

Environmental Report 2003

Health, Welfare and Food Bureau

Profile of Key Responsibilities

The Health, Welfare and Food Bureau is responsible for policy areas of health, food and environmental hygiene, elderly, social welfare and women's issues. It aims to formulate and coordinate policies and programmes:

- (i) to ensure that adequate welfare support is available to those in need;
- (ii) to safeguard and promote public health and to ensure that no one is prevented, through lack of means, from obtaining adequate medical treatment;
- (iii) to improve environmental hygiene and ensure food safety in the territory; and
- (iv) to promote the well-being and interests of women in Hong Kong.

2. The Health, Welfare and Food Bureau is organised into five divisions for the following responsibilities :

Health Division

- Policy matters relating to medical and health services, including review of health care delivery and financing systems, development of primary health care services, prevention of communicable and non-communicable diseases, development of Chinese medicine, provision of hospital services and manpower development issues.

Food and Environmental Hygiene Division

- Policy matters relating to food supply, food safety, environmental hygiene, agriculture, fisheries, and animal welfare and management.

Elderly Services Division

- Policy matters relating to elderly services and social security; and
- Elderly Commission.

Welfare Division

- Policy matters relating to social welfare provision including subvention, planning, manpower, relevant Funds, social capital and specific welfare services for family and children, young people and offenders, war veterans and people with disabilities.

Women's Division

- Policy matters relating to women's issues, including the Women's Commission, impact of government policies, legislation and services on women, and international conventions on women's issues.

3. The estimated expenditure of the Health, Welfare and Food Bureau in 2003-04 was \$160.6 million. The Bureau had 20 directorate officers and 133 non-directorate staff as at 1 April 2003. Its establishment ceiling for 2003-04 was \$56.7 million.

Environmental Goal and Policy

4. The Health, Welfare and Food Bureau supports the HKSAR Government's initiatives to improve the environment and is committed to help improve our own environmental performance by:

- (i) compliance with relevant environmental protection ordinances;
- (ii) promotion of waste reduction;
- (iii) advising other bureaux on the impact of their policies on public health;
- (iv) minimising the production of environmental pollutants and/or nuisance;
- (v) improving the general environmental conditions; and
- (vi) saving of resources.

Environmental Aspects and Impacts

5. The policies under the purview of Health, Welfare and Food Bureau may have environmental impact on various aspects, including waste disposal, air pollution and conservation of the environment. Such impacts would be taken into account when drawing up the policies.

Environmental Protection Measures

6. The following measures are relevant to environmental protection:

(A) Under policy areas

- (i) **Clinical waste**
to map out with the Hospital Authority the way forward in delivering Government's objective to dispose of clinical waste in an environmentally sound manner.

Performance

The Hospital Authority will continue to provide input to the roll-out of the future legislative framework for the control of clinical waste and its management in Hong Kong.

- (ii) **Smoking and tobacco control**
to reduce smoking prevalence and hence improve the air

quality, by discouraging smoking, educating the public, particularly the young, on the health risks involved, containing proliferation of tobacco use and protecting the public from passive smoking to the maximum possible extent.

Performance

Hong Kong's smoking prevalence rate is among the lowest in the world. In 2003, 15.3% of the population aged 15 or above were daily smokers, representing a significant drop from 23.3% in 1982. To further strengthen our anti-smoking regulatory framework, the Bureau launched in June 2001 a consultation exercise to consult the public on a host of legislative proposals to tighten statutory control over the use and promotion of tobacco products. Taking into account the views collected during the consultation exercise, the latest international developments and community opinions, we are drawing up the regulatory details. Our current timetable is to introduce an amendment bill to the Legislative Council in the first half of 2005.

(B) Within the office

(i) Waste minimisation

- ☛ use of "scrap" paper and recycled paper
- ☛ encourage circulating information, reports and consultation papers etc. through electronic means instead of using paper
- ☛ extended use of LAN in the office
- ☛ keep the number of paper publications to the absolute minimum
- ☛ use plain paper fax machines instead of thermal paper ones
- ☛ avoid sending original documents which have been sent by fax or email
- ☛ use of virtual fax services

- 🍃 use double-side photocopiers and place notices near photocopiers to remind staff of double sided copying
- 🍃 set "double sided" and "print in grayscale" as default printing modes for all printers
- 🍃 reuse of envelopes, loose minutes jackets and action tags
- 🍃 use less paper cups
- 🍃 reduce use of greeting cards
- 🍃 reuse of decorative materials at festive seasons
- 🍃 recover paper for recycling
- 🍃 recover printer cartridges for recycling
- 🍃 use recycled printer cartridge
- 🍃 extended use of refillable ball pens
- 🍃 review regularly the actual need against monthly supply items that have expiry dates

Performance

Generally effective

(ii) Energy conservation

- 🍃 remind staff to switch off lights, air-conditioners and personal computers outside office hours
- 🍃 affix "Energy Saving" stickers at all switches in the office to remind staff the importance of energy saving
- 🍃 encourage staff to use staircase for interfloor traffic
- 🍃 use energy-saving fluorescent lights
- 🍃 remove unnecessary lightings at the reception area and office area
- 🍃 turn off lights during lunch hours and when part of office is not in use
- 🍃 arrange late duty officers to conduct checking to ensure lights, air-conditioners in offices and conference rooms are switched off after office hours
- 🍃 use energy efficient equipment, such as power-saving photocopiers, printers and computers

- ☛ set all office equipment to energy saving mode when they are not in use for over 1 hour
- ☛ keep room temperature at a reasonable level to avoid excessive air-conditioning

Performance

Generally effective

(iii) Others

- ☛ implemented the Government's "Smoke-free Workplace Policy"
- ☛ organised the e-Christmas Card Design Competition in December 2003 to promote environmental awareness. The winning design had been used as the Bureau's e-Christmas card
- ☛ use unleaded fuel for departmental cars

Performance

Generally effective

Environmental Awareness within the Bureau

7. To improve the environmental awareness within the Bureau, a directorate officer has been appointed as the green manager of the Bureau since 1993. The officer has provided a focal point for introducing and reviewing environmental protection initiatives. Staff of the Bureau would be encouraged to attend training/workshops on green management and will continue to identify measures, both under policy areas or within the office, to protect our environment.