

March 17, 2021

The Editor
Financial Times

Dear Editor,

Re: your article “Expats in Hong Kong question Covid rules after hundreds quarantined” (March 15, 2021).

The HKSAR Government fully understands the challenges and frustrations that everyone is dealing with during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly those subject to quarantine or isolation orders.

However, we stand by our stringent public health protocols that have kept millions of people in Hong Kong safe and have prevented the large-scale community transmission of COVID-19 seen elsewhere in the world. To protect the health of all people living and working in the city is always the prime concern of the HKSAR Government.

Our comprehensive and robust epidemic control measures to combat the pandemic (including quarantine and isolation) achieve to stabilise the recent wave of epidemic in safeguarding the well-being of our community as a whole. Yet, we also wish to emphasise that for cases where children are involved, each and every decision has been made in the interests of the children and their families.

From the outset, the HKSAR Government has been transparent and open about the testing rules, quarantine measures and other strategies to contain the spread of the virus. Risk communication is key to managing the public anxieties during this critical period. Various channels are available to the business community to seek guidance and information as needed, including Announcements in the Public Interest on both television and radio, Facebook page, Instagram platform, YouTube channel, newspapers, the “GovHK Notifications” mobile app, health education infoline, media interviews, public transport, outdoor and digital media, etc. Apart from daily media briefings by senior health officials on the number of cases, relevant contact tracing, quarantine arrangement, etc., the latest situation of COVID-19 in Hong Kong and the most updated health advice could be found at the “COVID-19 Thematic Website” (www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/index.html).

Although this city of 7.5 million people has seen some of the lowest rates of COVID-19 cases (11,282 as of March 15) and deaths (203 as of March 15), we are still dealing with sporadic outbreaks across the city, including a recent outbreak involving a gym that was popular with professionals. Our strategy of stringent border control measures, compulsory testing, contact tracing, quarantine and isolation have been effective in containing the spread of the virus and to safeguarding the health of the whole population in Hong Kong.

The health of our community will continue to be our top priority.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Sophia Chan
Secretary for Food and Health
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government