

**For discussion on  
13 February 2006**

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## **LEGCO PANEL ON WELFARE SERVICES**

### **Supporting people with disabilities who are not CSSA recipients to cope with everyday needs**

#### **PURPOSE**

The objective of rehabilitation policy is to ensure equal opportunities for all people with disabilities, and to promote full integration of people with disabilities into society. The Government is committed to providing comprehensive services to meet the needs of people with disabilities, and to facilitate the latter to live in the community and be self-reliant.

2. This paper introduces the assistance covering various aspects, including financial, housing, emotional, community and information technology supports, that non-CSSA people with disabilities may seek to meet their needs in daily lives.

#### **FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

3. We provide financial support for non-CSSA persons with disability. The latter can apply for cash allowance under the “Disability Allowance (DA)” scheme, to meet their special needs arisen from disability. This is a non-means testing scheme, and there is no restriction on how the DA is used. The rates of DA are adjusted according to the movement of the Social Security Assistance Index of Prices. The Finance Committee has approved the upward adjustment of the rates of DA with effect from 1 February 2006. The new rates of monthly payment are HK\$1,125 (Normal DA) and HK\$2,250 (Higher DA). As in December 2005, the total number of persons receiving DA was 112,081. The total amount of DA released by the Government each year amounts to about HK\$1.6 billion.

4. We also appreciate that people with disability have special needs like purchasing medical or rehabilitation equipment. A number of funding

schemes have been set up to provide support in this regard. These funding schemes include -

**(1) Yan Chai Tetraplegic Fund**

Yan Chai Tetraplegic Fund was established by the Yan Chai Hospital Board in September 2004 to provide financial assistance to tetraplegic patients so as to support their living in the community and to improve their quality of living. The coverage of the grant includes essential expenses for the purchase and repair services of medical/rehabilitation appliances; essential expenses for home modifications; personal helper, etc. Since its inauguration, the Fund has received over \$9,200,000 donations. 32 applications amounting to a sum of about \$1,200,000 have been approved for the purchase of medical appliances and medical consumables, as well as for hiring of personal helpers.

**(2) “Financial support scheme to people with neuro-muscular disease on medical appliances and consumables” by the S K Yee Fund for the Disabled**

Commencing 2003, Hong Kong Neuro-muscular Disease Association has been granted \$200,000 per year for five years from the S K Yee Fund for the Disabled to subsidize patients with neuro-muscular disease in the purchase of medical appliances and consumables. As in September 2005, 11 non-CSSA patients have benefited from the scheme.

**(3) Ho Kam Yung Fund**

The Ho Kam Yung Fund was established in September 2005 to provide financial support to people with disabilities. The coverage of the Fund includes rehabilitation related expenses and short term financial assistance. As in January 2006, five non-CSSA persons with disabilities have benefited from the Fund.

**(4) Samaritan Fund**

The objective of the Samaritan Fund is to provide financial assistance to needy patients in meeting medical expenses that are not covered by the hospital maintenance fees or out-patient consultation fees in public hospitals/clinics.

5. A brief introduction of the above funding schemes is at *Annex A*. Needy persons with disability may apply to relevant funding scheme directly. They may also consult social workers for further information of these schemes or ask a medical social worker to help to apply for a suitable scheme.

## **HOUSING ASSISTANCE**

6. To address the housing needs of tetraplegic patients, the Housing Department gives special consideration to the needs of applicants of compassionate rehousing who are tetraplegic patients for extra space to accommodate their carers and rehabilitation equipment. Under the joint efforts of the Housing Department and the medical and allied health team of Kowloon Hospital, a specification on the housing provision for tetraplegic patients has been worked out to facilitate identification of suitable public housing units for them. Areas covered include minimum size of the unit, suitability for home modification, accessibility of public transport facilities as well as neighbouring commercial and communal facilities.

7. Since the launching of this scheme in December 2004, a total of 14 compassionate rehousing applications from tetraplegic patients have been submitted to the Housing Department. Amongst them, 13 have already been allocated public housing units and one is pending offer of housing unit.

