

Chapter 9

Public Order

The Security Bureau prioritises the maintenance of national security, law and order, public safety and an effective immigration control, making Hong Kong one of the safest cities in the world.

In 2022, the law and order situation was stable. The overall crime rate increased 10.6 per cent year on year, which was mainly attributed to the rise of deception cases. Violent crime cases were down by 7.9 per cent.

Since the implementation of the Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in June 2020, the police had arrested 236 people in cases involving suspected acts and activities that endanger national security as of end-2022. In the cases concerned, 145 individuals and five companies were prosecuted. As many organisations suspected of endangering national security ended up in dissolution or ceased operation one after another, the national security risks faced by Hong Kong have been largely reduced.

The Security Bureau Youth Uniformed Group Leaders Forum was set up in October to enable outstanding members of youth uniformed groups of disciplined and auxiliary services to advise the bureau on youth development work, such as enhancing young people's sense of national identity and national security awareness. Project Lighthouse was launched in December to pair non-ethnic Chinese youth with mentors and enhance their understanding of Chinese culture and ability in the Chinese language through various activities.

A pilot scheme which enables visitors invited by authorised host organisations to participate in specified short-term activities in Hong Kong without the need to apply for an employment visa was introduced in June. The scheme, covering 10 sectors, facilitates the gathering of global talents for exchanges in Hong Kong, giving play to the city's strength as a place to connect and excel under 'one country, two systems'. As at end-December, 895 non-local talents had benefited, including those participating in the Hong Kong Sevens and Vienna Philharmonic performances.

To tie in with the policy direction of the Northern Metropolis Development Strategy, the bureau and various government departments implemented the Sha Tau Kok Pier Opening Up Scheme from June, under which designated tour groups can use Sha Tau Kok Pier for travelling to neighbouring scenic spots such as Lai Chi Wo and Kat O by water vessels on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays. The scheme marked an important milestone in opening up Sha Tau Kok Town, which has been part of the frontier closed area since the 1960s. It aims to promote tourism development in Sha Tau Kok progressively with an emphasis on the preservation of cultural heritage and nature conservation. As at end-2022, more than 400 tour groups comprising 14,000 visitors had participated in the scheme.

The Security Bureau is responsible for security-related policies, including the maintenance of law and order, exercising immigration and customs control, rehabilitating offenders and drug abusers, and providing emergency fire and rescue services.

Fight Crime Committee

The Fight Crime Committee, chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration, provides advice and recommendations to prevent and reduce crime, coordinates crime-fighting efforts and monitors their results. In 2022, it monitored the overall crime situation, the trend of commercial crime and technology crime, the progress of the Police Superintendent's Discretion Scheme, youth crime, the drug situation and the Correctional Services Department's publicity campaign for rehabilitated people. Its 2022-23 publicity strategy targets deception, drug abuse, sexual assault, burglary, theft and enhancing the law-abiding awareness of young people.

Working with the committee are 18 District Fight Crime Committees, which monitor the crime situation at district level, reflect community concerns about law and order and organise district publicity programmes to increase crime prevention awareness.

Police Force

The Hong Kong Police Force is committed to maintaining law and order to ensure Hong Kong continues to be one of the world's safest and most stable cities.

At the end of 2022, the police had about 33,000 and 4,700 police officer and civilian posts respectively, reinforced by some 3,000 volunteers serving in the Hong Kong Auxiliary Police Force.

Crime

In 2022, 70,048 crimes were recorded, an increase of 8.7 per cent over 64,428 crimes recorded in 2021. The crime rate went up by 10.6 per cent to 961 cases per 100,000 population. There were 8,830 violent crimes, down 7.9 per cent. Robberies dropped 37.4 per cent to 77 and burglaries decreased 39.8 per cent to 886, which were the lowest figures since records began in 1969. The detection rate for burglary was the highest in the past 46 years, increasing by 7.7 percentage points to 42.6 per cent.

Of the reported crimes, 35.2 per cent, or 24,648 cases, were detected, resulting in the arrest of 28,829 people. Among these, 985 were juveniles aged between 10 and 15, while 1,789 were young people aged between 16 and 20. Most of the youths were arrested for wounding and serious assault, deception or serious drug offences.

The number of triad-related crimes increased 35.3 per cent to 2,554 compared with 2021, accounting for 3.6 per cent of all reported crimes in 2022.

The police combat triad activities by mounting enforcement action and intelligence-led operations in Hong Kong, targeting triad expansion and sources of income. They also participate in the annual tripartite operation codenamed 'Thunderbolt' with the Guangdong

Provincial Public Security Department and Macao Unitary Police Service. During the football world cup, the police mounted anti-triad and large-scale anti-illegal bookmaking operations.

Commercial Crime

The Commercial Crime Bureau combats serious commercial crime and the counterfeiting of monetary instruments. In 2022, the bureau's Fraud and Money Laundering Intelligence Taskforce facilitated nine intelligence-led operations, resulting in the arrest of 65 persons. The Anti-Deception Coordination Centre intercepted around \$1.36 billion of crime proceeds from local and overseas accounts and coordinated the arrest of 120 people and interception of four suspects. The anti-scam helpline received 38,279 calls from the public.

Cyber Security and Technology Crime

The Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau combats technology crime and maintains Hong Kong's cyber security through partnership with the community, stakeholders and overseas law enforcement agencies. During the year, 22,797 technology crimes were reported, involving a total of \$3.22 billion. The police also introduced the one-stop scam and pitfall search engine, Scameter, to help the public identify frauds and online pitfalls.

Dangerous Drugs

The police adopt a multi-agency approach, enlisting community support, to combat drug abuse and trafficking and to raise public awareness, especially among young people. Its Narcotics Bureau maintains a strategic partnership with the Mainland and overseas law enforcement agencies to combat international drug trafficking activities involving Hong Kong. In 2022, 3,775 people were arrested for drug offences, mostly involving cannabis (27.7 per cent) and methamphetamine, also known as 'ice' (19.2 per cent). The police seized 905 kilograms of cannabis buds in an operation, which was a record-high seizure of the drug.

Financial Investigation

The Financial Intelligence and Investigation Bureau combats money laundering and terrorist financing activities and assists in relevant risk assessment. The second Hong Kong Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Risk Assessment Report was published in July. During the year, 102 people were convicted of money laundering offences, with criminal assets of about \$669 million restrained and \$154 million confiscated.

Forensic Support

The Identification Bureau collects and compares fingerprints, examines firearms, takes photographs and gathers DNA evidence from crime scenes to support crime investigations and prosecutions. In 2022, fingerprint evidence linked 1,788 persons to 1,423 criminal cases.

