

## Chapter 9

# Public Order

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Hong Kong is one of the safest cities in the world and in 2024, the law and order situation was stable. The Security Bureau and its disciplined services, through innovative technology, strive to provide the public with more convenient services and to enhance the law enforcement capability, as well as the efficiency of rescue operations.

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 advises on ways to prevent and reduce crime, coordinates crime-fighting efforts and monitors their results. In 2024, 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 2024-25 publicity strategy targets deception, drug abuse, burglary and theft and promoting the law-abiding awareness of young people.

Working with the committee are 18 District Fight Crime Committees, which monitor the crime situation at the district level, reflect community concerns about law and order and organise district publicity programmes to enhance 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 2024, 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 2024, 94,747 crimes were recorded, an increase of 5.1 per cent on the 90,276 in 2023. The crime rate went up by 5 per cent to 1,259 cases per 100,000 population.

The increase was mainly attributed to 44,480 deception cases (46.9 per cent of overall crime), an 11.7 per cent rise year on year – though a considerable slowdown when compared with the year-on-year increases in 2022 and 2023, which were 45.1 per cent and 42.6 per cent respectively. About 60 per cent of the reports were online deception and 10,496 persons were arrested for deception and money-laundering offences in 2024, up 13.6 per cent. The total amount involved also decreased by \$30 million. To curb the problem at source, the police have been working with the telecommunication and banking industries, and also stepped up publicity and education work to enhance public awareness.

There were 10,485 violent crime cases, up 3.6 per cent year on year, mainly driven by the increase of 317 instances of 'naked chat' blackmail. Robberies decreased 7.2 per cent to 90 cases, while burglaries decreased 9.9 per cent to 1,220. Both robbery and burglary figures were the second lowest since records began in 1969. The detection rate for robberies reached a record high, increasing by 9.7 percentage points to 92.2 per cent, while the detection rate for burglaries reached 38 per cent, the second highest on record.

Of the reported crimes, 30.4 per cent, or 28,776 cases, were detected. Excluding deception cases, the detection rate rose to 47.9 per cent. In 2024, a total of 36,269 people were arrested for

the reported crimes. Among these, 946 were aged between 10 and 15, while 1,894 were aged between 16 and 20. Most of the youths were arrested for deception, wounding and serious assault or miscellaneous thefts.

The number of triad-related crimes decreased 0.4 per cent year on year to 2,325, accounting for 2.5 per cent of all reported crimes in 2024. The police combat triad activities through enforcement actions, intelligence-led operations and 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.

### **Commercial Crime**

Working closely with the banks, the police's Anti-deception Coordination Centre intercepted around \$1.48 billion of crime proceeds from local and overseas accounts and successfully intervened in 2,397 ongoing deception cases in 2024. The centre's Anti-scam Helpline 18222 received 79,595 calls from the public and the Anti-deception Alliance, established by the centre in collaboration with 10 major retail banks, sped up the processing of stop-payment requests – reducing the average response time by 80 per cent to 1.1 hours.

### **Cyber Security and Technology Crime**

The police combat technology crime through partnerships with the community, stakeholders and overseas law enforcement agencies. During the year, 33,903 technology crimes were reported, involving \$5.1 billion in losses. In February, the police launched the upgraded Scameter+ mobile application to further help the public identify fraud and online pitfalls. Over 880,000 alerts regarding fraud and cybersecurity risks have been issued to the public since the app's launch in 2023. The Anti-scam Lucky Draw, which ran from October to November, led to a further increase in Scameter+ downloads.

The Scameter database is shared with telecommunications service providers, banks and stored value facility providers for issuing alerts, filtering, and blocking, through collaboration with the Office of the Communications Authority and the Hong Kong Monetary Authority. The 'suspicious account alert' covers transactions made on the Faster Payment System, at bank branches or through e-banking and ATMs. The police have promoted cybersecurity attack and defence exercises, counter-cyberterrorism drills, digital forensics competitions and vulnerability disclosure programmes.

### **Dangerous Drugs**

The police tackle drug abuse and trafficking by seeking to reduce the supply and demand for drugs, while raising anti-drug awareness, particularly among students and youths, through community programmes. They maintain strategic partnerships with local, Mainland and overseas law enforcement agencies to combat international drug trafficking involving Hong Kong. During the year, 2,818 people were arrested for drug offences, mostly involving cocaine (20.3 per cent) and methamphetamine (20.2 per cent).

