this connection, please advise this Committee of:

- a) The reason(s) for the significant increase in these 2 specific offences;
- b) The initiatives that the Police intends to implement in response to the significant increase of these 2 offences; and
- c) The provision allocated by the Police to address these 2 offences over the past 5 years.

Asked by: Hon LUK Hon-man, Benson (LegCo internal reference no.: 15)

Reply:

- a) Following the resumption of international flights in the Mainland after the pandemic, the Mainland visa-issuing authorities abroad have resumed issuing visas to Mainland China to foreigners since March 2023. Coupled with rumors inducing illegal immigrants to come to Hong Kong, the number of non-ethnic Chinese illegal immigrants arrested in Hong Kong has increased notably in the second half of 2023. These illegal immigrants came to Hong Kong mainly to improve their livelihood.

The number of forged identity cards seized varies depending on the quantity of exhibits found in criminal cases. The increase in the quantity of exhibits in 2023 was mainly attributed to illegal workers, overstayers and illegal immigrants arrested in Hong Kong.

- b) To intercept illegal immigration activities, the Police Force has, since August 2023, further maintained close liaison with the Immigration Department (ImmD) and related Mainland law enforcement agencies. It has continuously strengthened intelligence-sharing for illegal immigration cases by holding anti-illegal immigration working meetings and practicing information exchange. Joint operations with both Mainland

and local authorities have also been conducted to address the problems of illegal immigrants, their illegal employment and involvement in illegal activities in Hong Kong. For example, inter-departmental operations codenamed “Champion” and “Powerplayer” were conducted with the ImmD and the Labour Department. Additionally, the Marine Police has collaborated with Mainland authorities to enhance sea patrols by exchanging real-time radar surveillance information for joint preventive actions. This collaboration aims to maximize the frequency and coverage of joint sea patrols at critical locations and times. High-profile patrols are carried out at boarding and landing blackspots along the seashore, with actions such as interception, stopping of vessels, and arresting relevant persons before illegal immigrants enter Hong Kong waters.

With enhanced and coordinated enforcement actions taken by law enforcement authorities in Guangdong and Hong Kong, the number of non-ethnic Chinese illegal immigrants arrested in Hong Kong has been decreasing since November 2023: from 364 persons in October 2023 to 249, 96, 67 and 43 persons in November 2023, December 2023, January 2024 and February 2024 respectively, representing a significant decline of nearly 90% compared to the peak in October 2023.

- c) The Force will deploy manpower, including frontline and criminal investigation units, appropriately across the territory for enforcement actions in response to the trend of illegal immigration activities. No specific staff establishment or additional estimated expenditures is involved.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**(Question Serial No. 0054)**

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:

Last year, Hong Kong experienced a significant surge in deception cases, with nearly 40 000 cases reported. This marked an increase of approximately 10 000 cases as compared to 2022. Among the prevalent scams are “click farms” and “quick cash crimes”, where scammers often impersonate customer service representatives for businesses. They lure victims by offering commissions and promising refunds after purchases, only to ultimately refuse to return funds under various pretexts. In this connection, please advise this Committee of the following:

1. Given the rise of “click farm” scams, where fraudsters impersonate customer service representatives for businesses or renowned international brands and contact victims through official-looking accounts on instant messaging apps, will the Police consider partnering with these apps/platforms? Such a collaboration could entail the platforms reporting dubious phone numbers or accounts, especially those requesting business accounts, to the Police Anti-Deception Coordination Centre. This would enable the Police to proactively verify and investigate potential fraud, aiming to prevent scammers from reaching the public via fraudulent business accounts.
2. Two years ago, the Police launched the “Scameter”, a scam and pitfall search engine accessible via a website and mobile app. Please provide the total development and upgrade costs for “Scameter”, the total number of searches conducted, and the number of searches that yielded information on scams or online security risks.
3. Regarding public education on fraud prevention, including advertising, publicity campaigns and seminars, please provide the expenditure for these initiatives over the last year. Please also advise whether assessments of their effectiveness have been conducted.

Asked by: Hon MA Fung-kwok (LegCo internal reference no.: 3)

Reply:

1. The Police Force has been conducting online patrols and enforcement actions from time to time to proactively combat various cybercrimes. In cases where suspicious fraudulent online advertisements or posts are identified, the Force will swiftly request relevant advertisers and website operators to remove such advertisements and websites, and will actively track down the whereabouts of the fraudsters. The Force consistently adopts a multi-agency approach to maintain a close and effective liaison mechanism with social media platforms. If crime-related information is found on a social media platform, the Force contacts the platform concerned, ensuring that timely action is taken to prevent exploitation for criminal purposes. In 2023, the Force requested various social media platforms to remove or review over 12 000 fraud-related pages or accounts.

In addition, the Force, the Office of the Communications Authority and mobile network operators jointly set up a dedicated working group in September 2022 to explore measures for tackling scams at the source. Mobile network operators, acting on information provided by the Force, proactively block or suspend services of telephone numbers suspected of fraud and restrict access to suspicious websites. By the end of January 2024, over 7 600 websites and nearly 3 200 telephone numbers involved in fraud cases had been successfully blocked or filtered.

The Force also encourages members of the public to optimise the use of the round-the-clock enquiry hotline “Anti-Scam Helpline 18222”, “Scameter” and “Scameter+” to assess instantly the risk of online scams and cyber pitfalls, and to report scams proactively. In November 2023, the Force launched the Faster Payment System Suspicious Proxy ID Alert in collaboration with 44 banks and stored value facilities operators. It is an initiative based on the information available from the “Scameter”, aiming to enhance the alert mechanism to users of the associated risks before conducting transactions. By 31 January 2024, this mechanism had issued over 264 000 alerts, flagging high-risk transfers totaling nearly \$410 million. The Force will continue to step up publicity and adopt such mechanism in other platforms.

2. The Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau launched a one-stop scam and pitfall search engine “Scameter” on the “CyberDefender” website (CyberDefender.hk) in September 2022 and launched the mobile application version “Scameter+” in February 2023 to enable members of the public to identify suspicious online platform accounts, payment accounts, phone numbers, email addresses and URLs, etc, and to provide fraud prevention tips. As at 31 January 2024, the “Scameter” has recorded over 2.3 million searches and issued approximately 400 000 alerts on frauds and cyber security risks.

In February 2024, automation elements were incorporated in “Scameter+”, enabling the application to issue alerts when users browse suspicious websites and receive suspicious calls. To further enrich the database of the search engine, a public “reporting” mechanism has been introduced, allowing members of the public to report suspicious websites or calls through the application.

The above expenditure forms part of the total expenditure under the Programme (2) “Prevention and Detection of Crime”. The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure involved.

The Force will continue to study how to combat fraud with the use of advanced technology.

3. The Force has been adopting a multi-agency approach by collaborating with other government departments, regulatory agencies and industry stakeholders. Through different platforms and media, the Force has conducted various anti-crime publicity and educational campaigns and large-scale thematic crime prevention activities to raise public awareness of the risks associated with the use of computer, Internet, social media and cyber security, which in turn heighten their alertness to deception.

As part of the Force's ongoing efforts to prevent deception, an extensive publicity strategy has been adopted to disseminate anti-deception messages by utilising multiple channels online and offline, with a view to enhancing the anti-deception awareness among members of the public. This includes broadcasting anti-deception publicity clips and television series; conducting anti-deception talks; producing teaching materials for primary and secondary schools; launching a WhatsApp channel; registering on various social media platforms, such as Xiaohongshu; and holding press conferences on the latest deception *modi operandi* as well as large-scale publicity campaigns.

In June 2023, the Force, in collaboration with government departments and public and private organisations, recruited and trained SILVERSHIELD ambassadors, utilising community power to spread the message "Scams are rampant; Tell everyone". To enhance public alertness to phishing scams, the Force launched a new round of anti-deception activities in August, which included the releasing of an anti-fraud promotional song by a renowned musician. August also marked the "Anti-Money Laundering Month", during which the Force rolled out a series of promotional activities to remind the public not to rent, lend or sell their bank accounts. In December, the Force organised the inaugural Anti-Scam Charity Run under the theme of anti-deception, attracting over 1 700 participants. Additionally, at the end of January this year, the Force hosted the Cyber Defenders' Carnival 2024 at HarbourChill Wan Chai to promote cyber security awareness. In February, the "Little Grape Family Carnival" was held in the West Kowloon Cultural District, featuring the "Little Grape's Sea, Land, and Air Parade" on 18 February, which drew an attendance of more than 25 000 visitors. The latest anti-deception publicity initiatives also encompass various "embedded marketing" methods, such as printing anti-deception messages on coffee cup sleeves provided by coffee chains, and the recent commissioning of the anti-deception ferry "Ping On", which set sail in February this year, marking a novel channel for disseminating anti-scam messages.

The Force will continue to enhance its publicity efforts in a bid to raise the public's alertness to deceptions and technology crimes.

The expenditure incurred by various formations of the Force on anti-deception initiatives, including anti-scam public educational programmes, forms part of the total expenditure under Programme (2) "Prevention and Detection of Crime". The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure involved. The Force will from time to time review the effectiveness of the initiatives.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB086**

**(Question Serial No. 1285)**

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:

Regarding the various replacement plans of the Marine Police launches, please provide the types, basic features (total length/crew members/speed), estimated commissioning time, and estimates of expenditure of the new launches procured as from 2022, as well as the types of serving police launches that will be replaced by the new ones.

Asked by: Hon MA Fung-kwok (LegCo internal reference no.: 24)

Reply:

Details of the launch replacement programmes as from 2022 are set out in the following table:

<b>Type of police launch to be procured</b>	<b>Basic features (Length Overall (LOA)/ Operational Manning Standard (OMS)/Speed)</b>	<b>Estimated commissioning time</b>	<b>Total estimate (\$)</b>	<b>Type of serving police launch to be replaced</b>
High-speed Interceptor	LOA: 14.2 metres OMS: 5 crew Speed: minimum 66 knots	3 vessels delivered in 2023; the remaining 2 vessels scheduled for delivery in 2024	126.31 million (5 vessels)	Damen Cougartek Sea Stalker
Versatile Patrol Launch	LOA: 37 metres OMS: 16 crew (including one Cook) Speed: minimum 25 knots	Contract signed in the fourth quarter of 2023; scheduled for delivery in 2025-2028	2,218.10 million (12 vessels)	Divisional Command Launch and Keka Launch
Mobile Response and Command Platform	LOA: 41 metres OMS: 19 crew (including one Cook) Speed: minimum 25 knots	Contract signed in the fourth quarter of 2023; scheduled for delivery in 2026	375.83 million (2 vessels)	Regional Training Launch

<b>Type of police launch to be procured</b>	<b>Basic features (Length Overall (LOA)/ Operational Manning Standard (OMS)/Speed)</b>	<b>Estimated commissioning time</b>	<b>Total estimate (\$)</b>	<b>Type of serving police launch to be replaced</b>
Divisional Logistic Launch	LOA: 12-17 metres OMS: 4 crew Speed: minimum 35 knots	Contract expected to be signed in the second quarter of 2024; scheduled for delivery in 2025-2028	541.98 million (11 vessels)	Seaspray Police Launch
Small Boat Divisional Disguised Craft	LOA: 7.9 metres OMS: 2 crew Speed: minimum 40 knots	Contract signed in the second quarter of 2023 and delivered in the fourth quarter of the same year	1.53 million (1 vessel)	Confiscated Speedboat
Divisional Fast Patrol Craft Mark IV	LOA: 10.5-12 metres OMS: 4 crew Speed: minimum 55 knots	Invitation to Tender gazetted in the fourth quarter of 2023; contract expected to be signed in the fourth quarter of 2024; scheduled for delivery in 2026-2028	265.94 million (12 vessels)	Divisional Fast Patrol Craft Mark I and II
Medium Patrol Launch Mark II	LOA: 16-20 metres OMS: 5 crew Speed: minimum 45 knots	Invitation to Tender expected to be gazetted in the second quarter of 2024; scheduled for delivery in 2027-2028	1,496.61 million (12 vessels)	Inshore Patrol Launch (6 vessels) and Medium Patrol Launch (6 vessels)
Personal Watercraft	LOA: 3.5-3.7 metres OMS: 2 crew Speed: minimum 35 knots	Quotation invitation expected to be issued in the third quarter of 2024; scheduled for delivery in 2025	4.51 million	Newly procured item

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**(Question Serial No. 0027)**

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 online deception cases has surged abruptly in recent years, some involving amounts exceeding \$10 million. Despite the launch of the Police's anti-scam mobile app "Scameter+", the number of victims continues to rise. Not only have the elderly but also well-educated groups, including professionals, have fallen prey to these frauds. In this connection, please inform this Committee of the following:

- 1) the manpower and expenditure dedicated by the Police to prevent and detect online deception cases for the past 5 years;
- 2) the total number of online deception cases detected by the Police, categorised by type of crime (e.g. e-shopping fraud, online investment fraud, online employment fraud, online gaming fraud, etc.), along with the amounts involved and the number of victims for each of the past 5 years; and
- 3) whether online gaming fraud employs different scam tactics, the details of each tactic and the Police's strategies to combat such fraud.

Asked by: Hon NG Kit-chong, Johnny (LegCo internal reference no.: 16)

Reply:

- 1) "Enhancing cyber security and combating technology crime" remains one of the Commissioner's Operational Priorities (COP) in 2024 and "combating quick cash crime" of the COP 2023 has been amended to "combating deception and quick cash crime". The Police Force has been taking proactive measures on all fronts to combat deception and technology crimes. The Commercial Crime Bureau (CCB) and its Anti-Deception Coordination Centre (ADCC), the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau (CSTCB), the Financial Intelligence and Investigation Bureau and the crime investigation units of various Police Regions and Districts are all dedicated to cracking down on scams and technology-related crimes.

To further enhance its capabilities in combating related crimes, the Force established the e-Crime Processing and Analysis Hub (e-Hub), a one-stop platform for handling electronic reports on technology crimes and deceptions, in September 2022. The e-Hub conducts correlation analysis on cases through an enhanced computer system to

identify relevant clusters of cases for consolidated investigation, with a view to focusing resources on following up the cases in a more efficient and effective manner, thereby enhancing the Force’s effectiveness in handling technology crimes and deceptions.

As various formations of the Force are involved in combating online deception and other types of crime, a separate breakdown of the manpower involved is not available. ADCC and the e-Hub are mainly tasked with combating online deception. For ADCC, the staff establishment has grown in each of the past 5 years: from 26 in 2019-20 to 49 in 2022-23, with 32 being permanent establishment and 17 on secondment from different Force formations. In 2023-24, the ADCC’s staff establishment expanded further to 90, with permanent establishment increasing by 5 to 37, and the remainder filled by 53 officers on secondment or Post-retirement Service Contracts. Meanwhile, the establishment of the e-Hub will expand from 26 since its inception to 28. Of these, 1 is a permanent post and the remainder are filled by officers on secondment from different Force formations. The Force will review the manpower and resources of various formations and adjust the establishment from time to time.

The expenditures for the CCB, ADCC, CSTCB, e-Hub and crime investigation units of various Police Regions and Districts form part of the total expenditure under Programme (2) “Prevention and Detection of Crime”. The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditures involved.

- 2) The common types of online deception reported to the Force as well as the amount involved for each of the past 5 years are tabulated as follows:

	Number of cases				
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Online Deception	5 157	10 716	13 859	19 599	27 314
Common types of online scam					
E-shopping Fraud	2 194	6 678	6 120	8 735	8 950
Online Investment Fraud	167	544	980	1 884	5 105
Phishing Scam (Note)					4 322
Online Employment Fraud	66	236	1 063	2 884	3 518
Social Media Deception	1 678	1 988	3 638	3 605	3 372
Email Scam	816	767	549	391	208

	Amount of losses (HK\$ million)				
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Online Deception	2,902.0	2,945.6	2,965.8	3,073.8	5,345.9
Common types of online scam					
E-shopping Fraud	27.3	122.3	71.5	74.1	190.5
Online Investment Fraud	48.6	266.3	472.0	926.5	3,267.4
Phishing Scam (Note)					102.4
Online Employment Fraud	2.8	10.5	85.3	459.1	760.2
Social Media Deception	261.9	259.1	669.4	779.0	745.4
Email Scam	2,535.5	2,247.4	1,538.8	751.1	163.6

(Note) Figures related to phishing scam have been maintained by the Force since January 2023.

The Force does not maintain any breakdowns on the numbers of victims and cases detected by the above-mentioned types of online deception.

- 3) Fraudsters involved in online betting scams typically approach victims through social media platforms or uninvited messages. Victims are then enticed to place bets on fraudulent online betting platforms, where they are asked to deposit funds into designated bank accounts to top up their bets. Regardless of the gambling results, victims are unable to withdraw any money.

The Force has all along spared no effort in combating all types of fraud, employing enhanced law enforcement measures, publicity and education, multi-agency cooperation, intelligence analysis and cross-boundary collaboration. In terms of publicity and education, the Force has implemented an extensive publicity strategy and disseminated anti-deception messages through multiple channels to enhance the public's anti-deception awareness. The Police also encouraged the public to proactively report scams by using the round-the-clock enquiry hotline "Anti-Scam Helpline 18222", "Scameter" and "Scameter+".

In November 2023, the Faster Payment System (FPS) Suspicious Proxy ID Alert was launched, connecting the FPS platform to the "Scameter" database. During online fund transfer via FPS, the matching function of the database can identify payees whose information is related to scam reports, and an alert message will appear on the confirmation page. By 31 January 2024, this mechanism had issued over 264 000 alerts, flagging high-risk transfers totaling nearly \$410 million. The Force will continue to step up publicity and implement such mechanism in other platforms.

In late November last year, the Force collaborated with 10 major banks in establishing the Anti-Deception Alliance (ADA), where bank representatives are deployed to work in the Police Headquarters to provide more direct and instant communication and assistance in intercepting fraudulent payments and issuing alerts. Since its official launch on 27 November 2023 until the end of January 2024, 95% of payment interception requests has been responded by banks within 2 hours, markedly improving efficiency. In respect of upstream scam intervention, the ADA has proactively prevented 162 persons from making further transfers to fraudsters by the end of January. The number of successful interventions rose from a daily average of 1.2 cases before the ADA's establishment to 3.5 cases in January 2024, marking a 1.9-fold increase.

In February 2024, automation elements were incorporated in "Scameter+", enabling the application to issue alerts when users browse suspicious websites and receive suspicious calls. To further enrich the database, a public "reporting" mechanism has been introduced, allowing members of the public to report suspicious websites or calls through the application.

The Force will continue to closely monitor the trend of fraud cases and review fraud combating measures and strategies from time to time, so as to enhance protection for the public.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**(Question Serial No. 0066)**

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:

In Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024-25 under this Programme, it is mentioned that the Hong Kong Police Force will, among others, utilise social media platforms to disseminate crime prevention messages to the public. In this connection, please advise this Committee of the Police Force's expenditure and manpower involved in related work and its effectiveness in 2023-24, the estimated expenditure and manpower to be involved in related work in 2024-25, as well as any specific plans and new measures, particularly those aimed at combating online scams, to disseminate crime prevention messages on social media platforms.

Asked by: Hon NG Kit-chong, Johnny (LegCo internal reference no.: 22)

Reply:

The Police Force has been utilising social media platforms to disseminate crime prevention messages to the public. These platforms are mainly managed by the Multi-media Communication Division of the Public Relations Wing, which is currently led by 1 Superintendent and staffed with an additional 27 police officers and 2 contract staff members who are responsible for managing the Force's social media platforms. This Division conducts live broadcasts at large-scale events or operations and provides support to other Force formations as necessary.

In light of the latest crime trends, the Force has produced crime prevention videos and posts for social media to disseminate anti-deception and anti-crime messages in a simple and lively way, with the aims of raising awareness of crime prevention among people of all ages and levels, as well as interacting with the public in the fight against crime.

In 2023-24, the Force leveraged social media to launch various thematic anti-deception and anti-crime campaigns, including "Anti-Drugs Month", "Child Protection Month", "Anti-Money Laundering Month", "Anti-Deception Month" and "All-Round CyberDefence". These activities were organised both online and offline, along with conventional media and support of key opinion leaders on the Internet, to ensure a wider public reach and better publicity.

To help the public identify scams and online pitfalls, the Force has widely promoted anti-deception and anti-crime messages as well as useful tools such as “Scameter+” with 3 new functions and “Faster Payment System Suspicious Proxy ID Alert” through various social media and channels. These efforts aim to enable the public to promptly assess deception risks and obtain fraud-related information, thereby raising public awareness against deception.

In 2023, the Force expanded its social media presence by launching 3 new official accounts: the Hong Kong Police WhatsApp Channels in June, the Xiaohongshu account in October, and the Douyin account in November. In addition to YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Weibo, X (formerly known as Twitter) and WeChat, the Force now operates a total of 9 social media channels. A total of 5 472 posts were published across these platforms in 2023, attracting over 5.75 million followers by 5 March 2024. This growth indicates effective engagement and dissemination of the Force’s anti-deception and anti-crime messaging.

In 2024-25, the Force intends to bolster communication with the public through various social media platforms, enhancing their understanding of police work. In addition, it will keep abreast of the times by reviewing developments in the mass and social media, and will disseminate information via more emerging platforms when necessary. 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”, and no specific breakdown is available.

The Force will continue to step up its publicity efforts to provide the public with information on deception and crime prevention through various channels. The effectiveness of publicity campaigns will be reviewed in a timely manner. To better deter deception and prevent crime, the Force will also strengthen collaboration with stakeholders to promote anti-deception and crime prevention for all.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**(Question Serial No. 0067)**

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 mentioned in Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024-25 under this Programme that the Hong Kong Police Force will, among others, enhance its capability in tackling technology crime and financial investigation. In this connection, please advise this Committee of the expenditure and manpower involved as well as its effectiveness for 2023-24. Please also advise on the estimated expenditure and manpower to be involved, the respective plans, and whether additional manpower, training and new equipment will be required for enhancing the Force's capability in tackling technology crime and financial investigation in the coming 2024-25; if so, the details.

Asked by: Hon NG Kit-chong, Johnny (LegCo internal reference no.: 23)

Reply:

The Police Force is committed to taking proactive measures to combat technology crime and money laundering activities, primarily through the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau (CSTCB) and the Financial Intelligence and Investigation Bureau (FIIB).

In 2023-24, the establishment of CSTCB and FIIB comprise police officers of ranks ranging from Police Constable to Chief Superintendent, with 395 and 217 officers (including 1 supernumerary post of Chief Superintendent) respectively. In 2024-25, the establishment of police officers in CSTCB will increase by 8, while that of FIIB will remain unchanged. The estimated expenditure for these 2 formations forms part of the total expenditure under Programme (2) "Prevention and Detection of Crime". The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure involved.

Enhancing cyber security and combating technology crime are among Commissioner's Operational Priorities in 2024. The Force will continue to enhance its capability in combating technology crimes and handling cyber security incidents, as well as stepping up collaboration, intelligence exchange and law enforcement with relevant stakeholders and law enforcement agencies, such as the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer and the Hong Kong Productivity Council. In addition, the Cybercrime Policing Advisory Panel (CPAP) of the CSTCB was set up in December 2022, comprising 12 panel members who are

experts and leaders from the academia, the education sector, commercial chambers, the financial sector, the information technology sector, the telecommunications sector and various public entities. The CPAP assists the Force in formulating short, medium and long term strategic directions in order to strengthen the Force's digital policing capabilities in combating cybercrimes. As of December 2023, 4 meetings had been convened by the CPAP.

On another front, the CSTCB hosted the International Symposium on Cyber Policing in September 2023. The event was attended by over 200 individuals, including 110 senior law enforcement officers, members, experts and academics from the Mainland, Macao, INTERPOL and 35 overseas countries, along with approximately 100 local working partners of the Force. During the symposium, 18 distinguished scholars from renowned universities and experts from the cyber technology industry, specialising in digital finance, communications technology, and cybersecurity, were invited to deliver keynote speeches and lead panel discussions for in-depth exploration into issues related to cyber policing. The symposium not only provided a platform for international law enforcement and public and private organisations to exchange insights but also fostered international collaboration in policing to better tackle the evolving trends of cybercrime in the context of globalisation. Additionally, the CSTCB has regularly conducted training programs to bolster police officers' expertise in handling technology crime, with two courses accredited at Level 4 and one at Level 5 of the Qualifications Framework respectively.

Meanwhile, the Force has been strengthening its professional capability in financial intelligence analysis and financial investigations, including the founding of the Money Laundering Expert Cadre in October 2022, a volunteer secondary duty cadre with currently more than 50 officers to assist the frontline in investigating money laundering cases and to testify as expert witnesses in court hearings. With FIIB's Financial Data Analytic Platform, funded by a \$698 million allocation from the Legislative Council and incrementally implemented since 2023, the financial intelligence system's analytical capabilities have been significantly enhanced through advanced technologies and big data analytics tools. To combat money laundering, the Force will continue to enhance the knowledge and techniques of police officers and the industry stakeholders in financial investigation by consistently offering local and international courses, as well as refining the mechanism for collaborating with local financial institutions, international organisations and law enforcement agencies from the Mainland and abroad.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB090**

**(Question Serial No. 0069)**

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 Logistics Bureau (TLB). The reply was prepared by the Hong Kong Police Force and vetted by the TLB.]

Question:

In Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024-25 under this Programme, it is mentioned that the Hong Kong Police Force will, among others, examine with relevant agencies and government departments on using closed-circuit television cameras for traffic enforcement. Please provide this Committee with an update on the current progress of the project, along with relevant details, and information on the specific work plans, the implementation timetable, as well as the estimated expenditure and manpower to be involved.

Asked by: Hon NG Kit-chong, Johnny (LegCo internal reference no.: 24)

Reply:

The Police Force is currently engaging in studies and discussions with the Transport Department on using closed-circuit television cameras for traffic enforcement, focusing on details such as technical improvement, workflow and resources. More information will be released in due course when the details are finalised.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB091**

**(Question Serial No. 0716)**

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:

Section 4C of the Summary Offences Ordinance (Cap. 228) requires that a performance licence (permit) shall be obtained in advance for a dragon/lion dance activity. In this connection, please advise this Committee of the following:

(a) the number of applications for permits received by the Police Force and the respective results (e.g. permit issued/application rejected) in each of the past 3 years; and for the applications rejected, the justifications of the Police;

(b) in respect of the activities for which permits were issued in the past 3 years, whether there were illegal acts which breached the conditions of the permit when such activities were conducted; if so, the details and how these cases were handled;

(c) the number of cases in which the dragon/lion dance activities were carried out without licence (including the number of law enforcement actions taken and complaints received) in each of the past 3 years; and the respective results (including a breakdown by the number of persons arrested, prosecuted and convicted, and the penalties imposed, etc.); and

(d) in respect of the Government's Licensing E-Service launched in September 2020 that enables organisers to apply for permits and submit required documents through Police's public website and save time from queuing and submitting applications at report rooms, please provide details on the application and handling processes, including the number of application, processing time and workflow.

Asked by: Hon NGAN Man-yu (LegCo internal reference no.: 33)

Reply:

(a) The number of applications for dragon/lion dance permits (permits) received by the Police Force in each of the past 3 years is tabulated as follows:

Year	Number of applications for permits	Number of permits issued	Number of exemptions granted	Number of applications objected
2021	133	4	0	21
2022	270	71	17	8
2023	1 389	1 198	52	2

Note: Since the figures are based on the dates when applications are received/permits are issued/applications are objected, the sum of the numbers of permits issued, exemptions granted and applications objected may not equal to the total number of applications for permits in the same year.

There are established procedures and guidelines in the Force for processing permit applications. Each and every application is considered in a holistic manner to determine whether a permit should be issued. The Force will consider an array of relevant factors, including the venue, time and nature of the activity being organised, the impact on traffic and residents, the background of the organiser and its past record, and whether the activity will be used for illegal purposes. If it is satisfied that the activity will not involve lawbreakers and will not jeopardise public order and public safety, a permit will be issued with appropriate conditions for the organiser to follow in managing the dragon/lion dance activity. The Force has put in place an exemption mechanism to grant exemptions for activities that do not involve illegal acts or have no impact on public order, such as those organised by the Government or schools.

- (b)&(c) The Force does not maintain statistics on breaches of permit conditions or cases of dragon/lion dance activities performed without a licence. If violations of permit conditions are identified, the Force will take appropriate enforcement action based on the facts of individual case.
- (d) In September 2020, the Force rolled out Licensing E-service, allowing applicants to apply for permits and submit necessary documents via the Police Public Page and save time from queuing and submitting applications at report rooms.

The number of permit applications submitted through Licensing E-service since September 2020 is tabulated as follows:

Year	Number of applications
2020 (from September to December)	3
2021	67
2022	160
2023	601
2024 (from January to February)	589

The performance pledge for processing a permit application is 14 working days.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB092**

**(Question Serial No. 2372)**

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 in Hong Kong has continuously hit record highs in recent years. Despite the Police Force's efforts to raise the public's anti-deception awareness through frequent updates on social media and posters across the city, telephone scam remains prevalent, with even highly educated or professional individuals falling victim to scammers using "old tricks in new ways". In 2017, the Police established the Anti-Deception Coordination Centre (ADCC) to specifically combat deception and co-ordinate the publicity efforts of all relevant departments in fighting the crime. In this connection, please advise this Committee of the following:

1. The number of deception cases, number of victims, amounts involved, as well as the numbers of cases detected and persons arrested for the past 3 financial years, with a breakdown by type of crime (e.g. telephone scam, online scam, etc.);
2. In tabular form, the number of deception cases involving multi-level marketing and fraudulent financial intermediaries, the amount involved, as well as the numbers of cases detected and persons arrested for the past 3 financial years;
3. In light of the increasingly rampant online scams, whether additional manpower and resources will be solicited for the ADCC in 3 key areas, namely, intelligence sharing and law enforcement, cross-agency collaboration, as well as publicity and education, so as to prevent deception, strengthen law enforcement, intercept fraudulent funds and raise public awareness of anti-deception; if so, the details; if not, the reason(s);
4. The number of deceptions and frauds related to electronic consumption vouchers last year reported to the Police and the total amounts involved and; among them, the number of cases involving theft of personal data for the collection of vouchers or cashing out vouchers at a discount;
5. Since the implementation of the Top Talent Pass Scheme on 28 December 2022, approximately 70 000 applications have been received with 55 000 approvals. Of the approved applicants, around 40 000 talents have since arrived in Hong Kong. Furthermore,

by the end of last year, over 50 000 dependants had been approved to join them, with more than 30 000 having arrived. The influx of these talents and their dependants is significant. However, concerns have been raised that many talents may hesitate to seek police assistance immediately after falling prey to scammers due to potential language barriers. In this regard, please advise whether the Police has any plans to collaborate with the Hong Kong Talent Engage to enhance anti-deception publicity efforts tailored to the “Hong Kong drifters”, so as to extend the reach of such campaigns and heighten the newcomers’ alertness to deception;

6. Whether the Police will consider introducing a “one-touch” emergency function on its WeChat official account to facilitate new talents in reporting deception crimes or other cases directly; and

7. Whether the Police will explore the use of artificial intelligence to develop “digital police officers” to improve communication with new arrivals.

Asked by: Hon SHANG Hailong (LegCo internal reference no.: 19)

Reply:

- The number of deceptions and frauds reported to the Police Force, the detection rate, the amount involved and the number of persons arrested for each of the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

	2021	2022	2023
Number of cases	19 249	27 923	39 824
Detection rate	10.6%	12.0%	11.9%
Amount involved (HK\$)	Over 6.4 billion	Over 4.8 billion	9.18 billion
Number of persons arrested	2 835	4 112	7 043

The common types of deception and fraud reported to the Force as well as the amount involved for each of the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

	Number of cases			Amount of losses (HK\$ million)		
	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023
Online Deception	13 859	19 599	27 314	2,965.8	3,073.8	5,345.9
Common types of online scam						
E-shopping Fraud	6 120	8 735	8 950	71.5	74.1	190.5
Online Investment Fraud	980	1 884	5 105	472.0	926.5	3,267.4
Phishing Scam (Note)			4 322			102.4
Online Employment Fraud	1 063	2 884	3 518	85.3	459.1	760.2
Social Media Deception	3 638	3 605	3 372	669.4	779.0	745.4
Email Scam	549	391	208	1,538.8	751.1	163.6
Telephone Deception	1 140	2 831	3 213	811.1	1,076.5	1,102.8
Guess Who	497	1 540	2 237	27.5	114.1	188.7
Pretend Officials	641	1 290	969	783.5	962.3	913.8
Detained Son	2	1	7	0.1	0.07	0.3

(Note) Figures related to phishing scam have been maintained by the Force since 2023.

The Force does not maintain any breakdowns of the numbers of victims and cases detected by the above-mentioned types of deception and fraud.

2. The number of deceptions and frauds reported to the Force involving financial intermediaries, the number of cases detected, the amount of losses and the number of persons arrested for each of the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

	2021	2022	2023
Number of cases	148	95	66
Number of cases detected	26	18	6
Amount of losses (HK\$ million)	43.2	38.5	21
Number of persons arrested	182	59	82

No cases of deception and fraud involving multi-level marketing practices has been reported to the Force in the past 3 years.

3. “Enhancing cyber security and combating technology crime” remains one of the Commissioner’s Operational Priorities (COP) in 2024 and “combating quick cash crime” of the COP 2023 has been amended to “combating deception and quick cash crime”. The Force has been taking proactive measures on all fronts to combat deception and technology crimes. The Commercial Crime Bureau (CCB) and its Anti-Deception Coordination Centre (ADCC), the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau (CSTCB), the Financial Intelligence and Investigation Bureau and the crime investigation units of various Police Regions and Districts are all dedicated to cracking down on scams and technology-related crimes.

Deception syndicates utilise a multitude of stooge accounts to collect fraudulent payments and launder money. Therefore, targeting stooge accounts is a vital strategy in dismantling the fraud industry chain. In 2023, the Force arrested a total of 9 239 persons for involvement in various types of deception and money laundering offences, representing an increase of over 75% compared to 2022. Among these, about 6 500 were stooge account holders. The Force has reached a consensus with the Department of Justice to enhance evidence gathering and prosecution procedures for relatively simple and straightforward money laundering cases involving stooge accounts and to expedite prosecution. Moreover, the Force will continue to apply to the court for enhanced sentencing and has, since 2023, achieved a 20% increase in the sentences of 4 stooge account holders, leading to imprisonment terms ranging from 26 to 38 months.

In collaboration with stakeholders, the Force is committed to leveraging technology in the fight against deception. Since the establishment of a collaborative working group with the Office of the Communications Authority and telecommunications service providers, several initiatives have been implemented. Apart from blocking spoofed calls originating from outside local regions with the prefix “+852”, and sending text or voice alerts to users when they receive such calls, mobile network operators have blocked or filtered over 7 600 websites and nearly 3 200 telephone numbers associated with deception cases by January 2024. On the technical front, telecommunications service providers also proactively identify and block a significant volume of calls made using technical devices and suspend related services.

Last year, in collaboration with the Hong Kong Monetary Authority and the banking industry, the Force introduced various anti-deception measures. Notably, in November, the Faster Payment System (FPS) Suspicious Proxy ID Alert was launched, connecting the FPS platform to the “Scameter” database. During online fund transfer via FPS, the matching function of the database can identify payees whose information is related to scam reports, and an alert message will appear on the confirmation page. By 31 January 2024, this mechanism had issued over 264 000 alerts, flagging high-risk transfers totaling nearly \$410 million. The Force will continue to step up publicity and implement such mechanism in other platforms.

In late November last year, the Force collaborated with 10 major banks in establishing the Anti-Deception Alliance (ADA), where bank representatives are deployed to work in the Police Headquarters to provide more direct and instant communication and assistance in intercepting fraudulent payments and issuing alerts. Since its official launch on 27 November 2023 until the end of January 2024, 95% of payment interception requests has been responded by banks within 2 hours, markedly improving efficiency. In respect of upstream scam intervention, the ADA has proactively prevented 162 persons from making further transfers to fraudsters by the end of January. For intercepting fraud proceeds, the ADCC continues to assist in minimising victims’ losses, intercepting over \$12.5 billion worth of fraud proceed since its inception until the end of last year.

The CSTCB launched a one-stop scam and pitfall search engine “Scameter” in September 2022 and launched the mobile application version “Scameter+” in February 2023. As at 31 January 2024, “Scameter+” has been downloaded more than 228 000 times, while the search engine has recorded over 2.3 million searches and issued approximately 400 000 alerts on frauds and cyber security risks. In February 2024, automation elements were incorporated in “Scameter+”, enabling the application to issue alerts when users browse suspicious websites and receive suspicious calls. To further enrich the database, a public “reporting” mechanism has been introduced, allowing members of the public to report suspicious websites or calls through the application.

The Force will continue to place emphasis on combating deception cases. In addition to stepping up enforcement and enhancing prosecution efficiency, the Force will rigorously combat the use of stooge accounts by deception syndicates in committing crimes through applications for enhanced sentencing. Approaches such as interception of fraudulent payments and upstream scam intervention will be adopted to minimise victims’ losses. Furthermore, the Force will continue to raise anti-deception awareness of members of the public through online and offline publicity and actively seek to maintain close cooperation with stakeholders from various sectors, relevant government departments and other law enforcement agencies, including those in the Mainland and overseas, so as to create synergy in combating deception cases.

Regarding the ADCC’s manpower, its staff establishment has grown over the past 5 years, from 26 in 2019-20 to 49 in 2022-23, with 32 being permanent establishment and 17 on secondment from different Force formations. In 2023-24, the ADCC’s staff establishment expanded further to 90, with permanent establishment increasing by 5 to 37, and the remainder filled by 53 officers on secondment or Post-retirement Service

Contracts. The Force will review the manpower and resources of various formations and adjust the establishment from time to time.

4. In 2023, the Force received reports of 108 cases related to consumption vouchers, involving crime proceeds totaling \$231,500. All these cases involved the fraudulent use of personal data to impersonate another to collect the vouchers. The CCB will maintain close contact with the Secretariat of the Consumption Voucher Scheme and the operators of stored value facilities, so as to exchange information and take timely follow-up actions and law enforcement actions as appropriate.
- 5-7. To raise anti-scam awareness among new arrivals from the Mainland, the ADCC held an anti-deception seminar on the latest deception trends in February last year for around 1 000 Mainland students from 14 tertiary institutions. The Force has also launched an account on Xiaohongshu to broaden its anti-scam outreach using online platforms. In September, the ADCC introduced e-learning packages tailored for Mainland students newly admitted to universities in Hong Kong, featuring a quiz with about 50 questions on the latest common fraud tactics to enhance their understanding of scam prevention. From its roll-out through the end of January 2024, the e-learning programme has been completed by over 2 500 students. The Force will continue to encourage the universities to distribute these resources to all their students.

Furthermore, in January 2024, Regional Crime Prevention Office of the New Territories North and the Hong Kong Top Talent Services Association co-hosted an anti-deception webinar for top talents, informing them of common fraud tactics in Hong Kong and aiming to reduce their risk of being scammed. The event attracted over 2 000 participants from various cities.

The Force is actively exploring different platforms to extend the reach of anti-deception information. In February 2024, it began releasing latest scam alerts and anti-deception messages on the WeChat account of Gter.net, a popular exchange platform among Mainland students, assisting them in preparing for their arrival in Hong Kong. Concurrently, the Force maintains close liaison with the Hong Kong Mainland Students Association and its 18 divisions across 11 local universities, disseminating the latest scam alerts through various student networks.

The Force has been adopting a multi-agency approach to heighten public alertness to different types of deception by collaborating with other government departments, regulatory agencies and industry stakeholders, and by organising large-scale thematic crime prevention activities, etc. The Force remains dedicated to exploring advanced technological applications in the fight against deception.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB093**

**(Question Serial No. 0163)**

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:

Regarding the recent public complaints about receiving spam messages promoting online illegal gambling via mobile messaging and social media apps, please advise this Committee of the following:

1. The number of online illegal gambling cases detected and the number of suspects arrested by the Police for each of the past 3 years;
2. Whether the Police have deployed manpower to monitor and intercept such messages for the past 2 years; if so, the details and the expenditure involved; and
3. Whether the current practices will be reviewed to strengthen measures against the promotion of online illegal gambling via messaging apps by illegal syndicates.

Asked by: Hon SHIU Ka-fai (LegCo internal reference no.: 15)

Reply:

1. The number of persons arrested by the Police Force in relation to illegal gambling offences (e.g. serious gambling and various offences such as operating or managing an unlawful gambling establishment, bookmaking, gambling in a gambling establishment, gambling in a street etc, as well as online illegal gambling) for each of the past 3 years is set out below:

	Number of persons arrested
2021	5 731
2022	6 781
2023	6 101

The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the number of cases and number of persons arrested in relation to online illegal gambling.

2.-3. The Force has been conducting proactive online patrols. If illegal or inappropriate content is identified on the Internet, the Force will contact the relevant platforms to request the removal of such content and take appropriate action. The Force has been adopting a multi-agency approach to maintain effective communication mechanisms with social media platforms. When crime-related information is found on a social media platform, the Force will proactively engage with the platform to prevent its use as a medium or tool for crime. In 2023, the Force requested the removal or review of over 12 000 pages or accounts related to frauds from various social media platforms, including online illegal gambling websites.