Liaison

The Liaison Bureau is the designated police unit for liaison with law enforcement agencies outside Hong Kong on crime investigation, mutual legal assistance, surrender of fugitive offenders, and notifications under the Reciprocal Notification Mechanism with the Mainland. As a sub-bureau of the Interpol National Central Bureau in China, it deals with Interpol-related matters.

Counter-terrorism

Hong Kong has a robust legal framework and strong enforcement capability to prevent and tackle any form of terrorist activities. Through the Inter-departmental Counter Terrorism Unit, the police monitor global and domestic terrorism trends, optimise counter-terrorism strategies and formulate action plans. The focus is effective and collaborative intelligence gathering, alongside strengthening the protection of critical infrastructure and other vulnerable locations. The police have drawn up response and contingency plans and strengthen inter-unit and inter-departmental operability through specialised training and exercises.

Emphasis is also put on public education and publicity to achieve a whole-of-community approach to counter-terrorism. The Counter-terrorism Reporting Hotline was launched in June to encourage the public to provide intelligence on terrorism or violence related crimes.

National Security

The National Security Department is responsible for collecting and analysing intelligence and information concerning national security; planning, coordinating and enforcing measures and operations for safeguarding national security; investigating offences endangering national security; conducting counter-interference investigation and national security review; carrying out tasks of safeguarding national security assigned by the Committee for Safeguarding National Security of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region; and performing other duties and functions necessary for the enforcement of the national security law.

The department launched its official WeChat account in August to promote public awareness of national security and to disseminate related information. The hotline it launched in November 2020 for the public to provide information or report cases relating to national security had received over 380,000 pieces of information as of end-2022.

Traffic

During the year, 15,107 traffic accidents involved casualties, of which 89 and 1,046 cases were fatal and serious accidents respectively. The data represented 15 per cent fewer traffic accidents involving casualties and 41 per cent fewer involving fatalities or serious injuries than in 2021.

Public Events

Hong Kong residents enjoy freedom of speech, peaceful assembly and procession. The police endeavour to facilitate all lawful and peaceful public events, while maintaining public order and safety through comprehensive risk assessments and deploying adequate resources for crowd management. In 2022, 963 public meetings and 41 public processions were held.

Public Relations

The Public Relations Wing disseminates information about police activities to the media round the clock and releases information on unforeseen incidents through an interactive electronic platform. It also helps the Fight Crime Committee plan and implement publicity campaigns.

Online platforms, including the police website, mobile application and social media, are used to strengthen the police force's connection with the community. Live streaming is conducted to increase public understanding of police work and gain public support. The wing also holds press conferences and case briefings and produces videos to disseminate timely information and anti-crime messages to the public.

The *OffBeat On Air* broadcast shares information on crime prevention and the work of individual police units. The wing also helps television and film production companies on filming related to police work, and offers advice and assistance on location filming. It publishes a fortnightly newspaper, *OffBeat*; the monthly *Junior Police Call Newsletter*; the quarterly *Senior Police Call Newsletter*; and the annual *Hong Kong Police Review*.

Engaging the Community

The Junior Police Call scheme and Police School Liaison Programme serve as bridges between the police and young people, while the Senior Police Call scheme promotes crime prevention, crime fighting and road safety messages among the elderly. Police Community Liaison Assistants are recruited to build long-term relationships with the non-ethnic-Chinese community.

To combat crimes against animals, the police implement the Animal Watchers Programme to unite efforts at the community level and raise public awareness on the prevention of cruelty to animals.

Another round of the child protection campaign 'Let's Talk', themed 'Bystander Intervention', was launched in October to highlight the importance of early intervention in child abuse cases.

Enforcement of Anti-epidemic Measures

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the police have collaborated with other government bureaus and departments and assisted to mount joint operations and implement anti-epidemic measures.

During the fifth wave early in the year, the police assisted in the execution of restricted-testing declaration operations to curb the transmission chains in the community and coordinated with relevant departments to transfer corpses from public hospitals to mortuaries following a surge in fatalities.

Planning and Development

To protect the privacy of the public and enhance security, the police have been implementing the New Generation Report Room project. In 2022, a new report room was commissioned at Chai Wan police station.

In the year, the Regional Higher Command at New Territories North and District Operations Rooms at Wan Chai, Yau Ma Tei, Tseung Kwan O and Tai Po police stations completed upgrading works to enhance operational capability and effectiveness.

Training

As a Programme Area Accreditation operator, the Police College has accredited a host of courses up to Qualifications Framework Level 5, and conducted a review to assure training quality.

Since 2021, 47 police officers have been admitted to the Executive Master of Public Administration programme jointly run by the college and Tsinghua University.

The college also facilitated the force-wide adoption of Chinese-style foot drills from 1 July.

Complaints and Internal Investigations

Under the statutory two-tier police complaint handling system, the Complaints Against Police Office handles public complaints against the police and works with the Independent Police Complaints Council (IPCC) in performing its statutory functions and duties. The office received 1,278 reportable complaints in 2022, 11.6 per cent lower than the yearly average of 1,456 over the past five years.

The police's Internal Investigations Office reinforces ethics and integrity in the force through education and cultural activities, governance and control, enforcement and deterrence, and reintegration and support, while the Integrity Audit Action Group strengthens the investigation of serious misconduct involving police officers and implements integrity management measures to identify officers in need.

Independent Police Complaints Council

The IPCC is an independent statutory body. Its key functions are to:

- observe, monitor and review the police's handling and investigation of reportable complaints;
- monitor actions taken or to be taken against any member of the police force by the Commissioner of Police in connection with reportable complaints;
- identify any fault or deficiency in police practice or procedure that has led to or might lead to reportable complaints, and to make recommendations accordingly;
- advise the Commissioner of Police and/or the Chief Executive of its opinion and/or recommendation in connection with reportable complaints; and
- promote public awareness of the role of the council.

Members and observers, appointed by the Chief Executive and the Secretary for Security respectively, are drawn from a wide spectrum of society. They may attend interviews and observe the police collecting evidence about reportable complaints to ensure investigations are conducted fairly and impartially.

In 2022, the IPCC scrutinised and endorsed the findings in 1,398 investigation reports on reportable complaints received during the year or carried forward from previous years, involving 2,148 allegations. Of these, 86 allegations were found to be substantiated or partially substantiated and the police have taken appropriate action against the officers involved.

Correctional Services Department

The Correctional Services Department (CSD) runs a comprehensive range of programmes under two broad categories: prison management and rehabilitation of offenders.

As at 31 December, the department was managing 29 correctional facilities, with 6,477 staff looking after 7,751 persons in custody and 1,193 people under supervision after discharge. Offenders sentenced to imprisonment are assigned to correctional institutions according to their gender, age and security ratings. Separate institutions are provided for male and female adults and young persons in custody. Young offenders aged between 14 and 20 may be admitted to a training or rehabilitation centre. The detention centre programme is designed for males aged between 14 and 24. Drug addicts found guilty of an offence punishable by imprisonment may be placed in a drug addiction treatment centre.