### **Financial Investigation**

During the year, 631 people were convicted of money-laundering offences, with criminal assets of about \$368 million restrained and \$23.7 million confiscated. The police worked with the

Department of Justice to seek longer sentences in some money-laundering cases involving fake, or 'stooge', accounts. As of the end of the year, 47 stooge account holders had had their sentences extended by three to 13 months, representing an increase of 12.5 to 33.3 per cent.

### **Forensic Support**

The police collect and compare fingerprints, examine firearms, take photographs and gather DNA evidence from crime scenes to support investigations and prosecutions. In 2024, fingerprint evidence linked 1,561 persons to 1,382 criminal cases.

### **Liaison**

There is a 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 also deals with Interpol-related matters.

### **Counter-terrorism**

Through the Inter-departmental Counter Terrorism Unit, the police monitor local and global terrorism trends, optimise counter-terrorism strategies and formulate action plans. Under the Three-tier Prevention Framework, announced in the 2024 Policy Address, the unit assists the Chief Executive and Secretary for Security in coordinating the counter-terrorism work of the disciplined services as well as other government departments. This includes intelligence gathering, social prevention and control, counter-terrorism publicity and public education.

The police implement preventive measures, such as strengthening the protection and resilience of critical infrastructure and sensitive premises, and regularly conduct training and multi-agency exercises to test and improve contingency plans in the event of an act of terrorism.

### **National Security**

Under the National Security Law and the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance, the National Security Department shoulders the responsibilities of safeguarding national security, including handling intelligence, enforcing relevant legislations and investigating related offences, conducting counter-interference investigations and national security reviews, and running relevant promotional and education activities.

In 2024, the police arrested 316 persons suspected of committing offences endangering national security, among whom 180 persons and five companies were convicted. The National Security Department Reporting Hotline has received over 850,000 pieces of information since its establishment. A public opinion survey conducted during the year showed that the public held the police force in high regard for its performance in safeguarding national security.

### **Traffic**

During the year, 18,355 traffic accidents involved casualties, of which 83 were fatal and 751 serious. The data represented 7 per cent more traffic accidents involving casualties and 24 per cent fewer involving fatalities or serious injuries than in 2023.

### **Public Events**

Hong Kong residents have freedom of speech and the right to peaceful assembly and procession. The police endeavour to ensure that such events are conducted in a peaceful and lawful manner, while safeguarding national security, public order and safety through comprehensive risk assessments and deploying adequate resources for crowd management. In 2024, 613 public meetings and 384 public processions were held.

### **Public Relations**

Police public relations strategies strengthen communications and connections with the media and public. Throughout the year, large-scale anti-deception publicity events, featuring anti-scam mascot the Little Grape, were organised to seek public trust and support.

The police collaborate with traditional media in television and film production. In addition, a variety of anti-crime promotional videos are produced and round-the-clock anti-crime information is shared on social media.

### **Engaging the Community**

Throughout the year, various events were held to engage different sectors of the community, including the Junior Police Call Summer Camp, the Junior Police Call Innovation and Technology Competition, the Senior Police Call Share the Love, the Senior Police Call Anti-deception and Health Campaign, Pat Heung Race, Pat Heung Fest and the Good Citizen Award Presentation Ceremony.

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.

The annual Let's T.A.L.K. Child Protection Campaign took place in September with a series of activities aiming to help caretakers relieve stress and foster their mental health, so as to raise public awareness on child protection.

Through the Leadership Institute on Narcotics, 100 anti-drug youth leaders organised campus and territory-wide anti-drug publicity campaigns, disseminating anti-drug messages to over 64,000 members of the public and galvanising the community to combat drug abuse.

### **Planning and Development**

The construction of several new police facilities, including the Police Vehicle Pound and Examination Centre under Traffic Hong Kong Island in Chai Wan, and the Chek Lap Kok Operational Base, continued in 2024. Both will be commissioned in 2025. The construction of the Hong Kong Police College Integrated Training Centre (Kong Nga Po) in Sheung Shui will also be completed in two phases in 2025 and 2026.

### **Information and Communications Technology**

During 2024, the police promoted digital policing, focusing on public safety and convenience, and launched a number of electronic public services. The smart search and rescue mobile application HK SOS, which launched in January, can pinpoint a distressed individual's location in

the absence of mobile signal coverage; while the police's first patrol robot began its trial operation at the departure hall of the Passenger Clearance Building of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port in October.

### **Training**

As a Programme Area Accreditation operator, the Police College operates its Qualifications Framework-recognised training programmes up to Level 5 for both new recruits and serving officers.