The expenditures for the above initiatives form part of the total expenditure under Programme (2) "Prevention and Detection of Crime". The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditures involved.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB094**

**(Question Serial No. 1896)**

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:

According to figures previously released by the Police Force, the number of online and telephone scams reported has doubled in recent years, with the total amount of money involved in the first 9 months of last year exceeding \$4.4 billion. In light of this escalating trend, please advise this Committee of the following:

1. The indicators used for detecting online and telephone scams for the past 3 years and the current year;
2. Detailed information regarding the expenditures and specific measures as mentioned in paragraph 11 under this Programme, where the Force will continue to enhance its capability in tackling technology crime and financial investigation;
3. Following the implementation of the Short Message Service (SMS) Sender Registration Scheme at the end of last year, which allows participating companies or organisations to send messages using “#” in the ID to help the public verify the sender and reduce the risk of SMS scams, whether the Police will consider conducting further study on establishing a voluntary registration scheme for a “white list for incoming calls”. Such a scheme would encourage telecommunications service providers, banks, government departments and businesses to be included in a database enabling the public’s mobile phones to automatically display the name of the registered organisation when receiving a call from a number on the “white list”. If considered, the details; if not, the reason(s);
4. As relayed by members of the public, mobile apps designed to block telemarketing calls are currently available on the market. These technologies could potentially be used to compile a “white list” of incoming calls. In this connection, will the Police consider collaborating with technology-related government departments and public bodies to develop a mobile app for identifying and verifying callers on the “white list”, or to enhance the functions of “Scameter+”? If so, the details; if not, the reason(s).
5. Taking inspiration from the banking sector, which initiates a verification process known as KYC (Know Your Customer) during suspicious transactions, such as large-value fund

transfers, will the Police consider adopting a similar approach and enhancing collaboration with the telecommunications sector? This would aim to proactively combat the actions of suspicious users who persistently make telephone calls, thus strengthening the capability to prevent and combat deception. If so, the details; if not, the reasons.

Asked by: Hon TAN Sunny (LegCo internal reference no.: 11)

Reply:

1. The number of deceptions and frauds reported to the Police Force, the detection rate, the amount involved and the number of persons arrested for each of the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

	2021	2022	2023
Number of cases	19 249	27 923	39 824
Detection rate	10.6%	12.0%	11.9%
Amount involved (HK\$)	Over 6.4 billion	Over 4.8 billion	9.18 billion
Number of persons arrested	2 835	4 112	7 043

Deception syndicates utilise a multitude of stooze accounts to collect fraudulent payments and launder money. Therefore, targeting stooze accounts is a vital strategy in dismantling the fraud industry chain. In 2023, the Force arrested a total of 9 239 persons for involvement in various types of deception and money laundering offences, representing an increase of over 75% compared to 2022. Among these, about 6 500 were stooze account holders. The Force has reached a consensus with the Department of Justice to enhance evidence gathering and prosecution procedures for relatively simple and straightforward money laundering cases involving stooze accounts and to expedite prosecution. Moreover, the Force will continue to apply to the court for enhanced sentencing and has, since 2023, achieved a 20% increase in the sentences of 4 stooze account holders, leading to imprisonment terms ranging from 26 to 38 months.

In addition to stepping up enforcement and enhancing prosecution efficiency, the Force will rigorously combat the use of stooze accounts by deception syndicates in committing crimes through applications for enhanced sentencing. Approaches such as interception of fraudulent payments and upstream scam intervention will be adopted to minimise victims' losses. Furthermore, the Force will continue to raise anti-deception awareness of members of the public through online and offline publicity and actively seek to maintain close cooperation with stakeholders from various sectors, relevant government departments and other law enforcement agencies, including those in the Mainland and overseas, so as to create synergy in combating deception cases.

2. The Force is committed to taking proactive measures to combat technology crime and money laundering activities, primarily through the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau (CSTCB) and the Financial Intelligence and Investigation Bureau (FIIB).

In 2023-24, the establishment of CSTCB and FIIB comprise police officers of ranks ranging from Police Constable to Chief Superintendent, with 395 and 217 officers (including 1 supernumerary post of Chief Superintendent) respectively. In 2024-25, the establishment of police officers in CSTCB will increase by 8, while that of FIIB will remain unchanged. The estimated expenditure for these 2 formations forms part of the

total expenditure under Programme (2) “Prevention and Detection of Crime”. The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure involved.

On technology crime, “enhancing cyber security and combating technology crime” is among Commissioner’s Operational Priorities in 2024. The Force will continue to enhance its capability in combating technology crimes and handling cyber security incidents, as well as stepping up collaboration, intelligence exchange and law enforcement with relevant stakeholders and law enforcement agencies, such as the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer and the Hong Kong Productivity Council. In addition, the Cybercrime Policing Advisory Panel (CPAP) of the CSTCB was set up in December 2022, comprising 12 panel members who are experts and leaders from the academia, the education sector, commercial chambers, the financial sector, the information technology sector, the telecommunications sector and various public entities. The CPAP assists the Force in formulating short, medium and long term strategic directions in order to strengthen the Force’s digital policing capabilities in combating cybercrimes. As of December 2023, 4 meetings had been convened by the CPAP.

On another front, the CSTCB hosted the International Symposium on Cyber Policing in September 2023. The event was attended by over 200 individuals, including 110 senior law enforcement officers, members, experts and academics from the Mainland, Macao, International Criminal Police Organisation and 35 overseas countries, along with approximately 100 local working partners of the Force. During the symposium, 18 distinguished scholars from renowned universities and experts from the cyber technology industry, specialising in digital finance, communications technology, and cybersecurity, were invited to deliver keynote speeches and lead panel discussions for in-depth exploration into issues related to cyber policing. The symposium not only provided a platform for international law enforcement and public and private organisations to exchange insights but also fostered international collaboration in policing to better tackle the growing trend of cybercrime in an increasingly globalised world. Additionally, the CSTCB has regularly conducted training programmes to bolster police officers’ expertise in handling technology crime, with two courses accredited at Level 4 and one at Level 5 of the Qualifications Framework respectively.

On financial investigation, the Force has been strengthening its professional capability in financial intelligence analysis and financial investigations, including the founding of the Money Laundering Expert Cadre in October 2022, a volunteer secondary duty cadre with currently more than 50 officers to assist the frontline in investigating money laundering cases and to testify as expert witnesses in court hearings. FIIB’s Financial Data Analytic Platform, funded by a provision of \$698 million approved by the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council, was rolled out by phase since 2023 to strengthen the financial intelligence system’s analytical capabilities through advanced technologies and big data analytics tools. To combat money laundering, the Force will continue to enhance the knowledge and techniques of police officers and the industry stakeholders in financial investigation by consistently offering local and international courses, as well as refining the mechanism for collaborating with local financial institutions, international organisations and law enforcement agencies from the Mainland and abroad.

3-5. To facilitate the crackdown on scam-related calls and messages, a working group was established in September 2022 by the Office of the Communications Authority (OFCA), the Force and major telecommunications service providers. A series of initiatives have been implemented to address the problem at its source. Apart from blocking spoofed calls originating from outside local regions with the prefix “+852”, and sending text or voice alerts to users when they receive such calls, telecommunications service providers have blocked or filtered over 7 600 websites and nearly 3 200 telephone numbers associated with deception cases by January 2024. On the technical front, telecommunications service providers also proactively identify and block a significant volume of calls made using technical devices and suspend related services.

To further assist the public in verifying the identities of SMS senders and increase their awareness of deception so as to prevent telephone and SMS fraud, the Government implemented the Short Message Service (SMS) Sender Registration Scheme (the Scheme) in December 2023. Under the Scheme, all participating companies or organisations will use “Registered SMS Sender IDs” with the prefix “#” when sending SMS messages to local mobile service subscribers. Since February 2024, the Scheme has been open for applications from all sectors, including government departments. As at the end of February 2024, major telecommunications service providers, banks and 11 government departments or statutory entities that use SMS for public communication have successively joined the Scheme.

Meanwhile, in February 2024, automation elements were incorporated in “Scameter+”, enabling the application to issue alerts when users browse suspicious websites and receive suspicious calls. To further enrich the database of “Scameter”, a public “reporting” mechanism has been introduced, allowing members of the public to report suspicious websites or calls through the application. The Force will review and update the database periodically to ensure that the data remain accurate and up-to-date.

Following the introduction of the above initiatives, the average number of telephone deception cases reported in the fourth quarter of 2023 decreased by 38.1% when compared to the same period in 2022. This suggests that these measures have had a positive impact on reducing telephone deception cases. The Force remains dedicated to exploring advanced technological applications in the fight against deception.

Regarding the establishment of a voluntary registration system for a “whitelist of incoming calls”, modelled after the Scheme as proposed in the question, OFCA has noted that such a whitelist would require frequent updates to ensure that members of the public do not miss important calls due to potential omissions or errors. Furthermore, the design of the calling number display technology, which follows a set of internationally recognised formats, generally does not support the display of signs and text other than numbers, making the suggestion technically unfeasible at this stage. However, if individual government departments or public entities deem it necessary to use special phone numbers for public communication, such as the Hong Kong SAR Government’s enquiry hotline 1823 and the Police Force’s Anti-Scam Helpline 18222, OFCA is committed to providing proactive support and assistance. OFCA will also continue to encourage various government departments and public organisations to seek its assistance in acquiring phone numbers that begin with specific digits for public

communication purposes. This will aid members of the public in identifying calls from government departments and public entities.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB095**

**(Question Serial No. 1216)**

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 Logistics Bureau (TLB). The reply was prepared by the Hong Kong Police Force and vetted by the TLB.]

Question:

It is mentioned that one of the duties of the Police Force is to work closely with relevant agencies and government departments to identify technological solutions to address serious parking offences. In this connection, please inform this Committee of the following:

- (a) the respective numbers of fixed penalty tickets (FPTs) for illegal parking, both electronic and handwritten, issued by the Police Force in the 5 Police Regions in each of the past 3 years;
- (b) the number of enforcement actions against illegal road racing conducted and the number of FPTs issued by the Police Force in the 5 Police Regions in each of the past 3 years; and
- (c) regarding the trial scheme on the average speed camera system conducted by the Transport Department which was completed in 2019, the number of speeding cases successfully collected through this trial scheme and whether the scheme will be formally launched; if so, the proposed locations, construction costs and timetable for the installation of the system.

Asked by: Hon TIEN Puk-sun, Michael (LegCo internal reference no.: 27)

Reply:

- (a) The figures on both electronic and handwritten fixed penalty tickets (FPTs) for illegal parking issued by the Police Force under the Fixed Penalty (Traffic Contraventions) Ordinance (Cap. 237) by Police Region for the past 3 years are listed in the following table:

Police Region	Number of FPTs issued for illegal parking					
	2021		2022		2023	
	Handwritten	Electronic	Handwritten	Electronic	Handwritten	Electronic
Hong Kong Island	191 500	497 092	81 520	542 480	21 622	501 545
Kowloon East	195 357	375 109	28 931	526 486	3 509	439 529
Kowloon West	216 708	646 284	76 906	934 178	10 686	949 590
New Territories South	184 200	400 506	52 787	518 108	11 655	459 872
New Territories North	147 737	447 667	47 929	554 146	10 318	604 693
Total	935 502	2 366 658	288 073	3 075 398	57 790	2 955 229

- (b) The enforcement figures on speeding handled by the Force in 2021, 2022 and 2023 are 266 333, 265 283 and 253 571 cases respectively. The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the figures on prosecutions for illegal road racing.

The figures on enforcement actions taken by the Force against speeding by Police Region for the past 3 years are listed in the following table:

Police Region	Enforcement figures on speeding		
	2021	2022	2023
Hong Kong Island	24 563	29 380	19 793
Kowloon East	47 728	43 132	50 576
Kowloon West	49 005	70 508	58 089
New Territories South	50 114	47 211	53 898
New Territories North	94 923	75 052	71 215
Total	266 333	265 283	253 571

- (c) The Force is currently engaging in studies and discussions with the Transport Department on using average speed camera system for traffic enforcement, focusing on details such as system interfacing, technical improvement, workflow and resources. More information will be released in due course when the details are finalised.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB096**

**(Question Serial No. 1223)**

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 mentioned that the Police Force will, among others, strengthen its response in tackling deceptions and frauds through the e-Crime Processing and Analysis Hub and Anti-Deception Coordination Centre. In this connection, please advise this Committee of the following:

- (a) The expenditure of the Anti-Deception Coordination Centre as a percentage of the estimate for Programme (2) Prevention and Detection of Crime;
- (b) The number of deceptions and frauds reported and successfully detected as well as the amount of money intercepted over the past year; and
- (c) Regarding the Police's mobile app "Scameter+", well-received by the public for its ability to identify scam calls and websites and to enable prompt reporting of suspicious phone numbers and websites, please provide the latest download count for the app, along with the annual operational and development expenditures.

Asked by: Hon TIEN Puk-sun, Michael (LegCo internal reference no.: 34)

Reply:

- (a) The expenditure of the Anti-Deception Coordination Centre (ADCC) forms part of the total expenditure under the Programme (2) "Prevention and Detection of Crime". The Police Force does not maintain the breakdown of the expenditure involved.
- (b) In 2023, 39 824 cases of deception were recorded, with a detection rate of 11.9%. A total of 9 239 persons were arrested for involving in various types of deception cases and committing money laundering offences. This figure represented an increase of more than 75% when compared with the figure for 2022; and among those arrested, about 6 500 persons were stooge account holders. Meanwhile, the ADCC continued to play a role in minimising the victims' losses, intercepting more than \$1.29 billion of fraudulent payments last year.

The Force will continue to place emphasis on combating deception cases. In addition to stepping up enforcement and enhancing prosecution efficiency, the Force will

rigorously combat the use of stooge accounts by deception syndicates in committing crimes through applications for enhanced sentencing. Approaches such as interception of fraudulent payments and upstream scam intervention will be adopted to minimise victims' losses. Furthermore, the Force will continue to raise anti-deception awareness of members of the public through online and offline publicity and actively seek to maintain close cooperation with stakeholders from various sectors, relevant government departments and other law enforcement agencies, including those in the Mainland and overseas, in combating deception cases.

- (c) The Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau launched a one-stop scam and pitfall search engine "Scameter" on the "CyberDefender" website (CyberDefender.hk) in September 2022 and launched the mobile application version "Scameter+" in February 2023, to enable members of the public to identify suspicious online platform accounts, payment accounts, phone numbers, email addresses and URLs, etc, and to provide fraud prevention tips. As at 31 January 2024, "Scameter+" has been downloaded more than 228 000 times, while the search engine has recorded over 2.3 million searches and issued approximately 400 000 alerts on frauds and cyber security risks.

In February 2024, automation elements were incorporated in "Scameter+", enabling the application to issue alerts when users browse suspicious websites and receive suspicious calls. To further enrich the database of the search engine, a public "reporting" mechanism has been introduced, allowing members of the public to report suspicious websites or calls through the application. The Force will review and update the database periodically to ensure that the data remain accurate and up-to-date.

The expenditures incurred by "Scameter" and "Scameter+" form part of the total expenditure under the Programme (2) "Prevention and Detection of Crime". The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure involved.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB097**

**(Question Serial No. 1084)**

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force  
Subhead (No. & title): ()  
Programme: Not specified  
Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Police (SIU Chak-ye)  
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the estimated expenditure increase for the Police Force's Programmes:

1. Provide a detailed breakdown of the increase in the estimated expenditure for maintenance of law and order in the community and operations (including but not limited to monitoring global and local terrorism trends and regimes on counter-terrorism (CT), and improving CT strategies and action plans).
2. Advise whether the procurement of new weapons and equipment has been considered. If so, provide a detailed breakdown of the related expenditure.

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 12)

Reply:

1. The increase in the estimates under Programme (1) "Maintenance of Law and Order in the Community" and Programme (4) "Operations" for 2024-25 is mainly due to the increased provisions for salaries (including some vacancies expected to be filled in 2024-25) and departmental expenses (including electricity charges, system maintenance charges and cleansing service charges), as well as increased cash flow requirement for capital items (including the replacement and procurement of plant, crafts, vehicles and equipment).
2. To ensure that police officers have more effective equipment to cope with actual operational needs, the Police Force will evaluate operational circumstances and review the operational needs of officers as appropriate, and procure or replace weapons and equipment in accordance with the established policies, procedures and rules. The information on the expenditure for the Force's procurement of various weapons and equipment involves the Force's operational deployment details. It is inappropriate to disclose such information.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB098**

**(Question Serial No. 1231)**

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: Not specified

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

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

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

Question:

1. Recently, the Police Force sought funding support for the installation of new “sky eyes” cameras. Will these cameras be utilised to record evidence of illegal parking?
2. What is the estimated increase in the number of Fixed Penalty Tickets (FPTs) to be issued compared to the last 3 financial years?
3. To prevent the deterioration of police-community relations, special attention is being given to areas with severe shortages of parking spaces and extensive parking restrictions. Will the Police consider directing law enforcement officers to exercise greater humanity and discretion when issuing FPTs, particularly during special festivals and events, provided that it does not compromise road safety or obstruct traffic flow?

Asked by: Hon TSE Wai-chun, Paul (LegCo internal reference no.: 8)

Reply:

1. The Government plans to install closed-circuit televisions (CCTVs) in areas with relatively high crime rates and in high-traffic pedestrian locations throughout Hong Kong. The initial phase of CCTV installation aims to prevent and combat crimes, safeguard public security, as well as enhance crime detection and prevention. Currently, the plan does not include using CCTV to record video evidence for illegal parking offences. The Police Force will continually assess the effectiveness of the initiative and will make reference to international enforcement practices to consider if it should be expanded to include other types of enforcement.

2. The number of Fixed Penalty Tickets (FPTs) issued in the past 3 years and the estimated number of FPTs to be issued in 2024 are tabulated as follows:

Number of FPTs issued				
Year	2021	2022	2023	2024 Estimated
Fixed penalty (moving offences)	527 923	545 358	548 670	549 000
Fixed penalty (illegal parking)	3 302 160	3 363 471	3 013 019	3 012 000

3. Road safety is one of the Commissioner’s operational priorities in 2024. The Force has statutory duties to prevent behaviour that endangers lives and property, as well as to control traffic upon public thoroughfares.

The Force is committed to adopting a “result-oriented” enforcement approach when formulating the overall traffic policing strategy, with a view to reducing the number of persons killed and seriously injured in traffic accidents as well as changing the irresponsible behaviour of road users causing obstruction on roads.

During traffic enforcement, the Force adheres to established guidelines while also considering the specific circumstances of individual cases, deploying resources flexibly and taking appropriate control and enforcement actions to enhance road safety.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB099**

**(Question Serial No. 3035)**

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:

Residents of Kowloon East have expressed multiple concerns about the prevalence of prostitution in old districts of Hong Kong, which they report as causing nuisance to the residents in the vicinity and seriously impacting children, adolescents and women in particular. In this connection, please advise this Committee of:

- (1) the number of anti-vice operations conducted by the Police in Kowloon East last year;
- (2) the total number of persons arrested during the operations for involvement in the prostitution activities, together with a breakdown by nationality, gender and age; and
- (3) the proportion of the Police's estimated expenditure of about \$5.7 billion under Programme 2 for the coming financial year that will be allocated to combat the above-mentioned criminal activities.

Asked by: Hon TSE Wai-chun, Paul (LegCo internal reference no.: 38)

Reply:

- (1) The Police Force conducted a total of 98 anti-vice operations in Kowloon East last year.
- (2) A total of 174 persons suspected of engaging in prostitution were arrested during the operations. Of these, 167 arrested females, aged from 24 to 61, were suspected of being involved in "soliciting for an immoral purpose", "breach of condition of stay" and "operating a massage establishment without a licence". The other 7 arrested males, aged from 35 to 65, were suspected of being involved in "keeping a vice establishment" and "living on earnings of prostitution of others". Among the persons arrested, 166 were Chinese (51 holding Hong Kong identity cards, 112 holding two-way permits and 3 being illegal immigrants), 3 were Indonesian and 5 were Thai.

- (3) The expenditure involved forms part of the total expenditure under Programme (2) "Prevention and Detection of Crime". The Force does not maintain the breakdown of the expenditure involved.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**(Question Serial No. 3036)**

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:

Members of the public have reported a perceived increase in telephone deception cases, noting that various defrauding tactics are being employed. Even with the Real-name Registration Programme for Subscriber Identification Module (SIM) Cards in place, deceptions persist; fraudsters commonly use mobile numbers starting with “9” and “6” — digits frequently used by the general public. There have been complaints that significant public funds allocated to preventing telephone deception have yielded inadequate results. In this connection, please advise this Committee of the following:

- (1) The number of telephone deception cases reported, along with the numbers of cases both detected and undetected; the total number of persons arrested, prosecuted, and convicted over the past 3 financial years;
- (2) Further to the above, the total amount involved in these cases, the amount successfully recovered, and the amount yet to be recovered;
- (3) The additional estimated expenditure allocated to combating telephone scams; and whether a key performance indicator (KPI) has been or will be established for this purpose; and
- (4) In light of the rapid advancement of technologies, including the use of artificial intelligence-powered face-swapping technology by fraudsters, which presents significant challenges to the public's ability to stay vigilant, what new measures or enhanced uses of the additional substantial estimated expenditure have been proposed to bolster the fight against such crimes and provide the public with a greater sense of security?

Asked by: Hon TSE Wai-chun, Paul (LegCo internal reference no.: 39)

Reply:

(1)-(2) The number of deceptions and frauds reported to the Police Force, the detection rate, the amount of losses and the number of persons arrested for each of the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

	2021	2022	2023
Number of cases	19 249	27 923	39 824
Detection rate	10.6%	12.0%	11.9%
Amount involved (HK\$)	Over 6.4 billion	Over 4.8 billion	9.18 billion
Number of persons arrested	2 835	4 112	7 043

The number of telephone deception cases reported to the Force and the amount of losses for each of the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

	2021	2022	2023
Number of cases	1 140	2 831	3 213
Amount of losses (HK\$ million)	811.1	1,076.5	1,102.8

Deception syndicates utilise a multitude of stogie accounts to collect fraudulent payments and launder money. Therefore, targeting stogie accounts is a vital strategy in dismantling the fraud industry chain, which includes activities such as telephone deception. In 2023, the Force arrested a total of 9 239 persons for involvement in various types of deception and money laundering offences, representing an increase of over 75% compared to 2022. Among these, about 6 500 were stogie account holders. The Force has reached a consensus with the Department of Justice to enhance evidence gathering and prosecution procedures for relatively simple and straightforward money laundering cases involving stogie accounts and to expedite prosecution. Moreover, the Force will continue to apply to the court for enhanced sentencing and has, since 2023, achieved a 20% increase in the sentences of 4 stogie account holders, leading to imprisonment terms ranging from 26 to 38 months.

For intercepting fraud proceeds, the Anti-Deception Coordination Centre continues to assist in minimising victims' losses, intercepting over \$12.5 billion worth of fraud proceed since its inception until the end of last year.

The Force does not maintain a breakdown by type of scam, including telephone deception, on the number of cases detected or the crime proceeds intercepted.

(3) To combat telephone deception, the Force established a dedicated working group with the Office of the Communications Authority and mobile network operators in September 2022, and since then, several initiatives have been implemented. Apart from blocking spoofed calls originating from outside local regions with the prefix "+852", and sending text or voice alerts to users when they receive such calls, mobile network operators have blocked or filtered over 7 600 websites and nearly 3 200 telephone numbers associated with deception cases upon the Force's request by

January 2024 and have been on the technical front, proactively identifying and blocking a significant volume of calls made using technical devices and suspending related services.

The Force has also been proactively using technology to prevent members of the public from being exposed to fraudulent calls. In February 2024, automation elements were incorporated in “Scameter+”, enabling the application to issue alerts when users browse suspicious websites and receive suspicious calls. To further enrich its database, a public “reporting” mechanism has been introduced, allowing members of the public to report suspicious websites or calls through the application. The Force will review and update the database periodically to ensure that the data remain accurate and up-to-date.

In addition to stepping up enforcement and enhancing prosecution efficiency, the Force will rigorously combat the use of stooge accounts by deception syndicates in committing crimes through applications for enhanced sentencing. Approaches such as interception of fraudulent payments and upstream scam intervention will be adopted to minimise victims’ losses. Furthermore, the Force will continue to raise anti-deception awareness of members of the public through online and offline publicity and actively seek to maintain close cooperation with stakeholders from various sectors, relevant government departments and other law enforcement agencies, including those in the Mainland and overseas, so as to create synergy in combating deception cases.

The expenditure incurred on the above initiatives forms part of the total expenditure under Programme (2) “Prevention and Detection of Crime”, and the Force does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure involved. The Force has no plans to formulate KPIs for specific types of deceptions.

- (4) Enhancing cyber security and combating technology crime are among Commissioner’s Operational Priorities in 2024. The Force will continue to enhance its capability in combating technology crimes and handling cyber security incidents, as well as stepping up collaboration, intelligence exchange and law enforcement with relevant stakeholders and law enforcement agencies, such as the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer and the Hong Kong Productivity Council. In addition, the Cybercrime Policing Advisory Panel (CPAP) of the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau (CSTCB) was set up in December 2022, comprising 12 panel members who are experts and leaders from the academia, the education sector, commercial chambers, the financial sector, the information technology sector, the telecommunications sector and various public entities. The CPAP assists the Force in formulating short, medium and long term strategic directions in order to strengthen the Force’s digital policing capabilities in combating cybercrimes. As of December 2023, 4 meetings had been convened by the CPAP.

On another front, the CSTCB hosted the International Symposium on Cyber Policing in September 2023. The event was attended by over 200 individuals, including 110 senior law enforcement officers, members, experts and academics from the Mainland, Macao, International Criminal Police Organisation and 35 overseas countries, along with approximately 100 local working partners of the Force. During the symposium, 18 distinguished scholars from renowned universities and experts from the cyber technology industry, specialising in digital finance, communications technology, and

cybersecurity, were invited to deliver keynote speeches and lead panel discussions for in-depth exploration into issues related to cyber policing. The symposium not only provided a platform for international law enforcement and public and private organisations to exchange insights but also fostered international collaboration in policing to better tackle the growing trend of cybercrime in an increasingly globalised world. Additionally, the CSTCB has regularly conducted training programmes to bolster police officers' expertise in handling technology crime, with two courses accredited at Level 4 and one at Level 5 of the Qualifications Framework respectively.

To combat the use of artificial intelligence-powered deepfake technology by fraudsters, the Force periodically conducts online patrols to search for fraudulent messages and videos on the Internet. In cases where fraudulent materials are identified, such as advertisements featuring celebrities impersonated to promote suspicious investment products, the Force will swiftly request relevant advertisers and website operators to remove such advertisements and websites, and will actively track down the whereabouts of the fraudsters. In 2023, the Force requested various social media platforms to remove or review over 12 000 fraud-related pages or accounts.

While fraudsters may utilise artificial intelligence-powered deepfake technology, this method is not infallible. For instance, members of the public can challenge someone on a video call to perform specific actions, which can help determine if any part of the image is manipulated. Additionally, heightened vigilance is advised when a relative or friend makes a request for remittance via video or voice recording, with further verification by phone call recommended. The Force also reminds the public to stay alert through the "Cyberdefender" website, its social media platforms, press conferences, as well as TV and radio interviews. By stepping up publicity and educational efforts across various media, the Force is committed to keeping the public informed of the latest artificial intelligence-powered deepfake technology *modi operandi*, thereby raising their awareness against deception and preventing them from falling victim to scams.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB101**

**(Question Serial No. 2791)**

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:

Would the Hong Kong Police Force provide information, with a breakdown by type of scam, on the number of deception cases reported, the amount of money involved, the numbers of cases detected, the persons arrested and prosecuted, as well as the total amount of crime proceeds recovered for each of the past 3 financial years?

Have the Police conducted analyses or evaluations on the evolving trends of various deception cases, and are there targeted measures in place to combat and detect each type of scam? If so, the details; if not, the reasons.

Please also provide information on the amount of crime proceeds successfully intercepted by the Anti-Deception Alliance, which was jointly established by the Police, the Hong Kong Monetary Authority and the banking industry, since its inception in November last year. Are there new policies or initiatives aimed at enhancing the interception of crime proceeds, thus minimizing victims' losses as effectively and as swiftly as possible? If so, the details; if not, the reasons.

Asked by: Hon WONG Chun-sek, Edmund (LegCo internal reference no.: 4)

Reply:

The number of deceptions and frauds reported to the Police Force, the detection rate, the amount involved and the number of persons arrested for each of the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

	2021	2022	2023
Number of cases	19 249	27 923	39 824
Detection rate	10.6%	12.0%	11.9%
Amount involved (HK\$)	Over 6.4 billion	Over 4.8 billion	9.18 billion
Number of persons arrested	2 835	4 112	7 043

The common types of deception and fraud reported to the Force as well as the amount involved for each of the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

	Number of cases			Amount of losses (HK\$ million)		
	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023
Online Deception	13 859	19 599	27 314	2,965.8	3,073.8	5,345.9
Common types of online scam						
E-shopping Fraud	6 120	8 735	8 950	71.5	74.1	190.5
Online Investment Fraud	980	1 884	5 105	472.0	926.5	3,267.4
Phishing Scam (Note)			4 322			102.4
Online Employment Fraud	1 063	2 884	3 518	85.3	459.1	760.2
Social Media Deception	3 638	3 605	3 372	669.4	779.0	745.4
Email Scam	549	391	208	1,538.8	751.1	163.6
Telephone Deception	1 140	2 831	3 213	811.1	1,076.5	1,102.8
Guess Who	497	1 540	2 237	27.5	114.1	188.7
Pretend Officials	641	1 290	969	783.5	962.3	913.8
Detained Son	2	1	7	0.1	0.07	0.3

(Note) Figures related to phishing scam have been maintained by the Force since 2023.

The Force does not maintain any breakdowns of the numbers of cases detected and prosecutions instituted by the above-mentioned types of deception and fraud.

Deception syndicates utilise a multitude of stooge accounts to collect fraudulent payments and launder money. Therefore, targeting stooge accounts is a vital strategy in dismantling the fraud industry chain. In 2023, the Force arrested a total of 9 239 persons for involvement in various types of deception and money laundering offences, representing an increase of over 75% compared to 2022. Among these, about 6 500 were stooge account holders. The Force has reached a consensus with the Department of Justice to enhance evidence gathering and prosecution procedures for relatively simple and straightforward money laundering cases involving stooge accounts and to expedite prosecution. Moreover, the Force will continue to apply to the court for enhanced sentencing and has, since 2023, achieved a 20% increase in the sentences of 4 stooge account holders, leading to imprisonment terms ranging from 26 to 38 months.

In collaboration with stakeholders, the Force is committed to leveraging technology in the fight against deception. Since the establishment of a collaborative working group with the Office of the Communications Authority and mobile network operators, several initiatives have been implemented. Apart from blocking spoofed calls originating from outside local regions with the prefix “+852”, and sending text or voice alerts to users when they receive such calls, mobile network operators have blocked or filtered over 7 600 websites and nearly 3 200 telephone numbers associated with deception cases by January 2024, and have been on the technical front proactively identifying and blocking a significant volume of calls made using technical devices and suspending related services.

Last year, in collaboration with the Hong Kong Monetary Authority and the banking industry, the Force introduced various anti-deception measures. Notably, in November 2023, the Faster Payment System (FPS) Suspicious Proxy ID Alert was launched, connecting the FPS platform to the “Scameter” database. During online fund transfer via FPS, the matching function of the

database can identify payees whose information is related to scam reports, and an alert message will appear on the confirmation page. By 31 January 2024, this mechanism had issued over 264 000 alerts, flagging high-risk transfers totaling nearly \$410 million. The Force will continue to step up publicity and implement such mechanism in other platforms.

In late November last year, the Force collaborated with 10 major banks in establishing the Anti-Deception Alliance (ADA), where bank representatives are deployed to work in the Police Headquarters to provide more direct and instant communication and assistance in intercepting fraudulent payments and issuing alerts. Since its official launch on 27 November 2023 until the end of January 2024, 95% of payment interception requests has been responded by banks within 2 hours, markedly improving efficiency. In respect of upstream scam intervention, the ADA has proactively prevented 162 persons from making further transfers to fraudsters by the end of January. For intercepting fraud proceeds, the Anti-Deception Coordination Centre continues to assist in minimising victims' losses, intercepting over \$12.5 billion worth of fraud proceed since its inception until the end of last year.

The Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau launched a one-stop scam and pitfall search engine "Scameter" in September 2022 and launched the mobile application version "Scameter+" in February 2023. As at 31 January 2024, "Scameter+" has been downloaded more than 228 000 times, while the search engine has recorded over 2.3 million searches and issued approximately 400 000 alerts on frauds and cyber security risks. In February 2024, automation elements were incorporated in "Scameter+", enabling the application to issue alerts when users browse suspicious websites and receive suspicious calls. To further enrich the database of the search engine, a public "reporting" mechanism has been introduced, allowing members of the public to report suspicious websites or calls through the application.

The Force will continue to place emphasis on combating deception cases. In addition to stepping up enforcement and enhancing prosecution efficiency, the Force will rigorously combat the use of stooge accounts by deception syndicates in committing crimes through applications for enhanced sentencing. Approaches such as interception of fraudulent payments and upstream scam intervention will be adopted to minimise victims' losses. Furthermore, the Force will continue to raise anti-deception awareness of members of the public through online and offline publicity and actively seek to maintain close cooperation with stakeholders from various sectors, relevant government departments and other law enforcement agencies, including those in the Mainland and overseas, so as to create synergy in combating deception cases.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**(Question Serial No. 2814)**

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  
(3) Road Safety  
(4) Operations

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

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

What were the numbers of vacancies in different ranks and grades that were not filled according to the original establishment of the Hong Kong Police Force for 2023-24? What are the estimated numbers, ranks and grades of staff members of the Police Force expected to retire from, and those expected to leave, over the next 3 years? Additionally, what is the anticipated manpower shortage in various ranks and grades at that time?

Apart from relaxing entry requirements and enhancing publicity efforts for recruitment outside the city, what are the Hong Kong Police Force's plans to improve recruitment in the coming year? Please inform this Committee whether the Police have any policy measures, such as streamlining administrative procedures or making good use of new technologies, to reduce manpower requirements. If such measures are in place, please provide details; if not, please explain the reasons.

Asked by: Hon WONG Chun-sek, Edmund (LegCo internal reference no.: 42)

Reply:

At present, there are approximately 6 000 vacancies for police officer posts and approximately 700 vacancies for civilian posts in the Police Force. The number of officers reaching their retirement age in the coming 3 financial years is set out as follows:

	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Police officers			
Gazetted officer	19	17	23
Inspectorate officer	27	19	27
Junior police officer	438	393	673
Civilian staff	131	141	103
Total	615	570	826

The Force will fill the vacancies through promotion, recruitment and various service extension measures.

The Force has been adopting proactive recruitment strategies to attract high calibre candidates who have the competence to become a police officer, the affection for the Motherland and Hong Kong, and the passion to serve the public.

Meanwhile, the Force has disseminated recruitment and publicity information through various media and social networking platforms, and has organised regular recruitment activities and projects, such as the Police Recruitment Experience and Assessment Day, Police Mentorship Programme, Police University Recruitment Express, Hong Kong Police University Recruitment Express (Mainland), Diploma of Applied Education – Police Cadet Training, Auxiliary Undergraduate Scheme, Police Recruitment Buddies Scheme, Sportsmen’s Programme for Recruitment, Experience and Development, Auxiliary Police Recruitment Express, education and careers expo as well as publicity videos featuring “Recruitment Spokespersons”, etc.

The Force will continue to adjust its publicity strategy in light of general social conditions such as the economic situation and demand in the labour market.

Moreover, the Force will minimise the need for manpower through re-prioritisation, internal redeployment, streamlining of work processes and enhancement of efficiency.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB103**

**(Question Serial No. 3285)**

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:

Regarding the recruitment for the Hong Kong Auxiliary Police Force, please advise this Committee of:

1. the number of applicants to the Auxiliary Police and the number of successful candidates each year for the past 3 years;
2. the wastage of Police Constables (Auxiliary) and Inspectors (Auxiliary) each year for the past 3 years; and
3. the average training cost for each new recruit to the ranks of Police Constable (Auxiliary) and Inspector (Auxiliary).

Asked by: Hon WONG Chun-sek, Edmund (LegCo internal reference no.: 30)

Reply:

1. The number of applicants to the Auxiliary Police and the number of successful candidates each year for the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

Financial year	Number of applicants	Number of successful candidates
2021-22	2 136	331
2022-23	2 301	343
2023-24 (As of 29 February 2024)	2 847	297

2. The annual wastage figures for Police Constables (Auxiliary) and Inspectors (Auxiliary) over the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

Financial year	Number of leavers (including retirees)	
	Police Constables (Auxiliary)	Inspectors (Auxiliary)
2021-22	193	7
2022-23	185	7
2023-24 (As of 29 February 2024)	247	7

3. Currently, Police Constable (Auxiliary) is the only entry rank to the Hong Kong Auxiliary Police Force. New recruits to the rank of Police Constable (Auxiliary) are required to attend a 370-hour salaried Basic Training Course. The starting hourly pay rate for a Police Constable (Auxiliary) in the financial year 2023-24 is \$111.5.

If a Police Constable (Auxiliary) is promoted to Inspector (Auxiliary), a 270-hour Inspectors of Police (Auxiliary) Promotion Course must be attended. The hourly pay rate for an Inspector (Auxiliary) in the financial year 2023-24 is \$274.5.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB104**

**(Question Serial No. 1399)**

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:

Regarding the initiatives promoting anti-deception, would the Government advise this Committee of the following:

1. The number of anti-deception publicity campaigns organised by the Police in the 18 districts over the past 5 years, including the content, numbers of participants and the expenditures of such campaigns, as well as the estimated expenditure for 2024-25;
2. The staff establishment, ranks and expenditure involved in organising anti-deception publicity campaigns in the 18 districts over the past 5 years, alongside the estimated expenditure for 2024-25;
3. The anticipated effectiveness of various anti-deception campaigns as evaluated by the Police, including the trends in deception cases; and
4. Whether the Police intend to integrate and centralise the management of anti-deception publicity campaigns; if so, the details and the expenditure to be involved; if not, the reason(s).

Asked by: Hon YUNG Hoi-yan (LegCo internal reference no.: 1)

Reply:

1. The Police Force has been adopting a multi-agency approach by collaborating with other government departments, regulatory agencies and industry stakeholders to implement anti-crime publicity and educational campaigns. As part of the Force's ongoing efforts to prevent deception, an extensive publicity strategy has been adopted to disseminate anti-deception messages by utilising multiple channels online and offline. This includes broadcasting anti-deception clips and television series; conducting anti-deception talks; producing teaching materials for primary and secondary schools; launching a WhatsApp channel; registering on various social media platforms, such as Xiaohongshu; and holding press conferences on the latest defrauding tricks as well as large-scale publicity campaigns.

In June 2023, the Force, in collaboration with government departments and public and private organisations, recruited and trained SILVERSHIELD ambassadors, utilising community power to spread the message “Scams are rampant; Tell everyone”. To enhance public alertness to phishing scams, the Force launched a new round of anti-deception activities in August, which included the releasing of an anti-deception promotional song by renowned musician. August also marked the “Anti-Money Laundering Month”, during which the Force rolled out a series of promotional activities to remind citizens not to rent, lend or sell their bank accounts. In December, the Force organised the inaugural Anti-Scam Charity Run under the theme of anti-deception, attracting over 1 700 participants. Additionally, at the end of January this year, the Force hosted the CyberDefenders’ Carnival 2024 at HarbourChill Wan Chai to promote cybersecurity awareness, with a total of 8 000 members of the public participating. In February, the “Little Grape Carnival” was held in the West Kowloon Cultural District, featuring “The Little Grape’s Sea, Land and Air Parade” on 18 February, which drew an attendance of more than 25 000 visitors. The latest anti-deception publicity initiatives also encompass various “embedded marketing” methods, such as printing anti-deception messages on coffee cup sleeves provided by coffee shop chains, and the recent commissioning of the anti-deception ferry “Ping On”, which set sail in February this year, marking a novel channel for disseminating anti-deception messages.

The Force will continue to enhance its publicity efforts in a bid to raise the public’s alertness to deceptions and technology crimes.

The Force does not maintain statistics on the details of anti-deception campaigns implemented by various formations at the headquarters, regional and district levels. The expenditure for anti-deception forms part of the total expenditure under Programme (2) “Prevention and Detection of Crime”. The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure involved.

2. “Enhancing cyber security and fighting technology crime” remains one of the Commissioner’s Operational Priorities (COP) in 2024 and “combating quick cash crime” of the COP 2023 has been amended to “combating deception and quick cash crime”. The Force has been taking proactive measures on all fronts to combat deception. The Commercial Crime Bureau and its Anti-Deception Coordination Centre (ADCC), the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau, the Financial Intelligence and Investigation Bureau and the crime investigation units of various police regions and districts are all dedicated to cracking down on deception.