The diets of persons in custody follow approved scales of nutritional values and take into account their health, religious and dietary requirements. All convicted adults, unless certified physically unfit, are required to work six days a week. They are assigned to different work posts according to their fitness, security ratings, personal experience and balance of sentence. They receive earnings, which may be used to buy canteen items, as an incentive to acquire good working habits and vocational skills. They can watch television and read newspapers and library books. They may send and receive letters, receive visits and take part in religious services.

The department is developing a 'smart prison' protocol by applying technology in correctional institutions to enhance efficiency and security. It has also introduced technology applications into its rehabilitation programme, which helps persons in custody enhance their self-management and facilitates their reintegration into society. The first-generation smart prison at Tai Tam Gap Correctional Institution started operation in 2021.

Correctional Facilities

Among the 29 correctional facilities, nine are for adult males and two are for adult females. Young males are housed in one correctional institution, one detention centre, one training centre and two rehabilitation centres, while young females are accommodated in one correctional institution and two rehabilitation centres. Hei Ling Chau Addiction Treatment Centre, Lai Sun Correctional Institution, Nei Kwu Correctional Institution and part of Lai King Correctional Institution accommodate convicted drug addicts. Siu Lam Psychiatric Centre separately houses males and females of all categories who require psychiatric treatment or assessment. Tai Tam Gap Correctional Institution is used for detaining adult males under the Immigration Ordinance. Eight of the correctional facilities cater for remanded people of different age groups. Two wards in public hospitals accommodate persons in custody who need special medical care or surgery. Three halfway houses help those released under supervision reintegrate into society. Their residents may go out to work or attend school during daytime.

Number of Admissions

During the year, 6,491 adults (4,712 males and 1,779 females) were sentenced to imprisonment, 4,562 adults (3,522 males and 1,040 females) were remanded, 91 young persons (81 males and 10 females) were sentenced to imprisonment, and 290 young persons (247 males and 43 females) were remanded.

In addition, 233 offenders (197 males and 36 females) were sentenced to detention in the training centre, rehabilitation centres or the detention centre; 394 offenders (326 males and 68 females) were placed in drug addiction treatment centres; and 995 offenders (862 males and 133 females) were remanded pending suitability reports for sentencing to one of these centres. Besides, 190 males were detained in Tai Tam Gap Correctional Institution under the Immigration Ordinance.

Pre-sentence Assessment

Young offenders and offenders with drug addictions who are sentenced to imprisonment may be remanded for up to three weeks to assess which correctional facility is suitable for them. The department's Rehabilitation Unit prepares suitability reports for the courts, while the Young Offender Assessment Panel, comprising CSD and Social Welfare Department representatives, considers cases referred by the courts and recommends the most suitable rehabilitation programmes for young offenders.

In 2022, the unit recommended 301 males and 58 females for admission to a rehabilitation, training or detention centre, and 437 males and 78 females as suitable for a drug addiction treatment centre. The panel received 135 cases from the courts for assessment.

Training, Detention and Rehabilitation Centres

The training centre provides young persons in custody with correctional training for six months to three years, comprising half-day educational classes and half-day vocational training. They also receive character development training in the form of scouting and guiding. Upon release, they are subject to three-year statutory supervision.

At the detention centre, males aged between 14 and 20 go through one to six months of detention, and males aged between 21 and 24, three to 12 months. Its programmes incorporate counselling and emphasise strict discipline and a hard-working attitude. After release, they are placed under one-year statutory supervision.

The rehabilitation centres provide a sentencing option for the courts to deal with young offenders aged between 14 and 20 who need a short-term residential rehabilitation programme. Those released are put through one-year statutory supervision.

Drug Addiction Treatment

Convicted drug addicts undergo a compulsory treatment programme as an alternative to imprisonment. Young addicts aged between 14 and 20 are accommodated separately from the adults. They receive two to 12 months of on-site treatment followed by one year of statutory supervision.

Health Care

All correctional institutions have on-site hospitals with qualified personnel stationed to provide basic health care. Persons in custody who need specialist treatment are referred to visiting specialists or public hospitals.

Education

The CSD provides young persons under 21 in custody with half-day education, and assists adult persons in custody to participate in continuing education voluntarily. It also assists persons in custody to obtain accredited qualifications by taking public examinations. Those pursuing further studies may apply for financial help from the Prisoners' Education Trust Fund and other subsidy schemes. In 2022, the department and the Hong Kong Metropolitan University signed a memorandum of understanding to provide more comprehensive support for persons in custody who wish to continue their studies.

Vocational Training

Eligible adult persons in custody have the option of taking market-oriented vocational training courses that issue accredited and recognised qualifications. Young persons in custody under 21 may take half-day vocational training programmes. Fifteen correctional facilities offered over 40 full-time and part-time courses in 2022.

Correctional Services Industries

The department arranges work for adult persons in custody as required by law, to help them develop good working habits and acquire work skills to facilitate their reintegration into society.

In 2022, a daily average of 3,427 persons in custody were engaged in productive work, providing government departments and subvented bodies with goods and services that included office furniture, uniforms, leather products, hospital linen, filter masks, fibreglass products, traffic signs, envelopes, laundry, book binding and printing. The market value of these goods and services was \$447 million in 2022.

Welfare and Counselling

Rehabilitation officers handle the welfare of persons in custody and help them with personal problems arising from their detention or imprisonment. The officers provide counselling and rehabilitation programmes. Pre-release reintegration orientation courses supply information on community resources to help persons in custody reintegrate into society.

Psychological Services

The department provides services to improve the psychological well-being of persons in custody and change their wrong values and offending behaviour. Clinical psychologists and trained CSD officers provide treatment for sex offenders, violent offenders, radical offenders, drug addicts and young persons in custody, and gender-specific treatment programmes for adult males and females. They submit assessment reports, including on the person's risk of reoffending upon discharge, to the courts, review boards and institutional management on request.

Multi-purpose family and rehabilitation service centres were set up in the community in 2022 to provide psychological and counselling services for rehabilitated offenders and their families, as well as a video visit service for relatives and friends of persons in custody.

Statutory Supervision

Statutory supervision aims to help supervisees reintegrate into society. It is provided to young persons discharged from custody, people discharged from training, rehabilitation, detention and drug addiction treatment centres, and those discharged under various statutory schemes. A breach of the supervision conditions may result in recall for a further period of training, treatment or imprisonment. At the year end, 1,193 people were under active statutory supervision.

