

立法會
Legislative Council

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Panel on Welfare Services

Subcommittee on Elderly Services

**Minutes of the 6th meeting
held on Tuesday, 6 May 2008, at 10:45 am
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building**

Members present : Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, SBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon CHAN Yuen-han, SBS, JP
Hon LI Fung-ying, BBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung

Members absent : Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung

Public Officers attending : Item I

Ms Carol YIP
Deputy Secretary for Labour & Welfare (Welfare) 2

Ms Betty HO
Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour & Welfare (Welfare) 3

Mr Ian CHIN
Assistant Secretary for Labour & Welfare (Welfare) 3B

Mrs Kathy NG
Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Elderly)

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Clerk in attendance : Miss Betty MA
Chief Council Secretary (2) 4

Staff in attendance : Ms Maisie LAM
Council Secretary (2) 2

Miss Maggie CHIU
Legislative Assistant (2) 4

I. Community care and support services for the elderly
[LC Paper No. CB(2)1493/07-08(01)]

The Subcommittee deliberated (Index of proceedings attached at **Annex**).

Resources allocated for the community care and support services

2. While welcoming the various initiatives being implemented by the Administration to facilitate elders to age in the community, as set out in paragraphs 6 and 7 of the Administration's paper, members expressed concern about the adequacy of the resources for these services to meet the current and future demand of the ageing population. Some members also expressed concern about the service quality, especially the meal delivery services, in the light of recent rising food prices. Some members pointed out that some District Elderly Community Centres (DECCs) located in districts with greater elderly population were working under tremendous work pressure and resource constraints. These members suggested that the resources for individual DECCs should be determined in accordance with the membership size, instead of the number of projects organised.

3. Deputy Secretary for Labour & Welfare (Welfare) 2 (DS/LW(W)2) and Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Elderly) (ADSW(E)) made the following responses -

- (a) the meal delivery services for elders in need were provided through the Integrated Home Care Services Teams and the Enhanced Home and Community Care Services Teams administered by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which were funded by way of the Lump Sum Grant (LSG) mode of subventions and contract service fees respectively. Given that the Other Charges portion of LSG would be adjusted annually in line with the Government-wide Price Adjustment Factor and the contract service fees would be adjusted annually with reference to the Composite Consumer Price Index, the increase in food cost would be reflected in the respective annual adjustments;

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- (b) the Social Welfare Department (SWD) had written recently to the operators of meal delivery services reminding them to maintain the service quality in face of rising food cost. They were advised to deploy flexibly their LSG subventions or use their LSG Reserves, or deploy flexibly the contract service fees, for meeting changing service demands. Individual operators who encountered problems could discuss with SWD; and
- (c) SWD initiated a re-engineering exercise in 2003 to upgrade the then Multi-service Centres for the Elderly and the Social Centres for the Elderly into DECCs and Neighbourhood Elderly Centres (NECs) respectively to meet the multifarious needs of elders ageing in the community. The number of DECCs and NECs in each district was determined based on the size of the elderly population and availability of existing services. Following the re-engineering exercise in 2003, DECCs and NECs were fully subvented by the Government and the operators could flexibly deploy the subventions to meet the changing service demands. The performance of these NGOs would be assessed through the outcome and output indicators stipulated in the Funding and Service Agreements.

4. Members remained of the view that the Administration should allocate more resources to further enhance the community care and support services and to monitor the quality of these services.

5. Noting that the 41 Support Teams for the Elderly (STEs) attached to DECCs had established contact with some 60 000 elders who were previously not known to STEs, Miss CHAN Yuen-han requested the Administration to provide a breakdown of these elders by types of housing they were living in, i.e. public housing or private housing. The Administration agreed to obtain the requisite information from STEs, if available.

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(Post-meeting note : The Administration has subsequently advised that SWD started collecting the relevant data in April 2003, and its statistics now cover about 50 000 of the 60 000 elders (i.e. more than 80%) outreached by STEs. Among these 50 000 elders, about 32 500 (65%) live in public housing and about 17 500 (35%) live in private housing.)

Bridging the gap between the community care and support services and the residential care services

6. Members took the view that the provision of community care and support services for the elderly was by no means a substitute for the provision of residential care homes for the elderly (RCHes) for elders with long-term care (LTC) needs as the older population would require some form of LTC services eventually. In view of the ageing population, the demand for residential care

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places would increase. Members considered that it was the Government's responsibility to formulate a long-term plan for the provision of residential care services for the elderly, to shorten the waiting time for subsidised RCHE places, and to speed up the provision of adequate RCHE places to meet the huge demand.

