

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

HAB250

(Question Serial No. 1850)

Head: (95) Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (5) Public Libraries

Controlling Officer: Director of Leisure and Cultural Services (Ms Michelle LI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Home Affairs

Question:

It is stated in paragraph 35 that “as part of the Government’s efforts to develop Hong Kong into an age-friendly city, the Department enhanced the facilities in public libraries in phases and organised more library activities to promote reading among senior citizens”. In this regard, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. In the coming 3 years, how many phases will be implemented to enhance the facilities in public libraries and what specific facilities will be enhanced to promote reading among senior citizens?
2. Will the Government provide visiting service by mobile libraries to housing for senior citizens, government institutions and nursing homes over the territory? If yes, what are the frequency, duration of visits and the activities to be organised? If no, will the Government commence such service in 3 years? What are the objectives for the 3 years and the expected amount of resources to be devoted to achieve the objectives?
3. Will the Government adjust the library collections in light of the needs of senior citizens by, for example, providing additional “audio books” with book-reading recordings? If yes, what are the specific plans and objectives for the 3 years and how many resources will be devoted to achieve the objectives?

Asked by: Hon YEUNG Alvin (Member Question No.27)

Reply:

1. To further promote reading among the elderly, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) started to enhance the reading environment and supporting facilities for senior citizens in public libraries in 2016-17. In 2017-18 and 2018-19, the LCSD plans to extend the provision of reading-aid equipment (including desktop video magnifiers and Internet workstations installed with special aiding devices such as screen magnification software) in all major and district libraries as well as selected small libraries subject to technical feasibility. In addition, age-friendly furniture (including adjustable reading tables and suitable seating) would be provided in

existing libraries, together with suitable setting design, to enhance the reading environment. The above enhancement works have also been planned for new libraries and existing libraries when they are due for renovation.

2. Mobile library services are provided to supplement the network of static libraries in offering accessible and convenient lending services for the general public in areas where the population is dense or in remote areas without any static library nearby or in the near future. The LCSD currently operates 12 mobile libraries providing services at 111 mobile library stops, reaching out to different user groups including the elderly and children. Besides, the Hong Kong Public Libraries (HKPL) offers block loan service to community organisations and schools on a regular basis. The HKPL also supports the operation of over 200 community libraries that serve different sectors of the community, including specific target groups, such as the elderly, ethnic minorities and youths. The LCSD will continue to collaborate with interested organisations to enhance library services for the elderly through its block loan service and support for community libraries.
3. The HKPL will take into account the needs of the ageing population in its collection development. It has planned to procure more books in large print and more titles on subjects relevant and interesting to the elderly people such as nutrition and health care. As regards audio books, the number of physical audio books has increased from about 137 000 in 2015-16 to about 141 000 in 2016-17. In addition, there are about 1 500 audio e-books in the library collection of the HKPL. The HKPL would continue to explore more physical audio books and suitable audio e-books (including titles suitable for the elderly in the market) and would set aside about \$1 million annually for the procurement in the coming 3 years.

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