Community Support

Community acceptance and support are paramount to an offender's rehabilitation and reintegration into society. The non-statutory Committee on Community Support for Rehabilitated Offenders, appointed by the Commissioner of Correctional Services, advises on rehabilitation, reintegration and publicity measures. It comprises community leaders, professionals and representatives of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and government departments.

Community Education

The Rehabilitation Pioneer Project targets secondary school students and encourages them to safeguard their country and home, stay away from crime and drugs and support offender rehabilitation through various community education programmes. The CSD implemented in 2022 the community education activity Rehabilitation Express, with a promotion vehicle visiting primary schools to promote national security, national education and crime prevention, as well as anti-drug and support for offender rehabilitation messages.

Visiting Justices

Two Justices of the Peace (JPs) visit each correctional institution fortnightly or monthly, depending on the type of facility. The JPs receive and investigate complaints from persons in custody, inspect their diets and examine their living and working conditions.

Complaints

The CSD's Complaints Investigation Unit handles and investigates complaints related to the department. Investigation reports are examined by the CSD Complaints Committee. A complainant dissatisfied with the investigation outcome may appeal to the CSD Complaints Appeal Board. Persons in custody may lodge complaints with any CSD officer or through other channels, such as the visiting JPs, the Ombudsman and Legislative Council members.

Customs and Excise Department

The Customs and Excise Department is responsible for the collection of revenue on dutiable goods, prevention of duty evasion, suppression of drug trafficking and abuse, prevention and detection of smuggling, and protection of intellectual property rights. The department also enforces legislation to protect consumer interests, safeguard and facilitate legitimate trade

and industry, uphold Hong Kong's trading integrity and fulfil relevant international obligations. At the year end, it had 7,386 posts.

Revenue Protection and Collection

The department collects excise duties from commodities stipulated in the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance: liquor, tobacco, hydrocarbon oil and methyl alcohol. It administers a licensing and permit system to ensure no dutiable commodities, whether imported or locally manufactured, are released for local consumption unless full duty has been paid. During 2021-22, the department collected \$12.5 billion in excise duties, 5.2 per cent more than in 2020-21.

The department assesses the taxable values of motor vehicles under the Motor Vehicles (First Registration Tax) Ordinance, resulting in the collection of \$6.2 billion first registration tax by the Transport Department in 2021-22, during which 55,800 motor vehicles were first registered.

The department takes sustained enforcement action against illicit cigarette activities and cooperates with Mainland and overseas customs authorities to stamp out cross-boundary cigarette smuggling through intelligence exchange.

In 2022, the department detected 3,436 cases involving the smuggling, storage, distribution and peddling of illicit cigarettes, a 14 per cent decrease from 2021, and seized 731.9 million illicit cigarettes, a 71 per cent increase from 2021. Fines were imposed on 2,107 travellers, a year-on-year drop of 18 per cent, for bringing into Hong Kong a total of 410,000 cigarettes in excess of their duty-free concession.

The department also acts to stamp out illicit fuel activities. In 2022, it detected 47 illicit fuel cases, arrested 85 people and seized 53,300 litres of illicit fuel. The number of cases was 30 per cent less than in 2021.

Anti-narcotics Operations

The department takes robust enforcement action to prevent and suppress the unlawful manufacture, distribution and trafficking of dangerous drugs; to trace, confiscate and recover drug proceeds from illegal drug activities; and to prevent the diversion of chemicals used for the illicit manufacture of dangerous drugs. To combat cross-boundary drug trafficking, the department deploys officers and detector dogs to boundary control points, and maintains close cooperation, exchanges intelligence and mounts joint operations with local, Mainland and overseas law enforcement agencies. A mechanism for communication and intelligence exchange with the logistics industry is in place to strengthen enforcement on the import and export of cargoes.

In 2022, the department dealt with 487 drug trafficking cases, smashed 24 drug storage and distribution centres and seven manufacturing and attenuating centres, seized 6,908kg of assorted dangerous drugs and arrested 177 people. Cross-boundary enforcement cooperation led to the overseas seizures of 201kg of dangerous drugs.

As part of the government's efforts to combat youth drug abuse, the department works with NGOs to encourage young people to stay away from drugs and lead a healthy life.

Anti-smuggling Operations

In 2022, through air, land and sea channels, 7,148 smuggling cases were detected, and \$5.1 billion worth of goods seized.

With the COVID-19 pandemic and its restrictions on passengers, as well as stringent quarantine and monitoring measures for cross-boundary drivers, smugglers made more use of air and sea channels, including sea cargo, river trade vessels and speed boats, to smuggle goods and contraband. The department has strengthened its enforcement efforts against illicit import and export of goods accordingly, and works closely with other law enforcement agencies to combat smuggling through intelligence exchange and joint operations.

Fire Services Department

The Fire Services Department fights fires and protects life and property in the event of fires and other calamities. The department also provides an emergency ambulance service, and formulates and enforces fire safety policies and measures. It plans and builds fire stations and ambulance depots to meet the territory's development and service needs and implement the government's policy of providing the fastest response possible to emergencies.

Its Fire and Ambulance Services Academy provides training services for the department, other public and private organisations as well as its Mainland and overseas counterparts.

The department has well-trained personnel, advanced communications systems and modern equipment. As at end-December, it employed 10,740 uniformed and 761 civilian members, and operated 468 fire appliances, 514 ambulances, 251 supporting vehicles and 26 fire vessels.

Firefighting and Rescue

Of the 34,775 fire calls received in 2022, five were classified as major fires and triggered the No 3 alarm. Accidents while cooking were the major cause of fires, accounting for 1,013 cases. General electrical faults caused 846 fires, while the careless handling or disposal of lighted materials, such as cigarette ends, matches and candles, caused 541 fires. False alarms, triggered mainly by faulty automatic alarm systems, made up 76 per cent of the total number of fire calls.

The department also provides rescue services for traffic accidents, shipwrecks, people trapped in lifts or locked in rooms, leakages of gas or other hazardous materials, building collapses, floods, landslides, industrial accidents, people stranded on hillsides and attempts to jump from a height. It handled a total of 35,314 such calls in 2022.

Ambulance Service

The department's Ambulance Command operates a fleet of emergency ambulances, rapid response vehicles and emergency medical assistant motorcycles driven by paramedics. All vehicles are fully equipped with life-support equipment such as automated external defibrillators and selected drugs for conditions including diabetes, shock, heart attack, shortness of breath, convulsion, cardiac arrest, anaphylaxis and drug overdose. The Ambulance Command handled a daily average of 2,028 calls in 2022.

The department trains frontline firefighters to become first responders who can provide basic life support to casualties and patients before the arrival of an ambulance crew. In 2022, first responders responded to 54,443 cases.

