

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
PANEL ON WELFARE SERVICES MEETING ON 13 NOVEMBER 2000

INFORMATION PAPER ON THE
PROVISION OF ENHANCED HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE SERVICES FOR ELDERS

PURPOSE

To brief Members on the planned provision of enhanced home and community care services for frail elders who prefer to stay and be taken care of at home.

BACKGROUND

2. It has always been government's policy to encourage older persons to age in place. This policy is consistent with the preference of our elders and their families. Surveys have indicated that the majority of our older persons prefer to age at home and most families are prepared to care of them at home, especially where adequate home and community support services are available.

3. Over the years, we have increased the provision of home care and community care services to facilitate more frail elders to continue to live at home. During the past year, we have also re-engineered the traditional home help services into meal service and home care service to enable service operators to deploy their resources more flexibly. Our initial assessment indicates that the new home care teams are equipped with better nursing and allied health support and are hence able to take care of elders requiring more intensive care services at home.

4. In the 2000 Budget, amongst a package of measures to promote self-reliance, we undertook to expand support services for the frail elders so that the carers may go out to work. We subsequently reported to Finance Committee that we are developing a form of enhanced home and community care services at an

annual recurrent cost of \$64 million. The Finance Committee accepted the financial implications arising from this proposal and the need for supplementary provision in 2000-01 if needed.

ENHANCED HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE SERVICES

Objective

5. The proposed enhanced home and community care services are an integrated form of services for the frail elders with the aim of enabling them to age at home. This new form of service will meet the dual objectives of meeting the elders' wish to stay in a familiar environment whilst receiving care and the family's wish to take care of them and in turn strengthen family cohesion.

Care Level of Target Clients

6. We aim to provide more intensive home and community-based care and support services to frail elders assessed by the Standardized Care Need Assessment Mechanism for Elderly Services to be of moderate level of impairment. These cases would be referred to service operators by accredited assessors or the Social Welfare Department's Standardised Care Need Assessment Management Offices (Elderly Services).

Service Parameters

7. Service providers are required to provide a wide range of care services that assist elders who suffer from moderate level of impairment to continue to live at home, as well as support services to enable their family caregivers to continue to perform their role effectively. Such services can be a range of home-based service or a comprehensive package of home-based and centre-based services with nursing and para-medical support in accordance with individual needs. Service providers are expected to exercise flexibility in providing, arranging or purchasing the appropriate services.

Selection of Service Providers

8. Building on our experience in allocation of service units in respect of home care services, we shall invite non-government organisations (NGOs) to submit proposals. In this exercise we shall further encourage service providers to use their existing resources, such as social centres, multi-service centres, day care centres, residential care homes, in a flexible and innovative manner. We shall also encourage the service providers to form partnership and strategic alliances with other service units or agencies to achieve higher integration and efficiency in service delivery.

Monitoring Mechanism

9. We shall monitor the services on a regular basis to ensure that the service operators are complying in full with our specified requirements. Service providers will be asked to provide on a quarterly basis Performance Indicators Reports. The data collected will form the basis for performance monitoring and benchmarking among service operators and for promoting inter-organisation learning and continuous improvement of service quality. Other monitoring measures will include random spot check by the Social Welfare Department and auditing of records and files as necessary.

Selection Criteria

10. The allocation of new service units to NGOs will be by invitation of proposals. The criteria for selection are clearly spelt out in the service specification documents. Interested NGOs will be required to submit proposals containing broadly, the following information:

- (a) vision, mission and strategic plan of the service provider;
- (b) ability to offer a package of appropriate care and support services to enable the frail elders to age at home;
- (c) ability to manage service quality, finance and human resources;

- (d) ability to adopt an innovative approach in service delivery and to form partnership and strategic alliances; and
- (e) relevant experience of the service provider.

11. While we will take into account the number of cases the service providers can serve, a contract will be awarded primarily on the basis of the quality of services a service provider can offer.

Contract Arrangement

12. We will award one contract to each of the 18 District Council districts. Each contract sum will be around \$3.5 million for providing service to a minimum of 70 elders. Interested NGOs will be required to indicate the number of users they can serve with this contract sum. This figure will become the minimum number of clients to be served and upon which we derive a per capita rate. The actual payment will be calculated on a per capita rate basis¹. We shall allow a 10% margin above the contract sum and payment for the additional clients served will be on a per capita basis. Clients will be charged according to prevailing practices and rates of existing meal, home care and day care services. The service operators will be responsible for collecting the fees.

13. We are aware that this first batch of contracts may not be sufficient to meet demand and that the demand for enhanced home and community care services is not evenly distributed among the 18 districts. The Government has earmarked more resources in 2001-2002 to further expand home and community care services for the elders. In the light of the actual demand on implementation of the Standardized Care Need Assessment Mechanism for Elderly Services, we shall consider awarding more than one contract or larger contracts to those districts with

¹ 50% of the annual contract sum will be released at the onset of the service as set up costs, and the service operator is expected to take up at least 50% of the minimum number of cases by the end of the first six months. Subsequent payments will be made quarterly and in advance based on the estimated number of cases to be served each quarter. Adjustments will be made on an annual basis based on the quarterly reports submitted by the service operator showing the actual number of cases in and out of the service each month.

huge demand in the next exercise.

Timetable

14. We intend to award contracts for bringing the service into operation in March 2001 to tie in with the implementation of the Standardized Care Need Assessment Mechanism for Elderly Services. SWD has issued letters to NGOs in early November 2000 to invite them to consider submitting proposals. The contracts will last for about 36 months in line with current practice.

ADVICE SOUGHT

15. Members are invited to note the implementation plan. We will keep Members informed about the progress of this initiative.

**Health and Welfare Bureau/Social Welfare Department
November 2000**