## **EMOTIONAL SUPPORT**

8. Medical social workers (MSW), social workers of Integrated / Family Services Centres and members of the self-help patient groups provide emotional support and counseling to people with disabilities and their families. Where necessary, people with disabilities and their families could be referred to clinical psychologists. MSW could also help to apply for financial assistance, such as the Samaritan Fund managed by Hospital Authority, or the Li Po Chun Charitable Trust Fund and Tang Shiu Kin & Ho Tim Charitable Fund managed by Social Welfare Department (SWD).

## **COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES**

9. The objectives of the community-based projects launched by SWD were to strengthen carers' caring capacity, to relieve their stress, and to provide people with disabilities and their families with a better quality of life. These projects include holiday care, family-based respite service, home care service, home-based rehabilitation training service, day care service for severely disabled persons, personal development programme, specialized programmes for persons with autism and challenging behaviours, and support scheme for the newly blind, etc.

10. Persons with disability in need may also consider using other suitable community support services, including Residential Respite Service, Home-based Training and Support Service, Specialized Home-based Training and Support Service, Integrated Home Care Services, Community Rehabilitation Network and Social and Recreational Centre for the Disabled, etc. An introduction of these services is at **Annex B**.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) SUPPORT SCHEME FOR PEOPLE WITH SEVERE PHYSICAL DISABILITIES**

11. The IT Support Scheme, with a capital of \$2Mn, was set up to provide funding support to people with severe physical disabilities (e.g. those suffering from tetraplegia, muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy, etc) for the purchase of computer and adaptive devices upon their discharge from hospital. Through the support of these IT equipments, these people's opportunities for communication would be promoted so that they can better integrate into the community. The scheme was launched in October 2005 and monitored by the Central Committee on Information Technology for Rehabilitation Services. Till present, three applications have been granted with a total of about \$60,000.

## **SUPPORT FOR CARERS**

12. The contributions of family members and carers of people with

disabilities in encouraging and sustaining the latter's participation in community life are invaluable. The various kinds of support for people with disabilities provided by the Government largely target family as receiving unit. These supports aim to help persons with disability and their family members to overcome difficulties together and to raise their living standard. The aforementioned, in particular, the emotional and community support, including Community-based Projects, Residential Respite Service, Home-based Training and Support Service, Support to Self-help Organizations of People with Disabilities/Chronic Illness and Parents/Carers Groups and Community Rehabilitation Network, etc., all cater to the needs of persons with disability together with their family members / carers.

13. The ten SWD-funded Parents/Relatives Resource Centres serve as a focal point, where parents and relatives of people with disabilities can meet and share their experiences, and establish mutual support with the assistance of the centre staff.

14. In addition, a one-off special funding, amounting to \$9Mn, will be granted to 102 organizations which have close contact or network with families/carers of people with disabilities in February 2006. The purpose of the funding is for the strengthening of training and support programmes to carers. Programmes to be conducted will include training courses/seminars/workshops on the caring of the disabled, support groups, publications, and publicity, etc.

## **INSURANCE SYSTEM**

15. The 2005 Hong Kong Rehabilitation Programme Plan Review Working Group discussed the merits and feasibility of the setting up of an insurance system for people with disabilities at two of its meetings. Reference was made to overseas example, such as the Old-Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance (OASDI) under the Social Security system of the United States. Having considered that such insurance system requires contributions on the part of the potential beneficiary, the Working Group was of the view that this kind of system would not be suitable for the situation in Hong Kong, and therefore decided not to pursue further in this

regard.

## **SAFETY NET**

16. Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme provides a safety net for those who cannot support themselves financially to meet their basic needs. Persons with disability who pass the means test may also receive special grants to meet their specific needs on top of the CSSA basic rate.

## **WAY FORWARD**

17. Two new services will be launched in 2006-07 to strengthen the support for people with disabilities living in the community.