The college has collaborated with the School of Public Policy and Management, Tsinghua University to provide an Executive Master of Public Administration programme since 2021. So far, three cohorts with a total of 96 police officers have been admitted.

The college works with the Mainland and overseas law enforcement and training institutions, including agencies in Belt and Road Initiative countries. In 2024, the college embarked on training exchanges to Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. A memorandum of understanding was signed with the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Uzbekistan, fostering collaboration in police training and development.

### **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 1,856 reportable complaints in 2024, 6.9 per cent higher than that in 2023. The police's Internal Investigations Office and Integrity Audit Action Group reinforce ethics and integrity in the police force through education and cultural activities, governance and control, enforcement and deterrence, and reintegration and support.

### **Independent Police Complaints Council**

The IPCC is an independent statutory body. Its members, appointed by the Chief Executive, are drawn from a wide spectrum of society. 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 opinions and/or recommendations in connection with reportable complaints; and
- promote public awareness of the role of the council.

The IPCC administers the Observers Scheme. Observers are appointed by the Secretary for Security. IPCC members and observers may attend interviews and observe the police collecting evidence about reportable complaints to ensure investigations are conducted fairly and impartially.

In 2024, the IPCC examined and endorsed the findings in 1,634 investigation reports on reportable complaints received during the year or carried forward from previous years, involving 2,332 allegations. Of these, 66 allegations were found to be substantiated and the police have taken appropriate action against the officers involved.

### **Correctional Services Department**

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

As at 31 December, the department was managing 29 correctional facilities, with 6,502 staff managing 10,020 persons in custody and 1,093 people under statutory 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 has been developing smart prison technology to promote the modernisation of correctional facilities and enhance the efficiency of prison management, level of security and effectiveness of rehabilitation programmes. It has also implemented the Social Visit e-Booking Service and the Approved Hand-in Articles e-Ordering Service to facilitate the visitation of visitors.

### **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, part of Lo Wu 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 and Nei Kwu Correctional Institution are used for detaining adult males and females respectively under the Immigration Ordinance. Nine 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, 9,427 adults (6,358 males and 3,069 females) were sentenced to imprisonment, 6,451 adults (4,786 males and 1,665 females) were remanded, 130 young persons (106 males and 24 females) were sentenced to imprisonment, and 281 young persons (246 males and 35 females) were remanded.

In addition, 182 offenders (163 males and 19 females) were sentenced to detention in the training centre, rehabilitation centres or the detention centre; 362 offenders (270 males and 92 females) were placed in drug addiction treatment centres; and 818 offenders (690 males and 128 females) were remanded pending suitability reports for sentencing to one of these centres. Besides, 237 males and 550 females were detained in Tai Tam Gap Correctional Institution and Nei Kwu Correctional Institution respectively 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 2024, the unit recommended 247 males and 27 females for admission to a rehabilitation, training or detention centre, and 338 males and 107 females as suitable for a drug addiction treatment centre. The panel received 125 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 can also take part in a character development programme 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 providing basic health care. Persons in custody who need specialist treatment are referred to visiting specialists or public hospitals.

### ***Education***

The department provides persons in custody under 21 with half-day education programmes, 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 2024, the department provided a two-year full-time Associate of General Studies programme in distance-learning mode for the graduates of the Diploma of Applied Education (DAE) programme at the Ethics College at Pak Sha Wan Correctional Institution and Lo Wu Correctional Institution. The department also extended the Ethics College to Pik Uk Prison, which offers a half-day part-time Associate of General Studies programme and half-day vocational training for graduates of the DAE whose remaining sentence is insufficient to complete the associate degree programme.

### ***Vocational Training***

Eligible adult persons in custody have the option of taking market-oriented vocational training courses that issue accredited and recognised qualifications. Persons in custody under 21 may take half-day vocational training programmes. Sixteen correctional facilities offered over 40 full-time and part-time courses in 2024.

### ***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 2024, a daily average of 4,891 persons in custody were engaged in productive work, providing government departments, public bodies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) with goods and services that included office furniture, uniforms, leather products, hospital linen, personal protective equipment, fibreglass products, traffic signs, envelopes, laundry, book binding and printing. The market value of these goods and services was \$465 million in 2024.

### **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 psychological counselling services for persons in custody with a view to improving their mental health and institutional adjustment as well as changing their offending behaviours. Clinical psychologists and trained CSD officers provide treatments for sex offenders, violent offenders, drug addicts and young persons in custody, and implement gender-specific treatment programmes as well as animal-assisted therapies. They submit assessment reports to the courts, review boards and institutional management on request.