Communications Centre

The 24-hour Fire Services Communications Centre mobilises firefighting and ambulance resources to provide timely services for the public. It also receives complaints about fire hazards and dangerous goods, and acts as an emergency coordinator for other government departments and public utilities during major emergencies. The centre provides post-dispatch advice to callers over the phone on more than 30 types of injuries and sicknesses, including burns, cardiac arrest, haemorrhage and childbirth, after dispatching ambulances. Callers receive immediate advice to help stabilise patients before the ambulance crew arrives.

At the scene of an incident, a digital trunked radio system is used to ensure effective and efficient radio communication.

Fire Safety

The Fire Safety Command draws up fire safety policies and formulates fire safety measures for buildings and mass transit systems. It devotes much effort to upgrading fire safety in old buildings, initiating fire safety inspections and raising public awareness of emergency preparedness.

In 2022, the command vetted 19,862 building plans, including those for tunnels and bridges, handled 740 submissions in relation to matters such as building plans and fire engineering reports, and offered fire safety advisory services on 828 occasions concerning the development of Hong Kong International Airport.

On railway infrastructure projects, the command formulates fire safety requirements and recommendations, and scrutinises the associated consultancy study reports, building plans and technical drawings of fire service installations (FSIs). In 2022, the command handled 1,810 submissions and carried out 1,859 acceptance inspections of FSIs at new railway projects, including the East Rail Line cross-harbour extension, and of alterations, additions and extensive station improvement works for existing lines.

The Licensing and Certification Command regulates the manufacture, storage, conveyance and use of dangerous goods and takes enforcement action against related offences. In 2022, it issued or renewed 4,289 storage licences for dangerous goods or timber, and 1,777 dangerous goods vehicle licences. The command also works with other law enforcement agencies to combat illicit fuelling. During the year, the Anti-illicit Fuelling Activities Task Force carried out 906 inspections and surprise operations, seized over 380,000 litres of illicit fuel and instituted prosecution in 249 cases.

The command monitors the status of FSIs in buildings, handles complaints and oversees the professional standards of registered FSI contractors. In 2022, it conducted 106,348 compliance inspections of FSIs in new buildings and developments, and another 86,409 inspections of existing FSIs. It issued 2,726 fire hazard abatement notices against irregularities found and took

legal action against 67 owners of defective FSIs and registered FSI contractors for regulatory contraventions.

In addition, the command formulates and enforces fire safety policies for licensed premises and takes enforcement action against fire hazards. It advises licensing authorities on fire protection and carries out fire safety compliance certification relating to the licensing and registration of food premises, places of public entertainment, places of public amusement, converted schools, child care centres, massage establishments, private columbaria, electronic waste disposal facilities, drug treatment and rehabilitation centres and other types of premises. In 2022, it carried out 78,503 inspections of such premises and issued 1,401 fire hazard abatement notices, of which 56 resulted in prosecution.

Anti-epidemic Efforts

During the fight against the COVID-19 epidemic, the department formulated fire safety requirements to enable the early commissioning of quarantine and medical facilities and set up rapid response teams to provide on-site emergency services at those facilities.

In light of the worsening epidemic situation, the department activated the Director's Command Post in February to divert non-emergency cases to community isolation and treatment facilities. To cope with the huge demand for patient transfer, it engaged, through the Transport Department, hundreds of coaches and taxis as an anti-epidemic fleet, which conveyed a total of 200,870 confirmed patients to such facilities.

The Fire Services Department was also responsible for evacuation operations of residential care homes for the elderly or persons with disabilities and helped transfer residents to and from the isolation facilities. The department coordinated over 4,000 such operations, serving more than 10,000 residents.

Community Collaboration Network

The department established in September the Community Collaboration Network, comprising the chairpersons of 18 District Fire Safety Committees, to strengthen connection with the public at the district level for fire safety publicity.

Youth Development

The department set up the Fire and Ambulance Services Teen Connect uniformed group in 2021 for the participation of secondary school students. The group aims to help young people cultivate positive thinking, aspirations to serve the community, law-abiding awareness, discipline and team spirit through various activities. As at end-2022, the group had recruited 180 members.

Government Flying Service

The Government Flying Service provides a range of flying services, including round-the-clock search and rescue coverage, casualty and medical evacuation, firefighting and support for other government departments.

It has a staff of 269 disciplined and 66 civilian members. In 2022, members flew a total of 6,197 hours, helped in 850 search and rescue operations and took 1,517 people to hospital by helicopter. By the end of 2022, it operated three fixed-wing aircraft and nine helicopters for operations and flight training.

Immigration Department

The Immigration Department exercises immigration control, issues HKSAR identity cards and travel documents, handles nationality and residency matters, and registers births, deaths and marriages. It had 7,442 and 1,701 disciplined and civilian posts respectively at end-2022.

Immigration Control

In accordance with the Basic Law, the HKSAR Government exercises immigration control on entry into, stay in and departure from Hong Kong. Immigration officers conduct checks at control points and vet entry applications to detect undesirable people, including international criminals and dubious visitors. The territory refused the entry of 2,373 people in 2022.

Hong Kong welcomes visitors and adopts an open visa policy. People from about 170 countries and territories may visit Hong Kong visa-free for seven to 180 days. Around 5.3 million people entered and left the city in 2022, a rise of 171.3 per cent from 2021.

The e-Channel is an electronic system installed at boundary crossings. It provides automated immigration clearance for Hong Kong residents, enrolled Consular Corps Identity Card holders and eligible visitors. The Smart Departure service allows eligible visitors holding electronic travel documents to perform automated departure clearance through e-Channels without prior enrolment. Reciprocal use of automated immigration clearance services is in place with Australia, Germany, Singapore, Korea and Thailand.

The Contactless e-Channel for Hong Kong residents provides a faster, more convenient and hygienic automated immigration clearance service. It allows enrolled residents to use their identity card or generate an encrypted QR code on their smartphone for self-service immigration clearance through facial verification technology, without touching any shared equipment throughout the process.

The Flight Token e-Channel for Hong Kong residents was launched in October to tie in with the Airport Authority Hong Kong's implementation of the Flight Token service. Eligible Hong Kong residents only need to face towards cameras to enter Flight Token e-Channels. Departure clearance will be completed upon successful facial verification.

Right of Abode

Article 24 of the Basic Law states that Hong Kong permanent residents, regardless of their nationalities, have the right of abode in the HKSAR and may obtain permanent identity cards.

Chinese nationals born outside Hong Kong of Hong Kong permanent residents are entitled to be HKSAR permanent residents, provided that one of the natural parents is a Chinese citizen who has the right of abode when that person is born.

