

# **Social Welfare Department Environmental Report 2023**

## **Introduction**

The Social Welfare Department (the Department) is responsible for implementing the Government's policies on social welfare and for developing and co-ordinating social welfare services. These include social security, services for the elderly, family and child welfare services, medical social services, group and community work, services for young people, rehabilitation services for people with disabilities, as well as services for offenders.

2. As at 31 December 2023, the Department had an establishment of 6,521 posts and the staff were accommodated in 229 office locations throughout the territory. Its actual recurrent expenditure in 2022-23 was \$98.973 billion.

3. This Environmental Report gives an updated account of the Department's performance in green management in 2023, and presents the ongoing efforts of the Department in the implementation of green measures.

## **Environmental Goal and Policy**

4. The Department is committed to supporting Government's policies on environmental protection and sustainable development. To this end, our objectives are to promote a green culture among staff of the Department and our working partners and to endeavour to adopt green management and practices in our workplace.

## **Green Measures Taken in 2023**

5. During the year, the Department has made continuous efforts in cultivating and fostering awareness among our staff members for the care of the environment. While most of our operation units are office-based, we have endeavoured to adopt good office practices aiming at reducing the use of, reusing as well as recycling valuable resource and conserving energy. Details of the green measures taken are as follows –

**(a) *Net Zero Electricity Generation***

- Solar photovoltaic (PV) systems have been installed at the rooftop of Kai Nang Integrated Rehabilitation Services Complex and Siu Lam Integrated Rehabilitation Service Complex, with a renewable energy generation at 30,440 kilowatt hours (kWh) in 2023; and
- The Department targets to operate the solar PV systems at Leung King Integrated Social Welfare Complex and Kei Ching Integrated Social Welfare Complex by 2024 and 2028 respectively.

**(b) *Energy Conservation***

- Installing motion sensors for lighting control in both office and common areas;
- Using LED Tube Lighting for illumination in office and common areas;
- Setting all photocopiers to automatic energy saving mode;
- Installing timed taps and dual-flush flushing cisterns in some of our toilets in order to reduce water usage and reduce sewage generation; and
- Ensuring proper maintenance of office equipment to conserve energy and reduce consumption;
- The Department recorded an electricity consumption of 6,963,841 kWh in 2022-23, which represented a decrease of 5.9% as compared to 2021-22; and
- Using 2018-19 as the baseline, the Department achieved a 14% energy saving during the year.

**(c) *Green Transport***

- Adopted four five-seater electric vehicles (EVs). The Department targets to replace nine fuel-propelled departmental vehicles with EVs by 2025;
- Installed four EV chargers at the carparks, with two at Wu Chung House and two at Lady Trench Training Centre, to support the operation of EVs;
- Practising carpooling and task combination as far as practicable to achieve multiple objectives in one journey instead of arranging separate trips; and
- Planning routes to minimise the journey distance and time, and to avoid congested area.

**(d) *Waste Reduction and Recycling***

- Encouraging staff members to use their own cups and drinking glasses instead of disposable plastic bottles or paper cups;
- Avoiding serving bottled water during meetings;
- Providing recycle bins for recycling waste paper, cans and plastic bottles;
- Collecting used printer toner cartridges for recycling;

- Transferring surplus furniture and equipment to other bureaux/departments for further use;
- Selling surplus furniture for recycling; and
- In 2023, collected 4,543 kilograms of waste paper and a total of 381 empty cans and plastic bottles for recycling.

**(e) *Minimising Paper Consumption***

- Reducing the consumption of photocopying paper through a wider use of electronic communication;
- Reducing the production of printed publications and encouraging staff members to upload publications onto the Department's homepage for public access;
- Uploading documents for internal circulation onto the departmental intranet portal for viewing by staff; and
- Advising staff members to collect and submit returns in electronic format through the portal.

**(f) *Economy Use of Paper***

- Requesting minimal numbers of hard copies of government newsletters/publications;
- Keeping the numbers of copies of paper publications to the minimum;
- Using printers and photocopiers with double-sided copying functions;
- Setting double-sided printing and printing in grayscale as default modes for all network printers and photocopiers;
- Using the blank side of used paper for drafting, printing and photocopying;
- Minimising the numbers of photocopies, and using both sides of paper if printing/photocopying is unavoidable;
- Encouraging staff members to use electronic greeting cards in replacement of printed cards on festive occasions;
- Minimising the usage of envelopes for dispatching unclassified and unrestricted documents;
- Implementing the Electronic Recordkeeping System for filing and retaining government records by 2025; and
- Controlled paper consumption to 74,261 reams, representing a drop of 2.65% comparing to the consumption in 2022, in which 100% of paper consumed in 2023 was recycled paper.