7. DS/LW(W)2 stressed that elders with LTC needs did not necessarily have to age in RCHEs. SWD was in parallel providing a range of subsidised community care and support services to facilitate elders to age in the community. Elders assessed to have care needs under the Standardised Care Need Assessment Mechanism for Elderly Services would be matched with the appropriate services in accordance with the assessment results. DS/LW(W)2 advised that more than 50% of those elders who had undergone the assessment were eligible for both residential care services and community care services. If they chose to receive subsidised home-based or centre-based community care services, they could still be put on the waiting list for subsidised residential care places. DS/LW(W)2 pointed out that there were some 20 000 surplus places in private RCHEs, but some elders preferred to wait for the subsidised places for various reasons.

8. DS/LW(W)2 added that the study being conducted by the Elderly Commission (EC) on residential care services for the elderly would explore how to target subsidised residential care services at elders most in need; and how to promote further development of quality self-financing/private residential care services and encourage shared responsibilities among individuals, their families and the society in meeting the LTC needs of the elderly. The study would also take into account the Administration's overall objective of encouraging "ageing in the community". It was expected that EC would complete the study by the first quarter of 2009.

Monitoring of RCHEs in using the additional one-month Comprehensive Social Security Assistance payments of residents

9. Members were concerned that some RCHE operators had reportedly used the additional one-month Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) payments announced in the 2007-2008 Budget to subsidise home fees, despite that the Administration had reminded the operators that the additional CSSA payments were not intended for subsidising homes fees. As the additional payments announced in the 2008-2009 Budget would be disbursed shortly, members considered that the Administration should step up the monitoring of RCHEs in preventing the use of the additional CSSA payments without the consent of the residents.

10. DS/LW(W)2 said that upon approval of the concerned funding by the Finance Committee, SWD would issue a letter to RCHE operators again reminding them that the additional CSSA payments could not be used for subsidising home fees. In addition, SWD's Licensing Office of Residential Care Homes for the Elderly would step up its inspection efforts and issue advice or warning to the RCHE concerned if any non-compliance was found. ADSW(E) supplemented

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that if the situation remained unchanged after the issuance of advice and warning, SWD might require the RCHE concerned to comply with the directions specified in the notice issued under section 19(1) of the Residential Care Homes (Elderly Persons) Ordinance (Cap. 459) within a specified period. If no improvement was made by the RCHE concerned within the specified period, SWD might consider prosecution. Furthermore, for suspected cases of financial abuse or fraudulent activities concerning elderly residents' possessions, which involved RCHE operators or staff members, SWD would refer them to the Police for investigation and follow up.

II. Any other business

11. Members agreed that the Subcommittee would consider its draft report to the Panel on Welfare Services at the next meeting, and deputations would be invited to give views if necessary.

12. At the invitation of the Administration, the Subcommittee agreed to conduct a visit to observe the implementation of the pilot Integrated Discharge Support Programme for Elderly Patients in Kwun Tong in June 2008. The Chairman said that members would be informed of the details of the visit in due course.

13. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:50 pm.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
21 July 2008

**Proceedings of the 6th meeting of the
Subcommittee on Elderly Services
on Tuesday, 6 May 2008, at 10:45 am
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building**

Time marker	Speaker(s)	Subject(s)	Action required
000000 - 000924	Chairman	Opening Remarks	
000925 - 001424	Administration	Briefing by the Administration on the services and initiatives to facilitate "ageing in the community" [LC Paper No. CB(2)1493/07-08(01)]	
001425 - 002440	Chairman Miss CHAN Yuen-han Administration	Concerns raised by Miss CHAN Yuen-han about the monitoring of private residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) in relation to handling the residents' Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) payments and the quality of the meal delivery services in the light of recent rising food prices The Administration's response that - (a) the Social Welfare Department (SWD) had provided clear guidelines on the fee charging arrangements of RCHEs and issued letters to private RCHEs to remind them that they should strictly adhere to the requirements of the Code of Practice for RCHEs; and (b) under the Lump Sum Grant (LSG) subvention system, the Other Charges portion would be adjusted annually in accordance with the established mechanism. SWD had issued a letter to the operators reminding them to maintain the service quality of the meal delivery services in the face of rising food cost	
002441 - 003401	Ms LI Fung-ying Administration Chairman	Views of Ms LI Fung-ying that the Administration should examine critically the need to adjust the funding for subvented meal services ahead of the annual adjustment cycle to reflect the increase in food cost; and increase the deterrent effect of the existing monitoring mechanism of RCHEs The Administration's advice that the impact of inflation on the provision of meal services funded by the Government would be discussed at the meeting of the Panel on Welfare Services on 8 May 2008; and prosecution actions would be taken against non-compliant RCHEs as appropriate if no improvement was made by the RCHE concerned within the specified period	
003402 - 004450	Ms LI Fung-ying Administration	The Administration's responses to concerns raised by Ms LI Fung-ying about the provision of the community care and support services for elders with long-term care (LTC) needs - (a) under the Standardised Care Need Assessment Mechanism for Elderly Services, elders with moderate or severe impairment level would be matched with subsidised residential care services or home/centre-based community care services as appropriate; (b) at present, the numbers of elderly users for non-frailty	