As various formations of the Force are involved in anti-deception publicity and education, a separate breakdown of the manpower involved is not available. For ADCC, which is mainly tasked with the above-mentioned duties, the staff establishment has grown in each of the past 5 years: from 26 in 2019-20 to 49 in 2022-23, with 32 being permanent establishment and 17 on secondment from different Force formations. In 2023-24, the ADCC’s staff establishment expanded further to 90, with permanent establishment increasing by 5 to 37, and the remainder filled by 53 officers on secondment or Post-Retirement Service Contracts. The Force will periodically review the manpower and resources of various formations and adjust the establishment as needed.

The above expenditure forms part of the total expenditure under Programme (2) “Prevention and Detection of Crime”. The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure involved.

3. Combating deception does not only rely on the publicity and enforcement work done by the Force, but also requires the collective efforts from various stakeholders and regulatory bodies, as well as the enhancement of public awareness against deception. The Force will continue to disseminate the latest anti-deception messages through various channels, step up enforcement and enhance prosecution efficiency. In order to rigorously combat the use of stooge accounts by deception syndicates in committing crimes, applications for enhanced sentencing will be made. Approaches such as interception of fraudulent payments and upstream scam intervention will be adopted to minimise victims’ losses.
4. With a view to bolstering the effectiveness of anti-deception publicity through expanded contact points, the relevant formations at headquarters levels, as well as various police regions and districts, will make concerted efforts in carrying out publicity and education against deception.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB105**

**(Question Serial No. 1408)**

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 Logistics Bureau (TLB). The reply was prepared by the Hong Kong Police Force and vetted by the TLB.]

Question:

The Government indicated in the Legislative Council that the Police Force has been expanding the use of technology (e.g. the e-Ticketing Scheme) to aid enforcement, with the aim of enhancing the Force's efficiency in traffic management. In this connection, please advise this Committee of the following:

1. The number of mobile devices procured (with a breakdown by Police Region) since the launch of the e-Ticketing Scheme in March 2020;
2. The number of complaints received from members of the public about illegal parking (with a breakdown by District Council district) in the past 5 years;
3. The number of black spots for illegal parking identified in various districts across the territory (with a breakdown by District Council district) in the past 5 years; and
4. The number of fixed penalty tickets (FPTs) issued for illegal parking (with a breakdown by District Council district and vehicle type) in various districts across the territory, and the total amount of fines collected in the past 5 years.

Asked by: Hon YUNG Hoi-yan (LegCo internal reference no.: 10)

Reply:

1. The number of portable printers procured for the e-Ticketing Scheme since its launch, with breakdown by Police Region, is tabulated as follows:

Police Region	Number of portable printers
Hong Kong Island	553
Kowloon West	615
Kowloon East	514
New Territories South	721
New Territories North	484
Total	2 887

- The numbers of complaints received by the Police Force from members of the public about traffic obstruction and illegal parking in 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 are 198 592, 218 630, 197 360, 168 075 and 142 953 respectively. The Force does not maintain a breakdown of relevant complaint figures by District Council district.
- As the Force has not established a specific definition for an illegal parking “black spot”, data on the number of such locations is not available. The Force is committed to strengthening enforcement in areas with significant traffic congestion, issuing Fixed Penalty Tickets (FPTs) without prior warning to vehicles/drivers causing severe obstructions or posing road safety risks, and, when necessary, towing away illegally parked vehicles.
- The Force maintains records of FPTs issued for illegal parking and other traffic enforcement statistics by Police Region. As such, prosecution figures by District Council district are not available. The number of FPTs for illegal parking issued under the Fixed Penalty (Traffic Contraventions) Ordinance (Cap. 237) by Police Region and vehicle type over the past 5 years is tabulated as follows:

Police Region	Number of FPTs issued for illegal parking				
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Hong Kong Island	287 149	599 218	688 592	624 000	523 167
Kowloon East	251 430	489 901	570 466	555 417	443 038
Kowloon West	339 549	631 593	862 992	1 011 084	960 276
New Territories South	296 732	512 831	584 706	570 895	471 527
New Territories North	249 884	474 326	595 404	602 075	615 011
Total	1 424 744	2 707 869	3 302 160	3 363 471	3 013 019

Vehicle type	Number of FPTs issued for illegal parking				
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Private car	992 720	1 977 286	2 180 390	2 061 425	1 786 162
Goods vehicle	338 132	560 073	826 856	956 171	875 438
Taxi	28 612	54 460	73 232	82 856	83 025
Public bus	21 095	23 474	33 675	43 977	53 187
Public light bus	2 074	2 510	3 505	5 668	7 715
Motorcycle	35 695	73 776	171 633	199 734	191 817
Others	6 416	16 290	12 869	13 640	15 675
Total	1 424 744	2 707 869	3 302 160	3 363 471	3 013 019

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB106**

**(Question Serial No. 2873)**

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 Logistics Bureau (TLB). The reply was prepared by the Hong Kong Police Force and vetted by the TLB.]

Question:

Please provide this Committee with the following information for the past 3 years (2022, 2023 and 2024):

1. The number of illegal parking complaints lodged by members of the public across the 18 districts in Hong Kong during the Lunar New Year holidays; and
2. The number of fixed penalty tickets issued for illegal parking across the 18 districts in Hong Kong during the Lunar New Year holidays. Please include a tabulated breakdown by type of traffic contravention leading to the issuance of the tickets, such as illegal parking, double parking, illegal pick-up/drop-off of passengers, loading/unloading of goods in restricted zones and at bus stops, prolonged stopping and waiting, unauthorised entry into yellow box markings or pedestrian crossings, and causing congestion.

Asked by: Hon ZHANG Xinyu, Gary (LegCo internal reference no.: 3)

Reply:

1&2. The Police Force categorises the figures for complaints about and fixed penalty tickets (FPTs) issued for illegal parking by Police Region and does not maintain these figures with a breakdown by the 18 districts. As the Force is currently compiling the traffic complaint and enforcement data for February 2024, the information for the month of the Lunar New Year holidays in 2024 is not yet available. The number of complaints about traffic obstructions and illegal parking (including double parking) reported by the public to the Police in February 2022 and January 2023 is tabulated as follows:

Number of complaints about traffic obstructions and illegal parking reported by the public		
Police Region	February 2022 (Note)	January 2023 (Note)
Hong Kong Island	1 353	1 589
Kowloon East	2 194	2 383
Kowloon West	2 414	4 089
New Territories South	2 249	2 367
New Territories North	3 214	2 458
Total	11 424	12 886

Note: Lunar New Year holidays for 2022 spanned from 1 to 4 February (covering Lunar New Year's Day through the Fourth Day). For 2023, Lunar New Year holidays spanned from 22 to 25 January (covering Lunar New Year's Day through the Fourth Day).

The number of FPTs issued for illegal parking by the Force under the Fixed Penalty (Traffic Contraventions) Ordinance (Cap. 237) in February 2022 and January 2023 is tabulated as follows:

Number of FPTs issued for illegal parking		
Police Region	February 2022 (Note)	January 2023 (Note)
Hong Kong Island	45 673	45 614
Kowloon East	41 118	42 891
Kowloon West	62 398	79 772
New Territories South	40 196	45 907
New Territories North	39 460	49 546
Total	228 845	263 730

Note: Lunar New Year holidays for 2022 spanned from 1 to 4 February (covering Lunar New Year's Day through the Fourth Day). For 2023, Lunar New Year holidays spanned from 22 to 25 January (covering Lunar New Year's Day through the Fourth Day).

The number of FPTs issued by the Force for 6 congestion-related offences under the Fixed Penalty (Criminal Proceedings) Ordinance (Cap. 240), categorised by Police Region and specific offence, for February 2022 and January 2023 is tabulated as follows:

Police Region	Offence	February 2022 (Note)	January 2023 (Note)
Hong Kong Island	Unlawfully entering box junction	12	21
	Picking up/setting down passengers in restricted zone	228	346
	Loading/unloading goods in restricted zone	56	116
	“U” turn causing obstruction	1	0
	Unauthorised stopping at bus stop/public light bus stand/taxi stand/public light bus stopping place	43	112
	Stopping public bus, public light bus or taxi longer than necessary when picking up/setting down passengers	0	0
	Sub-total	340	595
Kowloon East	Unlawfully entering box junction	1	20
	Picking up/setting down passengers in restricted zone	102	231
	Loading/unloading goods in restricted zone	28	53
	“U” turn causing obstruction	0	0
	Unauthorised stopping at bus stop/public light bus stand/taxi stand/public light bus stopping place	19	34
	Stopping public bus, public light bus or taxi longer than necessary when picking up/setting down passengers	0	0
	Sub-total	150	338
Kowloon West	Unlawfully entering box junction	30	97
	Picking up/setting down passengers in restricted zone	112	151
	Loading/unloading goods in restricted zone	23	25
	“U” turn causing obstruction	0	0
	Unauthorised stopping at bus stop/public light bus stand/taxi stand/public light bus stopping place	59	37
	Stopping public bus, public light bus or taxi longer than necessary when picking up/setting down passengers	0	0
	Sub-total	224	310

Police Region	Offence	February 2022 (Note)	January 2023 (Note)
New Territories South	Unlawfully entering box junction	1	10
	Picking up/setting down passengers in restricted zone	162	172
	Loading/unloading goods in restricted zone	18	31
	“U” turn causing obstruction	0	0
	Unauthorised stopping at bus stop/public light bus stand/taxi stand/public light bus stopping place	6	27
	Stopping public bus, public light bus or taxi longer than necessary when picking up/setting down passengers	0	0
	Sub-total	187	240
New Territories North	Unlawfully entering box junction	17	20
	Picking up/setting down passengers in restricted zone	141	160
	Loading/unloading goods in restricted zone	7	15
	“U” turn causing obstruction	1	0
	Unauthorised stopping at bus stop/public light bus stand/taxi stand/public light bus stopping place	9	22
	Stopping public bus, public light bus or taxi longer than necessary when picking up/setting down passengers	0	0
	Sub-total	175	217
Total		1 076	1 700

Note: Lunar New Year holidays for 2022 spanned from 1 to 4 February (covering Lunar New Year’s Day through the Fourth Day). For 2023, Lunar New Year holidays spanned from 22 to 25 January (covering Lunar New Year’s Day through the Fourth Day).

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB107**

**(Question Serial No. 2327)**

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Control after Entry

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the contravention of the Immigration Ordinance, would the Government inform this Committee of:

the statistics on overstayers, illegal immigrants, illegal workers and other immigration offenders by month, nationality, age and sex in the past 3 years?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Wing-yan, Joephy (LegCo internal reference no.: 28)

Reply:

The numbers of overstayers (Note) in the past 3 years are tabulated by their country/region of origin as follows:

Country/region of origin Year/month		Africa	Asia and the Pacific Region (Other than Mainland China)	Europe	Mainland China	North America	South America	Total
		2021	Jan	5	45	1	163	0
Feb	0		39	0	104	1	3	147
Mar	0		45	0	125	1	1	172
Apr	1		36	1	79	0	1	118
May	3		39	5	75	1	0	123
Jun	4		35	0	120	0	6	165
Jul	2		37	4	81	1	7	132
Aug	1		16	2	65	0	2	86
Sept	0		29	2	68	0	0	99
Oct	1		17	4	60	2	0	84
Nov	0		24	1	70	1	1	97
Dec	1		16	0	82	0	1	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>1 092</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>1 540</b>	

Country/region of origin Year/month		Africa	Asia and the Pacific Region (Other than Mainland China)	Europe	Mainland China	North America	South America	Total
		2022	Jan	2	14	1	90	0
Feb	1		21	0	78	0	3	103
Mar	1		23	1	124	0	3	152
Apr	0		11	0	53	0	0	64
May	0		32	1	89	0	0	122
Jun	0		13	0	87	0	1	101
Jul	2		32	1	93	0	1	129
Aug	0		21	1	84	0	0	106
Sept	0		18	1	92	0	0	111
Oct	1		24	0	78	0	2	105
Nov	3		29	3	66	0	1	102
Dec	4		31	0	91	1	2	129
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>		<b>269</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1 025</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1 333</b>
2023	Jan	1	27	1	113	0	0	142
	Feb	1	33	0	55	1	3	93
	Mar	1	39	2	71	0	0	113
	Apr	3	50	0	51	0	1	105
	May	4	68	2	98	0	1	173
	Jun	3	64	0	75	0	0	142
	Jul	10	70	0	110	0	0	190
	Aug	3	100	0	85	0	0	188
	Sept	4	102	0	107	1	0	214
	Oct	16	132	1	117	1	0	267
	Nov	8	169	0	150	0	1	328
	Dec	9	132	0	111	1	1	254
	<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>986</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1 143</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2 209</b>

Note: Those allowed to leave Hong Kong after completing the extension of stay formalities are excluded.

The numbers of illegal immigrants intercepted in the past 3 years are tabulated by their country/region of origin as follows:

Country/region of origin Year/month		Mainland China	Vietnam	Pakistan	Bangladesh	India	Others	Total
		2021	Jan	119	82	14	3	7
Feb	79		44	17	4	9	0	153
Mar	194		57	16	5	7	1	280
Apr	101		54	15	7	3	1	181
May	119		59	17	8	4	2	209
Jun	109		54	17	9	2	3	194
Jul	113		72	2	4	3	0	194

Country/region of origin  Year/month		Mainland China	Vietnam	Pakistan	Bangladesh	India	Others	Total
	Aug	112	35	11	4	2	1	165
	Sept	118	39	5	5	1	2	170
	Oct	106	39	9	3	6	1	164
	Nov	94	26	9	3	1	1	134
	Dec	112	25	9	2	7	2	157
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1 376</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>2 226</b>
2022	Jan	109	39	15	2	6	1	172
	Feb	11	126	1	0	2	0	140
	Mar	40	58	1	2	3	0	104
	Apr	23	14	1	1	0	1	40
	May	65	18	2	3	2	2	92
	Jun	71	18	6	4	5	1	105
	Jul	83	8	10	7	6	0	114
	Aug	48	15	2	7	0	0	72
	Sept	78	4	8	4	2	1	97
	Oct	53	7	5	2	3	2	72
	Nov	55	16	10	6	5	0	92
	Dec	37	12	4	0	1	1	55
<b>Total</b>	<b>673</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1 155</b>	
2023	Jan	39	11	1	2	1	1	55
	Feb	25	4	5	0	1	0	35
	Mar	27	14	8	4	2	1	56
	Apr	23	26	0	2	1	3	55
	May	38	42	1	4	2	0	87
	Jun	14	26	8	7	1	1	57
	Jul	16	36	7	16	0	2	77
	Aug	45	53	39	71	5	4	217
	Sept	17	54	43	77	15	3	209
	Oct	29	38	126	172	25	3	393
	Nov	51	52	69	111	15	2	300
	Dec	27	22	26	30	15	3	123
<b>Total</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>496</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>1 664</b>	

The numbers of illegal workers (including illegal immigrants, visitors, foreign domestic helpers and other non-permanent residents of Hong Kong) who were arrested by the Immigration Department (ImmD) in the past 3 years are tabulated by their country/region of origin as follows:

Country/region of origin Year/month		Number of persons arrested		
		Mainland China	Others	Total
2021	Jan	39	35	74
	Feb	20	56	76
	Mar	36	86	122
	Apr	34	60	94
	May	25	53	78
	Jun	35	43	78
	Jul	26	77	103
	Aug	26	64	90
	Sept	21	79	100
	Oct	35	72	107
	Nov	30	72	102
	Dec	23	56	79
	Total	<b>350</b>	<b>753</b>	<b>1 103</b>
2022	Jan	14	72	86
	Feb	4	3	7
	Mar	6	10	16
	Apr	13	36	49
	May	24	53	77
	Jun	14	76	90
	Jul	40	85	125
	Aug	13	53	66
	Sept	37	59	96
	Oct	21	50	71
	Nov	21	112	133
	Dec	15	55	70
	Total	<b>222</b>	<b>664</b>	<b>886</b>
2023	Jan	6	42	48
	Feb	18	53	71
	Mar	42	86	128
	Apr	26	43	69
	May	39	84	123
	Jun	61	55	116
	Jul	58	62	120
	Aug	73	77	150
	Sept	45	57	102
	Oct	75	58	133
	Nov	68	82	150
	Dec	47	47	94
	Total	<b>558</b>	<b>746</b>	<b>1 304</b>

The numbers of other immigration offenders arrested in the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

Year/Month		Number of persons arrested
2021	Jan	80
	Feb	67
	Mar	149
	Apr	104
	May	99
	Jun	100
	Jul	110
	Aug	90
	Sept	108
	Oct	92
	Nov	98
	Dec	84
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1 181</b>
2022	Jan	72
	Feb	5
	Mar	24
	Apr	40
	May	77
	Jun	95
	Jul	94
	Aug	81
	Sept	117
	Oct	116
	Nov	108
	Dec	86
	<b>Total</b>	<b>915</b>
2023	Jan	65
	Feb	82
	Mar	148
	Apr	152
	May	236
	Jun	171
	Jul	197
	Aug	233
	Sept	198
	Oct	296
	Nov	357
	Dec	287
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2 422</b>

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

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB108**

**(Question Serial No. 1861)**

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Pre-entry Control

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

[Note: The question below also concerns the policy purview of the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB). The reply was prepared by the Immigration Department and vetted by the LWB.]

Question:

Regarding the Quality Migrant Admission Scheme (QMAS), would the Government inform this Committee of:

- (1) the total number of persons approved for admission to Hong Kong under the QMAS in the past year and this year to date, and among which, the respective numbers of persons assessed under the General Points Test or Achievement-based Points Test;
- (2) the average processing time for each approved application under the QMAS;
- (3) how the Immigration Department (ImmD) verified the proof of academic qualifications, professional qualifications and work experience, etc. submitted by the QMAS applicants, and whether the ImmD would conduct sampling reviews on the proof of qualifications submitted by applicants who had been approved for admission to Hong Kong; and
- (4) the numbers of (i) applications refused, (ii) criminal investigations initiated and (iii) prosecutions instituted and cases of conviction by court on the grounds that the QMAS applicants had submitted false or misrepresented information in each of the past five years and this year to date?

Asked by: Hon CHAU Siu-chung (LegCo internal reference no.: 16)

Reply:

(1) The statistics of the Quality Migrant Admission Scheme (QMAS) in the past 2 financial years are tabulated as follows:

Financial year		2022-23	2023-24 (As of February 2024)
No. of applications received		28 732	76 985
No. of applications approved	General Points Test (GPT)	4 459	12 643
	Achievement-based Points Test (APT)	19	46
	Total	4 478	12 689

Note 1: Applications approved in a financial year may not totally be the applications submitted in the same year.

Note 2: The numbers of applications approved denote the numbers of applications that passed the selection by the Advisory Committee on Admission of Quality Migrants and Professionals (the Advisory Committee).

(2)

The QMAS seeks to attract highly skilled or talented persons to settle in Hong Kong in order to enhance Hong Kong's competitiveness. During the selection process, applicants who satisfy both the prerequisites and the minimum passing mark (under the GPT) or the one point-scoring factor (under the APT) will be short-listed for further assessment by the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee will consider the socio-economic needs of Hong Kong, the sectoral mix of candidates and other relevant factors, and make recommendations to the Immigration Department (ImmD) for assessing the applications.

The processing time required for each application will vary depending on factors such as the information and supporting documents provided by the applicants, the advice from the Advisory Committee and the number of applications received etc.

(3) The ImmD has all along been assessing each application in a rigorous manner. In assessing the applications, the ImmD will consider whether the applicants meet the specific eligibility criteria under the relevant admission schemes/arrangements as well as normal immigration requirements, and will take into account the individual circumstances of each application to ensure that only persons who are in compliance with the relevant immigration policies will be admitted into Hong Kong.

The ImmD has adopted stringent standard in verifying qualification proof submitted by applicants. In assessing the QMAS applications, the ImmD requires applicants to submit relevant proof of academic qualifications, professional qualifications and work experience, including the verification results of his/her academic qualifications by relevant authorised institutions (such as respective education departments or authorities, the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications, or relevant educational

institutions) or the documentary proof of professional qualifications validated by relevant notaries public, so as to establish that he/she has met the prerequisites and eligibility for relevant scores under the respective point-scoring factors. In case of doubts about the authenticity of the documents submitted by the applicants, the ImmD will promptly conduct follow-up investigations and take enforcement actions when necessary.

It is an offence for any persons to furnish false information or make false representation to the ImmD in their applications for visas or entry permits. If such cases are found, apart from rejecting such applications, the ImmD will also initiate criminal investigations into the cases concerned. Besides, should any person be unveiled for obtaining his/her visa or entry permit to Hong Kong by illegal means, the visa or entry permit so obtained will become null and void according to the law, and the person concerned will be subject to repatriation to his/her place of origin. Even if the person has obtained the right of abode in Hong Kong, it will be declared invalid according to the law, and he/she will be subject to repatriation to his/her place of origin.

(4) The ImmD does not maintain the breakdown statistics mentioned in the question.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB109**

**(Question Serial No. 1862)**

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Control after Entry

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

With regard to the work related to combatting illegal workers, would the Government inform this Committee:

- (1) of the respective numbers of anti-illegal worker enforcement operations conducted by the Government, as well as the numbers of illegal workers arrested in the operations in each of the past 3 years and this year to date;
- (2) of the respective numbers of employers of illegal workers prosecuted and convicted, as well as the penalties imposed on the convicted persons in each of the past 3 years and this year to date; and
- (3) given that observations have been reflected by the renovation, catering, domestic work industries, etc., that there has been a clear increasing trend in unlawful employment in recent years, whether the Government will consider initiating on-going and targeted anti-illegal worker operations? If yes, what are the details? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon CHAU Siu-chung (LegCo internal reference no.: 17)

Reply:

- (1) The numbers of operations conducted by the Immigration Department (ImmD) against unlawful employment and the numbers of illegal workers arrested in the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

Year	Number of operations	Number of illegal workers arrested
2021	16 132	1 103
2022	15 759	886
2023	17 248	1 304
2024 (as of February)	3 552	184

- (2) The numbers of employers of illegal workers prosecuted by the ImmD and convicted in the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

Year	Employers of illegal workers	
	Number of persons prosecuted	Number of persons convicted
2021	185	105
2022	138	85
2023	109	99
2024 (as of February)	38	26

From 2021 to end of February 2024, most of the convicted employers of illegal workers had been sentenced to imprisonment or fine. The imprisonment periods ranged from 4 weeks to 19 months, whereas the fines ranged from HK\$1,000 to HK\$54,000. One of the employers was convicted in court in February 2024 for employing persons not lawfully employable and sentenced to 19 months' imprisonment. The sentence reflected the gravity of unlawful employment.

- (3) The ImmD always monitors the trend of unlawful employment related crimes and timely conducts enforcement actions against unlawful employment in different industries, with a view to protecting job opportunities for the local workforce. During the period from 2021 to February 2024, the ImmD conducted 38 operations codenamed "Contribute" targeting at renovation related unlawful employment, among which nearly 75% were conducted after the pandemic and a total of 26 persons (including 22 illegal workers and 4 employers) were arrested. In addition, the ImmD conducted 3 727 anti-illegal employment operations codenamed "Twilight" to extensively combat unlawful employment in different industries. The targeted locations included renovation units, restaurants, residential flats, etc., and a total of 904 illegal workers and 296 employers were arrested. Furthermore, based on the analysis of intelligence and reported information, the ImmD will take enforcement actions against unlawful employment in the renovation, catering and domestic work industries. The ImmD will also continue to closely monitor the trend of unlawful employment related crimes, step up inspections and timely initiate publicity to educate residents of housing estates not to employ illegal workers for domestic work, renovation, etc., with a view to raising public awareness and strengthening education. Last year, the ImmD neutralised a crime syndicate specialising in undertaking outsourced cleaning contracts with restaurants and arranging illegal workers to take up cleaning and dishwashing duties. The syndicate members would enter into cleaning contracts with a number of restaurants, claiming to provide lawfully employable workers with cleaning and dishwashing services while recruiting illegal workers at a lower cost to profit from it. The estimated amount involved in the case exceeded HK\$17 million. In fact, the ImmD has been stepping up its efforts in carrying out anti-illegal worker operations over the past 3 years. In 2023, a total of 17 248 relevant operations were conducted, representing increases of 6.9% and 9.4% over 2021 and 2022 respectively, which reflected the ImmD's determination to combat unlawful employment.

The ImmD is also aware that some industries have turned to operate online stores for soliciting business, including renovation companies and domestic work agencies employing illegal workers. The ImmD has established the Cybercrime and Forensics Investigation Group, which is dedicated to assisting frontline investigators in collecting digital evidence so as to strengthen the ability in case investigation and evidence collection.

Moreover, the ImmD has proactively stepped up the publicity campaign in order to let the employers understand the serious consequences of employing illegal workers, and raise public awareness of not employing illegal workers. For example, the ImmD has deployed officers and promotional vehicles to black spots of unlawful employment from time to time to distribute “Don’t Employ Illegal Workers” leaflets to employers. The employers are provided with information on how to identify persons who are lawfully employable and are reminded to inspect the original Hong Kong identity cards of job seekers for verification. Information and videos about not to employ illegal workers and the points to note for employers before employing a job seeker are uploaded on the ImmD’s website for public reference. The ImmD has also disseminated the message of “Employing Illegal Workers Is an Offence” through the ImmD’s official account on social media platforms. Besides, the ImmD has set up a dedicated hotline (2824 1551) and email account ([anti-crime@immd.gov.hk](mailto:anti-crime@immd.gov.hk)) for the public to report unlawful employment.

The ImmD will continue to closely monitor the trend of unlawful employment crimes, step up enforcement actions against unlawful employment, disseminate the serious consequences of employing illegal workers on multiple fronts, raise public awareness of not to employ illegal workers and take resolute enforcement actions.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB110**

**(Question Serial No. 1162)**

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Pre-entry Control

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The 2023 Policy Address proposed to relax the visa policy in respect of employment for Vietnamese talent. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee of:

1. the respective numbers of applications received, pending approval, approved and rejected since the relaxation of the policy;
2. the age, gender, marital status, highest academic qualification of and professional qualifications possessed by the successful applicants;
3. the industries/sectors to which the successful applicants belong and their salaries received before entry to Hong Kong; and
4. the increase in the establishment and the estimated expenditure in the light of this scheme?

Asked by: Hon IP LAU Suk-ye, Regina (LegCo internal reference no.: 11)

Reply:

In consultation with the Labour and Welfare Bureau, the reply to various parts of the question is as follows:

1. to 3.

In the past, Vietnamese talent could only take up employment in Hong Kong through the Immigration Arrangements for Non-local Graduates. Under the relaxation measures introduced in October 2023, Vietnamese talent may apply for entry for employment in Hong Kong through other talent admission schemes, including the General Employment Policy and the Top Talent Pass Scheme. The numbers of applications received and processed as at end of February 2024 are as follows:

	<b>25 October 2023 to 29 February 2024</b>
Number of applications received	42
Number of applications approved	31
Number of applications rejected	0
Number of applications withdrawn by the applicants/which could not be processed further	6
Number of applications being processed	5

Relevant government departments do not maintain other statistics mentioned in the question.

4.

The Immigration Department will handle the work relating to the relaxation of visa policy through the flexible deployment of its existing manpower and resources. There is no separate breakdown of the establishment and expenditure involved.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB111**

**(Question Serial No. 1177)**

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (5) Nationality and Assistance to HKSAR Residents outside Hong Kong

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit (AHU) under the Immigration Department (ImmD) is tasked with duties including rendering assistance to Hong Kong residents in distress outside Hong Kong and their family members. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee of:

1. the number of requests for assistance received by the ImmD and the number of assistance seekers concerned in the past year by nature of the cases;
2. the number of requests for assistance received by the ImmD in the past year by region of the assistance seekers;
3. the specific assistance rendered to Hong Kong residents in distress outside Hong Kong in the past year; and
4. the staff establishment and estimated expenditure of the AHU in 2024-25?

Asked by: Hon IP LAU Suk-ye, Regina (LegCo internal reference no.: 26)

Reply:

In the past year, the Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit (AHU) of the Immigration Department (ImmD) received a total of 3 035 requests for assistance, involving 3 035 persons. A breakdown of the numbers of requests for assistance by nature of the cases and by region where residents outside Hong Kong sought assistance is tabulated as follows:

<b>Nature of the case</b>	<b>2023</b>
Loss of Travel Document	1 725
Traffic Accident	85
Hospitalisation, Illness and Death	683
Others (such as missing, being detained, etc.)	542
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 035</b>

<b>Region where residents outside Hong Kong sought assistance</b>	<b>2023</b>
Mainland China	634
Japan	465
United Kingdom	403
Thailand	174
Australia	172
Korea	131
U.S.A.	109
Israel	89
France	81
Canada	62
Others	715
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 035</b>

Upon receipt of requests for assistance from Hong Kong residents or their families, the AHU will seek to understand the situation through various channels including the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), the Chinese Diplomatic and Consular Missions, offices of the HKSAR Government in the Mainland and overseas or relevant government departments, and provide practicable assistance to the subjects having regard to the actual circumstances of the cases and their requests.

The staff establishment and total annual salary costs (in terms of the notional annual mid-point salary) of the AHU in the financial year of 2024-25 are as follows:

Year	Staff establishment	Total annual salary costs in terms of the notional annual mid-point salary
2024-25	30	\$20.52 million

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB112**

**(Question Serial No. 0090)**

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (4) Personal Documentation

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Under this programme, the work of the Immigration Department (ImmD) is to counteract illegal immigration and enhance the maintenance of law and order by providing all legal residents with a secure form of identity card and all consequential services related to identity cards; to register births, deaths and marriages and provide all consequential services related to such civil registration; to assess right of abode claims; and to facilitate international travel of Hong Kong residents by providing them with travel documents. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- a. Please list the quantities and usage counts of the Travel Document Submission Kiosks (TDSKs), and the average cost of each machine in the past 3 years.
- b. Does the ImmD maintain any statistics on the manpower and expenditure saved through the introduction of TDSKs? If yes, what are the details? If no, what are the reasons?
- c. Will the ImmD consider making various document application services go electronic? If yes, what are the details? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon KWOK Ling-lai, Lillian (LegCo internal reference no.: 18)

Reply:

a. At present, there are a total of 33 Travel Document Submission Kiosks (TDSKs) installed at the Immigration Department (ImmD) Headquarters and its 7 branch offices to facilitate eligible applicants in submitting applications for a Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) passport in a self-service manner.

In the past 3 years, the numbers of HKSAR passport applications submitted through the TDSKs are tabulated as follows:

Year	Number of applications
2021	75 273
2022	202 550
2023	509 209

The TDSKs are one of the initiatives under the Next Generation Electronic Passport System (e-Passport-2 System) of the ImmD. The annual recurrent expenditure on maintenance of e-Passport-2 System is around \$22.2 million, covering the daily operation of the system, the document production system, and all equipment of the TDSKs, etc. As the expenditure on maintenance of the TDSKs is part of the overall expenditure on maintenance of the e-Passport-2 System, a separate breakdown is not available.

b. Apart from enhancing the ImmD's efficiency in processing HKSAR passport applications, the introduction of the TDSKs also streamlined the processing of applications by staff at the counters. This enables the ImmD to be more flexible in deploying staff to handle other work processes, thereby enhancing the ImmD's overall capacity in processing travel document applications to meet the keen public demand for relevant services. As the processing of HKSAR passport applications submitted through the TDSKs forms part of the ImmD's daily work, the ImmD does not maintain a separate breakdown of the resources involved.

c. The ImmD has been committed to applying innovative technology in different work areas in support of the HKSAR Government's policy to promote digitalisation of government services with a view to providing more professional and quality services to the public. In respect of the application for personal documentation, the ImmD has put in place various measures to facilitate submission of HKSAR passport applications. In particular, members of the public are encouraged to submit their applications via the ImmD website or the Immigration Department Mobile Application (ImmD Mobile App). Alternatively, they may also choose to submit their applications through the self-service TDSKs. At present, about 80% of the applications are submitted online or in a self-service manner. In addition to the HKSAR passport applications, the processing of applications for identity cards and other travel documents (including the Document of Identity for Visa Purposes and the Re-entry Permit) has also gone electronic. Members of the public can make advance booking for applying for identity cards and travel documents via the ImmD website or the ImmD Mobile App, and pre-fill the forms via the aforesaid channels; or obtain tags from the Self-service Tag Kiosks at various offices for making applications. There are also Self-service Electronic Form-filling Desks at the Registration of Persons Offices to facilitate the members of the public in filling in the electronic application form in a self-service manner. On the collection of documents, self-service collection is currently available for both HKSAR passports and identity cards.

To further utilise technology to bring greater convenience to the public and enhance the handling capacity of identity card applications, the ImmD plans to install new Personal Documentation Submission Kiosks (PDSKs) and Personal Documentation Collection Kiosks (PDCKs) at its offices. PDSKs will integrate the functions of submitting applications for both identity cards and HKSAR passports. Eligible applicants can submit applications for replacement of identity cards and HKSAR passports in one-go in a fully self-service manner. Regarding the collection of documents, the new PDCKs will enable members of the public to collect both identity cards and HKSAR passports at the same time in a fully self-service manner. In the long run, it is anticipated that the application for or collection of documents can be done outside office hours through the self-service kiosks. Looking ahead, the ImmD will continue to utilise technology to introduce more electronic services so as to enhance the public's experience in using the relevant services, and from time to time review and explore

other measures to facilitate the application for and collection of documents with a view to further enhancing convenience and efficiency of the services.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB113**

**(Question Serial No. 0206)**

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Control after Entry

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

As mentioned under this Programme, the Immigration Department is to exercise immigration control by granting or refusing extension of stay; investigating and prosecuting offenders under the Immigration Ordinance (Cap. 115), Immigration Service Ordinance (Cap. 331), Registration of Persons Ordinance (Cap. 177), Marriage Ordinance (Cap. 181), Births and Deaths Registration Ordinance (Cap. 174), and certain provisions under the Crimes Ordinance (Cap. 200); removing or deporting illegal immigrants, overstayers and undesirable persons from Hong Kong; and implementing a unified screening mechanism, based on the procedures under the statutory torture claim screening mechanism, to assess non-refoulement claims made on all applicable grounds and effect timely removal of those whose claim is rejected. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- a. Please list the respective numbers of cases involving persons seeking entry into Hong Kong under the disguise of marriages with Hong Kong residents as well as successful prosecutions in the past 5 years. What was the average time of handling such cases?
- b. In connection with the above question, what were the average manpower and expenditure required for handling such cases?
- c. What are the details of estimated expenditure of the Department for strengthening enforcement actions against persons seeking entry into Hong Kong under the disguise of marriages with Hong Kong residents?
- d. Will the Department consider allocating resources to step up publicity with a view to achieving a stronger deterrent effect? If yes, what are the details? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon KWOK Ling-lai, Lillian (LegCo internal reference no.: 27)

Reply:

- a. Over the past 5 years, the numbers of bogus marriage cases investigated by the Immigration Department (ImmD) and the relevant numbers of persons successfully prosecuted are tabulated as follows:

Year	Number of cases investigated	Number of persons successfully prosecuted
2019	644	71
2020	292	45
2021	227	43
2022	383	67
2023	627	87
Total	2 173	313

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

- b-c. After the re-organisation of the Investigation Sub-division of the ImmD in June 2023, the staff establishment of the Special Task Force for the investigation of bogus marriages is 37 in total. The aforementioned manpower involves a total annual salary cost of about \$19.66 million (in terms of the notional annual mid-point salary value).

Apart from the Special Task Force, the ImmD also carries out work related to the investigations of bogus marriages at control points, births and marriage registries and visa offices. As the above work is part of the regular duties of the ImmD, there is no separate breakdown of the resources involved. The ImmD will continue to flexibly deploy manpower for strengthening the enforcement against bogus marriages having regard to its operational needs.

- d. On stepping up publicity, the ImmD has from time to time disseminated information on crackdowns on bogus marriage syndicates and successful prosecutions of intermediaries and persons engaged in bogus marriages through press briefings, press releases, media interviews, etc. to remind members of the public, including young people, of the consequences of engaging in bogus marriages and the serious implications of committing related offences. In addition, the ImmD will continue to disseminate relevant information through various popular publicity channels, for example, producing publicity video clips and uploading them to the ImmD's video sharing channel and social media platforms.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB114**

**(Question Serial No. 1823)**

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (5) Nationality and Assistance to HKSAR Residents outside Hong Kong

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the “assistance outside Hong Kong”, would the Government inform this Committee of:

- (1) the number of requests for assistance received by the Immigration Department (ImmD) from Hong Kong residents in distress outside Hong Kong and their family members in the past 2 years, with a breakdown by region of the assistance seekers and nature of the cases;
- (2) the establishment and strength of staff of the Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit in the past 2 years, and the total amount of annual salary costs involved; and
- (3) the number of requests for assistance received by the ImmD from Hong Kong residents in Taiwan since the temporary suspension of operation of the Hong Kong Economic, Trade and Cultural Office (Taiwan), and the nature of those requests?

Asked by: Hon LAM Chun-sing (LegCo internal reference no.: 15)

Reply:

(1) In the past 2 years, the Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit (AHU) of the Immigration Department (ImmD) received a total of 4 714 requests for assistance, involving 4 714 persons. A breakdown of the numbers of requests for assistance by nature of the cases and by region where residents outside Hong Kong sought assistance is tabulated as follows:

<b>Nature of the case</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
Loss of Travel Document	639	1 725
Traffic Accident	7	85
Hospitalisation, Illness and Death	344	683
Others (such as missing, being detained, etc.)	689	542
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 679</b>	<b>3 035</b>

<b>Region where residents outside Hong Kong sought assistance</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
Mainland China	452	634
Japan	105	465
United Kingdom	266	403
Thailand	112	174
Australia	72	172
Korea	43	131
U. S. A.	92	109
Israel	0	89
France	49	81
Canada	53	62
Others	435	715
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 679</b>	<b>3 035</b>

(2) The establishment and strength of staff, and the total annual salary costs (in terms of the notional annual mid-point salary value) of the AHU in the past 2 financial years are as follows:

<b>Financial year</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>
Establishment	26	30*
Strength^	38 (as at 31 March 2023)	32 (as at 1 March 2024)
Total annual salary costs (in terms of the notional annual mid-point salary value)	\$17.41 million	\$19.7 million

\* With the creation of 4 additional posts of Senior Immigration Assistant by the ImmD in the financial year of 2023-24, the staff establishment of the AHU has increased from 26 to 30.

^ The strength figure was higher than that of the establishment due to the flexible deployment of internal manpower by the ImmD for meeting operational needs in response to actual circumstances.

(3) Upon the suspension of operation of the Hong Kong Economic, Trade and Cultural Office (Taiwan) and covering the period until 31 December 2023, the AHU received a total of 49 cases requesting for assistance from Hong Kong residents in distress in Taiwan, including cases of hospitalisation, illness and death. A total of 49 persons were involved. The AHU has, on a case-by-case basis, provided appropriate and practical assistance to assistance seekers and their families.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB115**

**(Question Serial No. 0300)**

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Control upon Entry

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

As mentioned in the Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024–25, the Department will prepare for the extension of the operating hours for passenger clearance of the Shenzhen Bay Control Point to 24 hours, and the extension of operating hours for cargo clearance of the Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point to 24 hours. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. What is the progress of the extension of passenger clearance at the Shenzhen Bay Control Point to 24 hours, and that of cargo clearance at the Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point to 24 hours? What is the earliest time for implementing the extension?
2. Will there be any adjustments for the establishment and expenditure of the abovementioned 2 control points in the light of the implementation of round-the-clock clearance? If yes, what are the details?
3. Are there any plans to implement round-the-clock clearance at other immigration control points in addition to the 2 above?

Asked by: Hon LAU Ip-keung, Kenneth (LegCo internal reference no.: 14)

Reply:

1. and 3. In view of the resumption of normal travel between the Mainland and Hong Kong since early February last year, the governments of Hong Kong and Shenzhen have been closely monitoring the demand for clearance services at various land Boundary Control Points (BCPs). On the basis of the 24-hour passenger clearance services currently provided at Lok Ma Chau Control Point and Hong Kong Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port, the HKSAR Government will liaise with the Mainland authorities on extending the operating hours of the passenger clearance services of individual land BCPs as and when necessary to further facilitate the flow of people between the two sides.

2. To tie in with future operation needs of the Shenzhen Bay Control Point and the Heung Yuen Wai BCP, the Immigration Department will take various measures, in the light of the actual situation, including flexible deployment of manpower, optimisation of workflow, and effective use of information technology, etc., to enhance the handling capacity and efficiency of the control point, and seek additional resources through established mechanisms when

necessary.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB116**

**(Question Serial No. 0306)**

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Control upon Entry

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

It is estimated that the number of passengers/vehicles/vessels examined by land in 2024 will be 252 470 000, representing an increase of about 38% over the actual number in 2023. However, there will be a net decrease of 173 posts under this Programme in 2024-25. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee:

1. of the statistics on inbound and outbound passenger trips at various immigration control points in Hong Kong in the past 5 years and the coming year;
2. of the staff establishment as well as operating expenses and salary costs for various immigration control points in Hong Kong in the past 5 financial years and the coming financial year;
3. of the (i) sections/units, (ii) ranks, (iii) duties and (iv) remuneration expenditure involved in the reduction in posts and staff establishment; and
4. whether the Government has assessed the sufficiency of the existing staff establishment and resources to cope with the anticipated increase in the inbound and outbound passenger trips in 2024, and whether the targets and indicators of the performance measures under this Programme can be maintained?