**(g) *Carbon and Energy management – Tuen Mun Children and Juvenile Home ("the Home")***

- Committed to mitigating climate change through energy saving;
- Implementing the following energy management opportunities and

housekeeping measures, with a view to reducing additional 6% electricity consumption over five years from 2020-21 to 2024-25, using 2018-19 as the baseline. Relevant energy saving measures include-

- Arranging staff training in energy conservation
  - Forming energy management committee
  - Putting up energy conservation signs
  - Using split type air-conditioning units with energy saving labeling
  - Upgrading Mechanical Ventilation and Air-conditioning System
  - Switching off external lightings during daytime
  - Installing Solar Heat Collection Hot Water System
- Conducted annual carbon audit at the Home for the period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. This exercise serves to monitor the greenhouse gas emission.

Total No. of Major Buildings at the Home:	5
Total Floor Area:	11,976 m <sup>2</sup>
Total No. of Employees:	207
Category of Building(s):	Office type, Schools and Educational, and Residential Home
Total Greenhouse Gas Emissions	1,605.71 Tonnes of CO <sub>2</sub> -e
Total Electricity Consumption	3,007,859 kWh

***(h) Other Measures***

***(i) Green Management***

- Assistant Secretary (General) 3 is the designated Green Manager and is responsible for promoting and implementing various environmental protection measures;
- Sending electronic seasonal greeting cards during festive seasons; and
- Minimising the use of and reusing decorative materials.

***(ii) Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)***

- The Department has arranged regular cleaning for air ventilation systems to improve air quality. As at 31 December 2023, eligible premises of the Department have joined the IAQ Certification Scheme and had their IAQ assessed regularly and 116 premises have attained the "Excellent" or "Good" IAQ Class.

**(iii) Green Procurement**

- Procuring plain paper fax machine and other energy efficient office equipment and electrical appliances;
- Trading in office equipment, such as photocopiers, in procurement;
- Acquiring green stationery, such as refillable ball pens and items made of recycled materials, supplied by the Government Logistics Department; and
- Requiring cleansing contractors to use biodegradable garbage bags for waste disposal.

**(iv) Publicity/Education**

- Disseminating guidelines on saving electricity through economic use of lighting, air-conditioning, photocopiers and computer equipment to all offices;
- Displaying posters/stickers with messages to raise the awareness of the energy conservation among the staff members in office areas.
- Providing guidelines on green office practices for reference by all offices; and
- Uploading a wealth of Green Tips on our departmental intranet portal to raise staff awareness on and encourage office participation in waste minimisation, waste recovery and energy conservation.

**(v) Promotion of green message/practice to Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs)**

- Promulgating circulars and documents relevant to NGOs through the Department's homepage;
- Promoting the use of electronic communications with NGOs; and
- Establishing green practice of filing returns in electronic format.

**Commitment to Clean Air Charter**

6. The Department abides by the commitments stated in the Clean Air Charter. In addition to the green management efforts as listed out in paragraph 5 above, the Department will continue to –

- maintain room temperature at 25.5°C during summer months;
- turn off air-conditioners, computers and other office equipment when they are not in use;
- require drivers to switch off vehicle engines whilst awaiting; and
- closely monitor vehicle maintenance to ensure low emissions.

## **Green Management Performance**

7. The green measures taken in 2023 were effective. The Department has reduced electricity consumption and greenhouse gas emissions compared to 2022. The Department also installed system for net zero electricity generation in some premises and replaced vehicles with electric vehicles to further improving green management measures.

## **Way Forward**

8. The Department will continue to devote efforts in green management by exploring new green initiatives and enhance environmental awareness among our staff. To ensure that the green efforts will be maintained and improved, we are committed to -

- uphold and promote the 4Rs principles of “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Replace” in office management;
- continue our efforts in minimising consumption, recycling wastes and conserving energy;
- expand the use of information technology to minimise consumption of paper and energy; and
- explore more green initiatives which can be implemented in office operation and activities of the Department.

## **Comments and Suggestions**

9. The Department welcomes your views and suggestions on this Environmental Report. Please contact us by the following means -

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