Entry for Residence

The Mainland is the major contributor to Hong Kong's immigrant population. In 2022, about 21,200 Mainlanders joined their families in Hong Kong under the One-way Permit Scheme, which has a daily quota of 150.

Personal Documentation

Travel Documents

The department issues HKSAR passports to Hong Kong permanent residents who are Chinese nationals with the right of abode in the HKSAR holding valid Hong Kong permanent identity cards. In 2022, the department received 684,224 HKSAR passport applications, including 2,994 from overseas and 5,318 from the Mainland.

The department lobbies for greater travel convenience for HKSAR passport holders. As of December, 168 countries and territories have granted visa-free access or visa-on-arrival to HKSAR passport holders.

The Document of Identity for Visa Purposes (Doc/I) is issued for international travel to Hong Kong residents who are not eligible for the HKSAR passport and are unable to obtain a travel document of any other country or territory. The Re-entry Permit (REP) is issued to eligible Hong Kong residents for travel to the Mainland and Macao. During the year, 27,595 Doc/Is and 23,671 REPs were issued.

The department takes strict measures against the use of forged travel documents and carries out special operations against forgery syndicates. In 2022, it detected 109 forged travel documents.

Identity Cards

The department issues two types of identity cards to Hong Kong residents: the Hong Kong Permanent Identity Card for residents who have the right of abode in Hong Kong, and the Hong Kong Identity Card for those who do not.

Smart Identity Cards

In 2018, the department started issuing a new form of smart identity card with enhanced security features and chip technology that provide better protection of personal data and against counterfeiting. An improved contactless chip interface enables faster clearance at e-Channels. During the year, 2,015,609 new smart identity cards were issued by the department.

Illegal Immigration

The government keeps a close watch on illegal immigration and liaises closely with Mainland and overseas law enforcement agencies on population movements and illegal migration.

In 2022, the city arrested 673 Mainland illegal immigrants and 482 non-ethnic Chinese illegal immigrants.

Combating Unlawful Employment

The department combats illegal employment. It conducted 15,759 raids and arrested 1,180 illegal workers in 2022. Illegal workers are fined and/or jailed before being sent back to their places of origin. Their employers are also liable to prosecution.

Deportation and Removal

The department processes deportation and removal orders. During the year, 538 people were deported, meaning they are prohibited from returning. Another 745 people were removed from Hong Kong, comprising 319 illegal immigrants, 401 people who had breached their conditions of stay and 25 people who were refused entry.

Investigation and Prosecution

The department lays charges concerning immigration offences, including remaining illegally in Hong Kong, breaching conditions of stay, making false statements or representations, using forged travel documents, illegal employment, and criminal offences related to registrations of birth, death and marriage.

Illegal immigrants, persons subject to removal or deportation orders, overstayers or persons who are refused entry are prohibited under section 38AA of the Immigration Ordinance from taking employment, whether paid or unpaid, or establishing or joining any business.

Combating Trafficking in Persons

The department's screening mechanism identifies victims of trafficking in persons. A designated section is responsible for the early identification of potential victims and exploitation by screening foreign domestic helper visa applications, and investigates related immigration offences. Identified victims are referred to relevant departments to receive protection and support according to their situation, including urgent intervention, medical services, counselling and shelter.

Nationality Matters

The department is authorised by the Central People's Government to handle Chinese nationality applications from Hong Kong residents. In 2022, there were 210 declarations of change of nationality, 1,497 applications for naturalisation as Chinese nationals, 342 applications for renunciation of Chinese nationality and four applications for restoration of Chinese nationality.

Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Outside Hong Kong

The department's Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit works closely with the Security Bureau, the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the HKSAR, overseas Chinese diplomatic and consular missions, foreign consulates in Hong Kong, HKSAR Government offices outside Hong Kong and other government departments to provide practical assistance to Hong Kong residents in distress outside Hong Kong. A 24-hour hotline provides emergency assistance. In 2022, the unit handled 1,679 assistance requests.

Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages

Couples may marry at any of the five marriage registries or 272 licensed places of worship, or engage a civil celebrant to celebrate their marriage at any other place in Hong Kong. During the year, 13,796 marriages were celebrated in marriage registries, 1,241 in licensed places of worship, and 14,946 by civil celebrants.

Four district birth registries provide birth registration services. In 2022, 32,950 live births were registered.

Three death registries and 15 designated police stations in the New Territories and outlying islands handle death registrations free of charge. During the year, 61,557 deaths were registered.

Independent Commission Against Corruption

Hong Kong prides itself on its clean civil service, level playing field for doing business and a society intolerant of corruption. Established in 1974, the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) safeguards Hong Kong's deep-rooted culture of probity through stringent law enforcement, systemic prevention and community education. Its independence is enshrined in the Basic Law, and its operation is sustained by the government's strong commitment to weed out corruption.

The ICAC Annual Survey 2022 revealed that the public continued to maintain zero tolerance towards corruption. Of all respondents, 97.9 per cent considered keeping the city corruption-free was important to its overall development. In addition, 98.9 per cent said they had not encountered corruption personally in the past year.

In 2022, the ICAC received 1,835 corruption complaints (excluding election complaints¹), down 19 per cent from 2021. Of these complaints, 64 per cent concerned the private sector, 29 per cent related to government departments and 7 per cent involved public bodies. As at end-2022, 28, 148 and five complaints had been received respectively regarding the 2021 Election Committee Subsector Ordinary Elections, 2021 Legislative Council General Election and 2022 Chief Executive Election, which were held under the improved electoral system.

Enforcement

In 2022, 215 people were prosecuted (11 in election cases), 17 were cautioned for minor offences and 22 were warned for minor breaches of the electoral law. Of the prosecutions completed during the year, 101 people in 70 cases were convicted, resulting in person-based and case-based conviction rates of 82 per cent and 83 per cent respectively. By year-end, 1,035 cases, including 122 election cases, were under investigation.

Prevention and Education

The ICAC examines the systems and procedures of government departments and public bodies to identify corruption risks, and gives advice on plugging the loopholes. In 2022,

¹ Election complaints refer to complaints alleging breaches of the Elections (Corrupt and Illegal Conduct) Ordinance.

it completed 68 assignment reports and offered advice on 588 occasions. The ICAC provided integrity training to over 40,000 government officers and staff of public bodies, including briefing sessions for politically appointed officials of the new-term government.

Confidential corruption prevention advice is given free to private sector entities on request. During the year, the ICAC offered advice on 1,022 occasions. It also provided free-of-charge integrity training, including talks and online courses, to more than 78,000 employees in the business sector, including professionals in the banking, construction, medical and healthcare industries.

The ICAC implements moral education programmes for young people at different developmental stages, from kindergartens to tertiary institutions, to cultivate important values such as rule of law, law-abidingness and honesty. Young people are also encouraged to better understand the country's development and develop a sense of nationality as well as national identity.

