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Panel on Welfare Services

**Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 9 February 2009**

District-based trial scheme on carer training

Purpose

This paper summarizes the deliberations of the Panel on Welfare Services (the Panel) on issues relating to the launch of the district-based trial scheme on carer training.

Background

2. According to the Administration, "ageing in the community" is an underlying principle of the Government's elderly policy. This is in line with most elders' wish as they cherish the support from their families and the sense of belonging that a familiar community offers. It is also internationally recognized that "ageing in the community" can enhance elders' quality of life and that elders with long-term care (LTC) needs do not necessarily have to be cared for in residential care homes for the elderly.

3. To facilitate elders to age in the community, the Government has introduced various services to meet the multifarious needs of elders and enhance the support for carers. Relevant initiatives include –

- (a) provision of centre-based day care services to elders who have LTC needs and cannot be taken care of by family members during daytime;
- (b) introduction of Enhanced Home and Community Care Services to provide a tailor-made individualized package of home-based services to meet the needs of frail elders;

- (c) upgrading of all of the Multi-service Centres for the Elderly and 110 Social Centres for the Elderly to District Elderly Community Centres (DECCs) and Neighbourhood Elderly Centres respectively to enhance their roles and functions in providing elderly services in an integrated approach; and
- (d) strengthening of support to carers by offering them information, training and counselling services, helping them with the formation of mutual-assistance groups, setting up resource corners, and giving demonstration and loan of rehabilitation equipment through the elderly centres.

Deliberations of the Panel

4. When the Panel was briefed on the welfare initiatives in the Chief Executive's Policy Address 2007-2008 and Policy Agenda at the meeting on 15 October 2007, members were advised that to equip individuals with basic elderly care skills and a caring mindset and develop "elderly sitter" services to provide relief to carers, the Administration would launch a trial scheme in the Eastern and Wan Chai, Wong Tai Sin and Sai Kung, as well as Kowloon City and Yau Tsim Mong districts. The scheme would provide funding for DECCs, in collaboration with community organizations, to run carer training courses and to recruit those who had completed the courses to serve as "elderly sitters".

5. The District-based Trial Scheme on Carer Training was launched in October 2007 in the districts of Eastern and Wanchai, Wong Tai Sin and Sai Kung, as well as Kowloon City and Yau Tsim Mong. Under the Scheme, 11 DECCs were each provided with seed money of \$50,000 to run carer training programmes and provide "carer" services in collaboration with community organizations. The Administration expected that 660 individuals would be trained in the first year.

6. At the Panel meeting on 23 October 2008, members were advised that as of September 2008, some 700 individuals had been trained and many of them had become helpers to provide stand-in services for carers or volunteers in elderly centres. The number of elders served had exceeded 4 000. The Administration further advised that in view of the encouraging response, it would extend the Scheme in December 2008 to cover all DECCs in the territory. It was expected that an additional 1 500 individuals would be trained in a year's time.

Latest development

7. The Administration will report to the Panel on 9 February 2009 on the implementation of the District-based Trial Scheme on Carer Training.

Relevant papers

8. Members may wish to refer to the Administration's papers and minutes of meetings of the Panel on 15 October 2007 and 23 October 2008. The papers are available on the Council's website at <http://www.legco.gov.hk>.

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