Asked by: Hon LAU Ip-keung, Kenneth (LegCo internal reference no.: 20)

Reply:

1. The numbers of inbound and outbound passenger trips at various control points from 2019 to 2023 and in 2024 are set out at Annex 1.
2. The staff establishment and salary costs of the Immigration Department (ImmD) for various control points under Programme (2) from 2019-20 to 2023-24 and in 2024-25 are set out at Annex 2.
3. The ImmD will have a total net decrease of 170 non-directorate posts responsible for immigration control at various control points under Programme (2) in 2024-25. The total annual salary costs involved, in terms of the notional annual mid-point salary value, will be about \$59.36 million. There will also be a total net decrease of 3 non-directorate posts at service units other than the control points, and the total annual salary costs involved will be about \$190,000.
4. The ImmD will make flexible deployment of manpower as needed for exercising immigration control, and continue to review its manpower and other resources taking into account the actual situation of inbound and outbound travels, with a view to providing passengers with convenient and efficient immigration clearance services within the pledged waiting time.

Numbers of inbound and outbound passenger trips at various control points

Control Point <sup>Note 1</sup>	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024 (Estimate)
Airport	48 997 829	5 709 065	677 108	4 141 363	31 716 381	41 648 000
Lo Wu <sup>Note 3</sup>	78 234 223	5 455 893	10 179	0	45 334 772	62 261 000
Hung Hom	1 989 302	108 537	0	0	0	0
Lok Ma Chau Spur Line <sup>Note 3</sup>	50 156 435	3 516 742	13 955	0	40 845 069	56 095 000
West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou- Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link	16 732 428	975 897	0	0	19 653 992	26 992 000
Lok Ma Chau	24 801 949	1 621 157	0	0	8 397 262	11 532 000
Man Kam To	3 625 307	243 202	0	0	1 029 876	1 414 000
Sha Tau Kok	2 681 506	191 046	0	0	0	0
Shenzhen Bay	38 526 032	3 713 745	836 891	927 608	22 685 338	31 155 000
Hong Kong- Zhuhai-Macao Bridge	19 423 296	1 641 553	122 698	192 883	21 570 170	29 623 000
Heung Yuen Wai <sup>Notes 3 &amp; 4</sup>	-	-	10 470	301	12 450 061	17 098 000
Harbour Control	51 415	47 971	22 855	21 102	37 464	52 000
Macau Ferry Terminal	10 177 654	620 904	0	0	6 465 246	9 025 000
China Ferry Terminal	3 760 366	196 733	0	0	1 089 083	1 520 000
Tuen Mun Ferry Terminal	520 301	28 724	-	-	-	-
River Trade Terminal	134	42	1	6	19	30
Kai Tak Cruise Terminal <sup>Note 5</sup>	1 585 929	135 864	257 718	12 167	479 367	669 000
Total <sup>Note 2</sup>	301 264 106	24 207 075	1 951 875	5 295 430	211 754 100	289 086 000

**Note 1:**

The following boundary control points (BCPs) had suspended services during the COVID-19 epidemic with details as follows:

- Lo Wu (services suspended from 4 February 2020 to 5 February 2023)
- Lok Ma Chau Spur Line (services suspended from 4 February 2020 to 7 January 2023)
- West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (services suspended from 30 January 2020 to 14 January 2023)
- Lok Ma Chau (services suspended from 4 February 2020 to 5 February 2023)
- Man Kam To (services suspended from 30 January 2020 to 7 January 2023)
- China Ferry Terminal (services suspended from 30 January 2020 to 7 January 2023)
- Macau Ferry Terminal (services suspended from 4 February 2020 to 7 January 2023)

- Kai Tak Cruise Terminal (services suspended from 5 February 2020; passenger clearance service resumed for Hong Kong residents between 30 July 2021 and 6 January 2022 for operating the “cruise-to-nowhere” itineraries; international cruise service resumed on 8 March 2023)
- Heung Yuen Wai (full operation, including cargo and passenger clearance services, commenced since 6 February 2023)
- Tuen Mun Ferry Terminal has ceased operation since 30 January 2020.
- Hung Hom Control Point has ceased to operate since 30 January 2020 upon suspension of the Intercity Through Train services.
- Passenger clearance services at the Sha Tau Kok Control Point have been suspended since 30 January 2020 to facilitate the redevelopment of the Sha Tau Kok Port.

Note 2: There may be a slight discrepancy between the sum of individual items and the total as shown in the above table due to rounding.

Note 3: During the above services suspension periods, the Lo Wu Control Point, Lok Ma Chau Spur Line Control Point and Heung Yuen Wai BCP were opened as “BCP Polling Stations” on 19 December 2021 to facilitate registered electors in the Mainland to return to Hong Kong for voting in the 2021 Legislative Council General Election.

Note 4: The Mainland medical support team arrived Hong Kong SAR via the Heung Yuen Wai BCP on 16 March 2022.

Note 5: The numbers of inbound and outbound passenger trips included trips made by passengers of cruise liners berthing at the Kai Tak Cruise Terminal, the Ocean Terminal and other anchorages.

Staff establishment and salary costs of the ImmD for various control points

2019-20

Control point	Number of posts <sup>Note 1</sup>	Salary costs <sup>Note 2</sup> (\$m)
Airport	980	441
Lo Wu	738	334
Hung Hom	93	43
Lok Ma Chau Spur Line	250	113
West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link	407	188
Lok Ma Chau	378	164
Man Kam To	87	37
Sha Tau Kok	53	24
Shenzhen Bay	387	169
Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port	503	228
Heung Yuen Wai	204	95
Harbour Control	109	52
Macau Ferry Terminal	189	86
China Ferry Terminal	168	76
River Trade Terminal	40	21
Tuen Mun Ferry Terminal	30	15
Kai Tak Cruise Terminal	94	43
Total	4 710	2,127

Note 1: The actual manpower at various control points will be flexibly deployed according to operational needs.

Note 2: In terms of the notional annual mid-point salary value. There may be a slight discrepancy between the sum of individual items and the total as shown in the above table due to rounding.

2020-21

Control point	Number of posts <sup>Note 1</sup>	Salary costs <sup>Note 2</sup> (\$m)
Airport	990	469
Lo Wu	738	352
Hung Hom	93	45
Lok Ma Chau Spur Line	250	119
West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link	407	198
Lok Ma Chau	381	175
Man Kam To	87	39

Control point	Number of posts <sup>Note 1</sup>	Salary costs <sup>Note 2</sup> (\$m)
Sha Tau Kok	53	25
Shenzhen Bay	481	222
Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port	503	240
Heung Yuen Wai	204	99
Harbour Control	109	55
Macau Ferry Terminal	189	90
China Ferry Terminal	168	80
River Trade Terminal	40	22
Tuen Mun Ferry Terminal	30	16
Kai Tak Cruise Terminal	94	45
Total	4 817	2,290

Note 1: The actual manpower at various control points will be flexibly deployed according to operational needs.

Note 2: In terms of the notional annual mid-point salary value. There may be a slight discrepancy between the sum of individual items and the total as shown in the above table due to rounding.

#### 2021-22

Control point	Number of posts <sup>Note 1</sup>	Salary costs <sup>Note 2</sup> (\$m)
Airport	992	471
Lo Wu	737	351
Hung Hom	93	45
Lok Ma Chau Spur Line	250	119
West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link	407	198
Lok Ma Chau	381	175
Man Kam To	87	39
Sha Tau Kok	53	25
Shenzhen Bay	481	222
Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port	503	240
Heung Yuen Wai	204	99
Harbour Control	109	55
Macau Ferry Terminal	189	90
China Ferry Terminal	168	80
River Trade Terminal	40	22
Tuen Mun Ferry Terminal	30	16
Kai Tak Cruise Terminal	94	45
Total	4 818	2,292

Note 1: The actual manpower at various control points will be flexibly deployed according to operational needs.

Note 2: In terms of the notional annual mid-point salary value. There may be a slight discrepancy between the sum of individual items and the total as shown in the above table due to rounding.

### 2022-23

Control point	Number of posts <sup>Note 1</sup>	Salary costs <sup>Note 2</sup> (\$m)
Airport	1003	504
Lo Wu	737	372
Hung Hom	93	47
Lok Ma Chau Spur Line	250	126
West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link	407	209
Lok Ma Chau	381	185
Man Kam To	87	41
Sha Tau Kok	53	26
Shenzhen Bay	481	234
Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port	503	253
Heung Yuen Wai	204	105
Harbour Control	109	58
Macau Ferry Terminal	189	96
China Ferry Terminal	168	85
River Trade Terminal	40	23
Tuen Mun Ferry Terminal	30	16
Kai Tak Cruise Terminal	94	47
Total	4 829	2,429

Note 1: The actual manpower at various control points will be flexibly deployed according to operational needs.

Note 2: In terms of the notional annual mid-point salary value. There may be a slight discrepancy between the sum of individual items and the total as shown in the above table due to rounding.

### 2023-24

Control point	Number of posts <sup>Note 1</sup>	Salary costs <sup>Note 2</sup> (\$m)
Airport	1003	517
Lo Wu	737	382
Hung Hom	93	49
Lok Ma Chau Spur Line	250	129

Control point	Number of posts <sup>Note 1</sup>	Salary costs <sup>Note 2</sup> (\$m)
West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link	407	215
Lok Ma Chau	381	190
Man Kam To	87	42
Sha Tau Kok	53	27
Shenzhen Bay	481	240
Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port	503	260
Heung Yuen Wai	204	108
Harbour Control	109	60
Macau Ferry Terminal	189	98
China Ferry Terminal	168	87
River Trade Terminal	70	40
Kai Tak Cruise Terminal	94	48
Total	4 829	2,490

Note 1: The actual manpower at various control points will be flexibly deployed according to operational needs.

Note 2: In terms of the notional annual mid-point salary value. There may be a slight discrepancy between the sum of individual items and the total as shown in the above table due to rounding.

#### 2024-25

Control point	Number of posts <sup>Note 1</sup>	Salary costs <sup>Note 2</sup> (\$m)
Airport	970	528
Lo Wu	722	394
Hung Hom	74	44
Lok Ma Chau Spur Line	240	132
West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link	399	221
Lok Ma Chau	364	193
Man Kam To	87	44
Sha Tau Kok	40	23
Shenzhen Bay	481	251
Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port	488	266
Heung Yuen Wai	199	111
Harbour Control	97	58
Macau Ferry Terminal	188	102
China Ferry Terminal	166	90
River Trade Terminal	52	35
Kai Tak Cruise Terminal	92	50

Control point	Number of posts <sup>Note 1</sup>	Salary costs <sup>Note 2</sup> (\$m)
Total	4 659	2,542

Note 1: The actual manpower at various control points will be flexibly deployed according to operational needs.

Note 2: In terms of the notional annual mid-point salary value. There may be a slight discrepancy between the sum of individual items and the total as shown in the above table due to rounding.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB117**

**(Question Serial No. 1688)**

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (4) Personal Documentation

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

As shown in the Indicators, the number of applications for HKSAR passports is estimated to increase from 684 000 in 2022 to 910 000 in 2024. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- a) Is there a need for the Department to increase manpower to cope with the rise in HKSAR passport applications?
- b) How much manpower is estimated to be deployed to cope with the demand for application for HKSAR passports?
- c) As the peak times of identity card replacement have gradually passed, will the Department's additional resources be deployed for handling matters relating to HKSAR passports?

Asked by: Hon LUK Hon-man, Benson (LegCo internal reference no.: 21)

Reply:

- a) and b) In 2022, the Immigration Department (ImmD) received a total of about 680 000 applications for Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) passports. Following the gradual resumption of normalcy in society after the pandemic, the ImmD received a total of over 1.45 million HKSAR passport applications in 2023, more than doubled of that in 2022, with over 195 000 applications recorded in the month of March 2023. Both the application figures by year or by month reached record highs since the ImmD commenced issuing HKSAR passports in July 1997. To cope with the surge in the number of applications, the ImmD deployed resources and manpower to ensure that the cases could be processed in a timely manner. Meanwhile, by utilising technology and flexibly deploying resources, the ImmD has been constantly enhancing the passport application procedures and workflow to further enhance its processing capacity. Therefore, despite the surge in the number of HKSAR passport applications, the ImmD was able to meet its performance pledges all along.

In the first two months of 2024, the ImmD received more than 170 000 HKSAR passport applications, reflecting the public's keen demand for the related services. As a number of citizens had already renewed their HKSAR passports last year, it is anticipated that the number of HKSAR passport applications for 2024 will decline to about 910 000, which is however still higher than the pre-pandemic level of 720 000 applications in 2019. The ImmD will continue to closely monitor the demand for application for HKSAR passports, utilise existing resources and make appropriate manpower deployment to handle the related work, with a view to continuously providing the public with flexible, highly efficient and quality services.

- c) It is estimated that the total number of various types of identity card applications will reach about 1.15 million in 2024, which is nearly a double of the annual number of about 600 000 applications before the pandemic. Resources have already been earmarked in the 2024-25 Estimates to support the ImmD in continuously implementing measures to enhance the processing capacity of identity card applications. The ImmD will continue to closely monitor the public's demand for various types of public services, including passport application, and flexibly deploy resources and manpower as appropriate to handle the related work, having regard to the actual circumstances and demand.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB118**

**(Question Serial No. 0710)**

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Pre-entry Control

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The Immigration Department (ImmD) is responsible for processing applications for entry into Hong Kong for employment, investment, training, residence and study in accordance with prevailing policies and procedures. In this connection, please inform this Committee of the following:

- What were the numbers of applications for employment visas for foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) received and approved in the past 3 years? Please provide a breakdown by type of work and nationality.
- In each of the past 3 years, what was the number of cases of premature termination of employment contracts between employers and FDHs? (Please provide a breakdown by reason involved.)
- What was the number of FDHs who did not leave Hong Kong upon expiry of their limit of stay each year, in breach of the requirement of remaining in Hong Kong for not more than 2 weeks after contract termination? What follow-up actions were taken or what penalties were imposed?
- The ImmD set up a special duties team in June 2013. In assessing FDH visa applications, the ImmD will refer suspected cases to the special duties team for investigation. How many cases were handled by the special duties team in each of the past 3 years and what were the relevant details?

Asked by: Hon NGAN Man-yu (LegCo internal reference no.: 27)

Reply:

(1)

The statistics on the applications from foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) processed by the Immigration Department (ImmD) in the past 3 years with a breakdown by the applicants' nationality are tabulated as follows:

Region	2021-22		2022-23		2023-24 (as of February 2024)	
	No. of applications received	No. of applications approved	No. of applications received	No. of applications approved	No. of applications received	No. of applications approved
The Philippines	34 157	29 892	46 116	40 313	42 242	42 423
Indonesia	24 680	23 058	35 014	31 856	33 797	34 085
India	1 309	1 031	2 155	1 757	2 116	1 950
Thailand	395	287	501	454	429	451
Sri Lanka	265	169	415	327	379	343
Bangladesh	124	94	229	210	227	205
Myanmar	14	10	24	25	29	20
Others	262	150	274	139	278	91
Total	61 206	54 691	84 728	75 081	79 497	79 568

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

(2) and (3)

The ImmD has been following established procedures in investigating cases of overstaying of FDHs, including gathering intelligence from different channels and conducting proactive follow-ups and investigation. The numbers of FDHs arrested for overstaying in the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

Financial year	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24 (as of February 2024)
Number of FDHs arrested for overstaying	675	1 050	889

An FDH who has overstayed is in breach of his/her condition of stay. According to the Immigration Ordinance, offenders are liable on conviction to a fine of \$50,000 and to imprisonment for 2 years. If an FDH has any adverse records or breaches, the records will be one of the factors to be taken into account when processing any future applications made by him/her for an employment visa or extension of stay. Apart from prosecuting FDHs who have overstayed and contravened the conditions of stay, the ImmD will also carry out enforcement operations against intermediaries or agents which aid and abet them. In addition, the ImmD will continue to enhance publicity to remind the public that hiring illegal workers is a criminal offence and that employers must inspect documents of job-seekers before hiring them, and to encourage the public to report suspected cases of illegal employment.

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

(4)

The numbers of cases of FDH visa applications referred to the special duties team, the numbers of applications rejected, and the numbers of applications withdrawn by the applicants or which could not be further processed in the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

<b>Financial year</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24 (as of February 2024)</b>
Number of referral cases	5 469	2 350	1 237
Number of applications rejected	2 922	1 428	266
Number of applications withdrawn by the applicants or which could not be further processed	366	114	123

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB119**

**(Question Serial No. 3135)**

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Pre-entry Control

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

[Note: The question below also concerns the policy purview of the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB). The reply was prepared by the Immigration Department and vetted by the LWB.]

Question:

With the implementation of policies for attracting and retaining outside talent, professionals and entrepreneurs for career development in Hong Kong, the number of entry visa applications received by the Immigration Department (ImmD) has continued to increase from 241 507 in 2022 to 579 777 in 2023, and is expected to reach 783 500 in 2024. In this connection, does the ImmD need to deploy additional resources and manpower for processing applications? If yes, what are the details and the estimated expenditure? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon SHIU Ka-fai (LegCo internal reference no.: 40)

Reply:

The establishment and salary costs for processing applications made under various immigration policies/schemes in 2024-25 as estimated by the Immigration Department (ImmD) are tabulated as follows:

Talent admission scheme		2024-25
Top Talent Pass Scheme	Establishment (no. of posts)	15
	Salary costs* (\$ million)	12.38
General Employment Policy &	Establishment (no. of posts)	28
	Salary costs* (\$ million)	21.15
Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals	Establishment (no. of posts)	24
	Salary costs* (\$ million)	15.98
Immigration Arrangements for Non-local Graduates	Establishment (no. of posts)	14
	Salary costs* (\$ million)	9.15
Technology Talent Admission Scheme	Establishment (no. of posts)	3
	Salary costs* (\$ million)	2.6
Quality Migrant Admission Scheme	Establishment (no. of posts)	114
	Salary costs* (\$ million)	88.71
Admission Scheme for the Second Generation of Chinese Hong Kong Permanent Residents	Establishment (no. of posts)	12
	Salary costs* (\$ million)	6.65

& Including Employment Stream and Investment Stream.

\* In terms of the notional annual mid-point salary value.

In 2024-25, the ImmD will create 89 posts for processing applications made under various talent admission schemes, and the salary costs to be involved are \$70.34 million (in terms of the notional annual mid-point salary value).

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB120**

**(Question Serial No. 3136)**

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Control upon Entry

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

In 2024-25, the Immigration Department (ImmD) will prepare for the extension of the operating hours for passenger clearance of the Shenzhen Bay Control Point and cargo clearance of the Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point to 24 hours. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. What are the work details of the extension of the operating hours for clearance of the above 2 control points, including the timetable, manpower deployment and estimated expenditure?
2. Given that the passenger clearance through the Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point on weekdays has reached the design maximum throughput of 30 000 passengers per day, will the ImmD also consider extending the operating hours for passenger clearance of the control point so as to achieve a better diversion effect? If yes, what are the details? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon SHIU Ka-fai (LegCo internal reference no.: 41)

Reply:

1. In view of the resumption of normal travel between the Mainland and Hong Kong since early February last year, the governments of Hong Kong and Shenzhen have been closely monitoring the demand for clearance services at various land Boundary Control Points (BCPs). On the basis of the 24-hour passenger clearance services currently provided at Lok Ma Chau Control Point and Hong Kong Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port, the HKSAR Government will liaise with the Mainland authorities on extending the operating hours of the passenger clearance services of individual land BCPs as and when necessary to further facilitate the flow of people between the two sides.

2. According to the information provided by the Development Bureau in 2017, the designed daily handling capacity of the Heung Yuen Wai BCP is 30 000 passenger trips. The Heung Yuen Wai BCP has been very popular among the public since its commissioning, with an

average daily passenger throughput of about 34 000 in 2023. Although its utilisation is higher than its designed capacity, the relevant departments have been taking various measures in the light of the actual situation, including flexible deployment of manpower, optimisation of workflow, and effective use of information technology, etc., to enhance the handling capacity and efficiency of the control point in coping with the cross-boundary passenger flow. We will continue to closely monitor the operation of the control point.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB121**

**(Question Serial No. 1260)**

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Control after Entry

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

It is mentioned in Matters Requiring Special Attention that the Immigration Department will step up enforcement actions against persons seeking entry into Hong Kong under the disguise of marriages with Hong Kong residents. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- (1) What were the respective numbers of bogus marriage cases of which investigation was initiated by the authorities and reported cases received in the past 3 financial years? Among them, what were the numbers of convicted cases and their respective year-on-year changes?
- (2) What tactics are currently used to investigate suspected offences relating to bogus marriages allegedly committed by Hong Kong residents who married Mainlanders?
- (3) How will the enforcement actions against bogus marriages be strengthened in the new financial year? What are the manpower and resources required for the relevant policy?

Asked by: Hon TSE Wai-chun, Paul (LegCo internal reference no.: 37)

Reply:

(1) Over the past 3 financial years, the numbers of reports of bogus marriages received and cases investigated by the Immigration Department (ImmD), and the numbers of persons arrested and convicted are tabulated as follows:

Financial year	Number of reports	Number of cases investigated	Number of persons arrested	Number of persons convicted	Year-on-year change in the number of persons convicted
2021-22	597	223	622	43	-
2022-23	920	512	600	65	+51.2%
2023-24 (as of February)	1 462	545	769	88	+35.4%*
Total	2 979	1 280	1 991	196	-

\*Figures for March 2024 are not included.

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

(2) and (3) The Special Task Force of the ImmD (Special Task Force) for the investigation of bogus marriages has been collecting intelligence on suspected bogus marriages through various channels as well as investigating into and detecting bogus marriage cases. It has also proactively taken enforcement actions and stepped up publicity, with a view to combating persons seeking entry into Hong Kong by engaging in bogus marriages with Hong Kong residents through multi-pronged measures. The specific measures include:

(1) to step up immigration examination on arrivals

When conducting immigration examination on arriving passengers, the ImmD will critically scrutinise suspicious visitors visiting their spouses in Hong Kong on the strength of “Tanqin” (visiting relatives) exit endorsements, and will refuse their entry if their purposes of visit are in doubt. If any person is found to have contravened the laws of Hong Kong, such as making a false statement to the ImmD, enforcement officers of the ImmD will conduct in-depth investigations and prosecution actions will be taken.

(2) to conduct anti-illegal worker operations

In the past, many of those who entered into Hong Kong by engaging in bogus marriages aimed to take up unlawful employment. The ImmD therefore pays particular attention to Mainland residents holding “Tanqin” exit endorsements during anti-illegal worker operations. In-depth investigations will be mounted into any suspected cases of “Tanqin” exit endorsements obtained by engaging in bogus marriages.

(3) to step up operations against intermediaries

In the past, many bogus marriage cases involved marriage intermediaries arranging for Mainland residents to contract bogus marriages with Hong Kong residents and then apply for the requisite documents to enter Hong Kong. Therefore, the ImmD has all

along been paying attention to and conducting investigations into suspicious marriage intermediaries, as well as exchanging intelligence and cooperating with the Mainland enforcement authorities in combating intermediaries and syndicates involved in cross-boundary crimes.

Besides, the Special Task Force also proactively keeps track of the crime trend and collects intelligence through various channels, including advertisements with wording of “quick money” and “cross-boundary matchmaking” in social networking and instant messaging mobile applications, newspapers, webpages, etc. It will also conduct in-depth investigations into suspicious marriage intermediaries.

(4) to step up checking of suspected marriage registration cases

Apart from the Special Task Force, Marriage Registries of the ImmD also take part in combating bogus marriages. Marriage Registries will pay attention to and check each suspected marriage registration case to more effectively identify dubious cases of suspected double marriages in the Mainland and Hong Kong. Meanwhile, the Investigation Sub-division will also initiate investigations into suspected bogus marriage cases. With these measures in place, a number of suspected cases were swiftly detected and the offenders were successfully prosecuted and convicted.

(5) to exchange intelligence and cooperate with the Mainland authorities

The ImmD will notify the Mainland enforcement authorities of information of Mainland residents who have committed offences relating to bogus marriages, enabling the Mainland authorities to strictly scrutinise their future applications for exit endorsements. The Mainland enforcement authorities will also refer cases of suspected bogus marriages to the ImmD for follow up. The ImmD will conduct joint enforcement operations with the Mainland authorities when necessary.

(6) to prevent singly non-permanent residents to give birth in Hong Kong by means of bogus marriages

The ImmD also obtains delivery booking records from private hospitals for analysis and investigation, with a view to deterring attempts of Mainland pregnant women to give birth in Hong Kong by obtaining the “Confirmation Certificate on Delivery Booking” through bogus marriages.

(7) to step up publicity

The ImmD has from time to time disseminated information on crackdowns on bogus marriage syndicates and successful prosecutions of intermediaries and persons engaged in bogus marriage through press briefings, press releases, media interviews, etc. to remind members of the public, including young people, of the consequences of engaging in bogus marriages and the serious implications of committing related offences. In addition, the ImmD will continue to disseminate relevant information through various popular publicity channels, for example, producing publicity video clips and uploading them to the ImmD’s video sharing channel and social media platforms.

After the re-organisation of the Investigation Sub-division of the ImmD in June 2023, the staff establishment of the Special Task Force is 37 in total. The aforementioned manpower involves a total annual salary cost of about \$19.66 million (in terms of the notional annual mid-point salary value). Apart from the Special Task Force, the ImmD also carries out work related to the investigations of bogus marriages at control points, births and marriage registries and visa offices. As the above work is part of the regular duties of the ImmD, there is no separate breakdown of the resources involved. The ImmD will continue to flexibly deploy manpower for strengthening the enforcement against bogus marriages having regard to its operational needs.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB122**

**(Question Serial No. 2793)**

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Pre-entry Control

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

[Note: The question below also concerns the policy purview of the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB). The reply was prepared by the Immigration Department and vetted by the LWB.]

Question:

Would the Immigration Department please provide specific data on the processing of applications under the Top Talent Pass Scheme (TTPS) and the Talent List in 2023-24, including the number of applications received under each category; the academic qualifications, occupations and incomes of applicants under each category; the number of applications approved; as well as the information on the academic qualifications, occupations, incomes of the successful applicants under each category, together with the number and age profile of their dependants?

Asked by: Hon WONG Chun-sek, Edmund (LegCo internal reference no.: 6)

Reply:

Top Talent Pass Scheme (TTPS)

The numbers of applications received and approved under the TTPS in 2023-24 (as at end of February 2024) are as follows:

	Category A	Category B	Category C	Total
Number of applications received	15 491	26 369	9 242	51 102
Number of applications approved <sup>^</sup>	11 779	26 169	8 549	46 497

Note:

<sup>^</sup> Applications approved may not totally be those received in that year.

Category A refers to persons with an annual income of HK\$2.5 million or above in the year preceding the application.

Category B refers to persons who have obtained a bachelor’s degree from eligible universities prescribed in the designated aggregate list with at least 3 years of work experience over the past 5 years preceding the application.

Category C refers to persons who have obtained a bachelor’s degree from the eligible universities over the past 5 years preceding the application, but with less than 3 years of work experience. An annual quota of 10 000 is set for this category. To optimise the use of quotas, the number of arrivals in Hong Kong in respect of those approved talent will be taken as the criterion for calculating quota usage.

In 2023-24 (as at end of February 2024), statistics on successful applicants by income in the preceding year are tabulated as follows:

Income in the preceding year (HK\$)	Approved applications		
	Category A	Category B	Category C
2.5 million to less than 3 million	2 591	Applicants are not required to submit relevant information	
3 million to less than 5 million	5 100		
5 million to less than 10 million	2 162		
10 million or above	1 926		
Total	11 779		

Regarding academic qualifications, applicants under Category A are not required to provide information on academic qualifications, whereas applicants under Categories B and C are only required to prove their award of a bachelor’s degree by the eligible universities, and do not need to declare other academic qualifications.

In 2023-24 (as at end of February 2024), the statistics on approved applications for visas/entry permits of dependants under the TTPS are tabulated as follows:

TTPS	Category A	Category B	Category C	Total
Number of applications approved	20 882	31 559	435	52 876

Successful TTPS applicants will normally be granted an initial stay of 24 months to explore opportunities in Hong Kong without other conditions of stay. If talent have taken up employment or established/joined in business in Hong Kong during their stay, they are not required to notify the Immigration Department (ImmD). Yet, when applying for an extension of stay, applicants should provide the ImmD with credible information and documents to prove that they have taken up employment or established/ joined in business in Hong Kong in order to be granted an extension of stay. Since the TTPS was only launched in the end of 2022, the ImmD does not maintain statistics on the employment of incoming talent in Hong Kong for the time being.

In November last year, the Labour and Welfare Bureau conducted follow-up surveys with TTPS applicants who were granted visas/entry permits and have come to Hong Kong for more than 6 months to understand the situation of their settlement in Hong Kong, including their

employment, accommodation and children’s education in Hong Kong. The findings of the surveys reveal that 54% of the incoming talent have taken up employment, and are mainly engaged in managerial and professional jobs with median monthly employment earnings of around \$50,000. About 25% of the talent have a monthly income reaching \$100,000 or above, and about 10% even have an income reaching \$200,000 or above. A breakdown of employed talent by industry is as follows:

Industry	Proportion in the employed talent
Financial Services	31%
Innovation and Technology / Information and Communications Technology Service	18%
Commerce and Trade	17%
Insurance / Brokerage Services	8%
Academic Research and Education	4%
Others	22%

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

### Talent List

The purpose of drawing up the Talent List by the Government is to identify quality talent in need in Hong Kong that are in shortage and are difficult to be nurtured locally in a short time. The Talent list is applied under the relevant talent admission schemes to enable employers to recruit outside talent to meet their needs, in support of Hong Kong’s development into a high value-added and diversified economy. The Talent List, currently with a coverage of 51 professions, is applicable to the Quality Migrant Admission Scheme (QMAS), the General Employment Policy (GEP) and the Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals (ASMTP).

The number of applications that met the eligibility criteria under the Talent List and the number of approved applications under the above 3 talent admission schemes since the first Talent List promulgated in August 2018 up to 29 February 2024 is tabulated as follows:

Profession		Number of applications that met eligibility criteria under Talent List**	Number of applications approved**
<b>Business Support</b>			
1	Professionals in Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) (other than Financial Professionals)	10	10
<b>Creative Industries, Arts and Culture, Performing Arts</b>			
*	Creative Industries and Performing Arts Professionals	30	30
2	Arts Promoters	2	1

	Profession	Number of applications that met eligibility criteria under Talent List**	Number of applications approved**
3	Conservators for Movable Cultural Heritage	1	1
4	Creative Industries Professionals in Publishing	3	3
5	Digital Marketing and Branding Specialists	12	12
6	Creative Industries Professionals in Film	7	6
7	Performing Arts Professionals in Arts Technology	5	5
8	Creative Industries Professionals in Music	4	4
9	Creative Industries Professionals in Digital Entertainment	2	2
<b>Development and Construction</b>			
10	Architectural Professionals	38	37
11	Civil and Structural Engineering Professionals	52	50
12	Building Services Engineering Professionals	11	11
13	Electrical and Mechanical Engineering Professionals	15	14
14	Building Surveying Professionals	0	0
15	Quantity Surveying Professionals	16	16
16	Land Surveying Professionals	1	1
17	Landscape Architectural Professionals	2	2
18	Town Planning Professionals	2	2
19	Construction Managers/Builders	4	4
20	Building Information Modelling (BIM) Manager	2	2
<b>Environmental Technology Services</b>			
21	Waste Treatment Specialists/Engineers	21	21
<b>Financial Services</b>			
22	Professionals in Compliance in Asset and Wealth Management	56	55
23	Management Professionals in Asset and Wealth Management	116	110
24	Financial Professionals in Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG)	15	15
25	Specialist Insurance Professionals	19	19
26	Actuaries	16	14
27	Professionals in Fintech	108	101

Profession		Number of applications that met eligibility criteria under Talent List**	Number of applications approved**
<b>Healthcare Services</b>			
28	Doctors	7	7
29	Dentists	0	0
30	Dental Hygienists	0	0
31	Nurses	0	0
32	Midwives	0	0
33	Chinese Medicine Practitioners	1	0
34	Pharmacists	1	1
35	Occupational Therapists	0	0
36	Physiotherapists	1	1
37	Medical Laboratory Technologists	0	0
38	Optometrists	0	0
39	Radiographers	2	2
40	Chiropractors	5	5
<b>Innovation and Technology</b>			
41	Artificial Intelligence (AI) Specialists	25	25
42	Cloud Infrastructure Specialists	3	3
43	Software Specialists	46	45
44	Innovation and Technology (I&T) Experts	120	119
*	Data Scientists and Cyber Security Specialists	59	59
45	Data Scientists	14	12
46	Cyber Security Specialists	9	4
<b>Legal and Dispute Resolution Services</b>			
*	Dispute Resolution Professionals and Transactional Lawyers	6	6
47	Dispute Resolution Professionals	3	3
48	Legal Professionals (other than Dispute Resolution Professionals)	10	10
<b>Maritime Services</b>			
49	Shipping Finance Professionals	4	4
50	Marine Superintendents	18	18
51	Naval Architects	8	7
	Total	912	879

Note:

- \* The profession has been incorporated into the Talent List since 2018, and was split into two or more professions with effect from 16 May 2023.
- \*\* The number of approved applications under the QMAS denotes the number of applications that passed the selection by the Advisory Committee on Admission of Quality Migrants and Professionals (Advisory Committee). Among the applicants meeting the eligibility criteria of the Talent List, there were 33 QMAS applicants whose applications were pending discussion by the Advisory Committee.

The numbers of applicants meeting the eligibility criteria of the Talent List and having been approved under the QMAS, the GEP and the ASMTP by age, remuneration and academic qualifications are tabulated as follows:

Age	Number of applications approved
18 to 39	599
40 to 44	146
45 to 50	86
51 or above	48
Total	879

Monthly remuneration	Number of applications approved under GEP and ASMTP <sup>#</sup>
Below \$20,000	34
\$20,000 to \$39,999	216
\$40,000 to \$79,999	242
\$80,000 or above	84
Total	576

Note:

- <sup>#</sup> Successful applicants under the QMAS are not required to have secured an offer of employment before entering Hong Kong. Therefore, the ImmD does not maintain breakdown statistics on those applicants by monthly remuneration.

Academic qualification	Number of applications approved under QMAS <sup>##</sup>
Doctoral degree/ two master's degrees or more	91
Master's degree/ two bachelor's degrees or more	148
Bachelor's degree or equivalent	64
Total	303

Note:

## Generally speaking, all successful applicants under the GEP and the ASMTP hold a bachelor's degree in the relevant field. The ImmD does not maintain any further subcategories of the relevant statistics.

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

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB123**

**(Question Serial No. 2794)**

Head: (70) Immigration Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Pre-entry Control

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

What are the manpower and other resources required by the Immigration Department for handling the new Capital Investment Entrant Scheme (CIES) in 2024-25? Has the Government estimated the number of applications for the CIES to be received from 2024-25 to 2026-27? If yes, what are the estimate findings? If no, what are the reasons?

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

Reply:

In consultation with the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau, the reply to various parts of the question is as follows:

Under the New Capital Investment Entrant Scheme (New CIES), the New CIES Office under Invest Hong Kong is responsible for assessing whether the applications under the New CIES fulfil the financial requirements concerned, while the Immigration Department (ImmD) is responsible for assessing the applications for visa/entry permit and extension of stay, etc. In 2024-25, the establishment and salary costs for processing applications made under the New CIES as estimated by the ImmD are tabulated as follows:

Admission scheme/policy		2024-25
New CIES^	Establishment (no. of posts)	4
	Salary costs* (\$ million)	2.91

^ In the light of the number of applications for the scheme, the ImmD will handle the work relating to this admission scheme through flexible deployment of its existing manpower and resources.

\* In terms of the notional annual mid-point salary value.

The Government is confident that the New CIES will be well-received by investors interested in investing and pursuing development in Hong Kong, thereby channelling funds to Hong Kong's capital market and strengthening Hong Kong's status as an international asset and wealth management hub. While not setting a hard performance target for the New CIES, the Government will suitably evaluate its effectiveness to ensure the relevant arrangements and measures can attract target asset owners to deploy and manage their wealth, and fully realise the diverse investment opportunities in Hong Kong.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB124**

**(Question Serial No. 1532)**

Head: (70) Immigration Department

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

Programme: (1) Pre-entry Control, (4) Personal Documentation

Controlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The Territory-wide Identity Card Replacement Exercise ended in March 2023, but the estimate under Programme (4) Personal Documentation of the Immigration Department is higher than the 2023-24 original estimate by 6.1%. It is also expected that the number of identity cards and certificates of registered particulars issued will continue to increase with the implementation of and/or enhancement to immigration admission schemes. Please advise on:

1. the expected increase in the number of entrants under immigration admission schemes in 2024-25;
2. the average cost of identity card replacement for members of the public and the production cost per physical identity card in the Territory-wide Identity Card Replacement Exercise that ended in March 2023.

Asked by: Hon WONG Kwok, Kingsley (LegCo internal reference no.: 24)

Reply:

1. In consultation with the Labour and Welfare Bureau, the reply is as follows:

The Immigration Department (ImmD) expects to receive about 783 500 applications for entry visas under various immigration admission schemes/arrangements/policies in 2024, representing an increase of about 200 000 applications when compared with the actual figure of 2023. The Government has set a 3-year key performance indicator to trawl for talent, i.e. to admit at least 35 000 talent annually with an intended duration of stay of at least 12 months from 2023 to 2025, registering an increase of 40% over the average number in 2020 and 2021. There is no separate estimation of the numbers of entrants under various immigration admission schemes.

2. To facilitate the introduction of the Next Generation Smart Identity Card System (SMARTICS-2) in replacement of the old system for more effective support of work relating to the issuance of identity cards, the ImmD began issuing new smart identity cards on 26 November 2018 and launched the Territory-wide Identity Card Replacement Exercise

(Replacement Exercise) on 27 December 2018. The Replacement Exercise ended on 3 March 2023, during which around 6.84 million identity card holders had their identity cards replaced, representing about 85% of those Hong Kong residents who have to replace their identity cards.

The SMARTICS-2 supports the entire application process of smart identity card, from appointment booking, registration, production to issuance, as well as the related records management. During the Replacement Exercise, the SMARTICS-2 supported Smart Identity Card Replacement Centres, Registration of Persons Offices, the Identity Card Personalisation Centre, etc. in handling the work relating to the issuance of identity cards. There is no separate breakdown of the expenditure involved, which is part of the overall operational expenses of the SMARTICS-2.

In addition, as it is part of the ImmD's regular duties to process identity card replacement applications under the Replacement Exercise, no separate breakdown of the resources involved is available. Therefore, the ImmD does not maintain a breakdown of statistics mentioned in the question.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY****SB125****(Question Serial No. 1951)**Head: (70) Immigration DepartmentSubhead (No. & title): ()Programme: (2) Control upon EntryControlling Officer: Director of Immigration (J F KWOK)Director of Bureau: Secretary for SecurityQuestion:

Please list in a table a breakdown of visitor arrivals in 2019 and 2023 by region (by province for the Mainland) and country.

Asked by: Hon YIU Pak-leung (LegCo internal reference no.: 16)Reply:

According to the statistics from the Hong Kong Tourism Board, the top ten tourist markets in terms of visitor arrivals by country/ territory of residence of the visitors in 2019 and 2023 are tabulated as follows:

Country/territory of residence	2019
Mainland China*	43 774 685
Taiwan, China	1 538 915
Macao, China	1 238 709
U.S.A.	1 107 165
Japan	1 078 836
Korea	1 042 540
The Philippines	875 897
United Kingdom	518 378
Australia	505 253
Thailand	467 048
Others	3 765 183
<b>Total</b>	<b>55 912 609</b>

Country/territory of residence	2023
Mainland China*	26 760 453
Macao, China	1 223 905
Taiwan, China	783 778
The Philippines	763 778
U.S.A.	594 752
Thailand	450 372
Korea	402 999
Singapore	400 029
Japan	346 389
Malaysia	258 191
Others	2 015 014
<b>Total</b>	<b>33 999 660</b>

\*The Immigration Department does not maintain a breakdown by province.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB126**

**(Question Serial No. 0963)**

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Fire Service, (2) Fire Protection and Prevention

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

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding marine fire prevention strategies, please advise on the following:

- (a) How long does it generally take for fireboats and fire speedboats to arrive at various typhoon shelters or bays from their respective berths? (Set out the time in Annex 1 and put a slash “/” for areas beyond the respective service areas of the vessels.)