Multi-purpose family and rehabilitation service centres also provide psychological and counselling services for rehabilitated offenders and their families.

### **Research for Rehabilitation Services**

The Correctional Rehabilitation Research Unit, through conducting relevant empirical research and professional exchange with international research experts and correctional counterparts, provides scientific insights for the strategic planning of rehabilitation policies and crime prevention so as to deliver effective rehabilitation services to persons in custody and supervisees.

### **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, 1,093 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 NGOs and government departments.

### **Community Education**

The Rehabilitation Pioneer Project encourages young people to safeguard their country and home, stay away from crime and drugs and support offender rehabilitation through various community education programmes. In 2024, the department launched the Captain Gor Union initiative, which recruits primary and secondary school students as non-uniformed group members so as to nurture a new generation of young people with an affection for the country

and Hong Kong, and a positive mindset. The union also recruits youth with potential to join Rehabilitation Pioneer Leaders.

### **Visiting Justices**

Two Justices of the Peace (JPs) visit each correctional institution fortnightly or monthly, depending on the type of facility. They 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 7,540 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 that dutiable commodities, whether imported or locally manufactured, are only released for local consumption after full duty has been paid. During 2023-24, the department collected \$10.9 billion in excise duties, 9 per cent less than in 2022-23.

The department assesses the taxable values of motor vehicles according to the Motor Vehicle (First Registration Tax) Ordinance. In 2023-24, there were more than 59,000 first-registered motor vehicles, resulting in the collection of \$5.9 billion first registration tax by the Transport Department.

The Customs and Excise 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 2024, the department detected 21,284 cases involving the smuggling, storage, distribution and peddling of illicit cigarettes, an 80 per cent increase from 2023, and seized 614 million illicit cigarettes, a 6 per cent decrease from 2023. Fines were imposed on 19,074 travellers, a year-on-year rise of 94 per cent, for bringing into Hong Kong a total of 2.73 million cigarettes in excess of their duty-free concession.

The department also acts to stamp out illicit fuel activities. In 2024, it detected 25 illicit fuel cases, arrested 27 people and seized 28,200 litres of illicit fuel. The number of cases was 24 per cent less than in 2023.

### **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 2024, the department dealt with 680 drug trafficking cases, smashed 32 drug storage and distribution centres and five manufacturing and attenuating centres, seized 6,301 kilograms of assorted dangerous drugs and arrested 366 people. Cross-boundary enforcement cooperation led to the seizures of 384kg of dangerous drugs and arrest of 40 people in the Mainland and overseas.

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**

Based on risk assessment, the department inspects cargoes imported and exported by air, land and sea; and examines passengers and their baggage at entry and exit points, so as to prevent and detect smuggling activities. During the year, through air, land and sea channels, 31,759 smuggling cases were detected, with 26,532 people arrested and \$7.3 billion worth of goods seized.

The department keeps abreast of smuggling trends and strengthens its enforcement efforts against the illicit import and export of goods accordingly. It also works 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 possible response 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 had 10,690 uniformed and 786 civilian posts, and operated 479 fire appliances, 536 ambulances, 259 supporting vehicles and 30 fire vessels.

### ***Firefighting and Rescue***

Of the 37,828 fire calls received in 2024, five were classified as major fires and triggered the No 3 alarm or above. Accidents while cooking were the major cause of fires, accounting for 1,058 cases. General electrical faults caused 1,014 fires, while the careless handling or disposal of lighted materials, such as cigarette ends, matches and candles, caused 523 fires. Unwanted alarms, triggered mainly by faulty automatic alarm systems, made up 78 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 premises, 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 39,320 such calls in 2024.

### ***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 (AEDs) and selected drugs for conditions including diabetes, shock, heart attack, shortness of breath, convulsion, cardiac arrest, anaphylaxis and drug overdose. The command handled a daily average of 2,250 calls in 2024.

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 2024, first responders responded to 40,352 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 2024, the command vetted 18,274 building plans, including those for tunnels and bridges, handled 228 submissions in relation to fire engineering reports, and offered fire safety advisory services on 957 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 2024, the command handled 1,899 submissions and carried out 1,798 inspections of FSIs at railway stations, 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 2024, it issued or renewed 4,616 storage licences for dangerous goods or timber, and 1,830 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 more than 1,900 inspections and 29 interdepartmental enforcement operations, seized nearly 630,000 litres of fuel and instituted prosecution in 261 cases.

