

17 January 2024

For immediate release

## **Competition Commission conducts search regarding funeral service case**

The Competition Commission (Commission) executed search warrants this morning at 13 premises, including a number of funeral service companies and an office of a trade association in Hung Hom, Tuen Mun and Yuen Long. The companies, trade association as well as other funeral service practitioners are suspected of having engaged in anti-competitive conduct including price fixing when providing funeral services, in contravention of the First Conduct Rule under the Competition Ordinance (Ordinance).

The Commission received intelligence earlier alleging that funeral service practitioners engaged in anti-competitive conduct including market sharing by coordinating their solicitation of customers at the New Territories (Shatin) Forensic Medicine Centre (the reprovisioned Fu Shan Public Mortuary). The Commission therefore gathered and analysed information relating to the case, and conducted a surprise visit to the Forensic Medicine Centre with assistance from the Police in August 2023<sup>1</sup>, with the aim of gathering more information on-site.

After the operation, the Commission analysed the information in detail and found that, apart from the allegations mentioned above, a trade association and certain funeral service companies and practitioners are also suspected of having engaged in anti-competitive conduct including price fixing. The Commission therefore initiated another case to pursue the matter further and was satisfied that there is “reasonable cause to suspect” a contravention of a competition rule. The Commission thus decided to escalate the case to the investigation phase.

The Commission has exercised its compulsory powers in today’s operation. In addition to searching premises with warrants, it also requested relevant parties to produce documents and information.

The Commission expresses its deep appreciation to the Hong Kong Police Force for their assistance in today’s search.

The Commission calls on any interested parties who can provide information on the case or the practices in the industry, in particular practitioners in the funeral service industry or users of such services, to contact the Commission by telephone at 3462 2118, e-mail ([complaints@compcomm.hk](mailto:complaints@compcomm.hk)), post, or in person at the Commission’s office (by appointment only). The Commission will seek to protect any confidential information provided, including the identity of the informants.

Those who consider that they may have engaged or been involved in cartel conduct should approach the Commission for leniency or cooperation (Leniency Hotline: 3996 8010; e-mail: [leniency@compcomm.hk](mailto:leniency@compcomm.hk)).

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<sup>1</sup> See the Commission’s [press release](#) dated 15 August 2023.

No further comment will be made at this stage as the investigation is ongoing. The Commission stresses that existence of the investigation does not prejudge its outcome, and urges all companies and trade associations to comply with the Ordinance, and to steer clear of anti-competitive practices.

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