Typhoon shelter	Fireboat								Fire speedboat
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Aberdeen West Typhoon Shelter									
Aberdeen South Typhoon Shelter									
Causeway Bay Typhoon Shelter									
Cheung Chau Typhoon Shelter									
Kwun Tong Typhoon Shelter									
New Yau Ma Tei Typhoon Shelter									
Sam Ka Tsuen Typhoon Shelter									
Shau Kei Wan Typhoon Shelter									
To Kwa Wan Typhoon Shelter									
Tuen Mun Typhoon Shelter									
Yim Tin Tsai Typhoon Shelter									
Tai O									
River Trade Terminal (Tuen Mun)									
Chai Wan Public Cargo Working Area									
Cafeteria Beach, Tuen Mun									

- (b) What were the staff establishment and estimated expenditure involved in the fire prevention work for typhoon shelters in each of the past 3 years (from 2021-22 to 2023-24)?
- (c) What will be the staff establishment and estimated expenditure involved in the fire prevention work for typhoon shelters in 2024-25?

Asked by: Hon HO Chun-yin, Steven (LegCo internal reference no.: 16)

Reply:

- (a) The estimated journey times (in minutes) generally required for fire vessels, including fireboats and fire speedboats, to arrive at various typhoon shelters or bays within their main service areas from their respective stand-by berths are set out in the table below<sup>@</sup>:

Typhoon shelter/Bay	Fireboat										Fire speedboat
	1	2*	3	4	5	6~	7^	8	10*	11#	
Aberdeen West Typhoon Shelter	/	/	/	1.5	/	/	/	/	/	/	19
Aberdeen South Typhoon Shelter	/	/	/	6	/	/	/	/	/	/	25
Causeway Bay Typhoon Shelter	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	8	/	/	12
Cheung Chau Typhoon Shelter	/	/	3	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	29
Kwun Tong Typhoon Shelter	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	7	/	/	17
New Yau Ma Tei Typhoon Shelter	20	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	3.5
Sam Ka Tsuen Typhoon Shelter	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	7	/	/	16
Shau Kei Wan Typhoon Shelter	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	8	/	/	16
To Kwa Wan Typhoon Shelter	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	8	/	/	12
Tuen Mun Typhoon Shelter	/	/	/	/	10	/	/	/	/	/	1
Yim Tin Tsai Typhoon Shelter	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	15	10
Tai O	/	/	/	/	46	/	/	/	/	/	5
River Trade Terminal (Tuen Mun)	/	/	/	/	10	/	/	/	/	/	8
Chai Wan Public Cargo Working Area	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	12	/	/	19
Cafeteria Beach, Tuen Mun	/	/	/	/	10	/	/	/	/	/	3

Note:

- <sup>@</sup> The actual time taken for a fire vessel to arrive at the scene of a marine fire is affected by various factors, for example, whether the vessel is engaged in other operations (including participation in regular navigation training, exercise and inspection, or handling other emergency incident, etc.) when the fire call is received, and the marine traffic, waves, currents, wind direction, visibility and so forth at the time of the incident. Generally speaking, when the Fire Services Department (FSD) receives a call of marine fire incident, it will deploy at least 2 fire vessels nearest to the incident scene for operation. In addition, on-shore fire stations in the vicinity will promptly deploy fire appliances to nearby piers, where

on-shore fire personnel carrying portable fire pumps and other firefighting equipment will board police launches or Marine Department vessels and head for the incident scene to provide support.

- \* Fireboats No. 2 and No. 10 are reserve fireboats, which mainly serve as substitutes for fireboats under maintenance and repair. They therefore do not have specific service areas.
- ~ Fireboat No. 6 is deployed at Tsing Yi Fireboat Station and is responsible for waters near Tsing Yi and Ma Wan, including the oil terminals, oil tanker berths, dockyards, etc. in Tsing Yi District. The typhoon shelters and bays listed in the table above are not within its service area.
- ^ Fireboat No. 7 was put into service in mid-October 2020. It is currently berthed at Central Fireboat Station, alternating with Fireboat No. 1 to provide fire and rescue services to the Victoria Harbour and the areas of Hong Kong eastern waters.
- # Fireboat No. 11 was put into service in July 2023. It is currently berthed at Sai Kung Fireboat Base to provide fire and rescue services to the areas of Hong Kong eastern waters.

In addition, the FSD has 2 command boats and 8 speedboats stationed at the East and West Sea Rescue Berths of the airport. They are dedicated to handling incidents in the waters near the airport.

- (b) & (c) The firefighting, rescue and fire prevention education work in respect of typhoon shelters is mainly taken up by the personnel responsible for marine matters under the Marine and Diving Division of the FSD, with support from personnel of fire stations near the typhoon shelters. The FSD does not maintain separate statistics on the expenditure for fire prevention work for typhoon shelters. The establishment of the disciplined grade staff responsible for marine matters under the Marine and Diving Division of the FSD from 2021-22 to 2023-24 and in 2024-25 (estimate) is tabulated as follows:

Rank Year (as at 31 March)	Establishment			
	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25 (Estimate)
Senior Divisional Officer	1	1	1	1
Divisional Officer	2	2	2	2
Assistant Divisional Officer**	4	4	3	3
Senior Station Officer/Station Officer	15	15	15	15
Principal Fireman**	61	61	76	76
Senior Fireman**	84	84	92	92
Fireman**	141	141	179	179

\*\* To cope with community development and further enhance operational efficiency, the FSD restructured some of its operational divisions in October 2023. As a result

of manpower resources redeployment after the restructuring, the establishment of the Marine and Diving Division has changed with the reduction of 1 Assistant Divisional Officer and the addition of 15 Principal Firemen, 8 Senior Firemen and 38 Firemen.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB127**

**(Question Serial No. 2595)**

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (-) Not specified

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

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The establishment ceiling for 2024-25 will rise by 142 posts from an estimated 11 509 non-directorate posts as at 31 March 2024 to 11 651 posts as at 31 March 2025. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee of the establishment of the relevant posts to be created, with a breakdown by their respective responsibilities and the average expenditure on annual salary to be involved?

Asked by: Hon KONG Yuk-foon, Doreen (LegCo internal reference no.: 13)

Reply:

The Fire Services Department (FSD) estimates that there will be a net increase of 142 posts in 2024-25, involving an expenditure of about \$110 million on annual salary. The posts to be created are detailed as follows:

Item	Scope of Work	Rank	No. of posts
1	To provide manpower for the Airport East Fire Station, the Chek Lap Kok North Fire Station and the Chek Lap Kok North Ambulance Depot for the Three-Runway System (3RS) of the Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) which will soon be put into operation	Assistant Divisional Officer	4
		Principal Fireman	22
		Senior Fireman	23
		Fireman	65
		Senior Station Officer/Station Officer (Control)	4
		Principal Fireman (Control)	4
		Senior Fireman (Control)	11
		Ambulance Officer	1

Item	Scope of Work	Rank	No. of posts
2	To provide manpower for the fire station-cum-ambulance depot in Area 72, Tseung Kwan O which will soon be put into operation	Senior Divisional Officer	1
		Divisional Officer	1
		Assistant Divisional Officer	1
		Senior Station Officer/Station Officer	8
		Principal Fireman	4
		Senior Fireman	11
		Fireman	38
		Senior Ambulance Officer	1
		Ambulance Officer	1
		Principal Ambulanceman (upgraded from Senior Ambulanceman)	5
		Senior Ambulanceman	18
Ambulanceman	37		
3	To cope with the surge in on-site acceptance inspections before the commissioning of the 3RS of the HKIA in 2024	Building Services Inspector	7*
		Assistant Building Services Inspector	7*
4	To cope with the FSD's manpower requirement arising from the implementation of measures to enhance the fire safety of old buildings, such measures include the implementation of the defaulted works mechanism and the establishment of the FSD Building Improvement Support Centre	Divisional Officer	1
		Assistant Divisional Officer	3
		Senior Station Officer/Station Officer	5
		Principal Technical Officer	1
		Senior Building Services Inspector	1
5	To cope with the FSD's manpower requirement arising from the enhancement of emergency response capabilities in various aspects (including firefighting, rescue, handling of hazardous materials incidents and emergency ambulance service) and the relevant planning work, etc. for the National Games	Senior Divisional Officer	1#
		Divisional Officer	1#
		Assistant Divisional Officer	1#
		Senior Station Officer/Station Officer	1#
		Senior Station Officer/Station Officer (Control)	1#
		Assistant Chief Ambulance Officer	1#
		Senior Ambulance Officer	1#
		Ambulance Officer	1#
		Executive Officer II	1#

Item	Scope of Work	Rank	No. of posts
6	To establish the Greater Bay Area (GBA) Partnerships and External Affairs Office for strengthening collaboration with other GBA cities and implementing the GBA Emergency Response and Rescue Operational Plan	Divisional Officer	1
		Principal Fireman	1
		Senior Ambulance Officer	1
7	To cope with the increased workload related to recruitment and appointment matters	Executive Officer I	1
<b>Sub-total</b>			<b>298</b>
Deletion of posts			(101)
Deletion of the expired time-limited posts			(55)
<b>Total</b>			<b>142</b>

\* Time-limited posts until 31 December 2024

# Time-limited posts until 31 December 2025

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB128**

**(Question Serial No. 1687)**

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Fire Protection and Prevention

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

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Among the indicators, the estimated number of inspections of fire service installations (FSIs) and equipment for 2024 is only 259 050, which represents a decrease of over 20 000 inspections compared to the previous 2 years. In addition, the number of applications for approval of portable firefighting equipment and FSI/equipment processed in 2023 decreased by nearly half compared to 2022. In this connection, would the Government inform this Committee of:

- a) the reasons for the Fire Services Department (FSD)'s estimated decrease in the number of inspections of FSIs and equipment;
- b) the statistics on inspection of FSIs and equipment conducted by the FSD in the past 5 years;
- c) the reasons for resulting in this number of applications for approval of portable firefighting equipment and FSI/equipment processed; and
- d) the statistics on the number of applications for approval of portable firefighting equipment and FSI/equipment processed by the FSD in the past 5 years?

Asked by: Hon LUK Hon-man, Benson (LegCo internal reference no.: 20)

Reply:

- a) and b) To ensure that the fire service installations (FSIs) and equipment installed in buildings conform with the relevant standards and are in efficient working order at all times, the Fire Services Department (FSD) conducts inspections of these FSIs and equipment. The number of inspections of FSIs and equipment conducted by the FSD in the past 5 years are tabulated below:

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Number of inspections of FSIs and equipment conducted by the FSD	239 780	210 036	260 275	282 138	282 842

The FSD’s estimate for the number of inspections of FSIs and equipment in 2024 (259 050) is lower than the actual numbers in 2022 and 2023. This is subject to a basket of factors, including the market demand for acceptance inspection of FSIs and equipment for new buildings and major infrastructures, the number of inspections required by the FSD in response to complaints about FSIs and equipment, and the number of inspections of FSIs and equipment in buildings and premises conducted by the FSD in respect of the Certificate of Fire Service Installation and Equipment [note], etc. In fact, the FSD’s estimate for the number of inspections of FSIs and equipment in 2024 has increased by about 13% when compared to the estimate for 2023 (230 150).

Note: Pursuant to the requirements under regulation 8 of the Fire Service (Installations and Equipment) Regulations (Cap. 95B), the owner of any FSI/equipment shall keep such FSI/equipment in efficient working order at all times and have such FSI inspected by a registered FSI contractor (registered contractor) at least once in every 12 months. Upon the installation, maintenance, repair or inspection of FSI/equipment in any premises, the registered contractor shall issue to the FSI/equipment owner or the person commissioning the registered contractor a certificate (i.e. the Certificate of Fire Service Installation and Equipment) and forward a copy to the FSD. The inspection results, i.e. whether or not the FSI/equipment is in efficient working order, shall be stated in the certificate.

c) and d) FSIs and equipment to be installed for the protection of buildings must be accepted by the FSD. In addition, all portable equipment must be approved by the Director of Fire Services before it can be supplied or sold in Hong Kong. The number of applications for approval of portable firefighting equipment and acceptance of FSI/equipment (the applications) processed by the FSD in the past 5 years are tabulated below:

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Number of applications processed by the FSD	340	530	355	717	390

In general, the number of applications processed by the FSD is subject to the applications for approval or acceptance submitted by the trade. The main reason for the higher number of applications processed by the FSD in 2022 when compared to 2023 (see the table above) is that more such applications were received by the FSD in 2022.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB129**

**(Question Serial No. 1288)**

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Fire Service

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

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

1. Please provide the number of calls involving fireboats in 2023 and the time taken for the fireboats to arrive at the fire scenes, with a breakdown by the following journey times: under 15 minutes, under 30 minutes, under 45 minutes, under 60 minutes and under 120 minutes.
2. Please tabulate the numbers of duty and maintenance hours for each fireboat in 2023.
3. Please list in the table below the fireboats budgeted for replacement starting from 2022 and their respective information.

Fireboat	Basic features (total length/ crew capacity/ speed)	Target time of replacement	Builder (if any)	Approved commitment

Asked by: Hon MA Fung-kwok (LegCo internal reference no.: 27)

Reply:

- There were 2 400 calls involving fireboats in 2023 and the time taken for the fireboats to arrive at the scenes is tabulated as follows:

Journey time	Number of calls involving fireboats in 2023		
	Fire	Special service [Note]	Total
Under 15 minutes	74	337	411
15 to 29 minutes	58	354	412
30 to 44 minutes	40	242	282
45 to 59 minutes	22	112	134
60 to 119 minutes	25	123	148
More than 120 minutes	2	25	27
Call cancelled before arrival	164	822	986
Total	385	2 015	2 400

Note: Special service calls involve incidents other than fires, such as collision of vessels, ingress of water into vessels, gas leaks, rescue of people fallen into the sea, etc.

- The fireboats perform duties, including attending vessel fires or rescue operations, undertaking regular drills, promoting public education on vessel fire prevention, conducting inspections and navigation training in the respective waters they serve or on standby duty, while not under regular maintenance inspection or repair. The maintenance time of each fireboat in 2023 is as follows:

Fireboat	Maintenance time (no. of days)
Fireboat No. 1	2*
Fireboat No. 2 <sup>#</sup>	146
Fireboat No. 3	103
Fireboat No. 4	80
Fireboat No. 5	0*
Fireboat No. 6	83
Fireboat No. 7	17*
Fireboat No. 8	266 <sup>^</sup>
Fireboat No. 10 <sup>#</sup>	28*
Fireboat No. 11 <sup>@</sup>	0
Command Boat No. 1	33
Command Boat No. 2	28

# Fireboats No. 2 and No. 10 are reserve fireboats, which mainly serve as substitutes for fireboats under maintenance.

@ Fireboat No. 11 was put into service in July 2023.

\* No major routine maintenance was required for Fireboats No. 1, No. 5, No. 7 and No. 10 in 2023. The Marine Department conducts regular interim-inspection on the condition of fireboats and arranges for regular routine maintenance accordingly.

^ Fireboat No. 8 required a major repair in early 2023 due to damage to the mechanical parts of its propulsion system.

3. The fireboats budgeted for replacement starting from 2022 that are yet to be delivered and their respective information are tabulated as follows:

	Basic features (total length/ crew capacity/ speed)	Time of replacement*	Builder (if any)	Approved commitment (\$million)
Acquisition of Fireboat No. 12	36-39 metres/ 12 persons/ 25 knots	Scheduled for delivery to Hong Kong in the second quarter of 2024	Lungteh Shipbuilding Co., Ltd.	125
Replacement of Fireboat No. 2	29-32 metres/ 7 persons/ 25 knots	Scheduled for delivery to Hong Kong in the third quarter of 2024	Jianglong Shipbuilding Co., Ltd.	97.5
Replacement of Command Boat No. 1	34-36 metres/ 8 persons/ 35 knots	Scheduled for delivery to Hong Kong in the third quarter of 2024	Afai Southern Shipyards (Panyu Guangzhou) Ltd.	120
Replacement of Command Boat No. 2	34-36 metres/ 8 persons/ 35 knots	Scheduled for delivery to Hong Kong in the fourth quarter of 2024	Afai Southern Shipyards (Panyu Guangzhou) Ltd.	120

\* The actual time for the new vessels to put into service depends on factors including, among others, the acceptance and performance tests upon completion of construction.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB130**

**(Question Serial No. 2789)**

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Fire Protection and Prevention

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

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

What are the specific details of the Fire Services Department's community education programme on promoting cardiopulmonary resuscitation and the use of automated external defibrillators (AEDs) in 2024-25? Does the Department have plans to further encourage and promote the wider installation of AEDs on the premises of more trade and industrial organisations as well as owners' corporations? If yes, what are the details of the plans; if no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon WONG Chun-sek, Edmund (LegCo internal reference no.: 2)

Reply:

The Fire Services Department (FSD) will continue to adopt a multi-pronged approach to promote to the community cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and the use of automated external defibrillators (AEDs). The details are as follows:

- Organising the "Press to shock - Save a life" CPR & AED Course to teach members of the public the knowledge and skills of performing CPR and using an AED;
- Imparting to secondary and tertiary students the basic knowledge of CPR through the CPR Training Programme in Campus. In addition, the FSD plans to further collaborate with various secondary schools to provide students with hands-on experience in performing CPR and using an AED in class, thereby raising their awareness to immediately perform CPR and use an AED in an emergency, and boosting their confidence to perform rescue when encountering a cardiac arrest patient;
- Reaching out to members of public of different age groups through various publicity and promotion platforms (such as social media, advertisements, press briefings and carnivals, etc.), along with slogans like "The fully automated AED is for anyone to use without training" and "AED Accessible, Life-saving Possible" to spread the message that "Anyone can use an AED" to different sectors of society;

- Continuing to tap the synergy of the “Resuscitation Alliance” formed in June 2023 with other organisations dedicated to the promotion of CPR and AED, to strengthen the promotional and educational efforts in respect of CPR and AED through working with various sectors of the community;
- Organising thematic promotional activities and/or workshops jointly with various organisations to amplify promotional effectiveness and enable more people from different backgrounds and trades to understand that it takes only a few simple steps to perform CPR and use an AED; and
- Commending members of the public who had come forward to save a life, using their personal experiences to convey the message that anyone can save a life by CPR and AED during an emergency.

Currently, there are about 2 700 publicly accessible AEDs registered on the FSD’s online information platform, Centralized AED Registry for Emergency (CARE). The FSD will continue to seek collaboration with more organisations and agencies to expand AED coverage. Major measures are as follows:

- Launching the “AED Everywhere” programme to encourage more organisations and agencies to install publicly accessible AEDs and register these AEDs on the CARE platform for the public’s immediate retrieval and use in a cardiac arrest case. Three franchised bus companies were the first to join the programme in early 2024, with a plan to install a total of 70 AEDs at some of the bus regulators’ kiosks in the first phase. In the future, more organisations and agencies will be invited to participate in the programme and install more AEDs in the community;
- Organising the “Heartful Organisation” Awards Ceremony to commend organisations and agencies which have rendered active support for the promotion and installation of AEDs for public use, thereby encouraging more trade and industrial organisations and various industries to follow the example of the award winners by installing more AEDs at various locations in the community to fulfil their social responsibilities; and
- Continuing the collaboration with the Property Management Services Authority to promote AED-related information to property management companies and practitioners, and encourage property management companies to install more AEDs for the properties and premises under their management, benefitting more members of the public and residents.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB131**

**(Question Serial No. 2790)**

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:

What was the wastage rate of ambulanceman at each rank in the Fire Services Department (FSD) in 2023-24? What was the number of unfilled vacancies under the approved establishment of ambulanceman at each rank? What was the amount of overtime allowance for ambulanceman at each rank?

What was the replacement progress of town ambulances to be phased out by the FSD in 2023-24? What was the overall fault rate of the FSD's ambulances, and what was its impact on the day-to-day dispatch of ambulances?

Asked by: Hon WONG Chun-sek, Edmund (LegCo internal reference no.: 3)

Reply:

The wastage of personnel at each rank of the Ambulanceman grade in the Fire Services Department (FSD) in 2023-24 is tabulated below:

Rank	Principal Ambulanceman	Senior Ambulanceman	Ambulanceman
Establishment*	301	822	2 032
Wastage*	24	17	89

\* As at 29 February 2024

The number of vacancies not yet filled under the establishment of ambulanceman at each rank in the FSD is tabulated below:

Rank	Principal Ambulanceman	Senior Ambulanceman	Ambulanceman
Vacancy*	5	38	54

\* As at 29 February 2024

With the substantial increase in ambulance calls following the resumption of normality in the society, the FSD has arranged for its personnel to work overtime to meet the demand of emergency ambulance calls. The amount of Disciplined Services Overtime Allowance for personnel at each rank of the Ambulanceman grade in the FSD in 2023-24 is tabulated below:

Rank	Principal Ambulanceman	Senior Ambulanceman	Ambulanceman
Amount of Disciplined Services Overtime Allowance (\$million)*	6.2	26.8	48.6

\* As at 29 February 2024

To maintain the age of ambulances at a healthy level and to ensure the overall reliability of the fleet, the FSD has formulated an ambulance replacement plan (Plan). The FSD has completed the replacement of 53 town ambulances in 2023-24 according to the above-mentioned Plan.

Apart from replacing ambulances according to the Plan, the FSD also consistently monitors the efficiency of ambulance maintenance with the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD). Besides, the EMSD replaces the parts of the ambulances on a regular basis to ensure the reliability of the fleet. Additionally, in case of breakdown of an ambulance, the FSD will immediately refer the case to the EMSD for inspection and follow-up repairs. The FSD will also dispatch reserved ambulances to the units concerned for operational use to avoid affecting the dispatch and operation of ambulances.

In 2023-24 (as at 1 March 2024), the number of cases which FSD ambulances required factory repairs (including corrective repairs, accident repairs, and preventive maintenance carried out 3 times a year for each ambulance) was 1 850.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB132**

**(Question Serial No. 1388)**

Head: (30) Correctional Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Re-integration

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

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The social movement in 2019 has left an unhealed scar on many young people. Despite the end of the turmoil, some young people are still unable to readjust their thinking, or have even developed a distorted mindset, becoming anti-government and holding opposing views just for the sake of opposing.

Please inform this Committee of the following:

Whether education and publicity activities such as distributing leaflets and monthly publications, and conducting visits to schools to disseminate positive values have been included in the Re-integration Programme?

Asked by: Hon HO Kwan-yiu, Junius (LegCo internal reference no.: 18)

Reply:

The Correctional Services Department (CSD) has been committed to conducting community education and public engagement activities to enhance young people's national security awareness and sense of national identity, and promote community acceptance of and support for rehabilitated persons as well as disseminate the message of leading a law-abiding and drug-free life. On publicity and public engagement, CSD has been organising a wide variety of activities for district organisations, employers, the general public, young people and students, including holding district activities in 18 districts in collaboration with the District Fight Crime Committees, participating in the Hong Kong Brands and Products Expo and Hong Kong Flower Show, and launching relevant publicity work via social media and platforms, etc.

As regards community education activities targeting young people and students, CSD has implemented the Rehabilitation Pioneer Project (RPP) since September 2008. With young people and primary students as its major target participants, RPP aims to disseminate the messages of "safeguarding our country and home, leading a law-abiding and drug-free life as well as supporting offender rehabilitation" through 12 community education activities. In 2023, a total of 504 activities under RPP were held inside and outside schools with the total number of participants reaching 44 015.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB133**

**(Question Serial No. 0050)**

Head: (30) Correctional Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Re-integration

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

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

It is mentioned under the Programme that the Correctional Services Department facilitates the re-integration of persons in custody (PICs) into the community as law-abiding citizens. In this regard, please inform this Committee of the following:

- a. regarding the provision of psychological and counselling services for PICs and those under supervision after release, what are the average waiting time and number of persons awaiting the services;
- b. further to the above, what are the respective numbers of clinical psychologists, educational psychologists, social workers and professional counsellors providing psychological and counselling services for PICs and those under supervision after release, and the expenditure involved;
- c. please set out the respective numbers of PICs opted for pursuing programmes for Diploma Yi Jin, Diploma for Applied Education, Higher Diploma, Sub-degree, Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree or higher qualifications in the past 5 years; further to the above, whether the Government has followed up on their employment situation and provided support for them?

Asked by: Hon KWOK Ling-lai, Lillian (LegCo internal reference no.: 2)

Reply:

- a) The Psychological Services Section (PSS) of the Correctional Services Department (CSD) provides psychological and counselling services for persons in custody (PICs) and those under supervision after release to improve their mental health and rectify their offending behaviours. At present, the average waiting time for the first appointment for clinical psychological services provided by CSD is 3 to 5 working days, and follow-up services will be provided thereafter having regard to the actual situation and needs of the service recipients. CSD does not maintain statistics on the number of persons awaiting the services.

- b) The posts and numbers of staff in PSS of CSD assigned to provide psychological and counselling services for PICs and those under supervision after release (as at 1 March 2024) are tabulated below:

<b>Post</b>	<b>Number of staff</b>
Senior Clinical Psychologist	2
Clinical Psychologist	18
Other staff in PSS	32

As the provision of psychological and counselling services for PICs and those under supervision after release is part of CSD's work to facilitate their re-integration into the community, CSD does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure involved.

- c) In the past 5 years, a total of 57 young PICs (i.e. those aged below 21) took the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE) and 33 adult PICs were awarded 32 bachelor's degrees and 2 master's degrees. The numbers of the relevant PICs and the qualifications attained are tabulated below:

Year	<b>Qualifications attained</b> <sup>Note 2</sup>		
	<b>HKDSE</b>	<b>Bachelor's degree</b>	<b>Master's degree</b>
2023	18	8	1
2022	12	5	-
2021	7	5	-
2020	9	9	-
2019	14	5	1
Total	60 <sup>Note 1</sup>	32	2
	(involving a total of 57 young PICs)	(involving a total of 33 adult PICs)	

Note 1: In the past 5 years, a total of 3 young PICs sat for HKDSE more than once.

Note 2: CSD does not maintain a breakdown of PICs taking other individual programmes.

At the end of October 2023, CSD set up the Ethics College at Pak Sha Wan Correctional Institution and Lo Wu Correctional Institution, providing a one-year full-time Diploma of Applied Education programme with a total of 75 places for voluntary enrolment by 60 adult male PICs and 15 adult female PICs.

CSD has earlier signed Memorandums of Understanding with the Hong Kong Metropolitan University and 8 University Grants Committee-funded universities respectively to provide more comprehensive support for students in custody, including arranging credit transfers for students in need to help them continue their studies after release.

As regards employment follow-up, CSD will arrange for PICs due for discharge within 3 months to participate in the Pre-release Re-integration Orientation Course to provide them with the latest employment information, equip them with interview skills, and offer them job-matching service as well as formulate appropriate rehabilitation programmes taking into account factors such as their interests, strengths and academic qualifications,

so as to facilitate their smooth re-integration into society after release. For rehabilitated persons under statutory supervision, supervising officers of CSD will follow up on their employment situation and provide support. As for rehabilitated persons who are not subject to statutory supervision, CSD will refer them to non-governmental organisations for follow-up and assistance according to their needs.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY****SB134****(Question Serial No.1684)**Head: (30) Correctional Services DepartmentSubhead (No. & title): ()Programme: (2) Re-integrationControlling Officer: Commissioner of Correctional Services (WONG Kwok-hing)Director of Bureau: Secretary for SecurityQuestion:

Under Indicators, the success rate of the re-integration programme within the supervision period of training centre (non-conviction in 3 years after discharge) decreased from 81.5% in 2022 to 72.7% in 2023. In this regard, please inform this Committee of the following:

- What are the reasons for a substantial drop in the success rate?
- What are the reasons for training centre to attain a lower success rate as compared with those of detention centre and rehabilitation centre?
- What were the respective financial provisions for these 3 types of centres in the past 5 years?

Asked by: Hon LUK Hon-man, Benson (LegCo internal reference no.: 17)Reply:

The effectiveness of rehabilitation programmes is affected by various personal and social factors, including the motivation and determination of supervisees to turn over a new leaf, community and family support, peer influence, etc.

In the past 10 years, the success rates of supervision cases under the Training Centre Programme varied:

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Success rate (%)	67.3	74.7	74.2	77.8	79.2	76.9	77.8	76.7	81.5	72.7

As the criminal backgrounds and post-release supervision periods of young persons in custody (PICs) admitted to training centres, detention centre and rehabilitation centres vary, it is not appropriate to make a direct comparison of the success rates of the three programmes.

As the rehabilitation programmes are part of the work of the Correctional Services Department in assisting PICs to re-integrate into the community, the Department does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure involved.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB135**

**(Question Serial No. 2904)**

Head: (30) Correctional Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Re-integration

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

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding facilitating the re-integration of persons in custody (PICs) into the community, please inform this Committee of the following:

1. From 2020 until now, what were the amounts of resources spent in providing psychological and counselling services for PICs and the numbers of service recipients each year? What were the respective utilisation rates of psychological and counselling services in respect of PICs involved in the 2019 social turmoil and other categories of PICs?
2. What are the specific contents of the national education for PICs? Please set out the curriculum, frequency of organising related programmes, and the respective numbers of PICs involved in the 2019 social turmoil and other categories of PICs participating in the programmes.
3. Since the establishment of the Ethics College, what are the number of applications received and the actual number of students admitted? Among them, what are the respective numbers of applications from and admissions of PICs imprisoned due to their involvement in the 2019 social turmoil? Has the effectiveness of the programmes been assessed and is there any plan to increase the number of admissions of the Ethics College?
4. The re-integration of PICs into the community not only relies on the work targeting PICs, but also community acceptance. However, currently there is hostility from some people in the community towards those sentenced for imprisonment due to their involvement in the social turmoil in 2019 and some even openly reject their re-integration into the community. Some of them often for political reasons lodge complaints with and exert pressure on the Government regarding various aspects such as work, living and education, so as to stop those people from enjoying public resources in the community as ordinary people, causing immense difficulties for those released from prison despite their determination to abide by the law and live on self-reliance. What are the Government's plans and measures for disseminating positive messages in the community and launching public education accordingly?

Asked by: Hon ZHANG Xinyu, Gary (LegCo internal reference no.: 37)

Reply:

1. The figures on psychological services provided to persons in custody (PICs) and residents of halfway houses by the Psychological Services Section of the Correctional

<b>Psychological services</b> <sup>Note 1</sup>				
<b>Service recipient</b>	<b>Number of times</b>			
	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
a. PICs under the Prison Programme	22 889	24 336	17 957	18 630
b. PICs under the Training Centre Programme/ Detention Centre Programme/ Rehabilitation Centre Programme/ Drug Addiction Treatment Centre Programme	3 173	3 432	3 389	4 966
c. Rehabilitated persons under the Post-Release Supervision Scheme, Conditional Release Scheme and Release Under Supervision Scheme, and residents of halfway houses	547	568	430	478
<b>Total</b>	<b>26 609</b>	<b>28 336</b>	<b>21 776</b>	<b>24 074</b>

Services Department (CSD) in the past 4 years are tabulated below:

Note 1 : Psychological services include therapies, psychological counselling and assessment. CSD maintains only the numbers of times of psychological services received by PICs and rehabilitated persons, but does not maintain statistics on the breakdown of the offences committed by PICs and rehabilitated persons receiving such services.

As the provision of psychological and counselling services for PICs and those under supervision after release is part of CSD's work to facilitate their re-integration into the community, CSD does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure involved.

2. Since July 2020, CSD has launched an educational programme entitled "Understanding History is the Beginning of Knowledge" to assist PICs to learn history in an interesting way through diversified teaching modes covering expert talks, cultural experience classes and virtual reality teaching activities, etc., so as to enhance PICs' sense of national identity, help them establish correct values and reflect on the meaning of life, thereby guiding them back on the right track. Since the implementation of the programme in July 2020, a total of 30 activities have been organised, with a total of 756 participants, of whom 242 are PICs involved in the "black-clad violence". Teachers will also strengthen values education through teaching subjects such as Chinese history, moral and civic education, Basic Law education, National Security Law education, etc., so as to enhance PICs' law-abiding awareness.
3. CSD established the Ethics College at Pak Sha Wan Correctional Institution and Lo Wu Correctional Institution in late October 2023 to offer a one-year full-time Diploma of Applied Education programme for voluntary enrolment by adult PICs. The College received in the first year a total of 133 applications (43 of which were from PICs involved in the "black-clad violence") for enrolment in the programme. There were a total of 75 successful applicants for enrolment, including 60 males and 15 females (29

of them were PICs involved in the “black-clad violence”). All PICs enrolled in the Ethics College programme have satisfactory performance in terms of learning attitude and discipline. CSD will continuously review the effectiveness of the programme for consideration of future admission arrangements.

4. Community acceptance is of utmost importance to the smooth re-integration of rehabilitated persons into the community. As such, CSD has been committed to conducting community education and public engagement activities to promote community acceptance of and support for rehabilitated persons. On publicity and public engagement, CSD has been organising a wide variety of activities for district organisations, employers and the general public, including holding district activities in 18 districts in collaboration with the District Fight Crime Committees, participating in the Hong Kong Brands and Products Expo and Hong Kong Flower Show, and launching relevant publicity work via social media and platforms, etc.

To promote community-wide support for rehabilitated persons, CSD will organise the Rehabilitation Partners Award Presentation Ceremony this year to give recognition to individuals or groups, including non-governmental organisations, businesses, employers, etc., for their continuous support for rehabilitation work, with a view to encouraging different sectors of the community to become CSD’s rehabilitation partners, thus developing a broader support network for building a more stable and harmonious society through concerted efforts.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB136**

**(Question Serial No. 0057)**

Head: (31) Customs and Excise Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Anti-narcotics Investigation

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

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

It is mentioned under the Programme that the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) suppresses illicit trafficking in and abuse of dangerous drugs, combats money laundering and prevents diversion of controlled chemicals for the illicit manufacture of dangerous drugs. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- a. According to the information, there are upward trends in the quantities of narcotics, dangerous drugs and psychotropic drugs seized by C&ED. How will C&ED address this situation?
- b. The quantity of dangerous drugs seized outside Hong Kong increased by 7 times from 2022 to 2023. What specific measures will C&ED take to address the situation?
- c. Will C&ED step up publicity and public education? If yes, what are the details?

Asked by: Hon KWOK Ling-lai, Lillian (LegCo internal reference no.: 4)

Reply:

The Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) has all along been striving to combat drug trafficking activities at all levels. Apart from stepping up enforcement at all control points, C&ED has also strengthened intelligence exchange with Mainland and overseas law enforcement agencies so as to combat drug trafficking activities at source and, in conjunction with financial investigations, trace the capital flow of drug syndicates to combat money laundering and apply to the court for confiscating drug-related assets. In addition, taking into account the drug trafficking trends, C&ED formulates targeted plans to crack down on organised drug syndicates and individual drug offenders, and conducts joint operations with Mainland and overseas law enforcement agencies in a timely manner, with a view to enhancing enforcement effectiveness.

In 2023, C&ED detected 1 362 drug cases, in which approximately 8.8 tonnes of the five major drugs (namely heroin, cocaine, cannabis, methylamphetamine (ice) and ketamine) were seized, representing an increase of 46% and 56% respectively in the number of cases detected and the amount of major drugs seized as compared to 2022. Meanwhile, C&ED detected a number of large-scale drug trafficking cases, including the seizure of approximately 444 kg of liquid cocaine (amounting to around 22% of cocaine seized in the year) at the Kwai Chung

Customhouse Cargo Examination Compound and the seizure of approximately 311 kg of cannabis (amounting to around 13% of cannabis seized in the year) at the Tsing Yi Customs Cargo Examination Compound. Moreover, through cross-boundary collaboration and intelligence exchange, C&ED assisted Mainland and overseas law enforcement agencies in the seizure of approximately 1 459.6 kg of drugs outside Hong Kong, representing an increase of more than 6 times as compared to 2022. The figures show that C&ED's enforcement strategies are effective in combating cross-boundary drug trafficking activities. C&ED will continue to combat drugs by carrying out stringent enforcement actions and thorough investigation into drug offences.

C&ED has been actively organising various anti-drug publicity and education programmes, including anti-drug talks at schools and organisations, and working closely with the Narcotics Division of the Security Bureau to explain the harmful effects of drugs and remind members of the public to comply with the relevant legislation through television and radio Announcements in the Public Interest and a wide range of promotional materials. C&ED also organises talks and various forms of anti-drug publicity and education programmes through Customs YES to disseminate anti-drug messages to young people.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB137**

**(Question Serial No. 1685)**

Head: (31) Customs and Excise Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Anti-narcotics Investigation

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

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Under the Indicators, the number of cases of dangerous drugs, heroin and psychotropic drugs seized in Hong Kong recorded a sharp surge in 2023. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of:

- a) the reasons for the sharp surge in the number of cases of narcotics and dangerous drugs;
- b) the statistics on narcotics and dangerous drugs seized by the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) in the past 5 years;
- c) What specific measures will be taken by C&ED to combat the rampant drug activities? Will manpower and financial resources be substantially increased to curb the undesirable situation?

Asked by: Hon LUK Hon-man, Benson (LegCo internal reference no.: 18)

Reply:

a) The Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) has all along been striving to combat drug trafficking activities at all levels. Apart from stepping up enforcement at all control points, C&ED has also strengthened intelligence exchange with Mainland and overseas law enforcement agencies so as to combat drug trafficking activities at source.

According to a report published by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the increase in drug seizure amount is the global trend in recent years. C&ED has also noted that after the pandemic, the latest mode of drug trafficking has changed to a dual-track mode, i.e. trafficking drugs across border through individual passengers (“ants moving home”) and as large consignments in parallel. Having regard to the latest drug trafficking trends, C&ED formulates targeted plans to crack down on organised drug syndicates and individual drug offenders, and conducts joint operations with Mainland and overseas law enforcement agencies in a timely manner, with a view to enhancing enforcement effectiveness. In 2023, C&ED detected 1 362 drug cases, in which approximately 8.8 tonnes of the five major drugs (namely heroin, cocaine, cannabis, methylamphetamine (“ice”) and ketamine) were seized, representing an increase of 46% and 56% respectively in the number of cases detected and the amount of major drugs seized as compared to 2022. The figures show that C&ED’s

enforcement strategies are effective. The increase in the drug seizure amount is also in line with the global trend.

b) The number of drug cases detected and the amount of the 5 major drugs (namely heroin, cocaine, cannabis, “ice” and ketamine) seized by C&ED in the past 5 years are as follows:

	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
<b>Number of cases</b>	827	1 111	906	931	1 362
<b>Amount of the 5 major drugs seized (kg)</b>	1 514	2 545	3 673	5 678	8 835

c) C&ED will continue to closely monitor intelligence around the world. Through risk assessment, intelligence analysis and collaboration with other law enforcement agencies, C&ED will adopt targeted strategies and flexibly deploy existing manpower and resources in a timely manner, with a view to rigorously combating drug trafficking activities.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**(Question Serial No. 2813)**

Head: (31) Customs and Excise Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Anti-narcotics Investigation

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

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Except for “ice” (methylamphetamine), all the drugs seized by the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) in 2023 recorded drastic increases in quantities as compared with 2022. Did C&ED analyse the reasons for the surges in the quantities of drugs seized in 2023, and whether these seizures were mainly for sale in the local Hong Kong market or for transit to other regions via Hong Kong? If yes, what were the reasons for the surges in the quantities of drugs seized, and the proportion of drugs sold locally to drugs for transit to other regions? If not, what were the reasons?

Will C&ED implement new measures in the coming year in response to the new drug trafficking trend to combat various offences involving drugs? If yes, what are the details of these measures? If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon WONG Chun-sek, Edmund (LegCo internal reference no.: 41)

Reply:

The Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) has all along been striving to combat drug trafficking activities at all levels. Apart from stepping up enforcement at all control points, C&ED has also strengthened intelligence exchange with Mainland and overseas law enforcement agencies so as to combat drug trafficking activities at source.

According to a report published by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the increase in drug seizure amount is the global trend in recent years. C&ED has also noted that after the pandemic, the latest mode of drug trafficking has changed to a dual-track mode, i.e. trafficking drugs across border through individual passengers (“ants moving home”) and as large consignments in parallel. Having regard to the latest drug trafficking trends, C&ED formulates targeted plans to crack down on organised drug syndicates and individual drug offenders, and conducts joint operations with Mainland and overseas law enforcement agencies in a timely manner. In 2023, C&ED detected 1 362 drug cases, in which approximately 8.8 tonnes of the five major drugs (namely heroin, cocaine, cannabis, methylamphetamine (“ice”) and ketamine) were seized, representing an increase of 46% and 56% respectively in the number of cases detected and the amount of major drugs seized as

compared to 2022. The figures show that C&ED's enforcement strategies are effective. The increase in the drug seizure amount is also in line with the global trend.

Drug syndicates and their networks are complex and varied. Among the drugs seized, some were seized from import cargoes or seized locally, while some were seized from transshipment or export cargoes.

C&ED will continue to closely monitor intelligence around the world. Through risk assessment, intelligence analysis and collaboration with other law enforcement agencies, C&ED will adopt targeted strategies and flexibly deploy existing manpower and resources in a timely manner, with a view to rigorously combating drug trafficking activities.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB139**

**(Question Serial No. 2855)**

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:

There is a net decrease of 55 posts under Programme (1).

1. What are the reasons for the decrease of posts, and what is the establishment involved? How much expenditure on emoluments is saved by the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) as a result?
2. How much additional manpower will be deployed by C&ED this year, and what are the reasons? What major duties will the additional manpower be responsible for, and what is the expenditure incurred?