The command monitors the status of FSIs in buildings, handles complaints and oversees the professional standards of registered FSI contractors. In 2024, it conducted 74,415 compliance inspections of FSIs in new buildings and developments, and another 94,563 inspections of existing FSIs. It issued 4,352 fire hazard abatement notices against irregularities found and took 1,028 legal actions against, among others, owners of 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 2024, it carried out 80,023 inspections of such premises and issued 1,561 fire hazard abatement notices, of which 62 resulted in prosecution.

### **Community Collaboration Network**

The Community Collaboration Network, comprising the chairpersons of 18 District Fire Safety Committees, facilitates the implementation of the department's policies and measures, and disseminates messages on fire safety and community emergency preparedness at the district level.

### **Resuscitation Alliance**

The Resuscitation Alliance, comprising the Fire Services Department, the Auxiliary Medical Service (AMS), the Civil Aid Service (CAS), the Hong Kong Red Cross, the Hong Kong St John Ambulance, the Hospital Authority and the Resuscitation Council of Hong Kong, was established in 2023 to promote community resuscitation. Two more organisations, the Sudden Arrhythmia Death Syndromes Hong Kong Foundation and the Hong Kong College of

Cardiology joined in April. As of end-2024, around 160,000 citizens who completed cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and AED training became alliance members.

### **Community Emergency Responder Scheme**

The Fire Services Department Community Emergency Responder Scheme was launched in December to optimise the existing Fire Safety Ambassador and Building Fire Safety Envoy schemes. Apart from the conventional fire prevention education, the new scheme also covers response capability in case of emergencies and the operation of AEDs and administration of CPR. The new scheme enhances the emergency response capability of volunteers and deepens cross-sectoral collaboration with local organisations and enterprises.

### **Youth Development**

The Fire and Ambulance Services Teen Connect (FAST Connect) uniformed group aims to help young people cultivate positive thinking, aspirations to serve the community, law-abiding awareness, discipline and team spirit through various activities. With a view to offering this learning platform to more young people, FAST Connect has been expanding its membership by promoting at the district level through the 18 District Fire Safety Committees and inviting children of serving members of the department to join. As at end-2024, there were over 1,000 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 268 disciplined and 63 civilian members. In 2024, members flew a total of 5,898 hours, helped in 555 search and rescue operations and took 2,030 people to hospitals by helicopter. By the end of 2024, it operated three fixed-wing aircraft and nine helicopters for operations and flight training.

### **Immigration Department**

The Immigration Department exercises immigration control, issues Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) identity cards and travel documents, handles nationality and residency matters, and registers births, deaths and marriages. It had 7,202 and 1,572 disciplined and civilian posts respectively at end-2024.

### **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 entry of 31,236 people was refused in 2024.

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 298 million people entered and left the city in 2024, a rise of about 41 per cent from 2023.

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, Korea, Singapore 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 also launched 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.

The Mutual Use of QR Code between HKSAR and Macao SAR Clearance Service was launched in July, providing a faster and more convenient immigration clearance service for eligible Hong Kong and Macao residents. Eligible residents of either SAR can generate a QR code before departure to use for self-service immigration clearance on arrival.

In June, the government regularised the Immigration Facilitation Scheme for Visitors Participating in Short-term Activities in Designated Sectors following its pilot and expanded its scope to cover more authorised host organisations and designated activity. The scheme enables visitors invited by authorised host organisations to participate in specified short-term activities without an employment visa.

As at end-December, 30,158 non-local talents had benefited, including those participating in the InnoEX, Asian Financial Forum, Hong Kong International Dragon Boat Races, Hong Kong Sevens rugby tournament and international horse racing events.

### **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.

### **Entry for Residence**

The Mainland is the major contributor to Hong Kong's immigrant population. In 2024, about 40,000 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 2024, the department received 911,329 HKSAR passport applications, including 2,781 from overseas and 3,136 from the Mainland.

The department lobbies for greater travel convenience for HKSAR passport holders. As of December, 171 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, 49,193 Doc/Is and 47,554 REPs were issued.

### ***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***

The smart identity card has enhanced security features and chip technology that provide better protection of personal data and against counterfeiting, and its contactless chip interface enables faster clearance at e-Channels. During the year, 998,078 new smart identity cards were issued.

## ***Illegal Immigration***

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

In 2024, the city arrested 251 Mainland illegal immigrants and 684 non-ethnic Chinese illegal immigrants.

