

**Follow-up to Finance Committee (FC)
Meeting on 12 June 2009
FCR (2009-10)20**

**Shortening the waiting time for young persons with mental and
physical handicap for day and residential care services
upon leaving special schools**

Background

In deliberating FC paper FCR (2009-10)20 at the FC meeting on 12 June 2009, Members expressed concern about the long waiting time for day and residential care services for young persons with mental and physical handicap. The Hon Cyd Ho pointed out that under the current policy of the Education Bureau (EDB), teenagers with special needs were required to leave special schools on reaching the age of 18. They had to wait for a long time before they could be admitted for day and residential services. She requested the Commissioner for Rehabilitation to bring the matter up with EDB on possible measures, e.g. converting the vacant school premises for provision of more day and residential care services for persons with disabilities (PWDs), with a view to shortening the waiting time for these services as far as possible.

The Administration's Response

Enhancing Day and Residential Services for PWDs

2. The Administration will continue to closely monitor the service demand and adopt a three-pronged approach to increase the provision of residential care places, viz:

- (a) to regulate the residential care homes for PWDs and to introduce suitable complementary measures so as to ensure their service quality on the one hand while helping the market to develop residential care homes of different types and operational modes on the other;

- (b) to support non-governmental organisations to develop self-financing homes; and
- (c) to continue to steadily increase the number of subvented residential care home places.

In tandem, the Administration has been actively developing day care and community support services, so as to provide the PWDs with the necessary training and support to facilitate their continuous living at home and full integration into the community. The Administration will continue to identify premises and resources to steadily increase the provision of day and residential services to meet service demand.

Conversion of Vacant School Premises for Provision of Rehabilitation Services

3. To follow up on an earlier discussion at the Legislative Council Panel on Education in May 2007 on disposal and use of vacant school premises, EDB has started to share with other Government bureaux and departments the list of vacant school premises which are not suitable for school or other educational uses but could potentially be made available for use by other Government bureaux/departments to implement initiatives under their respective policy purview. The Social Welfare Department (SWD) has already established regular contact with the EDB in identifying suitable vacant school premises for provision of rehabilitation services. In the past years, SWD has explored the feasibility of converting several vacant school premises into welfare use for the provision of inter-alia residential cum day services for PWDs. The available school premises were found not suitable owing to their relatively small size or other technical constraints (e.g. structural limitations for provision of barrier-free access for PWDs). That said, SWD will continue to identify suitable vacant school premises for the provision of rehabilitation services in collaboration with EDB.

Education Bureau
Labour and Welfare Bureau
Social Welfare Department

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