### **(1) Integrated Rehabilitation Training and Support Centre**

A specialized Integrated Rehabilitation Training and Support Centre will be set up to provide transitional residential services, ambulatory day training, care and support services to persons with severe disability including tetraplegic patients to facilitate their return to community living. This is a time limited and goal oriented community-based rehabilitation programme providing psychological services, nursing care and other support to help target patients reach their maximum level of recovery and functioning after discharge from hospital/medical rehabilitation settings.

### **(2) Community Rehabilitation Day Centre**

Another project in the pipeline is the region-based Community Rehabilitation Day Centres (CRDC) aiming to provide short term and transitional rehabilitation services to discharged patients with a view to strengthening their self-care abilities, domestic living and community living skills. Service targets include people with physical impairment; patients suffering from stroke; or people with mental or neurological impairment affecting their physical functioning. The services of CRDC also include training programmes / educational courses / workshops for caregivers of target clients to enhance their caring capacities; organization of mutual support groups for the patients; professional consultation services

to support groups and other rehabilitation service units in the community; outreaching services to homebound patients to provide home-based individual therapy, professional support on home modification and purchase of rehabilitative equipments by occupational therapist/physiotherapist; as well as day respite care service.

18. In parallel, the Rehabilitation Programme Plan Review underway is also widely collecting views and considering suitable measures for the future development of rehabilitation services, with a view to implementing the policy of full integration of persons with disability into society.

### **ADVICE SOUGHT**

19. Members are invited to note the wide range of support services available for helping people with disabilities to meet their special needs.

Health, Welfare and Food Bureau  
February 2006

**Introduction of funding schemes for persons with disability****(1) Yan Chai Tetraplegic Fund**

Yan Chai Tetraplegic Fund was established by the Yan Chai Hospital Board in September 2004 to provide financial assistance to tetraplegic patients to support their living in the community and to improve their quality of living. The coverage of the grant includes essential expenses for the purchase of medical/rehabilitation appliances and repair services for these items; essential expenses for home modifications; temporary grants for meeting the special needs of tetraplegic patients (examples are: personal helper, occasional care, medical consumable items, escort service, and personal care items, etc.); and other special grants which the Fund Committee considers appropriate in supporting the community living of tetraplegic patients. By now, the Fund has received over \$9,200,000 donations. 32 applications amounting to a sum of about \$1,200,000 have been approved for the purchase of medical appliances and medical consumables, and for hiring of personal helpers.

**(2) “Financial support scheme to people with neuro-muscular disease on medical appliances and consumables” by the S K Yee Fund for the Disabled**

Hong Kong Neuro-muscular Disease Association is a self-help organization for people who suffer from neuro-muscular disease. Starting from 2003, the Association is granted \$200,000 per year for a total of five years from the S K Yee Fund for the Disabled to subsidize patients with neuro-muscular disease in the purchase of medical appliances and consumables. As in September 2005, 11 non-CSSA patients have benefited from the scheme.

**(3) Ho Kam Yung Fund**

The Ho Kam Yung Fund, managed by the Hong Kong Federation of Handicapped Youth under the recommendation of SWD, was established in



September 2005 to provide financial support to people with disabilities. The coverage of the Fund includes rehabilitation related expenses and short-term financial assistance. As in January 2006, five non-CSSA persons with disabilities have benefited from the Fund.

#### **(4) Samaritan Fund**

The Samaritan Fund, administered by the Hospital Authority (HA), is financed by public donations and contributions from the Government. The objective of the Samaritan Fund is to provide financial assistance to needy patients in meeting medical expenses that are not covered by the hospital maintenance fees or out-patient consultation fees in public hospitals/clinics. The coverage of the Fund includes expenses for privately purchased medical items (examples are: costs for disposable catheters used in Percutaneous Transluminal Coronary Angioplasty, hearing aids, wheelchair, cardiac pacemarkers or other surgical appliances) and drugs proven to be of significant benefits but too expensive for HA to provide as part of its subsidized services.