Asked by: Hon WONG Ying-ho, Kennedy (LegCo internal reference no.: 31)

Reply:

In order to maintain the sustainability of public finance, the Government has strictly controlled the civil service establishment since 2021-22. The Government will continue to implement this initiative, and maintain the target of zero-growth in the civil service establishment in 2024-25, with the aim of containing the establishment at a level not exceeding that as at end-March 2021. Bureaux and departments (B/Ds) have enhanced effectiveness and efficiency through re-prioritisation, internal redeployment and streamlining of work processes, so that various new policies and initiatives of the Government can be taken forward. In addition, there are time-limited posts deleted every year upon expiry of the duration for which the posts are created or upon completion of the jobs concerned. Posts which no longer have operational needs would also be deleted by B/Ds after their review of their civil service establishments.

The Customs and Excise Department (C&ED), upon review of its civil service establishment, deleted 57 vacant posts, which no longer have operational needs, under Programme (1) in 2024-25, including 1 Office Assistant, 1 Cook and 55 Customs Officers, saving expenditure of \$20.5 million. In addition, apart from internal redeployment, C&ED plans to create 1 time-limited post of Assistant Commissioner of Customs and Excise and 1 time-limited post

of Assistant Superintendent of Customs and Excise to steer the work of the Secretariat Office of the World Customs Organization Vice-Chairperson for the Asia/Pacific Region, involving expenditure of \$3.75 million. The creation of the directorate post is subject to the approval of the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council. To this end, the Security Bureau consulted and obtained support of the Panel on Security on 27 February this year, and will submit the proposal to the Establishment Sub-committee for consideration and seek approval from the Finance Committee. As such, there is a net deletion of 55 posts under Programme (1) of C&ED in 2024-25, with a reduction in expenditure of \$16.75 million.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB140**

**(Question Serial No. 2168)**

Head: (23) Auxiliary Medical Service

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Auxiliary Medical Service

Controlling Officer: Chief Staff Officer, Auxiliary Medical Service (WONG Ying-keung)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the manpower of the Auxiliary Medical Service (AMS), please advise this Committee of:

- 1) in light of the increase in the estimated number of new cadets from 485 to 700, whether AMS has worked on a recruitment scheme to meet the target number; if so, the details; if not, the reason(s); and
- 2) the budget of providing national security education for adult members and cadet corps respectively this year.

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Man-kwong (LegCo internal reference no.: 17)

Reply:

1) The AMS has been using a series of strategies, including organising first aid and health seminars, setting up booths in shopping malls, etc., to recruit youths into the Auxiliary Medical Service Cadet Corps (AMSCC). To further enhance the school-based promotional activities, the AMS has targeted to launch the "School-based Platoons" programme in the 2024-25 school year under the 15 companies distributed in different districts. The platoons will be named after the school and will aim at developing students' basic medical first aid knowledge. Youngsters aged 12-15 who aspire to a career in medical profession can receive basic medical first aid and discipline training by joining the school-based platoons.

On the other hand, in addition to the continued cooperation with the Hong Kong Metropolitan University, the AMS is also discussing collaboration with the medical profession-related departments of the other tertiary institutions. Through the "Health Awareness and Promotion Programme for Youth to U", cadets are equipped with more knowledge and experiences related to the medical professions. Cadets may also have the opportunity to join hands with the students from the nursing department of tertiary institutions to provide services such as visiting singleton elderly and conducting health checkups, which will help the youths to gain knowledge about different medical and healthcare sectors in advance and facilitate their career planning earlier. The AMS also hopes that the programme can become a "little cradle" for nurturing medical staff.

Besides, through the Volunteer Team of the AMS, the AMS has established an interactive network with different organisations to carry out various social services. On the one hand, this provides services to vulnerable communities such as the elderly and ethnic minorities. On the other hand, it encourages and attracts young people to join the AMSCC.

The AMS will further explore the collaboration with other youth organisations to develop cross-disciplinary activities and trainings (such as first aid training, cardio-pulmonary resuscitation and defibrillation techniques, etc.) and hence achieve synergies and help encouraging young people to become voluntary members or cadets.

It is expected that these measures will help to recruit 700 new cadets in the coming year.

2) The AMS regularly provides adult members and cadets with the relevant information to enhance their understanding and knowledge on national security via different channels, including compiling educational presentation files every quarter for unit supervisors to arrange group discussion and sharing in regular training; publishing information about national security education in the departmental publication “Auxiliary Medical Service Newsletter”; and including civic education and national security education in the “Health Awareness and Promotion Programme for Youth to U”, etc.

Apart from actively promoting national security education as above, the AMS has also organised diversified activities, such as quizzes on the National Security Law, thematic talks on national security education, museum or historical and cultural heritage study tours, exchange visits to the Mainland and the Greater Bay Area, Safeguarding National Security Cup competition, etc., to further strengthen members’ sense of patriotism, national identity and the awareness of national security.

The above activities have been incorporated into regular training and courses, therefore there is no extra expense involved.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB141**

**(Question Serial No. 2792)**

Head: (23) Auxiliary Medical Service

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Auxiliary Medical Service

Controlling Officer: Chief Staff Officer, Auxiliary Medical Service (WONG Ying-keung)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

In 2023/24, what is the number of vacancies in each rank of AMS that have not been successfully filled based on the approved establishment? Is there any assessment and estimation of the number of wastages on retirement and resignation in the coming 3 years, and if it will cause shortage of manpower?

Asked by: Hon WONG Chun-sek, Edmund (LegCo internal reference no.: 5)

Reply:

As at 8 March 2024, the AMS has a total of 3 487 voluntary members, which accounts for 70.7% of the approved establishment of 4 931 members with a total of 1 444 vacancies. By reviewing the relevant statistics in the past 3 years, the annual wastage is expected to be 300 on average in the coming years.

As usual, the AMS will continue to strive to recruit more members, and to provide continuous training in different areas and personal development to existing members in order to retain manpower and encourage promotion. The AMS has proactively expanded its channels in recruiting new members, such as setting up recruitment booths at more schools and shopping malls, joining the career fairs in different tertiary education institutions, and arranging monthly walk-in interviews at the AMS Headquarters. The AMS has even arranged recruitment exercises at remote areas such as Cheung Chau and Tung Chung. Apart from allowing volunteer members to extend their service beyond the age of 60 and up to 65, the AMS has put in place a series of measures to enhance members' morale, sense of belonging and satisfaction in order to retain existing members. The measures include cooperating with hospitals and tertiary institutions to equip members with advanced medical knowledge, commending members with excellent performances and providing them with promotion opportunities, arranging more team building activities and introducing various new equipment, etc. Through these measures, the AMS can attract more new members and retain existing members, and continue to provide resources to augment the regular medical and

health services in the most efficient and effective manner, so as to maintain the care and well-being of the people of Hong Kong.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB142**

**(Question Serial No. 2815)**

Head: (23) Auxiliary Medical Service

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Auxiliary Medical Service

Controlling Officer: Chief Staff Officer, Auxiliary Medical Service (WONG Ying-keung)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Has the Government set development goals and plans for the AMS Cadet Corps in the coming 3 years; and set targets and plans for new members recruitment? If yes, what are the details? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon WONG Chun-sek, Edmund (LegCo internal reference no.: 43)

Reply:

The AMS will continue to allocate resources to enhance the training of Auxiliary Medical Service Cadet Corps (AMSCC). Apart from discipline training and teaching of healthcare skills, the AMS will intensify efforts to arrange exchange and visits to the Mainland and the Greater Bay Area for cadets, including visits to medical emergency units in the Greater Bay Area and tours on innovative technological developments, to broaden the horizons of cadets and make the AMSCC more distinctive.

The AMS has been using a series of strategies, including organising first aid and health seminars, setting up booths in shopping malls, etc., to recruit youths into the AMSCC. To further enhance the school-based promotional activities, the AMS has targeted to launch the "School-based Platoons" programme in the 2024-25 school year under the 15 companies spread in different districts. The platoons will be named after the school and will aim at developing students' basic medical first aid knowledge. Youngsters aged 12-15 who aspire to a career in medical profession can receive basic medical first aid and discipline training by joining the school-based platoons.

On the other hand, in addition to the continued cooperation with the Hong Kong Metropolitan University, the AMS is also discussing collaboration with the medical profession-related departments of the other tertiary institutions. Through the "Health Awareness and Promotion Programme for Youth to U", cadets are equipped with more knowledge and experiences related to the medical professions. Cadets may also have the opportunity to join hands with the students from the nursing department of tertiary institutions to provide services

such as visiting singleton elderly and conducting health checkups. This will help the youths to gain knowledge about different medical and healthcare sectors in advance and facilitate their career planning earlier. The AMS also hopes that the programme can become a "little cradle" for nurturing medical staff.

Besides, through the Volunteer Team of the AMS, the AMS has established an interactive network with different organisations to carry out various social services. On the one hand, this provides services to vulnerable communities such as the elderly and ethnic minorities. On the other hand, it encourages and attracts young people to join the AMSCC.

The AMS will further explore the collaboration with other youth organisations to develop cross-disciplinary activities and trainings (such as first aid training, cardio-pulmonary resuscitation and defibrillation techniques, etc.) and hence achieve synergies and help encouraging young people to become voluntary members or cadets.

It is expected that these measures will help to recruit 700 new cadets annually in the coming 3 years.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB143**

**(Question Serial No. 1287)**

Head: (166) Government Flying Service

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Government Flying Service

Controlling Officer: Controller, Government Flying Service (Captain West WU)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

1. Please provide the number of exchanges of the Government Flying Service (GFS) with Mainland and overseas organisations (including navies) and the People's Liberation Army Hong Kong Garrison in 2023 (excluding the drills or exercises listed in part 2 of the Question).
2. Please provide the number of drills or exercises of GFS jointly conducted with Mainland and overseas organisations (including navies) and the People's Liberation Army Hong Kong Garrison in 2023, the details of such drills or exercises, and the names of the participating organisations.

Asked by: Hon MA Fung-kwok (LegCo internal reference no.: 26)

Reply:

1. After the end of the COVID-19 epidemic, the Government Flying Service (GFS) has actively resumed exchange activities with other organisations. In 2023, a total of 21 exchange activities of various forms were conducted with Mainland organisations (excluding the drills or exercises listed in part 2 of the Question) to foster mutual understanding and cooperation through reciprocal visits, field trips and technical seminars.
2. In 2023, the GFS conducted a total of 5 drills or exercises with other organisations, covering mainly the areas of emergency response, search and rescue. The participating organisations included Emergency Management Bureau of Shenzhen Municipality, Guangdong Maritime Safety Administration, Zhuhai Maritime Safety Administration, Macao Marine and Water Bureau, and the People's Liberation Army Hong Kong Garrison.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**(Question Serial No. 2822)**

Head: (166) Government Flying Service

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Government Flying Service

Controlling Officer: Controller, Government Flying Service (Captain West WU)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

What was the frequency of aerial survey photography undertaken by the Government Flying Service (GFS) over the past 3 years? Among such aerial survey work, what was the nature of photography? What were the highest, average and lowest expenditures incurred for such photography? Has the Government studied the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) to replace aerial survey photography undertaken by GFS? If so, what is the result of the study? If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon WONG Chun-sek, Edmund (LegCo internal reference no.: 50)

Reply:

The Government Flying Service (GFS) has been providing flying support to the Lands Department (LandsD) for its aerial survey work on request. The frequency of the relevant operations and the average expenditure in the past 3 years are as follows:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Total annual flight hours</b>	<b>Average expenditure per trip (\$)</b>
2021	29	61.32	27,040#
2022	42	99.10	42,400*
2023	34	91.30	56,420^

# It is calculated based on the CL605 fixed-wing aircraft's direct operating cost/hour flown of \$12,790 in 2021.

\* It is calculated based on the CL605 fixed-wing aircraft's direct operating cost/hour flown of \$17,970 in 2022.

^ It is calculated based on the CL605 fixed-wing aircraft's direct operating cost/hour flown of \$21,010 in 2023.

Apart from using the fixed-wing aircraft of the GFS for aerial surveying, LandsD also makes use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) for land surveying, mapping and land management. As the effective flight duration of UAVs is relatively short and their permissible flight altitude is relatively low, UAVs are mainly used for aerial photography of smaller areas. Therefore,

it is still necessary for LandsD to rely on the fixed-wing aircraft of GFS as a main tool for aerial surveying.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**(Question Serial No. 3280)**

Head: (166) Government Flying Service  
Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses  
Programme: Not Specified  
Controlling Officer: Controller, Government Flying Service (Captain West WU)  
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Starting from 2024-25, the Government Flying Service under the Security Bureau will take over the Hong Kong Air Cadet Corps (HKACC) from the Home and Youth Affairs Bureau. In this connection, please inform this Committee of the estimated additional manpower involved and the estimated expenditure for 2024-25 upon the takeover? As mentioned in the Policy Address, the former Pun U Association Wah Yan Primary School premises in Wan Chai will be used as the HKACC's new headquarters and training centre. What is the expenditure on the facilities and renovation of the premises?

Asked by: Hon WONG Chun-sek, Edmund (LegCo internal reference no.: 29)

Reply:

In the view that the aviation theme of the activities organised by the Hong Kong Air Cadet Corps (HKACC) is very similar to the nature of the work of the Government Flying Service (GFS) and that both sides have a long history of close co-operation, GFS will, on 1 April 2024, bring in HKACC as a youth uniformed group subvented by the department. On 9 March 2024, both sides signed a Memorandum of Administrative Arrangements to implement this arrangement.

For 2024-25, GFS will earmark \$3.04 million for HKACC to nurture young leaders and train more talents for the aviation industry of Hong Kong. GFS will flexibly deploy its manpower to strengthen support for HKACC.

For a number of years, HKACC had been unable to find a suitable venue for its headquarters and training activities. In this regard, the Security Bureau, in collaboration with other relevant departments, actively assisted HKACC in its application for using the former Pun U Association Wah Yan Primary School premises in Wan Chai as the group's new headquarters and training centre. At present, HKACC has been granted a short-term tenancy of the vacant school premises by the Lands Department. It has also obtained subsidy under the Development Bureau's Funding Scheme to Support the Use of Vacant Government Sites by Non-government Organisations (NGOs) to carry out detailed design and site investigation, subject to an upper limit of \$5 million. The funding scheme aims to enable NGOs to pursue

basic restoration works on vacant government sites for taking forward worthy projects for the community.

The detailed design of the proposed HKACC project is in progress. It is expected that the renovation works of the new headquarters and training centre will commence by the third quarter of 2024. However, the related expenditure cannot be confirmed until the design is completed and a contractor is commissioned to carry out the renovation works.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB146**

**(Question Serial No. 0748)**

Head: (37) Department of Health

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (6) Treatment of Drug Abusers

Controlling Officer: Director of Health (Dr. Ronald LAM)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The methadone clinics run by the Department of Health provide drug abusers with readily accessible, legal, medically safe and effective treatment services. In this regard, will the Government please advise this Committee on:

1. the numbers of people who have successfully detoxified through the Methadone Treatment Programme (MTP) in each of the past 3 years, and the normal duration of treatment;
2. whether the Government has any plans in 2024-25 to further promote drug users to detoxify by participating in the MTP; if not, the reasons; and
3. the number of methadone clinics across the territory, the manpower and expenditure involved, and whether resources will be re-prioritised according to the utilisation rate of these clinics?

Asked by: Hon TSE Wai-chuen, Tony (LegCo internal reference no.: 19)

Reply:

1. According to international medical knowledge and standards, abusers of opiate drugs should receive sustained treatment and support, so as to reduce the cost arising from their drug addiction problems that they themselves, their families and the whole society have to bear. Using methadone as a maintenance agent in the treatment for abusers of opiate drugs is currently recognised by the medical community as one of the most effective treatments and is endorsed by international organisations such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the World Health Organization. The effectiveness of Hong Kong's Methadone Treatment Programme (MTP) is affirmed by the results of a review conducted by international consultants commissioned by the Department of Health (DH) in 2012, which recommended that the MTP should continue, with maintenance treatment as its focus. The DH conducted in-house studies again in 2017 and 2022. The results indicated that drug abusers receiving continuous methadone treatment in the previous year had lower rates of illicit opiate drug use,

polydrug use, arrests for crimes or unemployment than those who did not participate in the MTP in the previous year. Moreover, the former also had a more harmonious relationship with their family members.

The MTP adopts an integrated treatment approach, offering professional counselling and social welfare support to provide holistic care alongside the provision of methadone. Methadone helps reduce the discomfort of opiate drug abusers when they go through detoxification, and prevents them from falling prey to the temptation of relapse or even committing crimes. Apart from helping drug abusers stay away from drugs, the programme provides a legal, effective, affordable and readily accessible alternative to illegal opiate drugs to those who are unable to attain total abstinence. The MTP can reduce crime and anti-social behaviours arising from drug abuse, and enable drug abusers to lead a normal productive life and continue their work. It can also prevent the spread of diseases, in particular blood-borne diseases such as AIDS, hepatitis B and tetanus, through reduction of intravenous drug abuse and needle-sharing.

Under the MTP, the majority of clients opt for maintenance treatment. Depending on the condition of individual clients, doctors engaged in the programme prescribe methadone to the clients who wish to undergo detoxification treatment at tapered doses until total abstinence. 18-month aftercare services will be provided to those who have completed the detoxification programme for prevention of relapse. The numbers of participants who completed detoxification in each of the past 3 years (2021-2023) were 23, 15 and 24 respectively.

2&3. Over the past 10 years, the overall number of reported drug abusers in Hong Kong has dropped by more than half. According to the statistics of the Government's Central Registry of Drug Abuse, while heroin (commonly known by its Chinese street name as "white powder") is still the most commonly abused drug (accounting for about 40% of the total reported drug abusers in Hong Kong), the number of reported abusers of narcotics analgesics (including opiate drugs but mainly heroin) has dropped significantly over the past decade, from 5 127 in 2013 to 2 145 in 2022, representing a decrease of 58%. Based on the actual circumstances and the recommendations set out in the report of the said review conducted by international consultants, the DH has been monitoring the utilisation of methadone clinics and adjusting their services and operation where necessary. The DH closed down the Lee Kee Methadone Clinic in Kowloon City and the Eastern Street Methadone Clinic in Sai Ying Pun in October 2016 and July 2022 respectively to meet the demands and optimise resource utilisation.

Currently, there are a total of 18 methadone clinics across the territory. The revised estimated expenditure of the DH for operating the clinics for the financial year 2023-24 is \$50.3 million. As for the staff establishment, the approved establishment of the DH's methadone clinics contains 13 posts, including 3 Senior Medical and Health Officers, 1 Executive Officer I and 9 supporting staff.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB147**

**(Question Serial No. 0262)**

Head: (121) Independent Police Complaints Council  
Subhead (No. & title): ()  
Programme: (1) Police Complaints Administration  
Controlling Officer: Secretary-General, Independent Police Complaints Council (Daniel MUI)  
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The objective of the Independent Police Complaints Council (IPCC) is to ensure that investigation of Reportable Complaints by the Complaints Against Police Office (CAPO) of the Hong Kong Police Force (the Police) is carried out in a thorough, impartial and efficient manner. In this connection, would the authority concerned please advise this Committee:

1. The staff establishment and salary expenditure of the IPCC in the past five years;
2. The number of complaints against the Police received and handled by the IPCC, as well as the average time required to examine the cases in the past five years; whether the IPCC has compiled a breakdown of complaint cases by category;
3. The number of recommended improvements to police practices or procedures made by the IPCC, and the number of recommended improvements accepted by the Police in the past five years;
4. The provision for 2024-25 is \$0.9 million (1.0%) lower than the revised estimate for 2023-24, representing another year-on-year decrease in the IPCC's provision. In this regard, would the authority concerned please advise in detail the specific reasons for the reduction in the provision; and
5. As mentioned in the Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024-25, the IPCC will continue to strengthen its communication and engagement with stakeholders to facilitate their understanding of the IPCC's work. Please provide details of the channels through which the IPCC communicated with stakeholders, the number of participants and the relevant expenditure in the past five years. Has the authority concerned assessed the effectiveness of such practices? If yes, what are the details; if not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Pui-leung (LegCo internal reference no.: 2)

Reply:

1. The number of posts and salary expenditure of the Independent Police Complaints Council (IPCC) in the past five years are set out below:

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>Number of Posts</b>	<b>Staff Costs (\$'000)</b>
<b>2023/2024</b>	68	\$59,124 <sup>Note 2</sup>
<b>2022/2023</b>	74	\$59,524
<b>2021/2022</b>	74	\$58,927
<b>2020/2021</b>	74 <sup>Note 1</sup>	\$59,825
<b>2019/2020</b>	68	\$61,234

Note 1: The IPCC recruited additional staff between 2020/2021 and 2022/23, to address complaint cases relating to the riots in 2019.

Note 2: This figure may be subject to adjustment.

2. Under the prevailing two-tier police complaints system, all complaints against the Hong Kong Police Force (the Police) are received, handled and investigated by the Complaints Against Police Office (CAPO) of the Police. Upon completion of the investigation, CAPO will submit the investigation reports of Reportable Complaints, together with all relevant files, documents and materials, to the IPCC for scrutiny. A Reportable Complaint case may involve a number of allegations. The number of Reportable Complaint cases and allegations received and handled by the IPCC, and the average time required for complaint examination in the past five years are set out below:

	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24 (As of February 2024)</b>
<b>Number of Reportable Complaint cases received and handled</b>	1 293	1 390	1 705	1 419	1 471
<b>Number of allegations received and handled</b>	2 209	2 311	2 747	2 218	2 080
<b>Average number of days required for complaint examination</b>	125	162	142	105	65

A breakdown of the complaint allegations received and handled by the IPCC in the past five years (by category) is set out below:

<b>Category of Allegation/ Year</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24 (As of February 2024)</b>
<b>Neglect of Duty</b>	1 003	968	1 169	1 033	1 000
<b>Misconduct/ Improper Manner/Offensive Language</b>	910	1 011	1 307	942	945
<b>Assault</b>	175	168	119	137	77
<b>Unnecessary Use of Authority</b>	55	116	106	73	32
<b>Threat</b>	26	27	20	20	18
<b>Fabrication of Evidence</b>	40	16	22	12	6
<b>Police Procedures</b>	0	3	0	1	1
<b>Other Offences</b>	0	2	4	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>2 209</b>	<b>2 311</b>	<b>2 747</b>	<b>2 218</b>	<b>2 080</b>

3. In the past five years, the Police has accepted all the Service Quality Improvement Initiatives (SQIIs) made by the IPCC covering various policing areas, such as optimising traffic enforcement and stop-and-search procedures; making good use of computer forensic equipment and body-worn video cameras, thereby enhancing the efficiency and accuracy of policing work; and strengthening the communication skills and training of police officers, to enhance their capability in responding to different situations whilst on duty. The relevant figures are set out below:

	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>
<b>SQIIs made by the IPCC to the Police</b>	17	22	24	19	20

4. The IPCC will reduce its recurrent expenditure by 1% in 2024-25, in line with the Productivity Enhancement Programme applicable to all policy bureaux and departments. By optimising resource utilisation, the provision for the IPCC in 2024-25 will be sufficient to cover its operating expenditure.

5. In the past five years, the IPCC has enhanced public understanding of the Council by engaging with stakeholders from various sectors, organising school programmes, producing publications and television drama, etc.

The IPCC has maintained close communication with the Police. In addition to regular working-level meetings and joint meetings with police representatives, the IPCC has conducted over 20 visits to various police units since 2019-20. These visits aim to facilitate in-depth exchanges with frontline police officers and gain insights into different challenges they face.

To reach out to more young people, the IPCC has organised about 60 talks and exhibitions in tertiary institutions and secondary schools through its school programme in the past five years. The IPCC has also met and exchanged views with over 20 professional groups, educational associations, representatives of relevant Mainland organisations and District Fight Crime Committees. Through game booths and large display boards at district carnivals and on-site introduction by staff, the public could also gain a better understanding of the IPCC’s work. The total number of participants in these events exceeded 20 000. During the activities, the IPCC received immediate feedback and gathered comments through questionnaires from various stakeholders, who showed their support for the IPCC’s work with positive responses. A number of schools have extended invitations for continuous collaboration with the IPCC, a proof of the recognition of the IPCC’s educational work among teachers and students.

Furthermore, the IPCC introduces its work to the public through radio interview programmes and feature articles in newspapers. Between 2020 and 2021, the IPCC produced “IPCC Frontline”, a television drama series which was broadcast on local free television channels and online platforms, attracting over 1.3 million viewers in total. In 2023-24, the IPCC has produced an animated promotional video targeting primary and secondary school students.

The publicity expenditure of the IPCC in the past five years is set out below:

<b>Year</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>
<b>Expenditure (\$'000)</b>	8,821 <sup>Note 1</sup>	846	1,335	1,338	1,144 <sup>Note 2</sup>

Note 1: This figure includes the production cost of the television drama series “IPCC Frontline”.

Note 2 : This figure may be subject to adjustment.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB148**

**(Question Serial No. 2993)**

Head: (168) Hong Kong Observatory  
Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses  
Programme: (2) Radiation Monitoring and Assessment  
Controlling Officer: Director of the Hong Kong Observatory (Dr CHAN Pak-wai)  
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

As stated under this Programme, the aim of the Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) is to organise training and exercises on radiation, assessment and protection, enhance radiation monitoring of sea water samples in local waters, and conduct outreach activities such as public and school talks. Despite that the discharge of nuclear-contaminated water from Japan keeps raising public concern, the estimated expenditure under this Programme of the HKO this year is \$36.7 million, which is 2.4% lower than the original estimate last year. Will the Government inform this Committee of:

1. the major items for the reduction in the estimate;
2. whether the reduction in the estimate will affect the estimated expenditure on radiation monitoring of sea water samples in local waters?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Chun-ying (LegCo internal reference no.: 1)

Reply:

The estimated expenditure for 2024-25 under the "Radiation Monitoring and Assessment" programme is slightly lower than that for last year. This is mainly attributed to the difference in instruments that requiring replacement compared with last year, leading to a slight decrease in the corresponding one-off expenditure. In addition, the Observatory has enhanced the radiation monitoring of sea water samples in local waters through redeployment of internal resources. The relevant work does not involve additional expenditure.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB149**

**(Question Serial No. 0408)**

Head: (170) Social Welfare Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (4) Rehabilitation and Medical Social Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Social Welfare (Charmaine LEE)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) strengthened the manpower of counselling centres for psychotropic substance abusers (CCPSAs) and centre for drug counselling (CDC) in 2023. In this connection, would the Government please inform this committee of:

1. the number of psychotropic substance abusers (PSAs) requiring counselling services in each of the past 5 years, broken down by age group and gender, and whether the effectiveness of such services has been evaluated;
2. the number of drug abusers requiring drug counselling services in each of the past 5 years, broken down by age group and gender, and whether the effectiveness of such services has been evaluated; and
3. the respective manpower and expenditure involved in counselling services for PSAs and drug counselling services in the past 5 years.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Pui-leung (LegCo internal reference no.: 29)

Reply:

1. The number of cases receiving counselling services at the 11 CCPSAs across the territory in the past 5 years, by age group, is set out below:

Year	2019-20 (no. of cases)	2020-21 (no. of cases)	2021-22 (no. of cases)	2022-23 (no. of cases)	2023-24 (as at December 2023) (no. of cases)
Age group					
Below 21	389	339	342	373	306
21 or above	2 472	2 564	2 778	2 722	2 459
Total	2 861	2 903	3 120	3 095	2 765

SWD does not keep any record of information on the gender of service users.

Among the cases that received counselling services at the 11 CCPSAs across the territory in each of the past 5 years, except for 2023-24 where there is no full-year statistics for effectiveness evaluation, 60% or more are drug-free before termination of the case.

2. The number of drug abusers/drug rehabilitees receiving counselling services at CDC in the past 5 years, by age group, is set out below:

Year \ Age group	2019-20 (no. of cases)	2020-21 (no. of cases)	2021-22 (no. of cases)	2022-23 (no. of cases)	2023-24 (as at December 2023) (no. of cases)
Below 21	20	26	22	13	9
21 or above	375	377	363	383	330
Total	395	403	385	396	339

SWD does not keep any record of information on the gender of service users.

Among the cases that received counselling services at CDC in each of the past 5 years, except for 2023-24 where there is no full-year statistics for effectiveness evaluation, 60% or more are drug-free before termination of the case.

3. The staffing establishments of CCPSAs and CDC are set out at Annex. Service operators of subvented organisations may flexibly deploy resources and arrange manpower as appropriate under the Lump Sum Grant Subvention System to meet the requirements of the Funding and Service Agreements.

The total annual expenditure on drug treatment and rehabilitation services operated by subvented organisations (including CCPSAs and CDC) in the past 5 years is as follows:

2019-20 (Actual expenditure) (\$ million)	2020-21 (Actual expenditure) (\$ million)	2021-22 (Actual expenditure) (\$ million)	2022-23 (Actual expenditure) (\$ million)	2023-24 (Revised estimate) (\$ million)
134.7	139.3	141.6	142.7	171.7

## Staffing establishments of CCPSAs and CDC

Table 1 : CCPSAs

Rank/Post	No. of persons				
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Social Work Officer (SWO)	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1 <sup>Note 1</sup>
Assistant Social Work officer (ASWO)	4	4	4	4	5.5 <sup>Note 1</sup>
Social Work Assistant (SWA)	3	3	3	3	3
Registered Nurse (Psychiatric) [RN(Psy)]	1	1	1	1	1
Welfare Worker (WW)	1	1	1	1	1
Assistant Clerical Officer (ACO)	1	1	1	1	1
Peer Support Worker (PSW)	0	2 <sup>Note 2</sup>	2	2	2
Workman II	1	1	1	1	1
Family Aide (FA)	0	0	0	0	1 <sup>Note 1</sup>

Table 2: CDC

Rank/Post	No. of persons				
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
SWO	1	1	1	1	1
ASWO	2	2	2	2	3.5 <sup>Note 1</sup>
SWA	6	6	6	6	6
RN(Psy)	1	1	1	1	1
ACO	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
PSW	0	2 <sup>Note 2</sup>	2	2	2
Workman II	1	1	1	1	1
FA	0	0	0	0	1 <sup>Note 1</sup>

Note 1 Additional resources have been allocated since June 2023 to strengthen manpower for CCPSAs and CDC, and enhance support for pregnant drug abusers and drug-abusing parents.

Note 2 Additional resources have been allocated since October 2020 to deploy PSWs in CCPSAs and CDC to provide peer support services for drug abusers and their family members.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB150**

**(Question Serial No. 3818)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding the facilities at the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB) Hong Kong Port (HKP), please inform this Committee of the following:

1. Normal travel between Hong Kong and the Mainland has resumed since 2023 and Northbound Travel for Hong Kong Vehicles has also been implemented. In view of the latest operation situation and vehicle usage of the HZMB, what are the Government's latest estimates of expenditure and manpower arrangements for the HKP in 2024-25?
2. Since the commissioning of the HZMB, as at February 2024, what is the utilisation situation of the immigration facilities of the HKP? Please tabulate the relevant figures by passengers from Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao.

Asked by: Hon HO King-hong, Adrian Pedro (LegCo internal reference no.: 24)

Reply:

1. The HKSAR Government will continue to monitor the demand for clearance services at various land boundary control points, maintain close liaison with relevant Mainland authorities and make appropriate deployment of manpower and resources to provide quality and efficient clearance services. The relevant manpower and daily expenditure have been subsumed under the overall expenditure of various relevant departments. We do not maintain a breakdown of the relevant figures.
2. The numbers of inbound and outbound passenger trips and private car trips at the HZMB HKP since its commissioning and up to end February 2024 are tabulated below:

Year	Hong Kong residents <sup>Note2</sup>	Mainland visitors <sup>Note2</sup>	Other visitors <sup>Note2</sup> (Macao visitor trips)	Total	Private cars
2018 <sup>Note1</sup>	1 783 581	2 561 575	472 552 (281 655)	4 817 708	83 947
2019	10 320 945	6 796 180	2 306 171 (1 150 975)	19 423 296	823 264
2020	1 209 923	204 482	227 148 (127 668)	1 641 553	126 003
2021	111 291	7 567	3 840 (2 710)	122 698	1 264
2022	134 382	38 366	20 135 (12 162)	192 883	2 384
2023	14 226 147	4 636 207	2 707 816 (1 637 930)	21 570 170	1 529 648
2024 (As at end February)	2 826 319	1 296 458	543 536 (267 638)	4 666 313	502 880

Note 1: Official commissioning since 24 October 2018.

Note 2:

- “Hong Kong residents” refer to both permanent and non-permanent residents of Hong Kong.
- “Mainland visitors” refer to visitors from the Mainland of China (including the Guangdong Province). The Immigration Department does not maintain a breakdown of visitors by provinces.
- “Other visitors” refer to visitors from other countries or regions outside the Mainland of China. Figures in brackets indicate inbound and outbound trips by Macao visitors.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB151**

**(Question Serial No. 3888)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Internal Security

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

It was proposed in the 2023 Policy Address to enhance education on our country's history, culture and current affairs on different fronts, thereby promoting patriotism and ensuring its continuity from generation to generation:

(1) Will there be communication with the Central Government on increasing the number of barracks open days during major festivals? For example, arranging barracks open days on special days such as HKSAR Establishment Day, PLA Day, National Day; and regularising the opening of the exhibition centre at Ngong Shuen Chau Barracks to the public. If so, what are the details? If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon LEE Wai-king, Starry (LegCo internal reference no.: 3)

Reply:

1. In celebration of Hong Kong's return to the Motherland, the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Hong Kong Garrison organises barracks open days around 1 July, with a view to further enhancing communication and exchanges with different sectors of the local community. In 2021, the Hong Kong Garrison Exhibition Center was set up at Ngong Shuen Chau Barrack. An exhibition themed "Dreams of the East" is staged in its three thematic exhibition halls, namely "the Chinese Dream", "the Dream of a Strong Military" and "the PRC HK Garrison", along with a weaponry and equipment area displaying historical photos, antiques and models of the PLA's military equipment. Through the visits, members of the public can deepen their understanding of the remarkable achievements of the country, the nation's military history and the work of the Hong Kong Garrison. The HKSAR Government will continue to communicate with the Hong Kong Garrison and support their discharge of duties.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB152**

**(Question Serial No. 3600)**

Head: (151) Government Secretariat: Security Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Immigration Control

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Security (Patrick LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The Immigration Department (ImmD) has implemented the Pilot Scheme on Immigration Facilitation for Visitors Participating in Short-term Activities in Designated Sectors (Pilot Scheme) since 2022 to allow more non-local talents to come to Hong Kong and participate in specified short-term activities as visitors without the need to apply for employment visas/entry permits. Will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. How many applications were received by the ImmD each year since the implementation of the Pilot Scheme and among them how many were approved?
2. What were the total numbers of authorised organisations each year since the implementation of the Pilot Scheme?
3. Following the expansion of the Pilot Scheme in 2023 to cover 12 designated sectors instead of 10, will the Government consider covering more new sectors?
4. Has the Government considered regularising the Pilot Scheme, and will it consider extending the limit of stay upon each arrival of the visitors from 14 days to 21 days?
5. How many visitors were prosecuted and convicted for taking employment, whether paid or unpaid, thereby breaching their conditions of stay under the Immigration Regulations in the past 5 years?

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Hei, Edward (LegCo internal reference no.: 106)

Reply:

The Government launched a two-year Pilot Scheme on Immigration Facilitation for Visitors Participating in Short-term Activities in Designated Sectors (Pilot Scheme) on 1 June 2022 to provide immigration facilitation for visitors participating in short-term activities in designated sectors, with a view to facilitating business, promoting development of relevant sectors and raising Hong Kong's international profile. Organisations authorised by relevant government bureaux or departments can issue invitation letters to relevant non-local talent in their sectors. Invited persons may come to Hong Kong and participate in specified short-term activities as visitors without the need to apply for employment visas or entry permits from the Immigration Department (ImmD) and can receive remuneration. Our reply to the various parts of the question is as follows:

(1) and (2)

In February 2023, the Government expanded the Pilot Scheme to cover more sectors after review. At present, the Pilot Scheme covers 12 sectors, viz., Medical and Healthcare, Higher Education, Arts and Culture, Sports, Heritage, Creative Industries, Innovation and Technology, the Hong Kong Laureate Forum, Aviation, International/Mega Events, Finance, and Development and Construction, with some 400 authorised organisations. As at December 2023, the Pilot Scheme has benefited 13 218 non-local talent, facilitating their entry into Hong Kong as visitors to participate in various short-term events and activities, such as the Asian Financial Forum and Hong Kong International Dragon Boat Races, etc. Non-local talent invited by the authorised organisations need not make applications to ImmD.

(3) and (4)

As mentioned above, the two-year Pilot Scheme was expanded to cover 12 sectors after review in February 2023. The Government is currently conducting a comprehensive review of the implementation of the Pilot Scheme, which covers the scope of the scheme and the duration of the invitees' participation in specified short-term activities, and whether to regularise the Pilot Scheme, with a view to ensuring that it can achieve the policy objectives in an effective and sustainable manner.

(5)

The numbers of visitors prosecuted for and convicted of unlawful employment under the Immigration Ordinance in the past 5 years are tabulated as follows:

<b>Year</b>	<b><u>Visitors</u> taking up unlawful employment</b>	
	<b>Prosecuted</b>	<b>Convicted</b>
2019	873	832
2020	379	368
2021	303	234
2022	147	116
2023	476	435

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY****SB153****(Question Serial No. 3437)**Head: (30) Correctional Services DepartmentSubhead (No. & title): ()Programme: (1) Prison ManagementControlling Officer: Commissioner of Correctional Services (WONG Kwok-hing)Director of Bureau: Secretary for SecurityQuestion:

Assuming the occupancy rate is 100%, please list in the following table the average monthly cost per service place and the estimates of various types of institutions in the 2023-24 financial year:

Item	Prison	Training Centre	Detention Centre	Rehabilitation Centre	Drug Addiction Treatment Centre
Staff expenses					
Departmental expenses					
Administrative fee					
Depreciation/maintenance of premises and equipment					
Total					

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 209)Reply:

The revised estimated expenditure of the Correctional Services Department (CSD) for 2023-24 financial year is about \$5.242 billion.

In addition to detaining persons in custody (PICs), the daily operation of CSD includes other related work and services that are not institution-specific, such as escort of PICs to and from courts and hospitals, provision of medical, welfare and aftercare services, etc. As such, it is not practicable to accurately calculate the cost of custody of a PIC at a particular type of correctional facility.

The average daily penal population in 2023 was 8 498.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB154**

**(Question Serial No. 3438)**

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:

Assuming the occupancy rate is 100%, please list in the following table the average monthly cost per service place in various types of institutions in the past 5 financial years:

Average monthly cost per service place (\$)	Prison	Training Centre	Detention Centre	Rehabilitation Centre	Drug Addiction Treatment Centre
2019-20					
2020-21					
2021-22					
2022-23					
2023-24					

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 210)

Reply:

The expenditures and estimates of the Correctional Services Department (CSD) in the past 5 financial years are tabulated as follows:

Year	Prison Management (\$ billion)	Re-integration (\$ billion)	Total (\$ billion)
2023-24 (Revised estimate)	4.0437	1.1983	5.2420
2022-23 (Actual expenditure)	3.8051	1.2054	5.0105
2021-22 (Actual expenditure)	3.5901	1.1499	4.7400
2020-21 (Actual expenditure)	3.3256	1.1137	4.4393
2019-20 (Actual expenditure)	3.1690	1.1398	4.3088

In addition to detaining persons in custody (PICs), the daily operation of CSD includes other related work and services that are not institution-specific, such as escort of PICs to and from courts and hospitals, provision of medical, welfare and aftercare services, etc. As such, it is not practicable to accurately calculate the cost of custody of a PIC at a particular type of correctional facility.

The average daily penal populations of correctional facilities in the past 5 years are tabulated as follows:

Year	Average daily penal population (persons)
2023	8 498
2022	7 613
2021	7 616
2020	6 902
2019	7 737

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB155**

**(Question Serial No. 3439)**

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:

Assuming the occupancy rate is 100%, please list in the following table the average daily meal cost per person in custody (PIC) in various types of institutions in the past 5 financial years:

	Average daily meal cost per PIC (\$)				
	Prison	Training Centre	Detention Centre	Rehabilitation Centre	Drug Addiction Treatment Centre
2019-20					
2020-21					
2021-22					
2022-23					
2023-24					

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 211)

Reply:

The average daily cost of food material per person in custody (PIC) in various correctional institutions in the past 5 financial years is as follows:

Financial year	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Average daily cost of food material per PIC (\$)	24.6	25.8	29.2	29.2	31.1

(Note: The average cost is calculated based on the contract price of food material in the year, thus such meal cost is applicable to all institutions.)

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**(Question Serial No. 3440)**

Head: (30) Correctional Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Re-integration

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

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Assuming the occupancy rate is 100%, please list in the following table the average annual education and vocational training cost per person in custody (PIC) in various types of institutions in the past 5 financial years:

Average annual education and vocational training cost per PIC (\$)	Prison	Training Centre	Detention Centre	Rehabilitation Centre	Drug Addiction Treatment Centre
2017-18					
2018-19					
2019-20					
2020-21					
2021-22					

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 212)

Reply:

The Correctional Services Department (CSD) provides half-day compulsory education for young persons in custody (PICs) aged between 14 and 20 and arranges for qualified teachers to teach the subjects, having regard to the length of sentences and learning needs of young PICs. 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.