## ***Combating Unlawful Employment***

The department combats illegal employment. It conducted 17,906 raids and arrested 4,172 illegal workers in 2024. Illegal workers are fined and/or jailed before being sent back to their places of origin. Their employers are also liable to prosecution.

## ***Combating Use of Forged Travel Documents***

The department takes strict measures against the use of forged travel documents and carries out special operations against forgery syndicates. In 2024, it detected 668 forged documents.

### ***Deportation and Removal***

The department processes deportation and removal orders. During the year, 1,099 people were deported, meaning they are prohibited from returning. Another 1,397 people were removed from Hong Kong, comprising 476 illegal immigrants, 901 people who had breached their conditions of stay and 20 people who were refused entry.

### ***Investigation and Prosecution***

The department lays charges against persons who commit 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 investigating 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 2024, there were 364 declarations of change of nationality, 2,123 applications for naturalisation as Chinese nationals, 239 applications for renunciation of Chinese nationality and 11 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 2024, the unit handled 3,302 assistance requests.

### ***Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages***

A new marriage registry and births registry were established at the Immigration Headquarters in Tseung Kwan O in June.

Couples may marry at any of the six 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, 21,339 marriages were celebrated in marriage registries, 926 in licensed places of worship and 22,321 by civil celebrants.

Five district birth registries provide birth registration services. During the year, 36,767 live births were registered.

Three death registries and 15 designated police stations in the New Territories and outlying islands handle death registrations. During the year, 52,366 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. The Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) safeguards the city'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 consistently shows that the community is highly intolerant of corruption. The majority of respondents indicated they had not encountered corruption personally in the preceding 12 months prior to the interviews, reaffirming the stable probity situation of Hong Kong.

In 2024, the ICAC received 2,058 corruption complaints (excluding election complaints<sup>1</sup>), representing a year-on-year increase of 3 per cent. Of these complaints, 70 per cent, 23 per cent and 7 per cent concerned the private sector, government departments and public bodies respectively. During the year, the ICAC received 95 election complaints, most of which concerned the District Council Ordinary Election (85 complaints) held in December 2023.

### **Enforcement**

During the year, 207 people were prosecuted, 19 were cautioned for minor offences and one was warned for a minor breach of the electoral law. A total of 122 people in 84 cases were convicted, representing a 76 per cent in person-based and 84 per cent case-based conviction rates respectively. By year-end, 1,217 cases, including 108 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 any loopholes. In 2024, it completed 69 assignment reports and offered prevention advice on 553 occasions. Integrity training was provided to more than 50,000 government officers and staff of public bodies.

Confidential corruption prevention advice is given free to private sector entities on request. During the year, the ICAC offered advice on 1,230 occasions. It also provided free integrity training to more than 140,000 employees in the private sector, including imported workers and incoming talents.

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

To cultivate important values such as law-abiding awareness, honesty and a sense of responsibility, the ICAC implements moral education programmes for young people from kindergartens to tertiary institutions, engaging over 280,000 students in the year.

To mark its 50th anniversary, the ICAC engaged the public in commemorative events, including the Running Gala and Open Day. The *ICAC Investigators 2024* TV drama was launched, reaching a record 10.54 million viewers. A cafe named 1974 was set up in the lobby at ICAC headquarters to further integrate anti-corruption education with the society.

### **International Cooperation and Mainland Liaison**

The ICAC strives to expand its international network to promote Hong Kong's robust rule of law and anti-corruption experience to countries in the Belt and Road Initiative, and enjoys close collaboration with anti-corruption agencies in the Mainland and Macao.

In February, the ICAC established the Hong Kong International Academy Against Corruption, which organised more than 30 international and local training programmes and signed memorandums of understanding with five local, Mainland and Macao universities to enhance exchanges and research in the fight against corruption. The International Association of Anti-Corruption Authorities (IAACA), presided over by the ICAC Commissioner, increased its membership to 180. Through the tripartite partnership formed by the ICAC, the academy and the IAACA, international training and experience sharing activities were hosted to promote Hong Kong's probity culture overseas.

In 2024, the ICAC, in collaboration with the IAACA, hosted the 8th ICAC Symposium in Hong Kong, attended by more than 500 representatives from about 180 anti-corruption and law enforcement agencies of nearly 60 jurisdictions. At the symposium, the IAACA adopted the first anti-corruption declaration named after Hong Kong – the 'Hong Kong Declaration on Strengthening International Cooperation in Preventing and Fighting Corruption'.

In addition, the ICAC has strengthened its strategic cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, signing a memorandum of understanding, co-organising training courses and co-producing a corruption prevention guide. The ICAC also signed memorandums of understanding with anti-corruption agencies from six countries to establish a framework for deepening anti-corruption cooperation.