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		<p>tested and fatality tested home-based community care services were 17 000 and 3 450 respectively. There were 2 100 elders waitlisted for the non-frailty tested home care services and the waiting time ranged from a few days to a few months. For frailty tested home care services, the demand varied in different districts and the average waiting time was two to four months;</p> <p>(c) about 2 800 elders were using the centre-based day care services and the average waiting time was about six months; and</p> <p>(d) there were at that time 41 District Elderly Community Centres (DECCs), 115 Neighbourhood Elderly Centres (NECs) and 57 Social Centres for the Elderly (S/Es)</p>	
004451 - 010003	Chairman Administration	<p>The Administration's responses to enquiries raised by the Chairman about the community care and support services and the support to carers -</p> <p>(a) in planning the centre-based day care services for each district, SWD would take into account the size of the elderly population and availability of existing services;</p> <p>(b) following the re-engineering exercise in 2003 to upgrade the then Multi-service Centres for the Elderly and S/Es into DECCs and NECs respectively with enhanced standard space provision, no limit was set regarding the membership size. Currently, the membership size of DECCs and NECs ranged from about 700 to as high as more than 1 000;</p> <p>(c) the evaluation study on the effectiveness and user satisfaction of the re-engineered NECs and DECCs conducted by the University of Hong Kong recommended that more elderly centres should be established on the green field sites; and</p> <p>(d) a District-based Trial Scheme on Carer Training and an Integrated Discharge Support Programme for Elderly Patients were launched in 2007 and 2008 respectively with a view to strengthening the support to carers</p> <p>The Chairman's view that the recurrent subvention for individual DECCs and NECs should be determined in accordance with the membership size</p>	
010004 - 011320	Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung Administration Chairman	<p>Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung shared the Chairman's view that more resources should be allocated to DECCs and NECs having a larger membership size</p> <p>The Administration's advice that under the LSG subvention arrangement, NGOs were required to conduct services and activities as specified in the Funding and Service Agreements</p>	
011321 - 013330	Miss CHAN Yuen-han Administration	Concerns raised by Miss CHAN Yuen-han about the monitoring of RCHEs in using the additional one-month	

Time marker	Speaker(s)	Subject(s)	Action required
	Chairman	<p>CSSA payments of residents and the resources allocated to the elderly centres to strengthen the outreach services to hidden and vulnerable elders</p> <p>The Administration's responses that -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) efforts had been and would continuously be made by SWD to ensure that RCHEs would not use the additional CSSA payments of residents to subsidise home fees; (b) additional recurrent funding had been allocated to the elderly centres to strengthen their manpower provision so that they could outreach to more hidden and vulnerable elders and provide assistance to those who were in need; and (c) the 41 Support Teams for the Elderly (STEs) attached to DECCs had established contact with some 60 000 elders who were previously not known to STEs, of whom about 30 000 were singletons <p>The Administration was requested to provide a breakdown of those elders who were previously not known to them by types of housing they were living in, i.e. public housing or private housing, if available</p>	Admin to provide information
013331 - 014714	Chairman Ms LI Fung-ying Administration Miss CHAN Yuen-han	<p>The Chairman's view that the provision of community care and support services for the elderly was by no means a substitute for the provision of RCHE places for elders with LTC needs as the older population would require some form of LTC services eventually</p> <p>The Administration's responses that -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) more than 60% of the elders with LTC needs did not necessarily have to age in RCHEs, but could age in the community with the provision of a range of subsidised community care and support services; and (b) the Elderly Commission's study on the residential care services for the elderly, which was expected to be completed by the first quarter of 2009, would explore - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) how to target subsidised residential care services at elders most in need; and (ii) how to promote further development of quality self-financing/private residential care services and encourage shared responsibilities among individuals, their families and the society in meeting the LTC needs of the elderly 	
014715 - 014954	Chairman Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung	Views of Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung that the Administration should consider providing premises at concessionary rents for private RCHEs with a view to reducing the operating cost and sustaining the long-term development of residential care services for the elderly	

Time marker	Speaker(s)	Subject(s)	Action required
		The Administration's advice that the tender for purpose-built RCHE premises was open to both NGOs and the private sector	
014955 - 015531	Miss CHAN Yuen-han Chairman Administration Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung	Miss CHAN Yuen-han's view that the number of elders using the community care and support services was on the low side as compared with the size of the elderly population and there was much room for improvement to the existing services as well as new initiatives to support the elders to age in the community	
015532 - 015822	Chairman Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung Miss CHAN Yuen-han Administration	Proposal to conduct a visit to observe the implementation of the pilot Integrated Discharge Support Programme for Elderly Patients in Kwun Tong	
015823 - 020131	Chairman Miss CHAN Yuen-han Ms LI Fung-ying	Arrangements of future meetings	

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