On vocational training, CSD has been collaborating with various training bodies (including

the Employees Retraining Board, the Construction Industry Council and the Vocational Training Council, etc.), having regard to the situation of the local employment market, to provide over 40 vocational training courses with more than 1 400 full-time and part-time training places for lawfully residing adult PICs who are due for discharge within 24 months and eligible for employment to enrol on a voluntary basis and obtain recognised qualifications after taking relevant examinations, thereby enhancing their employability and helping them enrol in bridging or progressive courses in the future, with a view to facilitating their re-integration into society after release. These courses cover a wide range of industries such as construction, engineering, business, food and beverage, retail, beauty care, transport, logistics, laundry services, computer application and environmental services, etc.

As for young PICs, CSD currently provides 13 half-day vocational training courses covering commercial practice, creative multimedia production techniques, coffee house operations, Western pastry and dessert making, building services and beauty care, etc.

The above mixed operation mode has been adopted in vocational training for flexible deployment of internal resources and those of collaborating training bodies to meet the changing market needs, with a view to enhancing PICs' employability after release and providing them with opportunities for advanced vocational training. Therefore, the expenditure on vocational training courses is recorded on a yearly basis.

CSD's expenditures on vocational training and PICs' education in the past 5 years are tabulated as follows:

Year	2019-20 (Actual expenditure)	2020-21 (Actual expenditure)	2021-22 (Actual expenditure)	2022-23 (Actual expenditure)	2023-24 (Revised estimate)
Expenditure on vocational training courses (\$ million)	30.29	30.38	29.90	30.13	31.47
Expenditure on education (\$ million)	40.05	40.64	41.91	41.39	43.14

Since PICs' length of sentences varies and the participation of adult PICs in relevant courses is on a voluntary basis, the education and vocational training provided by correctional institutions are different. Therefore, CSD does not calculate or maintain statistics on the average education and vocational training cost per PIC in various types of institutions.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB157**

**(Question Serial No. 3441)**

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:

Please list in the following table the monthly quantities of the following hygiene items provided to each person in custody (PIC):

Daily Commodity	Monthly Quantity Provided
Toilet paper	
Sanitary napkin (for female PICs only)	

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 213)

Reply:

The monthly quantities of hygiene items provided to each person in custody (PIC) are as follows:

Daily Commodity	Monthly Quantity Provided
Toilet paper	Given the different physical needs of male and female PICs, the Correctional Services Department provides each male PIC with 1 roll of toilet paper every 3 weeks, while each female PIC is provided with 2 rolls each month.  PICs may request additional toilet paper from officers if necessary. Officers will arrange for distribution based on PICs' actual needs.

Sanitary napkin (for female PICs only)	Each female PIC is provided with 20 sanitary napkins each month.  Female PICs may request additional sanitary napkins from officers if necessary. Officers will arrange for distribution based on PICs' actual needs.
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- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY****SB158****(Question Serial No. 3442)**Head: (30) Correctional Services DepartmentSubhead (No. & title): ()Programme: (1) Prison ManagementControlling Officer: Commissioner of Correctional Services (WONG Kwok-hing)Director of Bureau: Secretary for SecurityQuestion:

Please provide a breakdown by the number of complaints received by correctional institutions, the category of complaints, the complainant, 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.

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 214)Reply:

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 or operation 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 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)	2019 (Number of cases)	2020 (Number of cases)	2021 (Number of cases)	2022 (Number of cases)	2023 (Number of cases)
Use of unnecessary force	9	21	16	9	7
Misconduct of staff	33	49	34	30	28
Negligence of duty	15	40	25	18	14

Abuse of authority	11	19	12	5	11
Injustice in disciplinary action	11	28	28	14	12
Dissatisfaction with institutional policy/procedure	2	9	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>72</b>

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

Cases substantiated/partly substantiated after comprehensive investigation by CIU (complaints lodged by PICs)	<b>2019</b> (Number of cases)	<b>2020</b> (Number of cases)	<b>2021</b> (Number of cases)	<b>2022</b> (Number of cases)	<b>2023</b> (Number of cases)
Substantiated	1	4	1	0	0
Substantiated other than reported	0	1	2	0	2
Not fully substantiated	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>

A total of 2 Assistant Officers were subject to punishment for involvement in the substantiated/partly substantiated cases listed above in the past 5 years.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB159**

**(Question Serial No. 3443)**

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:

What is the number of correctional officers in the establishment of the Complaints Investigation Unit of the Correctional Services Department? What is the average time required for completing an investigation of a complaint? Is the manpower sufficient for handling the complaints?

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 215)

Reply:

The Complaints Investigation Unit (CIU) of the Correctional Services Department (CSD) is appointed by the Commissioner of Correctional Services. It is an investigation unit responsible for handling and investigating complaints, and its operation is independent of other sections of the Department. There are 15 staff members in the establishment of CIU, including 3 civilian staff.

CIU will complete an investigation within 18 weeks from the date of receiving a complaint. The findings will be submitted to the Correctional Services Department Complaints Committee (CSDCC) for review and decision-making. If necessary, CSDCC may refer the case back to CIU for investigation or make recommendations to the Department for the improvement of services. In 2023, the average time for CIU to complete a complaint investigation was 11.5 weeks.

CSD will review the establishment and deployment of manpower in CIU for adjustment from time to time having regard to actual circumstances.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB160**

**(Question Serial No. 3444)**

Head: (30) Correctional Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Re-integration

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

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

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?

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 216)

Reply:

The Correctional Services Department (CSD) provides half-day compulsory education for young persons in custody (PICs) aged between 14 and 20, and arranges for qualified teachers to teach the subjects. Having regard to the length of sentences and learning needs of young PICs, CSD provides young PICs undergoing training at rehabilitation centres with the "Teen's Programme", which includes 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.

CSD has earlier signed Memorandums of Understanding with the Hong Kong Metropolitan University and 8 University Grants Committee-funded universities respectively to provide more comprehensive support for PICs, including credit transfers, with a view to assisting them to continue their studies after release.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB161**

**(Question Serial No. 3445)**

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:

Please provide a breakdown by average working hours, longest working hours, standard earnings and overtime earnings for each type of work engaged by persons in custody in various correctional facilities in the past 5 years.

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 217)

Reply:

According to Rule 38 of the Prison Rules (Cap. 234A), all convicted adult persons in custody (PICs) are required to engage in work (unless they have been certified by the Medical Officer seconded to the Correctional Services Department (CSD) as unfit for work on medical grounds). According to Rule 43 of the Prison Rules, PICs' hours of labour shall not be less than 6 nor more than 10 daily, exclusive of meals.

CSD does not maintain any statistics on the average or the longest working hours of PICs who have engaged in different types of work. A PIC who works and a PIC who, through no fault of his/her own, is unable to work, and an unconvicted person on remand who elects to engage in the service or industries of the prison in accordance with Rule 39 and Rule 201 of the Prison Rules respectively, may receive payment in accordance with rates approved by the Commissioner of Correctional Services. The earning rates are calculated on the basis of the earnings per week (see **Table**).

If overtime work by PICs is necessary for meeting operational needs, CSD will arrange for PICs to work overtime on a voluntary basis and they will be compensated with overtime earnings (i.e. 1.5 times of earnings).

Earnings Scheme for PICs  
Earnings per week for adult PICs (effective from 1 September  
 2023)

<b>Earnings per week</b>		
<b>Rate scale</b>	<b>Earning grade</b>	<b>(HK\$)</b>
Basic rate#	-	31.24
Apprentice	A	58.90
	B	69.75
	C	79.35
	D	101.00
	E	122.39
	F	143.11
Skilled	A	84.54
	B	105.59
	C	126.66
	D	168.47
	E	211.25
	F	253.66

# PICs who are unable to work due to medical reasons, or newly convicted persons who are undergoing an induction programme and have not yet been assigned work are eligible for the basic earning grade.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB162**

**(Question Serial No. 3446)**

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:

It is mandatory for persons in custody to keep savings to meet their living expenses after release. What were the average and median savings in the past 5 years?

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 218)

Reply:

Adult persons in custody (PICs) are required to save 10% of their earnings until the mandatory savings of \$500 are made. After meeting the above requirement, PICs may save their remaining earnings or spend them on purchasing canteen items (e.g. snacks and additional daily commodities, etc.). The Correctional Services Department does not maintain statistics on PICs' savings made from their earnings.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB163**

**(Question Serial No. 3447)**

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:

In the past 5 years, what were the numbers of work injuries sustained by persons in custody (PICs) in various correctional facilities? What were the average and median amount of compensation for work injuries? What were the degrees of recovery of work injuries after assessment? Are there any guidelines to follow? How does the Department ensure PICs comply with the occupational safety and health requirements while they are at work?

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 219)

Reply:

Statistics of persons in custody (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:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of accidents</b>
2023	7
2022	12
2021	8
2020	4
2019	7

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 the Correctional Services Department (CSD) as unfit to work on medical grounds). CSD does not have an employer-employee relationship with PICs, and daily necessities and medical services are provided to PICs by the Government. 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 an ex-gratia payment. All eligible cases are handled and approved under the established mechanism.

In the past 5 years, there was 1 application for an ex-gratia payment from a PIC on the ground of work injuries. The ex-gratia payment involved was about \$20,000. The case also involves a civil claim for damages and the proceedings are still in progress.

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.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB164**

**(Question Serial No. 3448)**

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:

What were the respective numbers of applications for official visits in different correctional facilities 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.: 220)

Reply:

The Correctional Services Department does not maintain statistics on the number of applications for official visits as well as the respective numbers of applications approved and rejected.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB165**

**(Question Serial No. 3449)**

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:

Please list the numbers of persons in custody kept in special cells (e.g. single cells), distribution of length of confinement (e.g. 7 days, 14 days, 21 days and 28 days) and reasons for the confinement in various correctional institutions and prisons in the past 5 years.

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 221)

Reply:

By virtue of the duties and powers conferred by law, the Correctional Services Department (CSD) is committed to ensuring a secure, safe, humane, decent and healthy custodial environment. In accordance with the Prison Rules (Cap. 234A), CSD is empowered to impose separate confinement as punishment on persons in custody (PICs) who have committed offences against prison discipline, and to order the removal of PICs from association if the Department has reasonable grounds for believing that it is desirable to do so for the maintenance of good order or discipline or in the interests of PICs. PICs can also apply on their own initiative for removal from association with other PICs in view of their own circumstances such as special criminal background.

The numbers of cases involving PICs being removed from association, distribution of length of removal from association and the numbers of disciplinary cases involving PICs being imposed separate confinement as punishment in the past 5 years are tabulated below (as at 31 December of the year):

Year	Distribution of length of removal from association				Total number of cases involving PICs being removed from association (Note 1)	Disciplinary cases involving PICs being imposed separate confinement as punishment (Note 2)
	Under 72 hours	72 hours to 1 month	1 month to not longer than 4 months	Above 4 months		
2023	140(21)	306(27)	215(26)	26(26)	687	4 395
2022	174(31)	220(42)	202(27)	53(53)	649	3 801
2021	445(68)	284(82)	256(37)	52(51)	1 037	4 307
2020	389(15)	187(27)	158(29)	33(33)	767	3 562
2019	423(6)	242(18)	131(19)	33(33)	829	3 181

( ) Cases involving PICs applying for removal from association on their own initiative.

Note 1: Over 80% of the cases involved PICs being removed from association as a security measure to maintain institutional discipline and order or when the PICs were suspected of having internal concealment of dangerous drugs. As for the remaining cases, the PICs applied on their own initiative for removal from association in view of their own circumstances (such as special criminal background).

Note 2: In accordance with Rule 63 of the Prison Rules, separate confinement for any period shall not exceed 28 days.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB166**

**(Question Serial No. 3450)**

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:

Please provide a breakdown of expenditure on the arrangement of separate confinement for persons in custody.

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 222)

Reply:

As the management of persons in custody under separate confinement is part of the daily management work of the Correctional Services Department, the Department does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure incurred.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY****SB167****(Question Serial No. 3451)**Head: (30) Correctional Services DepartmentSubhead (No. & title): ()Programme: (1) Prison ManagementControlling Officer: Commissioner of Correctional Services (WONG Kwok-hing)Director of Bureau: Secretary for SecurityQuestion:

Please provide the numbers of “individual acts of indiscipline” and “concerted acts of indiscipline” in the past 5 years. What were the losses and expenditures involved? Please list the causes of the above cases of acts of indiscipline and the ways these cases were handled by the Department.

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 223)Reply:

The respective numbers of individual acts of indiscipline and concerted acts of indiscipline of persons in custody (PICs) in the past 5 years are tabulated below:

Year	Individual acts of indiscipline (No. of acts of indiscipline)	Concerted acts of indiscipline (No. of cases)
2023	5 335	4
2022	4 564	5
2021	5 269	8
2020	4 332	10
2019	3 905	7

Since the handling of acts of indiscipline forms part of the daily management work of the Correctional Services Department (CSD), the Department does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure involved. Besides, CSD does not maintain a breakdown of the losses incurred due to acts of indiscipline of PICs.

The causes of acts of indiscipline of individual PICs vary, and CSD does not maintain any statistics in this regard. For cases of concerted acts of indiscipline, most of the PICs involved had triad backgrounds, records of drug abuse or repeated imprisonment. They usually incited other PICs to get involved in collective actions or fighting in an attempt to establish their sphere of influence or resist the management measures or actions taken by the management to combat illicit activities.

CSD handles acts of indiscipline of PICs in accordance with the established mechanism. Apart from continuously strengthening intelligence collection and conducting special searching operations to ensure that all illicit activities are nipped in the bud, CSD also tackles illicit or indiscipline acts decisively and promptly so as to prevent situations from deteriorating. CSD may take disciplinary actions against the persons involved or report the cases to the Police for follow-up, having regard to the nature and gravity of the cases. CSD may also order individual PICs involved to be removed from association in accordance with the law for the maintenance of good order and discipline in the institutions. Besides, in case an emergency incident occurs in a correctional facility, the Regional Response Team will arrive at the institution promptly to provide immediate tactical support to the institutional management in a bid to bring the situation under control and prevent it from deteriorating.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB168**

**(Question Serial No. 3452)**

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:

The average meal expenses per meal per person for ethnic Chinese persons in custody (PICs), and a breakdown by types of food. The average meal expenses per meal per person for non-ethnic Chinese PICs, and a breakdown by types of food. Please provide the average meal expenses per meal per person provided by the Correctional Services Department to correctional officers during work hours, and a breakdown by types of food.

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 224)

Reply:

The Correctional Services Department (CSD) attaches great importance to racial equality. No persons in custody (PICs) will be treated differently with regard to their race, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin, including meal arrangements for PICs. Hence, CSD does not have the relevant information on meal expenses of PICs of individual ethnic groups. In accordance with Section 24A of the Prisons Ordinance (Cap. 234), CSD provides PICs with plain and wholesome food. The variety and portion of dietary scales (the 4 main dietary scales including local staple rice diet, diet of curries and chapatti, diet of bread and potatoes, and vegetarian diet) currently provided by CSD are designed by dietitians and approved by the Department of Health. The scales meet the nutritional needs of PICs. Non-vegetarian PICs are provided with an appropriate amount of meat in their daily meals. The types of meat include pork, beef, fish, skinless chicken, chicken wings, etc. Prices of all dietary scales are more or less the same. The average cost of food material per day per person is about \$31.1.

In accordance with the Civil Service Regulations, an officer who is on duty for a continuous period of 12 hours or more in any period of 24 hours may receive a local subsistence allowance. In general, the duty hours of CSD staff do not meet this requirement. Therefore, the Department does not have relevant statistics on the average expenditure on subsistence allowance per staff per day.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB169**

**(Question Serial No. 3453)**

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:

Please list the numbers of persons with disabilities in various correctional institutions in the past 5 years and currently by the types of disabilities. Please inform this Committee of the arrangements for the provision of care and necessary treatments made for persons with disabilities serving their sentences in prison, and provide a breakdown of the expenditure involved.

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 225)

Reply:

The Correctional Services Department (CSD) provides basic medical care services to all persons in custody (PICs), including setting up hospitals in correctional institutions where medical examinations and appropriate treatments or referrals are provided to newly admitted PICs by Medical Officers (MOs) seconded from the Department of Health and correctional officers with nursing qualifications. CSD will also arrange for PICs to serve their sentences at appropriate correctional institutions and provide PICs with appropriate health care, attention and necessary treatments, taking into account the advice of MOs.

CSD also cares for the special needs of PICs with disabilities. For instance, CSD organises sign language courses in collaboration with non-profit-making organisations to enhance frontline correctional officers' communication skills with and understanding of PICs with hearing impairment. In addition, CSD will, having regard to the circumstances of individual PICs with hearing impairment, engage part-time sign language interpreters or seek assistance from non-governmental organisations to arrange sign language interpretation service for those PICs in need.

Since the caring of PICs with disabilities forms part of the daily management work of CSD, the Department does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure involved.

According to the annual penal population survey conducted by CSD, a breakdown of the numbers of persons with disabilities serving sentences by the type of disabilities from 2019

to 2023 is tabulated below (since the penal population survey for 2024 has yet to be conducted, CSD does not have the relevant statistics):

Year (As at 31 March)	Persons with mental disabilities or mental illness	Persons with physical disabilities	<b>Total</b>
2023	474	106	<b>580</b>
2022	229	125	<b>354</b>
2021	79	135	<b>214</b>
2020	78	95	<b>173</b>
2019	254	154	<b>408</b>

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB170**

**(Question Serial No. 3454)**

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:

Please provide the numbers of transgender persons (transgender males and females) and persons with disabilities in various correctional institutions currently and in the past 5 years. Please inform the Committee of the arrangements for the provision of care and necessary treatments made for persons with disabilities serving their sentences in prison, and provide a breakdown of the expenditure involved.

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 226)

Reply:

The Correctional Services Department (CSD) provides basic medical care services to all persons in custody (PICs), including setting up hospitals in correctional institutions where medical examinations and appropriate treatments or referrals are provided to newly admitted PICs by Medical Officers (MOs) seconded from the Department of Health and correctional officers with nursing qualifications. CSD will also arrange for PICs to serve their sentences at appropriate correctional institutions and provide PICs with appropriate health care, attention and necessary treatments, taking into account the advice of MOs.

CSD also cares for the special needs of PICs with disabilities. For instance, CSD organises sign language courses in collaboration with non-profit-making organisations to enhance frontline correctional officers' communication skills with and understanding of PICs with hearing impairment. In addition, CSD will, having regard to the circumstances of individual PICs with hearing impairment, engage part-time sign language interpreters or seek assistance from non-governmental organisations to arrange sign language interpretation service for those PICs in need.

Since the caring of PICs with disabilities forms part of the daily management work of CSD, the Department does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure involved.

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Year (As at 31 March)	Persons with mental disabilities or mental illness	Persons with physical disabilities	<b>Total</b>
2023	474	106	<b>580</b>
2022	229	125	<b>354</b>
2021	79	135	<b>214</b>
2020	78	95	<b>173</b>
2019	254	154	<b>408</b>

As for transgender persons, a total of 73 transgender persons were admitted to correctional institutions from 2019 to 2023, of which 5 cases involved female-to-male transgender persons.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB171**

**(Question Serial No. 3455)**

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:

Please provide the numbers of new books acquired for the libraries of various correctional institutions and the expenditures involved in each of the past 5 years. How are these books distributed by category? What are the criteria for book selection and procurement? What officers on establishment are responsible for this matter? What are the guidelines for compliance? Have the libraries provided appropriate books to persons in custody of other nationalities who are illiterate in English or Chinese?

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 227)

Reply:

The Correctional Services Department (CSD) encourages persons in custody (PICs) to cultivate an interest in and spend their leisure time on reading. Therefore, libraries have been set up in various correctional institutions to provide PICs with books of different types and in different languages. The total collections of the libraries in correctional institutions currently extend to over 120 000 copies. In the past 5 years, CSD incurred an average annual expenditure of about \$72,000 on the acquisition of new books for the libraries in various correctional institutions, and the average number of new books acquired every year was about 1 000 copies.

Staff members of the Education Unit of CSD are responsible for the acquisition of appropriate books for the libraries in accordance with the established procurement procedures, having regard to factors such as reading interests and learning needs of PICs. CSD does not maintain a breakdown of books by category. In addition, CSD borrows books from the Hong Kong Public Libraries to facilitate loans by PICs, replaces the borrowed books in batches on a regular basis and also receives books donated by outside organisations or individuals according to the established mechanism.

CSD has been making its best endeavours to increase the number of books in foreign languages. At present, books kept in the libraries of various correctional institutions are in about 40 different languages. In addition to books in the Chinese and English languages, CSD has acquired over 4 500 books in other languages over the past 5 years for reading by

PICs of other nationalities who are illiterate in English and Chinese. The distribution of books by language is tabulated below:

Book	Quantity	Percentage (%)
Traditional Chinese	84 286	69
Simplified Chinese	8 091	7
English	13 629	11
Other languages (Note)	15 736	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>121 742</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: Not less than 40 different languages, e.g. Vietnamese, Indonesian, Thai, Korean, Spanish, French, Hindi, Urdu, etc.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**(Question Serial No. 3456)**

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:

Please list the prices of various canteen items in correctional institutions. By comparing the current basic level of earnings of persons in custody (PICs) with the prices of canteen items, what is the percentage of earnings spent on purchasing basic necessities by PICs? How often are the prices of canteen items in correctional institutions reviewed? What criteria are made reference to?

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 228)

Reply:

The canteen items currently available for purchase by persons in custody (PICs) and their prices are listed in **Table**.

PICs may save their earnings or use them to purchase canteen items. The Correctional Services Department (CSD) does not maintain the relevant figures on the percentage of earnings PICs spent on purchasing canteen items.

Canteen items are procured through an open tender exercise. CSD will deduct the payment of the items ordered by individual PICs from the balance of their earnings according to the supplier's contract prices. The prices of various types of canteen items will be subject to review every time CSD arranges for a new contract or whenever it is deemed necessary.

**Table**

Canteen items available for purchase by PICs					
Item	Description	Price (HK\$)	Item	Description	Price (HK\$)
1	Curry Beef Cube	10.51	39	Pencil	1.30
2	BBQ Fried Dough	11.52	40	Exercise Book	2.25
3	Dried Shredded Cuttlefish	8.20	41	Envelope (5 pieces)	1.80
4	Dried Pork	8.91	42	Writing Paper (10 sheets)	3.10
5	Salted Fried Peanuts	3.84	43	Skin Lotion/Cream	30.70
6	Nam Yue Peanuts	4.50	44	Lip Balm	15.20
7	Mixed Nuts	3.11	45	Baby Powder	17.80
8	Fried Broad Beans	8.51	46	Baby Oil	30.40
9	Corn Flakes	5.70	47	Shampoo (400 ml)	26.80
10	Preserved Mandarin Orange Peel	6.42	48	Shampoo (200 ml)	30.80
11	Liquoriced Red Ginger	2.80	49	Hair Conditioner	28.40
12	Cream Sandwich Biscuits- Chocolate flavour	3.25	50	Plastic Hair Comb	2.50
13	Cream Sandwich Biscuits- Peanut flavour	3.25	51	Plastic Soap Box	10.20
14	Vegetable Biscuits	12.93	52	Toilet Soap	6.44
15	Cream Wafers-Coconut flavour	9.20	53	Toothpaste	20.65
16	Sesame Crackers/Soda Biscuits	5.50	54	Desensitising Toothpaste	41.91
17	Crisp Biscuits- Orange or lemon flavour	15.51	55	Tooth Brush (Soft)	9.80
18	Saltine Soda Biscuits	8.80	56	Tooth Brush (Ultra Soft)	14.50
19	Digestive Biscuits	17.20	57	Facial Towel	6.40
20	Spring Onion Crackers	18.80	58	Tissue Paper	5.85
21	Calcium Crackers	15.60	59	Hair Brush	10.00
22	BBQ Flavoured Potato Chips	3.40	60	Plastic Hair Clip (2 pieces)	9.40
23	Cheese Flavoured Snacks	1.70	61	Sanitary Napkins (10 pieces)	24.60
24	Shrimp Sticks	3.43	62	Ear Plugs (1 pair)	19.50
25	Glucose Lemon Flavoured Candies	10.50	63	Double-wall Plastic Cup with Lid	31.50
26	Dairy Chocolate Bar	12.85	64	Battery (AA) (2 pieces)	6.20
27	Peanut Chocolate Beans	10.73	65	Battery (AAA) (2 pieces)	6.20
28	Fruit Chewy Soft Candies with Vitamins	13.22	66	Photo Album (4R)	14.60
29	Haw Flakes	6.30	67	Stamps(\$2.2x1+\$0.5x1+\$0.2x2+\$0.1x1)	3.20
30	Soya Bean Drink	2.75	68	Aerogrammes (2 pieces)	7.40
31	Malt Soya Bean Drink	3.75	69	Cigarettes (Gentori)	60.45
32	Orange Drink	3.00	70	Cigarettes (Wealth)	64.45
33	Sugar Cane Drink	2.75	71	Deodorant	27.72
34	Chrysanthemum Tea	2.75	72	Mosquito Repellent Patches	28.90

35	Lemon Tea	3.00	73	Oat Crackers	12.42
36	High Calcium Low Fat Milk	5.50	74	Hi-calcium Soya Drink – Original flavour	5.50
37	Plastic Ruler	4.60	75	Body Wash	37.50
38	Ball Pen (blue)	3.75	76	Panty Liners (40 pieces)	17.20

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB173**

**(Question Serial No. 3457)**

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:

Please provide a breakdown of expenditure on warm clothing for each person in custody in various correctional institutions in the past 5 years.

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 229)

Reply:

The actual expenditures of the Correctional Services Department on clothing and bedding (including blankets) for persons in custody in the past 5 years are tabulated below:

<b>Year</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>
Expenditure on clothing (\$ million)	12.63	14.01	14.74	13.41	13.43
Expenditure on bedding (\$ million)	1.96	2.60	3.12	2.43	1.55
Total expenditure (\$ million)	14.59	16.61	17.86	15.84	14.98

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB174**

**(Question Serial No. 3458)**

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:

Please list the recorded numbers of cases in which frontline officers used “necessary force” in various prisons and correctional institutions in the past 5 years. What were the reasons for using “necessary force”? Please provide a breakdown with explanation. Please list the recorded numbers of persons in custody and staff members injured due to the use of “necessary force” in various prisons in the past 5 years. Please list the auxiliary equipment made use of when using “necessary force”. What was the expenditure involved? Please provide a breakdown with explanation.

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 230)

Reply:

By virtue of the duties and powers conferred by law, the Correctional Services Department (CSD) is committed to ensuring a secure, safe, humane, decent and healthy custodial environment.

Rule 237 of the Prison Rules (Cap. 234A) stipulates that no correctional officer in dealing with persons in custody (PICs) shall use force unnecessarily and, when the application of force to a PIC is necessary, no more force than is necessary shall be used. The appropriate force to be used by correctional officers against PICs should be non-lethal, defensive and minimal to prevent correctional officers themselves, PICs or other persons from being harmed.

The reasons for correctional officers to use necessary force on PICs include stopping PICs from self-harm or resistance behaviour, fighting among themselves and attacking others, etc. The numbers of cases in which correctional officers used necessary force against PICs and the numbers of persons injured in the past 5 years are tabulated below:

Year	Number of cases involving the use of necessary force	Number of PICs injured	Number of correctional officers injured
2023	78	98	25
2022	77	80	23
2021	101	123	18
2020	91	117	14
2019	69	93	40

Correctional officers are generally equipped with oleoresin capsicum foam and extendable truncheons during supervision of PICs. Since the information about the expenditure on and the quantity of the relevant equipment procured by CSD involves its operational deployment details, it is not appropriate to disclose such information.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**(Question Serial No. 3459)**

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:

Are frontline officers provided with training and guidelines on the use of necessary force on persons in custody (PICs) at “B Hall” of Pik Uk Correctional Institution (PUCI)? In what circumstances will force be used on young offenders? If correctional officers consider necessary force should be used, how can they ensure that no excess injury will be caused to the subdued PICs? What types of auxiliary equipment or weapons are provided to frontline officers at “B Hall” of PUCI to prevent PICs from committing acts of indiscipline? What are the specific contents of the guidelines on the use of necessary force on PICs for frontline officers? How can the Correctional Services Department (CSD) ensure that correctional officers will not abuse their power? Are PICs informed of the possibility of being applied necessary force by staff members of CSD when they are admitted into prisons? And are they informed of their rights concerned? What is the average cost of each use of necessary force to subdue PICs?

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 231)

Reply:

By virtue of the duties and powers conferred by law, the Correctional Services Department (CSD) is committed to ensuring a secure, safe, humane, decent and healthy custodial environment.

Rule 237 of the Prison Rules (Cap. 234A) stipulates that no correctional officer in dealing with persons in custody (PICs) shall use force unnecessarily and, when the application of force to a PIC is necessary, no more force than is necessary shall be used. The appropriate force to be used by correctional officers against PICs should be non-lethal, defensive and minimal to prevent correctional officers themselves, PICs or other persons from being harmed. The reasons for correctional officers to use necessary force on PICs include stopping PICs from self-harm or resistance behaviour, fighting among themselves and attacking others, etc.

Every correctional officer is required to receive professional tactics, self-defense and scenario training to learn how to use different types of equipment and how to respond in emergency

situations. CSD also provides training and organises drills for correctional officers from time to time to ensure that they are familiar with the requirements and procedures for the use of necessary force. Correctional officers are generally equipped with oleoresin capsicum foam and extendable truncheons during supervision of PICs.

The departmental guidelines stipulate that, except in extreme emergency situations, correctional officers shall give a warning to PICs, express the intention to use force, and state clearly the nature and degree of force intended to be used before the application of force. The PICs concerned shall be given every opportunity to obey orders before any use of force. In most cases, the situations at the scene should allow correctional officers to handle resistance of PICs first by verbal advice and counselling. If the resistance persists or is even raised to a higher level, correctional officers may use appropriate force after making a professional judgement based on the actual circumstances at the scene in that particular time, the level of resistance of PICs, the abilities of the correctional officers themselves and the threats faced.

All PICs newly admitted into correctional institutions will be arranged to undergo an induction programme, during which the staff will explain to them their rights. In addition, through the Information Booklet for Persons in Custody issued to them and the electronic kiosks located at different places in the institutions, they can obtain detailed information about their rights. PICs who feel aggrieved may lodge complaints or air their grievances through various internal and external channels.

As maintaining institutional order and handling emergencies are part of the daily duties of correctional officers, CSD does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure incurred.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB176**

**(Question Serial No. 3460)**

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:

Please list the recorded numbers of cases in which frontline officers used “necessary force” in various correctional institutions for young offenders aged under 21 in the past 5 years, and also the recorded numbers of young offenders aged under 21 and staff members injured due to the use of “necessary force” in various prisons in the past 5 years.

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 232)

Reply:

By virtue of the duties and powers conferred by law, the Correctional Services Department is committed to ensuring a secure, safe, humane, decent and healthy custodial environment.

Rule 237 of the Prison Rules (Cap. 234A) stipulates that no correctional officer in dealing with persons in custody (PICs) shall use force unnecessarily and, when the application of force to a PIC is necessary, no more force than is necessary shall be used. The appropriate force to be used by correctional officers against PICs should be non-lethal, defensive and minimal to prevent correctional officers themselves, PICs or other persons from being harmed.

The reasons for correctional officers to use necessary force on PICs include stopping PICs from self-harm or resistance behaviour, fighting among themselves and attacking others, etc. The numbers of cases in which correctional officers used necessary force against young PICs and the numbers of persons injured in the past 5 years are tabulated below:

Year	Number of cases involving the use of necessary force	Number of young PICs injured	Number of correctional officers injured
2023	2	2	0
2022	3	2	1
2021	12	23	7
2020	4	3	2
2019	3	10	5

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB177**

**(Question Serial No. 3461)**

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:

Rule 237 of the Prison Rules (Cap. 234A) stipulates that no correctional officer in dealing with persons in custody (PICs) shall use force unnecessarily. Please list the records of non-compliant correctional staff using force unnecessarily with a breakdown. If there are no such records, what are the reasons? Are the existing closed circuit television (CCTV) systems and complaints mechanism effective enough to deter staff members from using force unnecessarily? How can the Department prove their effectiveness? What is the total expenditure on CCTV systems incurred by the Department? How many CCTVs are installed in each institution? What is the average cost of each CCTV?

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 233)

Reply:

In the past 5 years (2019-2023), there was no recorded case of staff using force unnecessarily in the Correctional Services Department (CSD).

At present, a total of over 8 000 closed circuit televisions (CCTV) are installed in correctional institutions. CSD is planning to extend the coverage of CCTV systems in institutions gradually to enhance the effectiveness of the monitoring function so as to combat and prevent indiscipline acts and illicit activities in institutions, and also protect the safety of correctional officers in the course of law enforcement and ensure the safety of persons in custody (PICs).

Besides, CSD all along attaches great importance to complaints lodged by any persons, regardless of whether they are PICs or discharged persons. If aggrieved by any treatment they have received, they may lodge complaints or air their grievances through various internal or external channels.

Internal channels include complaining to the institutional management, directorate officers of the CSD Headquarters during their inspections to correctional institutions or the Complaints Investigation Unit (CIU) of CSD. CIU will carry out an investigation of each and every complaint in a fair, impartial and comprehensive manner, or make a referral to other law

enforcement agencies for follow-up actions having regard to the circumstances of the case.

As for external channels, PICs may write to Members of the Legislative Council, The Ombudsman, statutory bodies, other law enforcement agencies or government bureaux, etc. to lodge their complaints. Besides, they may choose to seek assistance from or lodge their complaints with the visiting Justices of the Peace (JPs) directly during the latter's surprise visits to their institutions and request to meet the JPs alone.

The Office of The Ombudsman (the Office), as an independent and statutory organisation for handling complaints against government departments, can initiate independent investigation into the complaints. If necessary, the Office may request CSD to assist in the investigation by providing information (such as CCTV footage), or even conduct site inspections and interview the complainants.

PICs have the right to see their legal advisors. Staff members of CSD will not be present at their interviews, and thus will not know the contents of such interviews.

CSD also reviews and enhances the complaints handling mechanism from time to time with a view to increasing the transparency and credibility of the Department in handling complaints in an open, fair and impartial manner.

To widen the structure of the Correctional Services Department Complaints Appeal Board (CSDCAB) and further strengthen the mechanism to scrutinise appeals, the number of members of CSDCAB was increased to 31 in November 2020. Apart from JPs, religious persons who are acquainted with correctional operations were also appointed. The independence of CSDCAB ensures that appeal cases are handled fairly.

CSD adopts a zero tolerance policy against violations of regulations by its staff. As a disciplinary force, CSD demands strict discipline. The conduct of individual staff members is monitored by supervisory staff at different levels. If any indiscipline act of a staff member is confirmed, CSD will take disciplinary action against the staff member concerned. If it is suspected that illegal acts are committed, CSD will refer those cases to other law enforcement agencies for follow-up actions.

As mentioned above, over 8 000 CCTVs are installed in correctional institutions. The average cost of each CCTV in correctional institutions varies owing to differences in locations, year of completion, building structures, design of institutions and time of installation and update of CCTV systems, and thus it cannot be generalised.

The project estimates for replacement and enhancement of the CCTV systems currently in progress are tabulated as follows:

	<b>Correctional Facility</b>	<b>Head/Subhead</b>	<b>Number of CCTVs installed</b>	<b>Project Estimate/ Commitment (\$ million)</b>
1	Stanley Prison	Head 708 Capital Subventions and Major Systems and Equipment	2 493	162.680
2	Pak Sha Wan Correctional Institution and Siu Lam Psychiatric Centre		1 030	51.546
3	Tai Lam Correctional Institution	Head 30 Correctional Services Department Subhead 603 Plant, vehicles and equipment	376	24.510
4	Tong Fuk Correctional Institution		690	35.274
5	Pik Uk Prison		569	37.409
6	Cape Collinson Correctional Institution		302	55.450
7	Hei Ling Chau Addiction Treatment Centre		580	98.701
8	Hei Ling Chau Correctional Institution		514	108.211
9	Lai Sun Correctional Institution		236	40.944
10	Pik Uk Correctional Institution		270	13.507
11	Lo Wu Correctional Institution		3 618	241.331
12	Lai King Correctional Institution/Chi Lan Rehabilitation Centre		578	54.489
13	Shek Pik Prison		1 441	119.995
14	Sha Tsui Correctional Institution/Lai Chi Rehabilitation Centre		508	38.069
15	Nei Kwu Correctional Institution		382	30.967

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB178**

**(Question Serial No. 3462)**

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:

Please provide the records of cases in which correctional officers subdued persons in custody (PICs) with empty hands, or with the use of oleoresin capsicum foam or extendable truncheon in various prisons and correctional institutions in the past 5 years. How many records mentioned above involved female PICs, young offenders and PICs over the age of 65?

Asked by: Hon TIK Chi-yuen (LegCo internal reference no.: 234)

Reply:

By virtue of the duties and powers conferred by law, the Correctional Services Department (CSD) is committed to ensuring a secure, safe, humane, decent and healthy custodial environment.

Rule 237 of the Prison Rules (Cap. 234A) stipulates that no correctional officer in dealing with persons in custody (PICs) shall use force unnecessarily and, when the application of force to a PIC is necessary, no more force than is necessary shall be used. The appropriate force to be used by correctional officers against PICs should be non-lethal, defensive and minimal to prevent correctional officers themselves, PICs or other persons from being harmed.

The numbers of cases involving the use of necessary force against PICs by correctional officers in the past 5 years are tabulated below:

Year	Number of cases by type of necessary force used			Total
	Empty-hand control	Use of oleoresin capsicum foam	Empty-hand control and use of oleoresin capsicum foam	
2023	8	4	66	78
2022	8	7	62	77
2021	12	5	84	101
2020	14	9	68	91
2019	14	5	50	69

Note: In the past 5 years, no correctional officers used extendable truncheons on PICs.

CSD does not maintain a breakdown of cases involving the use of necessary force by correctional officers on PICs by age. The numbers of cases involving institutions for young PICs and female PICs respectively in the past 5 years are tabulated below:

Year	Number of Cases Involving Institutions for Young PICs	Number of Cases Involving Institutions for Female PICs
2023	2	17
2022	3	22
2021	12	24
2020	4	20
2019	3	10

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB179**

**(Question Serial No. 3534)**

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:

Regarding the Police's efforts on maintenance of law and order in the community, please advise this Committee of the following:

1. It is mentioned under Programme (1) that there will be a decrease of 23 posts. Please provide details of the respective ranks, formations and duties, as well as the measures in place to maintain current service standards with reduced manpower;
2. Whether the Police have explored the use of technology to enhance its capability in responding to emergency calls in the past year; and
3. Further to the above, whether the response time to emergency calls has been shortened and if the indicators for responding to 999 telephone calls have been enhanced; if so, the details and expenditure involved; if not, the reason(s).

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hak-kan (LegCo internal reference no.: 55)

Reply:

1. In 2024-25, there will be a net decrease of 23 posts (involving creation of 16 disciplined services posts and 3 civilian posts and reduction of 42 civilian posts) on the staff establishment under Programme (1) "Maintenance of Law and Order in the Community". Details on the number of posts to be created and the salaries involved are set out in the following table:

Rank	Number of posts to be created	Police Pay Scale (PPS)/ Master Pay Scale (MPS)	Monthly salary for the rank in HK\$ (from 1 April 2023)
Superintendent	1	PPS 50 – 53	128,510 – 144,440
Chief Inspector	1	PPS 44 – 49	100,200 – 123,905
Senior Inspector/Inspector	2	PPS 24 – 43	50,500 – 96,600
Sergeant	4	PPS 17 – 28	41,155 – 59,080
Police Constable	8	PPS 4 – 17	28,095 – 41,155
<b>Total (police officers)</b>	<b>16</b>		
Supplies Assistant	1	MPS 1 – 10	14,735 – 25,815
Police Translator I	1	MPS 22 – 27	47,795 – 60,065
Police Translator II	1	MPS 10 – 21	25,815 – 45,640
<b>Total (civilian staff)</b>	<b>3</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>		

Details on the number of posts to be reduced and the salaries involved are set out in the following table:

Rank	Number of posts to be reduced	Master Pay Scale (MPS)/ Model Scale 1 Pay Scale (MOD)	Monthly salary for the rank in HK\$ (from 1 April 2023)
Office Assistant	-13	MPS 1 – 6	14,735 – 20,165
Typist	-7	MPS 2 – 10	15,665 – 25,815
Artisan	-1	MPS 5 – 8	18,965 – 22,895
Workman I	-1	MOD 3 – 13	15,690 – 19,175
Workman II	-20	MOD 0 – 8	14,730 – 17,355
<b>Total (civilian staff)</b>	<b>-42</b>		

For operational effectiveness, it is inappropriate to disclose the details on the reduction of establishment in individual formations.

To continuously enhance its efficiency, the Police Force has developed comprehensive human resources and strategic plans that cover various aspects, including staff training and career development. Officers are encouraged to pursue self-advancement and strengthen their professional capacity so as to serve members of the public more effectively. The Force deploys resources flexibly in response to policing needs, ensuring that the community's service demands are effectively met. In general, policing services will not be affected by the reduction in establishment.