In 2022, the ICAC partnered with more than 700 organisations to organise a series of online and offline publicity activities to encourage the public to report corruption.

International Cooperation and Mainland Liaison

The ICAC works closely with anti-corruption agencies from overseas, the Mainland and Macao, and provides training to graft fighters in Belt and Road countries. It also promotes Hong Kong's rule of law, anti-corruption regime and integrity culture globally through exchanges with international organisations. In 2022, the commissioner resumed official visits to anti-corruption agencies in Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand. In December, the ICAC organised a financial investigation specialist training course in Hong Kong for Southeast Asian countries.

Since the commissioner was elected president of the International Association of Anti-Corruption Authorities early in the year, a regional coordination mechanism was implemented to strengthen international partnerships against corruption.

Checks and Balances

The ICAC functions independently and is accountable to the Chief Executive. Its work is subject to the scrutiny of four independent committees: the Advisory Committee on Corruption, Operations Review Committee, Corruption Prevention Advisory Committee and Citizens Advisory Committee on Community Relations. Each committee submits an annual work report to the Chief Executive.

All corruption complaints, whether or not pursuable, must be reported to the Operations Review Committee for scrutiny. No investigation would be concluded without its endorsement. An independent ICAC Complaints Committee, comprising members of the Executive Council and the Legislative Council as well as prominent members of the community appointed by the Chief Executive, monitors and, where appropriate, reviews the ICAC's handling of non-criminal complaints against the ICAC or its staff.

Narcotics Division

The Narcotics Division coordinates policies and measures to combat the drug problem. It also oversees anti-money laundering and counter-financing of terrorism measures in relation to the supervision of designated non-financial businesses and professions to ensure their compliance with the relevant law.

Anti-drug Strategy and Coordination

The government's anti-drug strategy involves preventive education and publicity, treatment and rehabilitation, legislation and law enforcement, external cooperation, and research.

The Action Committee Against Narcotics advises the government on anti-drug policy and measures. Chaired by a non-official, it comprises around 20 other non-official members from the medical, legal, education, media, business, community and social service sectors, and six official members, namely the Commissioner for Narcotics and representatives from the Education Bureau, the police and the departments of Customs and Excise, Health, and Social Welfare. Under a reciprocal arrangement with Singapore, the Director of Central Narcotics Bureau of Singapore also sits on the committee.

Preventive Education and Publicity

In 2022, the division launched a new anti-drug publicity campaign, with the theme 'Let's Stand Firm. Knock Drugs Out!' and two anti-drug ambassadors, Agent Don't and Agent Hope, to rally community support for combating drug abuse.

In light of the regulation of cannabidiol (CBD) as a dangerous drug under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance from 1 February 2023, a set of TV and radio Announcements in the Public Interest was rolled out to remind the public of the legislation and to dispose of their CBD products early. The division also provides relevant information through seminars, a webpage, TV and radio channels, and advertisements.

The division's 24-hour hotline '186 186' and instant messaging service '98 186 186' via WhatsApp or WeChat are manned by professional social workers to provide help for people with drug problems. Cases are referred to NGOs for treatment and rehabilitation.

The Hong Kong Jockey Club Drug InfoCentre, a dedicated anti-drug education centre, was reopened to the public in November after a renovation. Multimedia facilities and devices have been installed to enrich visitor experience.

The division works with the Education Bureau to help students, both inside and outside the classroom, understand the dangers of drugs and the dire consequences of engaging in drug-trafficking activities. School personnel are provided training with the knowledge and skills to identify and offer early help to at-risk students.

The Healthy School Programme with a Drug Testing Component is a school-based initiative to strengthen students' resolve in refusing drugs and to foster a drug-free campus. In the 2022-23 school year, 223 secondary schools, partnering with NGOs, implemented the programme.

The Beat Drugs with Sports programme is a student-led initiative that promotes a healthy lifestyle and an anti-drug culture in secondary schools through students' participation in sports and health activities. There were 98 participating secondary schools in 2022-23.

Treatment and Rehabilitation

Treatment and rehabilitation services are available to drug abusers with different needs. The Correctional Services Department implements a compulsory treatment programme, the Department of Health provides a voluntary outpatient methadone treatment programme, and the Hospital Authority operates substance abuse clinics at all seven hospital clusters. NGOs run voluntary residential programmes in 37 drug treatment and rehabilitation centres, and provide community-based services in 11 counselling centres for psychotropic substance abusers and two centres for drug counselling.

The division coordinates initiatives in partnership with stakeholders according to the strategic directions in its Three-year Plan on Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Services in Hong Kong (2021-23) and the latest drug scene.

Legislation and Enforcement

The division and relevant departments monitor the drug scene closely and regularly review the laws to address any emerging threat.

In 2022, 10 dangerous drugs (bromophine, CBD, clonazepam, CUMYL-PEGACLONE, diclazepam, diphenidine, flubromazepam, isotonitazepam, MDMB-4en-PINACA and metonitazepam) and three precursor chemicals (4-anilinopiperidine, tert-butyl 4-(phenylamino)piperidine-1-carboxylate and norfentanyl) were brought under the control of the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance and the Control of Chemicals Ordinance respectively. The effective date of their control was 16 December, except for CBD which will be on 1 February 2023.

During the year, the police and the Customs and Excise Department seized about 66,300kg of major types of drugs and arrested 4,005 people for drug-related offences.

Drug Abuse Statistics and Trends

The Central Registry of Drug Abuse compiles drug abuser statistics filed by a reporting network that includes law enforcement agencies, treatment and welfare agencies, tertiary institutions, hospitals and clinics.

The registry recorded 5,235 drug abusers in 2022, of whom 33 per cent were new cases, 14 per cent were aged under 21 and 20 per cent abused more than one drug. Heroin continued to be the most commonly abused single drug in Hong Kong, afflicting 42 per cent of drug abusers. Psychotropic substances were abused by 68 per cent of drug abusers. Commonly abused psychotropic substances included cocaine (20 per cent), methamphetamine, commonly known as 'ice' (17 per cent), cannabis (16 per cent) and triazolam/midazolam/zopiclone (11 per cent). Half of the newly reported drug abusers had abused drugs for at least 4.2 years before their drug abuse was reported, compared with 3.4 years in 2021.

External Cooperation

Hong Kong works with its counterparts in the Mainland and elsewhere in combating drug crimes. Three international conventions that provide a framework for international cooperation to address the drug problem apply to Hong Kong: the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs as amended by the 1972 Protocol; the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances; and the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

In 2022, government representatives, as members of the Chinese delegation, joined the meetings of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs and associated bodies through videoconferencing.

