

THE HONG KONG COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE
Views on the Re-engineering of Community Support Services

Background

1. The Health and Welfare Bureau commissioned the Centre on Ageing of the University of HK in 2000 to review the provision of community care and support services for elders living in the community. The consultant recommended integration and service enhancement of the existing community support services, i.e. transforming SE into Neighborhood Elderly Centre (NEC), ME into District Elderly Community Centre (DECC), and upgrading the home help teams as pledged in 2001 Policy Address, to achieve continuum of care in the community. **This direction was all along supported by the NGO sector and we hope that the recommendation of the Consultancy Study should be regarded as backbone of this exercise.**
2. Based on the Consultant's recommendations, SWD has already invited operators of 2 DECCs and 4 NECs in Shatin and Tuen Mun respectively. **The lump sum for a DECC is \$ 5.745 mln and a NEC is \$ 1.194 mln.**
3. On May 29, 2002, the Community Chest has formally announced that they are going to withdraw the annual allocation in topping up 15-20% subvention of 89 SEs and 20 MEs in 2003-04, which is about \$ 27 mln per year. In view of the imminent financial difficulties of the agencies facing termination of Community Chest funding, SWD has announced to address this issue by re-engineering and integrating the existing services according to the recommendation of the Consultancy Report, as well as transforming SEs into NECs, ME into DECC, and upgrading the home help teams as pledged in 2001 Policy Address. **However, SWD emphasized that the amount they can support is likely to be insufficient to cover the amount allocated by the Community Chest.**

NGO's Perspective

4. The Council has been discussing with the Department and they agree with us the general direction and the principles for revamping. However, we are still negotiating on the reference cost. We have first proposed a reference cost according to the recommendations of the Consultancy Report. However, in view of the economic hardship, we have further trimmed down the cost as follows:

- a. *For SE to transform into NEC:* an additional 1 ASWO at mid-point to perform the additional functions required for a NEC. **The reference cost of a NEC is the existing subvention of SWD plus an additional \$ 0.394 mln** (for 1 ASWO)
 - b. *For ME to transform into DECC:* an additional 1 ASWO and 1 SWA at mid-point to perform the additional functions required for a NEC. **The reference cost of a NEC is the existing subvention of SWD plus an additional \$ 0.639 mln** (for 1 ASWO + 1 SWA)
 - c. *Upgrading home help teams:* On top of the existing home help team's resources, an additional **\$ 3613**¹ is required to take care of an extra case with moderate level of impairment.
5. With reference to the reference cost, **the agencies would try their best to pool together their existing resources in elderly services for formation of DECC, NEC and upgrading home help services on one hand, and SWD would match the cost difference on the other hand.**
 6. For years, the agencies are not receiving 100% subvention from SWD to operate S/Es and M/Es but they are required to give 100% output according to FSA. They either apply for Community Chest's funding support or to raise funds by themselves to cover the difference. **Therefore, SWD has moral obligation to assist the agencies facing imminent financial difficulties in this revamping exercise in order to maintain the service quality and to safeguard the well-being of the service users.**
 7. Under the current economic hardship, we understand that the Department may not have enough resources to transform all the existing 211 SEs and 35 MEs into NECs and DECCs at one time. **We have no objection to transform the SEs and MEs by phases until Department is more ready and have sufficient resources to complete the integration and to actualize the recommendations of the Consultant.**
 8. We appeal to the Welfare Panel's understanding to the imminent financial difficulties of the agencies facing termination of Community Chest funding while considering detail arrangement for the re-engineering. Therefore, we hope the Welfare Panel can consider the followings:

¹ \$ 3613 is the benchmarked unit cost of existing EHCCS

- a. advising the Department on working out financial arrangement of this re-engineering exercise and consult with the service operators. The recommendations of the Consultant have provided a very good reference.**
- b. advising the Department on how to assist the agencies in facing financial difficulties upon termination of the allocation from Community Chest.**