### **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 will 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 supervises designated non-financial businesses and professions to ensure their compliance with anti-money laundering and counter-financing of terrorism legislation.

### ***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 non-official members from the medical, legal, education, media, business, community and social service sectors, and 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***

To promote awareness against harmful drugs, including cocaine, cannabis and the rise of 'space oil drug', the department launched several sets of TV and radio announcements in the public interest (APIs) throughout 2024. In view of the threat posed by cocaine addiction, the division stepped up its promotion against the harm of the drug with a set of TV and radio APIs with the slogan 'Cocaine drags you down' in January.

Further TV and radio APIs launched in the summer, highlighted the harm caused by cannabis to young people and told audiences through rap that 'Cannabis is a drug', and a good life is always cannabis-free.

To coincide with proposed legislation to control the use of etomidate – the main active ingredient of 'space oil drug' – the division launched an animated video in August to reinforce the drug's harm and enhance public vigilance against this substance. It also published a new set of TV and radio APIs and a series of feature stories in end-December, as well as placed advertisements throughout public transport networks, boundary control points, billboards, popular websites and mobile applications, and social media platforms. In addition, the division stepped up its cooperation with the school and professional sectors to promote preventive education in the community, especially for the youth.

The Anti-drug Info Zone: Stride Ahead Into A Drug-free Future roving exhibition was staged at various malls in June, as well as the Hong Kong Book Fair and then at tertiary institutes throughout the second half of 2024. The exhibition incorporated science, technology, engineering and mathematics education to share anti-drug knowledge with visitors and provide them with information about criminal liability for drug offences and how to seek help.

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

The Hong Kong Jockey Club Drug InfoCentre is equipped with multimedia interactive facilities and features, including guided tours, parental talks, thematic exhibitions and workshops to help the public gain a deeper understanding on drugs as well as build a healthy lifestyle. A new Space Oil Drug Corner was set up in 2024 to educate about this emerging drug.

The division also works with the Education Bureau to help students, both inside and outside the classroom, understand the dangers of drugs and the consequences of engaging in drug-trafficking activities.

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 2024-25 school year, 246 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 134 participating secondary schools in 2024-25.

### ***Treatment and Rehabilitation***

Treatment and rehabilitation services are available to drug abusers with different needs. The CSD 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 30 drug treatment and rehabilitation centres, and provide community-based services in 11 counselling centres for psychotropic substance abusers and one centre for drug counselling with two sub-bases.

In March, the division promulgated the Three-year Plan on Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Services in Hong Kong for 2024-2026. The strategic directions for drug treatment and rehabilitation services provide a reference for service units to develop plans and programmes that effectively respond to the latest drug situation and the needs of drug abusers and those in rehabilitation.

### ***Legislation and Enforcement***

In 2024, six dangerous drugs (bromazolam, butonitazene and etomidate, and its three analogues metomidate, propoxate and isopropoxate) and 18 precursor chemicals (1-boc-4-piperidone, 3,4-MDP-2-P methyl glycidic acid and its esters, 4-piperidone and P-2-P methyl glycidic acid and its esters) were proposed to be controlled under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance and the Control of Chemicals Ordinance respectively. The effective date of their control will be within the first half of 2025.

During the year, the police and Customs and Excise Department seized about 10,252kg of major types of drugs and arrested 3,242 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 5,068 drug abusers in 2024, of whom 35 per cent were newly reported, 14 per cent were aged under 21 and 22 per cent abused more than one drug. Heroin continued to be reported as the most commonly abused single drug in Hong Kong, afflicting 40 per cent of drug abusers. Psychotropic substances were abused by 70 per cent of drug abusers. Commonly abused psychotropic substances included cocaine (21 per cent), methamphetamine (commonly known as 'lce', 16 per cent), cannabis (13 per cent) and ketamine (11 per cent). Half of the newly reported drug abusers had abused drugs for at least 4.8 years before their drug abuse was reported, compared with six years in 2023.

### ***External Cooperation***

Hong Kong works with its counterparts in the Mainland and elsewhere in combating drug crimes. Three international conventions 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 2024, government representatives, as members of the Chinese delegation, joined the 67th session of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs convened in Vienna, while a young person from Hong Kong took part, for the first time, in the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs Youth Forum, also in Vienna.

### ***Research***

Drug-related research helps formulate anti-drug measures. The division conducted the triennial survey of drug use among students at upper primary to post-secondary levels in the 2023-24 school year.