*Annex B***Introduction of Community Support Services****(1) Community-based Support Project**

SWD launched a series of new and innovative community support projects in 2002 with the objectives to strengthen the carers' caring capacity, to relieve their stress, and to provide people with disabilities and their families with a better quality of life. After an evaluation on the outcome of this first batch of projects, the second batch of community-based projects was launched in October 2005. These projects include holiday care, family-based respite service, home care service, home-based rehabilitation training service, day care service for severely disabled persons, personal development programme, specialized programmes for persons with autism and challenging behaviours, and support scheme for the newly blind, etc.

**(2) Residential Respite Service**

Residential Respite Service for Disabled Adults provides temporary residential care for the disabled adults so that their family members or carers could have a planned short break to attend to their personal business, such as: undergoing a medical operation or taking a vacation tour. It also serves to relieve temporarily the burden of the family members or carers in taking care of the disabled adults so as to make the former's life less stressful and more stimulating. The service is provided by 83 rehabilitation service units.

**(3) Home-based Training and Support Service**

There are a total of 19 Home-based Training and Support Teams serving the people with disabilities throughout the territory. The Home-based Training and Support Service (HBTS) aims to provide home-based training and to establish support network for people with disabilities and their families through service provision and the integration of rehabilitation services and community resources. By providing home-based, centre-based and community-based training and activities, HBTS team assist person with mental handicap to lead a more independent living and

social life. In parallel, HBTS teams also provide occupation therapy and support network to people with various disabilities.

**(4) Specialized Home-based Training and Support Service**

Specialized Home-based Training and Support Service (SHBTS) provides home-based professional therapy services to the severely disabled throughout the territory. Apart from short term and intensive therapy or rehabilitation exercise, SHBTS assist people with disabilities to overcome their adjustment problems in daily living so as to enhance their quality of life. Professional views and assistance on the use of rehabilitation appliances, adaptive devices/installation and home modification will also be provided to people with disabilities living in the community.

**(5) Integrated Home Care Services**

Integrated Home Care Services (IHCS) provide a range of community support services to severely disabled persons living in the community. The services include nursing care, personal care and rehabilitation services. There are 60 IHCS teams serving the whole territory.

**(6) Support to Self-help Organizations of People with Disabilities/Chronic Illness and Parents/Carers Groups**

Since 2001, SWD has granted funding support to self-help organizations of people with disabilities/chronic illness and parents/carers groups with a view to enhance the capacity of these organizations in providing mutual care and emotional support to persons facing similar problems. At present, 60 self-help organizations have been granted funding support.

**(7) Community Rehabilitation Network**

Community Rehabilitation Network (CRN) is a community-based rehabilitation service for persons with visceral disability or chronic illness. It serves to assist these people and their families to continue to live at home and in the community through the various activities in this programme. Psycho-social Support Groups are organized for carers to assist them to cope with the pressure arising from the caring of their chronically ill family members, and to establish effective means of communication and positive thinking. At present, there are six CRN centres providing services on a regional basis.

**(8) Parents/Relatives Resource Centres**

There are ten SWD-funded Parents/Relatives Resource Centres serving as a focal point, where parents and relatives of people with disabilities can meet and share their experiences, and establish mutual support with the assistance of the centre staff.

**(9) Social and Recreational Centres for the Disabled**

There are 17 Social and Recreational Centres for the Disabled (S&RC) providing opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in and to organize a variety of activities meeting their social, recreational and developmental needs, with a view to facilitating their integration into the community. Services provided include social, recreational and sporting activities organized within the centre or in the community. Examples are social service and interest groups, committee training, as well as mass/special activities.

**(10) One-off Special Funding for Strengthening Training and Support Programmes for Family Members and Carers of People with Disabilities**

A one-off special funding, amounting to \$9Mn, will be granted to 102 organizations that have close contact or network with families/carers of people with disabilities in February 2006. The purpose of the funding is for the strengthening of training and support programmes to carers. Programmes to be conducted would include training courses/seminars/workshops on the caring of the disabled, support groups, publications, and publicity, etc.