Research

Drug-related research helps formulate anti-drug measures. The findings of a 2020-21 survey of drug use among students at upper primary to post-secondary levels were released in June.

Beat Drugs Fund

With a capital base of \$3.35 billion, the fund supports anti-drug community efforts by financing projects and research, helping treatment and rehabilitation centres to meet statutory licensing requirements and supporting schools in implementing anti-drug initiatives. In 2022, the fund approved about \$177 million to support 207 projects and programmes.

Under the fund, a total of \$9 million has been granted to the 18 District Fight Crime Committees for the fourth round of the ongoing Anti-drug Community Awareness Building three-year programme, which began in April 2021, to sustain anti-drug efforts and raise awareness of hidden abuse at the local community level.

Anti-money Laundering and Counter-financing of Terrorism

The Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau coordinates overall policies in anti-money laundering and counter-financing of terrorism. The Narcotics Division oversees the implementation of relevant measures in two main areas: facilitating regulatory bodies' risk-based supervision of designated non-financial businesses and professions and raising awareness of relevant measures among these trades, including lawyers, accountants, estate agents and dealers in precious metals and stones; and maintaining a declaration and disclosure system for the cross-boundary movement of large quantities of physical currency and bearer negotiable instruments.

During the year, the Narcotics Division supported the bureau in a legislative exercise to introduce a registration regime for dealers in precious metals and stones and to impose statutory anti-money laundering and counter-financing of terrorism requirements on the sector. The registration regime will take effect on 1 April 2023.

The Cross-boundary Movement of Physical Currency and Bearer Negotiable Instruments Ordinance requires declarations or disclosures to be made for the cross-boundary transportation of currency or bearer negotiable instruments with a value of more than \$120,000.

Commissioner on Interception of Communications and Surveillance

The Commissioner on Interception of Communications and Surveillance is an independent oversight authority, appointed by the Chief Executive on the recommendation of the Chief Justice. The Interception of Communications and Surveillance Ordinance provides a statutory regime for the authorisation and regulation of interception of communications and covert surveillance conducted by law enforcement agencies (LEAs) to prevent or detect serious crime and protect public security.

A secretariat assists the commissioner in performing the commissioner's statutory duties, which include overseeing and conducting reviews on the compliance by LEAs and their officers with the ordinance's relevant requirements; carrying out examinations upon applications from persons who suspect that they are subjects of interception or covert surveillance conducted by LEAs; giving notifications to those affected in cases of interception or covert surveillance without the authority of a prescribed authorisation; and making recommendations to the Secretary for Security on the code of practice issued under the ordinance and to the heads of LEAs to better carry out the objects of the ordinance or the provisions of the code of practice.

The commissioner submits annual reports to the Chief Executive with statistical information and his assessment of overall compliance with the ordinance's requirements. The 2021 annual report was submitted to the Chief Executive in June 2022 and tabled in the Legislative Council in October.

Government Laboratory

The Government Laboratory provides forensic testing service to law enforcement agencies. Its Forensic Science Division has two operational groups.

The Drugs, Toxicology and Documents Group comprises three areas:

- abused drugs examination;
- drink-driving and drug-driving cases, urinalysis and hair drug testing for abused drug monitoring programmes, and toxicological examination in coroner's and criminal cases; and
- examination of handwriting and documents, and technical support in testing the production quality of Hong Kong identity cards and e-passports.

The Criminalistics and Quality Management Group undertakes forensic tests on trace evidence, marks and impressions, and human DNA. It provides crime scene investigation and consultation service, covering fire investigation, traffic accident reconstruction and bloodstain pattern analysis.

Auxiliary Medical Service

The Auxiliary Medical Service (AMS) is a government department under the Security Bureau, with 99 civil service positions, over 3,500 adult volunteers and nearly 1,900 cadets. It reinforces

regular medical and ambulance services during emergencies and provides backup in normal circumstances. Volunteers include doctors, nurses, pharmacists and paramedics.

The AMS provides first aid during natural disasters, large-scale incidents, public activities and festivals. During Sundays and public holidays, its members operate first aid stations in country parks while during weekends and public holidays, its First Aid Bicycle Teams patrol cycling tracks in the New Territories. The AMS also organises first aid programmes at schools and public talks on cardiopulmonary resuscitation and other health topics.

During the year, the AMS participated in the fight against COVID-19. Its members were deployed to assist at quarantine, treatment and testing facilities; escort people to quarantine facilities; support the enforcement of compulsory testing orders; and assist the implementation of restriction-testing declarations. It also provided infection control training to civil servants on anti-epidemic duties and deployed members to assist work in public mortuaries.

The cadets, aged 12 to 17, receive training in discipline and medical skills. The Health Awareness and Promotion Programme for Youth provides them with professional knowledge and skills on health care, public hygiene and health.

Civil Aid Service

The Civil Aid Service (CAS) is a government auxiliary emergency service set up under the Civil Aid Service Ordinance, with around 3,100 auxiliary adult members and 3,600 cadets, who receive training, administrative and logistics support from 109 civil servants.

Members are trained to provide support in times of emergency, such as mountain search and flood rescue, and to patrol country parks and hiking trails to offer assistance to those in need. In 2022, the CAS completed 55 mountain search and rescue assignments.

During the COVID-19 epidemic, the CAS assisted the Security Bureau and the Department of Health in managing various quarantine centres and community isolation facilities. More than 256,000 man-shifts were deployed to manage over 17,000 quarantine and isolation units.

The CAS Cadet Corps helps youth aged 12 to 17 develop leadership potential and cultivate civic awareness through training in foot drill, basic emergency rescue, crowd management, first aid and rock climbing. The School Partnership Scheme implemented by the CAS offers disciplinary and leadership training to junior secondary students. In 2022, more than 1,000 students from 24 secondary schools applied to the cadet corps after participating in relevant activities.

Websites

Auxiliary Medical Service: www.ams.gov.hk

Civil Aid Service: www.cas.gov.hk

Commissioner on Interception of Communications and Surveillance: www.sciocs.gov.hk

Correctional Services Department: www.csd.gov.hk

Government Flying Service: www.gfs.gov.hk

Government Laboratory: www.govtlab.gov.hk

Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department: www.customs.gov.hk

Hong Kong Fire Services Department: www.hkfsd.gov.hk

Hong Kong Police Force: www.police.gov.hk

Immigration Department: www.immd.gov.hk

Independent Commission Against Corruption: www.icac.org.hk

Independent Police Complaints Council: www.ipcc.gov.hk

Narcotics Division: www.nd.gov.hk

Security Bureau: www.sb.gov.hk

Three-year Plan on Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Services in Hong Kong (2021-2023):
www.nd.gov.hk/en/three_year_plan_2021_2023.html