- Since October 2023, the Force has fully rolled out the Advanced Mobile Location Services. When a member of the public makes a 999 call using a smartphone to seek assistance, the 999 Reporting Centre simultaneously receives the caller's geolocation, significantly enhancing operational effectiveness in responding to emergency calls.

In January 2024, the Force launched the “HKSOS Mobile Application”, which is specially designed for outdoor activities to assist the public in planning their journeys and safeguard their lives. When a member of the public requests assistance through the application, the 999 Reporting Centre immediately receives the itinerary and location shared by the member of the public, thereby assisting search and rescue personnel in locating the person in need of help as soon as possible.

To assist the hearing and speech impaired persons in sending help-seeking messages to the 999 Reporting Centre, the Force has enhanced the HKSOS application to provide 9 categories of help-seeking messages in graphics and text, such as fractures, severe bleeding and breathing difficulties, for selection by users and to transmit the user’s geolocation when seeking assistance.

Furthermore, the Force is actively developing the Next Generation Emergency Telephone System, including a platform for handling multimedia data, which will provide an additional means for members of the public to transmit multimedia data to the 999 Reporting Centre.

3. As outlined in the Performance Pledge for 999 emergency calls, the Force strives to answer all 999 calls within 9 seconds and respond to all genuine emergency 999 calls within an average response time of 9 minutes in Hong Kong and Kowloon and 15 minutes in the New Territories. The response time is measured from the time a report is received at the 999 console of the Regional Command and Control Centre to the arrival of police officers at the scene.

In 2023, the 999 console of the Force’s Regional Command and Control Centre answered 2 568 591 calls for assistance, with an average answer time of 7.8 seconds. Of these, 81 659 calls were emergency calls requiring police follow-up, with over 98.1% responded to within the time stipulated in the Performance Pledge.

The Hong Kong Police Force’s standard of the Performance Pledge for emergency call services is on par with, or even surpasses, that of other major cities worldwide. For example, in London and Singapore, the target response times for the police in answering 999 calls and responding to emergency requests are 10 seconds and 15 minutes respectively. The Force continuously reviews the 999 emergency services and is committed to providing the public with prompt and efficient services.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB180**

**(Question Serial No. 3538)**

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:

Regarding the Police's efforts on prevention and detection of crime, please advise this Committee of the following:

1. Details on the respective ranks, formations and duties in respect of the increase of 7 posts under Programme (2);
2. Whether the Police have introduced new technologies to enhance enforcement capabilities in tackling technology crime in the past year; if so, the details of the technologies, the expenditure involved, and the specific strategies implemented to enhance the professional knowledge of investigating officers in tackling technology crime;
3. The staff establishment, relevant expenditure, and specific work effectiveness of the "e-Crime Processing and Analysis Hub" and the "Anti-Deception Coordination Centre" in the past year; and whether the Police will consider adjusting the staff establishment of these two centres in the coming year to address the increasing number of deception cases; and
4. Further to the above, whether the Police will review the effectiveness of the various existing anti-deception and anti-crime publicity campaigns.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hak-kan (LegCo internal reference no.: 59)

Reply:

1. In 2024-25, there will be a net increase of 7 posts (comprising an increase of 28 posts of police officers and a decrease of 3 posts of police officers and 18 civilian posts) on the staff establishment under Programme (2) "Prevention and Detection of Crime". Of the 28 police officer posts to be created, 3 will be under the Anti-Deception Coordination Centre (ADCC) of the Commercial Crime Bureau and 8 will be under the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau (CSTCB) for enhancing territory-wide anti-deception capability; while the other 17 will be under the CSTCB for discharging cyber security work in relation to the 15th National Games in 2025.

Details on the posts to be created and the salaries involved are tabulated as follows:

Rank	Number of posts to be created	Police Pay Scale (PPS)	Monthly salary for the rank (HK\$) (from 1 April 2023)
Chief Inspector	1	PPS 44 – 49	100,200 – 123,905
Senior Inspector/Inspector	4	PPS 24 – 43	50,500 – 96,600
Station Sergeant	3	PPS 24 – 33a	50,500 – 74,590
Sergeant	12	PPS 17 – 28	41,155 – 59,080
Police Constable	8	PPS 4 – 17	28,095 – 41,155
<b>Total (police officers)</b>	<b>28</b>		

Details on the posts to be reduced and the salaries involved are set out in the following table:

Rank	Number of posts to be reduced	Police Pay Scale (PPS)/ Master Pay Scale (MPS)/ Model Scale 1 Pay Scale (MOD)	Monthly salary for the rank (HK\$) (from 1 April 2023)
Police Constable	-3	PPS 4 – 17	28,095 – 41,155
<b>Total (police officers)</b>	<b>-3</b>		
<b>Total (civilian officers)</b>	<b>-18</b>	MPS 1 – 24 MOD 3 – 13	14,735 – 52,410 15,690 – 19,175
<b>Total</b>	<b>-21</b>		

- “Enhancing cyber security and combating technology crime” is among Commissioner’s Operational Priorities in 2024. The Police Force has been taking proactive measures on all fronts to combat deception and technology crimes, such as striving to leverage technology in collaboration with relevant stakeholders in the fight against deception and technology crimes. Notably, in November 2023, the Force collaborated with the Hong Kong Monetary Authority and the banking sector to launch the Faster Payment System (FPS) Suspicious Proxy ID Alert, thereby connecting the FPS platform to the “Scameter” database. During online fund transfer via FPS, the matching function of the database can identify payees whose information is related to scam reports, and an alert message will appear on the confirmation page. By 31 January 2024, this mechanism had issued over 264 000 alerts, flagging high-risk transfers totalling nearly \$410 million. The Force will continue to step up publicity and implement such mechanism in other platforms.

In September 2022, the CSTCB launched “Scameter”, a one-stop scam and pitfall search engine, followed by its mobile application “Scameter+” in February 2023. As at 31 January 2024, “Scameter+” has surpassed 228 000 downloads, while “Scameter” has logged 2.3 million searches and issued nearly 400 000 alerts on frauds and cybersecurity risks. In February 2024, the Force optimised the functions of “Scameter+” by incorporating automation elements, which enable the application to issue alerts when users browse suspicious websites and receive suspicious calls. To further enrich the

database of “Scameter+”, the Force has also introduced a public “reporting” mechanism for members of the public to report suspicious websites or calls through the application. The Force will continue to explore advanced technological applications to combat deception and fraud.

The Force will also continue to enhance its capability in combating technology crimes and handling cybersecurity incidents, as well as stepping up collaboration, intelligence exchange and law enforcement with relevant stakeholders and law enforcement agencies, such as the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer and the Hong Kong Productivity Council. In addition, the Cybercrime Policing Advisory Panel (CPAP) of the CSTCB was set up in December 2022, comprising 12 panel members who are experts and leaders from the academia, the education sector, commercial chambers, the financial sector, the information technology sector, the telecommunications sector and various public entities. The CPAP assists the Force in formulating short, medium and long term strategic directions in order to strengthen the Force’s digital policing capabilities in combating cybercrimes. As of December 2023, 4 meetings had been convened by the CPAP.

On another front, the CSTCB hosted the International Symposium on Cyber Policing in September 2023. The event was attended by over 200 individuals, including 110 senior law enforcement officers, members, experts and academics from the Mainland, Macao, INTERPOL and 35 overseas countries, along with approximately 100 local working partners of the Force. During the symposium, 18 distinguished scholars from renowned universities and experts from the cyber technology industry, specialising in digital finance, communications technology, and cybersecurity, were invited to deliver keynote speeches and lead panel discussions for in-depth exploration into issues related to cyber policing. The symposium not only provided a platform for international law enforcement and public and private organisations to exchange insights but also fostered international collaboration in policing to better address the evolving trends of cybercrime in the context of globalization. Additionally, the CSTCB has regularly conducted training programmes to bolster police officers’ expertise in handling technology crime, with two courses accredited at Level 4 and one at Level 5 of the Qualifications Framework respectively.

3. Currently, the Commercial Crime Bureau and its ADCC, the CSTCB, the Financial Intelligence and Investigation Bureau, as well as the crime investigation units of various Police Regions and Districts are all dedicated to cracking down on scams and technology-related crimes.

To further enhance the Force’s capabilities in combating deception, the e-Crime Processing and Analysis Hub (E-Hub) was established in September 2022 as a one-stop platform to handle all e-reports of technology crime and deception. Through an optimised computer system, correlation analysis is undertaken to identify relevant case clusters for consolidated investigation, with a view to focusing resources on following up the cases more swiftly and efficiently, thereby enhancing the Force’s effectiveness in handling technology crimes and deceptions. The E-Hub has been operating smoothly since its establishment and the e-Report Centre has been widely used by the public. Specifically, e-reports on technology crimes and deceptions have increased from a monthly average of about 2 200 prior to the establishment of the E-Hub to

roughly 3 700 at present. As of 31 January 2024, the E-Hub has received 59 357 e-reports on technology crimes and deceptions, all of which have been followed up in due course. Meanwhile, the E-Hub has been maintaining close co-operation with the ADCC on interception of fraud proceeds. As of 31 January 2024, more than \$670 million worth of crime proceeds have been successfully intercepted in 269 technology crime and deception-related e-reporting cases.

In November 2023, the Force collaborated with 10 major banks in establishing the Anti-Deception Alliance (ADA), where bank representatives are deployed to work in the Police Headquarters to provide more direct and instant communication and assistance in intercepting fraudulent payments and issuing alerts. Since its official launch on 27 November 2023 until the end of January 2024, the response time for 95% of payment interception requests has been reduced to within 2 hours, markedly improving efficiency. In respect of upstream scam intervention, the ADA has proactively prevented 162 persons from making further transfers to fraudsters by the end of January. For intercepting fraud proceeds, the ADCC continues to assist in minimising victims' losses, intercepting over \$12.5 billion worth of fraud proceed since its inception until the end of last year.

In 2023-24, the staff establishment of the ADCC expanded from 49 in the previous financial year to 90, with permanent posts increasing by 5 to 37, and the remainder filled by 53 officers on secondment from different Force formations or Post-Retirement Service Contracts. In 2024-25, the number of permanent posts in the ADCC will increase by 3 to 40, whereas the establishment of the E-hub will be expanded from 26 since its inception in September 2022 to 28, among which 1 is permanent post and the remainder filled by officers on secondment from different Force formations.

The Force will periodically review the manpower and resources allocated to various formations and adjust the establishment in light of the latest crime trends and policing needs.

4. The Force has been adopting a multi-agency approach by collaborating with other government departments, regulatory agencies and industry stakeholders to implement anti-crime publicity and educational campaigns. As part of the Force's ongoing efforts to prevent deception, an extensive publicity strategy has been adopted to disseminate anti-deception messages by utilising multiple channels, both online and offline, with a view to enhancing public awareness of anti-deception. This includes broadcasting anti-deception clips and television series; conducting anti-deception talks; producing teaching materials for primary and secondary schools; launching a WhatsApp channel; registering on various social media platforms, such as Xiaohongshu; and holding press conferences on the latest defrauding tricks as well as large-scale publicity campaigns. The Force will from time to time review the effectiveness of these initiatives.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB181**

**(Question Serial No. 3539)**

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

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

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 Logistics Bureau (TLB). The reply was prepared by the Hong Kong Police Force and vetted by the TLB.]

Question:

Regarding the Police's efforts on road safety, please advise this Committee of the following:

1. Details on the respective ranks, formations and duties in respect of the decrease of 29 posts under Programme (3), as well as the measures in place to maintain current service standards with reduced manpower; and
2. It is mentioned under Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024-25 that the Police will enhance the efficiency and overall accuracy of traffic enforcement through the wider use of technology, including e-Ticketing. In this connection, please provide information on the specific plans and the estimated expenditure, the manpower expected to be saved, as well as whether indicators have been established to measure effectiveness and accuracy of these initiatives.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hak-kan (LegCo internal reference no.: 60)

Reply:

1. In 2024-25, there will be a net decrease of 29 posts (including an increase of 3 civilian posts and a decrease of 2 disciplined services posts as well as 30 civilian posts) under Programme (3) "Road Safety". Details on the posts to be reduced and the salaries involved are tabulated as follows:

Rank	Number of posts to be reduced	Police Pay Scale (PPS)/ Master Pay Scale (MPS)/ Model Scale I Pay Scale (MOD)	Monthly salary for the rank in HK\$ (from 1 April 2023)
Senior Inspector/ Inspector	-1	PPS 24 – 43	50,500 – 96,600
Police Constable	-1	PPS 4 – 17	28,095 – 41,155
<b>Total (police officers)</b>	<b>-2</b>		
Office Assistant	-3	MPS 1 – 6	14,735 – 20,165
Senior Typist	-1	MPS 11 – 15	27,405 – 34,060
Typist	-10	MPS 2 – 10	15,665 – 25,815
Artisan	-6	MPS 5 – 8	18,965 – 22,895
Property Attendant	-10	MOD 3 – 13	15,690 – 19,175
<b>Total (civilian staff)</b>	<b>-30</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>-32</b>		

For operational effectiveness, it is inappropriate to disclose other information requested in the question.

The Police Force has formulated comprehensive human resources and strategic plans for staff training, career development, among others, to continuously enhance the its capability. Officers are encouraged to make self-advancement and strengthen their own professional capacity so as to serve members of the public more effectively. The Force flexibly allocates resources to meet the policing needs and ensure community service needs are effectively met. In general, policing services will not be affected by the establishment adjustments.

- Since March 2020, the Force has launched in phases the e-Ticketing Pilot Scheme in all police districts across the territory. Frontline enforcement officers have since been able to access or input data on illegally parked vehicles via their mobile devices and instantly print out fixed penalty tickets (FPTs) in order to reduce human errors in issuing handwritten FPTs, thereby enhancing the overall enforcement accuracy.

Under the current legislation, the Force is required to issue handwritten FPTs/notices demanding payment of fixed penalty only for traffic contraventions under Cap. 237 and Cap. 240. Meanwhile, in December 2023, the Government introduced the Electronic Traffic Enforcement (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill into the Legislative Council (LegCo) to provide legal basis for the issuance of electronic FPTs. The bill is currently considered by the LegCo for enactment. Our goal is to gradually implement the Electronic Traffic Enforcement in 2024 after the bill is passed by the LegCo.

In June 2021, a new commitment of \$352 million was secured from the Finance Committee of the LegCo for the development of the Traffic e-Enforcement System. The system comprises 3 main components: (1) an e-Ticketing system that digitises the frontline enforcement process; (2) an internal centralised Force platform for managing

all the relevant data and inquiries related to traffic enforcement; and (3) a dedicated website and mobile application that provides a one-stop service for the public. With the full implementation of the System and e-Ticketing, it is anticipated that the number of supporting civilian staff at the Force's Central Traffic Prosecutions Division can be reduced. The time saved by frontline officers through e-Ticketing can be allocated to other police duties such as responding to calls for assistance from the public.

The Force is committed to adopting a "result-oriented" enforcement approach when formulating the overall traffic policing strategy, with a view to reducing the number of persons killed and seriously injured in traffic accidents as well as changing the irresponsible behaviour of road users causing obstruction on roads. The proportion of complaints about data errors in printed FPTs has been relatively lower compared to those for handwritten FPTs since the implementation of the e-Ticketing Pilot Scheme. The Force has not established any other indicators to measure the effectiveness or accuracy of issuing FPTs.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB182**

**(Question Serial No. 3841)**

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 Logistics Bureau (TLB). The reply was prepared by the Hong Kong Police Force and vetted by the TLB.]

Question:

Will the Government inform this Committee of:  
the number of persons penalised for using electric mobility devices on roads under the relevant legislation over the past 3 years?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hak-kan (LegCo internal reference no.: 52)

Reply:

Combatting the illegal use of electric mobility devices is among the Police Force's Selected Traffic Enforcement Priorities. The number of persons arrested for illegal use of electric mobility devices over the past 3 years is tabulated as follows:

2021	2022	2023
207	236	267

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB183**

**(Question Serial No. 3777)**

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

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 in Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024-25 under Programme (1) that the Police Force will continue to identify and implement measures to ensure effective and flexible tasking of front-line officers to enhance supervision, deployment and distribution of workload. In this connection, please advise this Committee of the following:

- 1) the staff establishment and estimated expenditure of all Police Regions and the respective police stations in Hong Kong over the past 3 years (2021-22 to 2023-24); and
- 2) whether resources have been deployed in a timely manner according to the population growth trends in various districts; if so, the details; if not, the reasons.

Asked by: Hon KAN Wai-mun, Carmen (LegCo internal reference no.: 50)

Reply:

- 1) The yearly distribution of the Police Force's establishment (as at 31 December), categorised by rank and region, is detailed in the appendices of the *Hong Kong Police Review*. For information on the staff establishment of all police districts in the territory for 2021 to 2022, please refer to the *Hong Kong Police Review* available on the Force's website ([https://www.police.gov.hk/ppp\\_en/01\\_about\\_us/police\\_review.html](https://www.police.gov.hk/ppp_en/01_about_us/police_review.html)). The staff establishment, including both police officers and civilian staff, for all police regions and their respective police districts in 2023, is tabulated as follows:

Police Districts	Establishment (As at 31 December 2023)	
	Police Officers	Civilian Staff
Central District	875	75
Eastern District	781	69
Wan Chai District	756	88
Western District	781	65
Hong Kong Island Region Headquarters	1 186	198
<b>Hong Kong Island Region Total</b>	<b>4 379</b>	<b>495</b>
Kwun Tong District	436	41
Railway District	458	27
Sau Mau Ping District	631	57
Tseung Kwan O District	482	48
Wong Tai Sin District	802	68
Kowloon East Region Headquarters	985	91
<b>Kowloon East Region Total</b>	<b>3 794</b>	<b>332</b>
Kowloon City District	872	86
Mong Kok District	762	83
Sham Shui Po District	946	81
Yau Tsim District	1 091	99
Kowloon West Region Headquarters	1 440	280
<b>Kowloon West Region Total</b>	<b>5 111</b>	<b>629</b>
Border District	1 107	98
Tai Po District	838	64
Tuen Mun District	786	62
Yuen Long District	1 106	80
New Territories North Region Headquarters	1 345	268
<b>New Territories North Region Total</b>	<b>5 182</b>	<b>572</b>
Airport District	498	43
Kwai Tsing District	757	61
Lantau District	452	39
Shatin District	879	72
Tsuen Wan District	625	51
New Territories South Region Headquarters	1 146	98
<b>New Territories South Region Total</b>	<b>4 357</b>	<b>364</b>
Outer Waters District	1 127	63
Port District	672	37
Marine Region	519	69
<b>Marine Region Total</b>	<b>2 318</b>	<b>169</b>
<b>Other Departments Total</b>	<b>8 118</b>	<b>2 172</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>33 259</b>	<b>4 733</b>

The estimated expenditures of all police regions form part of the total expenditure under the Programme “Maintenance of Law and Order in the Community”. The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure involved.

- 2) The Force will review the manpower and resources of all police districts from time to time, and adjust the staff establishment and redeploy resources flexibly according to policing needs in view of factors such as crime trends, infrastructural developments, population growth and geographical characteristics.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB184**

**(Question Serial No. 3620)**

Head: (122) Hong Kong Police Force

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Road Safety

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

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

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

Question:

Under the Road Traffic (Expressway) Regulations, drivers must keep to the left-most lane of an expressway unless they are heading for a right side exit or overtaking another vehicle, in order to enhance road safety and maintain smooth traffic flow on expressways. However, there have been instances where drivers misuse the fast lanes for an extended period, which has directly or indirectly led to traffic accidents. In this connection, please advise this Committee of the following:

1. The number of traffic accidents and casualties in each of the past 3 years involving vehicles following too closely in the fast lane of expressways, including the number of those involving chain collisions among multiple vehicles;
2. The number of law enforcement actions taken against the prolonged misuse of fast lanes in each of the past 3 years, broken down by Police's regional traffic formation;
3. The number of drivers prosecuted for not keeping to the left-most lane on expressways;
4. Prolonged misuse of fast lanes is not only a violation of the law, but also an indication of inadequate driving knowledge and poor driving attitudes among drivers. Please advise whether educational and publicity work has been conducted for drivers, in addition to law enforcement, in the past 5 years; if so, the details; if not, the reason(s); and
5. Whether the law enforcement agencies will consider introducing the use of technologies for enforcement purposes to enhance prosecution efforts against the prolonged misuse of fast lanes.

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Hei, Edward (LegCo internal reference no.: 131)

Reply:

1. The number of traffic accidents and injuries involving “vehicles following too closely on expressways” for each of the past 3 years is tabulated as follows:

Year	2021	2022	2023
Number of traffic accidents	353	241	340
Number of injuries involved	573	410	557

Note: No fatalities resulted from traffic accidents involving “vehicles following too closely on expressways”.

2. As the Police Force does not maintain data on “enforcement actions taken against the prolonged misuse of fast lanes”, a specific breakdown is not available.
3. The number of the Force’s enforcement actions taken against drivers “not complying with the restriction on vehicles using the right-most lane on a left-driving expressway” for each of the past 3 years is tabulated as follows:

Year	2021	2022	2023
Number of enforcement actions taken	3 874	4 469	4 791

4. The Force always attaches great importance to road safety and strives to raise drivers’ awareness and curb irresponsible driving through publicity, education and enforcement actions. Collaborating with various government departments and bodies (including the Transport Department and the Road Safety Council), the Force engages in promotional and educational campaigns by leveraging online platforms, social media and publicity materials, and disseminating videos and safety information to remind drivers to adhere to traffic laws. Going forward, the Force will persist in advocating for safe driving among all stakeholders and will continue to monitor and analyse traffic accident data and facts to implement measures addressing emerging trends.
5. The Force embraces technological advancements for traffic enforcement and draws on the experiences of international law enforcement agencies to consider the adoption of new technologies that enhance enforcement efficiency.

To ensure the safety of road users, the Force strategically targets offences like “failing to comply with the restriction on vehicles using the right-most lane on left-driving expressways”. Additionally, mobile devices, including in-car video recording systems, are utilised for ad hoc enforcement operations. Such measures are designed to keep drivers vigilant, thereby mitigating the risk of traffic accidents.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB185**

**(Question Serial No. 3621)**

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 purview of the Transport and Logistics Bureau (TLB) and the Environmental Protection Department (EPD). The reply was prepared by the Hong Kong Police Force upon consultation with the EPD and vetted by the TLB.]

Question:

Given Hong Kong's dense population, illegal road racing during the early hours and the intentional emission of excessive noise by vehicles have caused significant disturbances to residents living near major roads and expressways. In addressing the issue of vehicular noise nuisance, will the Government advise this Committee of the following:

1. The number of complaints received about illegal road racing or vehicular noise in the past 3 years;
2. The total number of enforcement actions taken and prosecutions initiated by the Police's Regional Traffic Formations in the past 3 years;
3. Whether there are currently any identified black spots for vehicular noise nuisance in Hong Kong; if so, please provide details; if not, please advise whether a mechanism will be established; and
4. Noting that law enforcement agencies of some countries and regions have utilised technology such as noise-detecting cameras to capture evidence of excessively loud vehicles and issue fixed penalty tickets upon investigation, please advise whether similar technologies will be introduced to Hong Kong.

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Hei, Edward (LegCo internal reference no.: 132)

Reply:

1. The Police Force does not maintain information on complaints about illegal road racing or vehicular noise.

2. The figures on enforcement actions taken by the Force against speeding by police region for the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

Police Region	Enforcement figures on speeding		
	2021	2022	2023
Hong Kong Island	24 563	29 380	19 793
Kowloon East	47 728	43 132	50 576
Kowloon West	49 005	70 508	58 089
New Territories South	50 114	47 211	53 898
New Territories North	94 923	75 052	71 215
Total	266 333	265 283	253 571

The Force does not maintain a breakdown of the figures on illegal road racing.

- 3-4. The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) has all along been keeping abreast of the development of overseas technologies in monitoring excessive noise emitted from modified vehicles. The EPD has applied artificial intelligence in recent years in analysing sounds and images and developed technology to automatically identify illegally modified vehicles that emit excessive noise. The Force will continue to keep in view technological developments (including those developed by the EPD) and introduce suitable technologies to facilitate law enforcement in a timely manner.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB186**

**(Question Serial No. 3547)**

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

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

Programme: (2) Fire Protection and Prevention

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

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Regarding hill fire prevention, would the Department inform this Committee of the following:

Hill fires occur from time to time in Hong Kong's extensive country parks, and the situation could be dire should the fires spread. What are the measures that the Department has in place to prevent hill fires and the annual expenditure involved? What publicity and education programmes does the Department have to explain the hazards and the importance of hill fire prevention to the public?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hak-kan (LegCo internal reference no.: 68)

Reply:

The Fire Services Department (FSD) has been taking multi-pronged measures to prevent hill fires. In terms of hill fires prevention operations, the FSD deploys additional manpower and equipment to divisions with a relatively high number of hill fires during Ching Ming Festival and Chung Yeung Festival, which is the peak period for hill fires in the year, to handle the anticipated higher-than-usual occurrence of hill fire incidents, and sets up Forward Command Post to facilitate the monitoring and deployment of appropriate resources for fighting fires.

In terms of publicity and education, the FSD promotes and enhances public awareness of the danger of and prevention of hill fire through various channels, and steps up its publicity and education efforts during Ching Ming Festival and Chung Yeung Festival when the number of hill fires is relatively high. Such work includes:

**Promotion through Television and Radio**

Announcements in the public interest (APIs) are broadcasted on television and radio channels as well as the Housing Department's Housing Channel for the public to learn about hill fire hazards and the importance of hill fire prevention through media that are familiar to them.

**Poster Display**

Various hill fire prevention posters are produced and displayed at fire stations/ambulance depots, community halls/community centres of the Home Affairs Department, public housing

estates and poster sites managed by the Information Services Department to promote the message of hill fire prevention.

### **Banner Display**

Hill fire prevention banners are displayed at prominent locations of rural areas in the New Territories to raise public awareness of hill fire prevention.

### **Promotion through Partners**

Links to APIs on hill fire prevention are sent to over 500 social welfare organisations through partnership with The Hong Kong Council of Social Service to ensure that the message of hill fire prevention can reach the wider community.

### **Promotion through Social Media**

Posts about hill fire prevention are released timely through the FSD's various official social media channels, leveraging their extensive coverage to spread important messages.

### **On-site Leaflet Distribution**

Hill fire prevention leaflets are distributed by the FSD personnel, in collaboration with the local community (including members of District Fire Safety Committees, Fire Safety Ambassador Honorary Presidents and Fire Safety Ambassadors) to grave sweepers in places where crowds gather (such as country parks, MTR stations, bus stops and cemeteries) during Ching Ming Festival and Chung Yeung Festival to disseminate the message of hill fire prevention to the members of public.

The FSD has, on an ongoing basis, allocated resources to reduce fire hazards in Hong Kong and organised various fire safety publicity activities to strengthen public awareness of fire safety and prevention. The FSD does not maintain a separate breakdown of the expenditure involved in hill fire prevention work since fire prevention is part of its work.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB187**

**(Question Serial No. 3782)**

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Fire Protection and Prevention

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

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

It is stated in the Programme that the Fire Services Department (FSD) will formulate a mechanism and pursue the legislative work for the Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance (FS(B)O) for empowering the FSD and the Buildings Department (BD) to carry out fire safety improvement works for owners of old composite and domestic buildings who have failed to comply with the relevant requirements and to recover the related fees from them afterwards, as well as to explore the strategy to improve the fire safety of those old buildings. In this connection, please inform this Committee of the following:

1. The final numbers of applicant buildings, applications approved, and the expenditure involved in the third round of the Fire Safety Improvement Works Subsidy Scheme (FSWS) which was open for application from 1 April 2023. What is the total amount of subsidies disbursed so far in respect of the provision of \$2 billion?
2. The numbers of applications, improvement works completed, works yet to be completed, and extension applications under the FSWS since its inception, with a breakdown by 18 districts in table form.
3. The direction of the proposed amendments to the FS(B)O, the legislative timetable, and the estimated yearly number of fire safety works to be carried out by the FSD and the BD after the enactment of the Ordinance.

Asked by: Hon CHENG Wing-shun, Vincent (LegCo internal reference no.: 70)

Reply:

1. To assist owners of old buildings in complying with the requirements of the Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance (Cap. 572) ("the Ordinance"), the Government, in partnership with the Urban Renewal Authority ("URA"), implemented a \$2-billion Fire Safety Improvement Works Subsidy Scheme ("FSWS") in 2018, providing subsidies for carrying out fire safety improvement works. Subsequently, the Government increased the funding for the FSWS to a total of \$5.5 billion. In 2018 and 2020, the URA rolled

out 2 rounds of applications. Since then, the URA launched the third round of application from April to September 2023 to assist more owners in need to enhance the fire safety standard of their buildings.

There were 2 249 and 734 applications meeting the basic application requirements in the first and second rounds of the FSWS applications respectively. The URA issued letters of Approval-in-principle” (“AIP”) to the applicants of the above 2 983 applications, and contacted them about the commencement of fire safety improvement works. For the third round, the URA received 1 307 applications meeting the basic application requirements. The URA is processing the applications and will issue to the applicants AIP in due course. On the amount of subsidy, as at 29 February 2024, the URA disbursed about \$72 million to the owners of 162 buildings.

In accordance with the estimated cash flow requirements of the FSWS, the Government disbursed \$650 million of funding to the URA in 2023-24 and plans to disburse \$780 million of funding to the URA in 2024-25.

2. According to the URA’s information as at 29 February 2024, the number of applications issued with AIP in the first and second rounds and the progress of works by District Council district are set out in the following table:

<b>District Council district</b>	<b>Number of applications issued with AIP</b>	<b>Number of applications with works in progress</b>	<b>Number of applications with works completed</b>
Central and Western	325	316	9
Wan Chai	243	222	21
Eastern	200	197	3
Southern	76	70	6
Yau Tsim Mong	746	716	30
Sham Shui Po	453	433	20
Kowloon City	291	278	13
Wong Tai Sin	102	99	3
Kwun Tong	67	67	0
Tsuen Wan	131	126	5
Tuen Mun	35	35	0
Yuen Long	155	153	2
North	22	21	1
Tai Po	66	66	0
Sai Kung	3	3	0
Sha Tin	25	23	2
Islands	4	4	0
Kwai Tsing	39	38	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>2 983</b>	<b>2 867</b>	<b>116</b>

An applicant under the FSWS shall carry out fire safety improvement works in accordance with the schedule stipulated in the AIP. If the applicant fails to comply

with the required schedule, he/she may apply to the URA for an extension. The URA does not keep separate statistics on such information.

The number of applications meeting the basic application requirements in the third round by District Council district is tabulated as follows:

<b>District Council district</b>	<b>Number of applications meeting the basic application requirements</b>
Central and Western	175
Wan Chai	124
Eastern	111
Southern	24
Yau Tsim Mong	269
Sham Shui Po	176
Kowloon City	148
Wong Tai Sin	37
Kwun Tong	31
Tsuen Wan	58
Tuen Mun	21
Yuen Long	48
North	12
Tai Po	26
Sai Kung	3
Sha Tin	12
Islands	0
Kwai Tsing	32
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 307</b>

As mentioned above, the URA is processing the third round applications and will issue to the applicants AIP in due course.

3. The Government has been proactively providing various kinds of support to owners of old buildings (including support on financial, coordination among owners as well as technical aspects) with a view to assisting them in carrying out fire safety improvement works. Nevertheless, some owners, in particular those of “three-nil” buildings, may still have difficulties in complying with the requirements of the Ordinance due to the lack of coordination capability. In order to further upgrade the fire safety standards of old buildings, the Government has proposed to amend the Ordinance, and by improving the existing legal framework through legislative amendments with reference to the Buildings Department’s (“BD”) experiences in the work of building safety and the similar mechanism under the Buildings Ordinance (Cap. 123), to empower the enforcement authorities, i.e. the BD and the Fire Services Department, to carry out fire safety improvement works (“defaulted works”) for owners of target buildings who have

failed to comply with the requirements of the Ordinance, and to recover the relevant fees from such owners upon completion of the works.

The Government listened to the views of the Panel on Security of the Legislative Council (“the Panel”) on the proposed amendments to the Ordinance in September 2021 and July 2022 respectively, and launched a ten-week public consultation exercise on 5 July 2022. Overall, the comments we received are generally in support of the Government’s proposal. The Government also briefed the Panel on 5 December last year on the proposals regarding the amendments to the Ordinance and the defaulted works mechanism, etc. At present, the Government is stepping up the drafting work of the proposed amendment bill, with the target of submitting it to the Legislative Council for scrutiny in 2024.

It is the responsibility of owners to timely repair and properly maintain private buildings, including carrying out the required fire safety improvement works to enhance the fire safety standards thereof according to the Ordinance. Subject to relevant factors such as the effective use of public funds and government resources, the trade’s capacity and willingness to undertake the works, as well as not compromising the principle that owners are obligated to timely repair and properly maintain their private buildings, the Government would only, under exceptional circumstances, carry out defaulted works for target buildings that fail to comply with the requirements of the Ordinance, so that owners of target buildings in genuine need will be able to obtain assistance from the Government. It is estimated that defaulted works could be carried out for about 20 to 60 target buildings every year.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB188**

**(Question Serial No. 3626)**

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Fire Protection and Prevention

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

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

In 2016, a no. 4 alarm fire broke out at a mini-storage in Ngau Tau Kok. The Fire Services Department (FSD) later accepted the recommendations made by the Coroner's Court to initiate inspections and law enforcement actions in Mini-storage Premises across the territory for the sake of their fire safety. Would the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. To the FSD's knowledge, what is the current number of Mini-storage Premises across the territory?
2. What were the numbers of Mini-storage Premises inspected and inspections per Mini-storage Premises conducted by the FSD in each of the past 3 years?
3. What was the total number of common fire hazards in Mini-storage Premises identified by the FSD during the inspections in each of the past 3 years?
4. In relation to the above question, what were the top 3 common hazards and the respective percentages they accounted for in the total number of common fire hazards in Mini-storage Premises identified by the FSD each year?
5. What was the number of Fire Hazard Abatement Notices (FHANs) issued to Mini-storage Premises operators by the FSD in each of the past 3 years?
6. What was the number of prosecutions against Mini-storage Premises operators for failing to abate fire hazards within the time frames specified in the FHANs in each of the past 3 years?
7. The recommendations made by the Coroner's Court earlier included the conducting of a comprehensive review of the internal messaging transmission mechanism of the FSD, which was then followed up by a dedicated committee of the Department. What is the current implementation progress of the recommendations?

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Hei, Edward (LegCo internal reference no.: 138)

Reply:

1. Mini-storage Premises may operate in various modes. Those containing cluster(s) of lockers or storage cubicles allowing direct access for the public to store and retrieve articles are Target Mini-storage Premises. According to the records of the Fire Services Department (FSD) as at 29 February 2024, there was a total of 706 Target Mini-storage Premises in operation in Hong Kong.

2. to 6.

The figures related to the inspections of Target Mini-storage Premises conducted by the FSD in the past 3 years are tabulated below:

	2021	2022	2023
Number of Target Mini-storage Premises inspected by the FSD	189	204	358
Number of fire hazards identified by the FSD during the inspections of Target Mini-storage Premises	82	127	103
Number of Fire Hazard Abatement Notices (FHANs) issued to Target Mini-storage Premises operators by the FSD	82	127	103
Number of prosecutions against Target Mini-storage Premises operators for failing to abate fire hazards within the timeframe specified in the FHANs	21	144	109

The FSD does not maintain separate statistics on the number of inspections per Target Mini-storage Premises each year.

In addition, the top 3 common fire hazards identified by the FSD during inspections of Target Mini-storage Premises and the respective percentages they accounted for in the total number of fire hazards identified during those inspections in the past 3 years are tabulated below:

Common fire hazards identified	2021	2022	2023
Undesirable arrangement of storage cubicles	32.9%	30.7%	35.0%
Obstruction / insufficient number of windows	22.0%	33.1%	31.1%
Insufficient exit signs and directional signs	18.3%	17.3%	14.6%

7. The FSD has set up a dedicated committee to comprehensively follow up on the recommendations made by the Coroner's Court and has implemented relevant measures, including improvement of internal messaging dissemination mechanism to ensure more effective dissemination of important messages.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB189**

**(Question Serial No. 3765)**

Head: (45) Fire Services Department

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

Programme: (3) Ambulance Service

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

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Please provide the following figures:

1. The number of ambulance service calls from the Mainland for conveying patients from boundary control points in the past year (please give a breakdown of the number of calls by control point);
2. The shortest, longest and average time required for all completed cases in the past year;
3. The overall expenditure on ambulance service calls from the Mainland for conveying patients from boundary control points in the past year.

Asked by: Hon WONG Chun-sek, Edmund (LegCo internal reference no.: 31)

Reply:

Under normal circumstances, upon receipt of a call for emergency ambulance services, the Fire Services Department (FSD) will dispatch ambulance(s) in accordance with the established arrangements to convey patient(s) from the Hong Kong ports of land boundary control points to a nearby Accident and Emergency Department under the Hospital Authority to receive the services required.

1. The number of calls for emergency ambulance services handled by the FSD at Hong Kong ports of various land boundary control points in 2023 is tabulated as follows:

Hong Kong port of land boundary control point	Number of calls
Lok Ma Chau	394
Lok Ma Chau Spur Line	595
Lo Wu	1 193
Shenzhen Bay	1 332
Man Kam To	255
Sha Tau Kok	1
Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge	436
Heung Yuen Wai	256
Express Rail Link West Kowloon	406
Total	4 868

2. The FSD does not maintain relevant statistics of the time that the FSD required for handling the above-mentioned emergency ambulance services.
3. The FSD's revised estimated expenditure on overall ambulance service for 2023-24 is about \$2.77 billion. The FSD does not keep separate statistics of the expenditure involved in the handling of cases of emergency ambulance calls at Hong Kong ports of land boundary control points.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB190**

**(Question Serial No. 3794)**

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:

The utilisation rate of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge was back on an upward track following the resumption of normal travel between the Mainland and Hong Kong in 2023. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of:

the plans and estimates for taking forward the development of Smart Customs and inspection facilities to achieve higher efficiency in vehicle clearance?

Asked by: Hon HO King-hong, Adrian Pedro (LegCo internal reference no.: 25)

Reply:

In 2024-25, the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) will continue to take forward the Smart Customs development to enhance efficiency for vehicular clearance. C&ED will continue to improve different electronic customs clearance platforms, make use of big data analytics and artificial intelligence (AI) to facilitate risk management and continue to deploy advanced inspection equipment, such as the Gantry Type X-Ray Vehicle Inspection Systems, Mobile X-Ray Vehicle Scanning Systems, Computed Tomography Scanners with AI functions, auto-detection devices for X-ray checkers, etc.. Moreover, C&ED will continue to promote and develop various vehicle clearance facilitation schemes, for example, the Inter-modal Transshipment Facilitation Scheme, the Single E-lock Scheme, the Hong Kong Authorized Economic Operator Programme, etc., and closely liaise with the trade to coordinate arrangements on customs clearance.

In 2024-25, C&ED's estimated expenditure under the Programme "Control and Enforcement" is \$4,742 million, involving an estimated number of 6 168 posts. As improving customs clearance services to facilitate efficient cross boundary passenger, cargo and vehicular flows constitutes part of the work of the Department, it is difficult to quantify such expenditure separately.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB191**

**(Question Serial No. 3606)**

Head: (168) Hong Kong Observatory

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Radiation Monitoring and Assessment

Controlling Officer: Director of the Hong Kong Observatory (Dr CHAN Pak-wai)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

The Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) launched a School Community Ambient Radiation Measurement Pilot Programme (the Pilot Programme) named Gamma-Go in 2021. Will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. the numbers of participating schools and workshops organised in each year since the launch of the Pilot Programme;
2. given that the HKO is responsible for designing the portable Gamma-Go device required for the activities, the design, production costs and fees;
3. whether the data collected from on-site surveys and measurements under the Pilot Programme are open for public viewing; if not, whether the HKO will consider opening up the data to tie in with the Government's principle of open data; and
4. whether the Government has considered to regularise the Pilot Programme; if not, the expected completion date of the Pilot Programme?

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Hei, Edward (LegCo internal reference no.: 116)

Reply:

The Gamma-Go activity launched by the Hong Kong Observatory in 2021 has already been regularised. On average, around 30 workshops are held annually, with the participation of about 25 schools each year. As the expenditure on the design and production of the portable Gamma-Go devices has been subsumed under the regular provision for the Observatory, a breakdown of the relevant expenditure is not available.

The Gamma-Go activity aims to enhance students' understanding of radiation through lectures and practical activities. Participating schools will, based on their individual circumstances, arrange for students to practise measuring radiation levels at different times and in different scenarios, such as indoors, outdoors or at places with radiation sources (materials containing trace amounts of radiation for educational purposes). The data collected are mainly for educational purposes. In terms of open data, the Hong Kong

Observatory regularly publishes on its website the real-time ambient gamma radiation levels of the 12 fixed monitoring stations in Hong Kong.

- End -