### ***Beat Drugs Fund***

With a capital base of \$3.35 billion, the Beat Drugs 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 2024, the fund approved about \$204 million to support around 230 projects and programmes.

Under the fund, a total of \$9 million standard funding has been granted to the 18 District Fight Crime Committees for the fifth round of the three-year Anti-drug Community Awareness Building Programme, which aims to sustain the momentum in community-driven anti-drug work. Taking into account the evolving anti-drug need of local communities over time, each committee can apply for an optional additional funding of \$100,000 in the fifth round if

it is demonstrated with sufficient grounds and detailed information that there is a need for extra funding.

### **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.

### **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 2023 annual report was submitted to the Chief Executive in June 2024 and tabled in the Legislative Council in October.

### **Government Laboratory**

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

The Drugs, Toxicology and Documents Group undertakes analysis of:

- abused drugs, hair drug testing, urinalysis, drink and drug driving cases; and
- toxicological examination in coroner's and criminal cases, examination of handwriting and counterfeit documents and forgeries.



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 AMS is a government department under the Security Bureau, with 98 civil service positions and around 3,500 adult volunteers and 2,000 cadets. It reinforces regular medical and ambulance services during emergencies and provides backup in normal circumstances. Volunteers come from different walks of life, including health professionals such as doctors, nurses and pharmacists.

The AMS provides first aid services during natural disasters, large-scale incidents, public activities, festivals, and at major sports events. During Sundays and public holidays, its members operate first aid stations in country parks while during Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays, its First Aid Bicycle Teams patrol cycling tracks across the territory. The AMS also organises first aid programmes at schools and public talks on CPR, the use of an AED and other health topics. Apart from first aid services, the AMS runs the Non-emergency Ambulance Transfer Service, operating ambulance vehicles to provide inter-hospital transfer and other conveyance service of non-emergency nature.

Cadet members, aged 12 to 17, receive national security education as well as training in Chinese-style foot drill and flag-raising, discipline and medical skills. In 2024, the AMS, in collaboration with the Hong Kong Metropolitan University, Saint Francis University and Tung Wah College, promoted diversified development of young people through various educational activities, such as medical and health training, service learning programmes and volunteer services, as well as career planning.

### **Civil Aid Service**

The CAS is a government auxiliary emergency service with around 3,000 adult members and 4,000 cadets, who receive training, administrative and logistics support from 107 civil servants.

Members provide support in times of emergency, such as mountain search and flood rescue, and patrol country parks and hiking trails to offer assistance to those in need. In 2024, the CAS completed 40 mountain search and rescue assignments.

The CAS Cadet Corps helps young people aged 12 to 17 develop leadership potential and cultivate civic awareness through national security education as well as training in Chinese-style foot drill, basic emergency rescue, crowd management, first aid and rock climbing. The School Partnership Scheme implemented by the CAS offers discipline and leadership training to junior secondary students. In 2024, more than 1,400 students from 29 secondary schools applied to the Cadet Corps after participating in relevant activities.

Apart from developing the Cadet Corps, the CAS cooperates with different government departments, NGOs and schools to provide tailor-made short-term courses, visits and talks for

the young people. In 2024, more than 3,600 young people participated in the public education programmes organised by the CAS, with over 800 students receiving training specifically related to Chinese-style foot drill and flag-raising activities. These activities not only cultivate positive thinking and enhance young people's competence, but also foster a sense of national identity and belonging.

### Websites

Auxiliary Medical Service: [www.ams.gov.hk](http://www.ams.gov.hk)

Civil Aid Service: [www.cas.gov.hk](http://www.cas.gov.hk)

Commissioner on Interception of Communications and Surveillance: [www.sciocs.gov.hk](http://www.sciocs.gov.hk)

Correctional Services Department: [www.csd.gov.hk](http://www.csd.gov.hk)

Government Flying Service: [www.gfs.gov.hk](http://www.gfs.gov.hk)

Government Laboratory: [www.govtlab.gov.hk](http://www.govtlab.gov.hk)

Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department: [www.customs.gov.hk](http://www.customs.gov.hk)

Hong Kong Fire Services Department: [www.hkfsd.gov.hk](http://www.hkfsd.gov.hk)

Hong Kong Police Force: [www.police.gov.hk](http://www.police.gov.hk)

Immigration Department: [www.immd.gov.hk](http://www.immd.gov.hk)

Independent Commission Against Corruption: [www.icac.org.hk](http://www.icac.org.hk)

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