

**For information
on 6 February 2010**

LEGCO PANEL ON WELFARE SERVICES

Community Care and Support Services for the Elderly

Purpose

This paper sets out the community care and support services provided by the Government for the elderly and various related initiatives under the welfare portfolio.

Policy on elderly care

2. “Ageing in place” is an underlying principle of the Government’s elderly policy. It is also the wish of most elders. Elders cherish the support of their families and prefer living in a familiar environment. It is internationally recognised that “ageing in place” can help enhance elders’ quality of life.

3. In fact, it is not necessary to admit all elders with long-term care (LTC) needs to residential care homes. To help them stay in the community, the Government provides a range of subsidised centre-based and home-based community care services. If these elders cannot be adequately taken care of at home, the Government will also provide them with subsidised residential care services.

4. The services and initiatives implemented by the Government to help elders age in place are set out below.

Community care services

5. At present, the Government provides centre-based day care services to elders who have LTC needs and cannot be taken care of by their family members during daytime through the 59 Day Care Centres/ Units for the Elderly in the territory. The services cover personal care, nursing care, rehabilitation exercise, meal delivery and escort services etc. There are a total of 2 254 places serving over 3 000 elders, including part-time users. We will provide an additional 60 places in Tai Po, Sham Shui Po and the Southern District early this year. The 2009-10 Policy Address has also undertaken that the Government would further increase such places in the next two years in districts with greater service demand.

6. Apart from centre-based services, we also provide home-based Enhanced Home and Community Care Service and Integrated Home Care Services for frail elders. These services cover personal care, nursing care, rehabilitation exercise, environmental risk assessment and home modifications, and meal delivery, etc. There are currently 4 699 service places in total.

7. As for non-frail elders, they can make use of the Integrated Home Care Services which cover simple nursing care, domestic cleaning and meal delivery, etc. There is no ceiling on the number of service places. At present, there are about 17 000 elders using this service.

Community support services

8. At present, there are more than 200 elderly centres throughout the territory, including 41 District Elderly Community Centres (DECCs), 117 Neighbourhood Elderly Centres (NECs) and 53 Social Centres for the Elderly.

With over 180 000 members, these elderly centres provide elders and their carers with diversified services and activities, taking care of their psychological, social and learning needs. The elderly centres also provide various support services to carers of elders, including the provision of information, training and counselling services, assistance in forming carers' mutual-assistance groups, setting up resource centres, and demonstration and loan of rehabilitation equipment, etc.

New initiatives

9. Apart from the above-mentioned services, the Government has introduced a number of new initiatives in recent years to support elders ageing in the community, including:

(a) **District-based Scheme on Carer Training**

The “District-based Scheme on Carer Training” (the Scheme) launched by the Government in October 2007 covers many aspects, including the skills in providing care to elders, knowledge about common ailments among elders and communication with elders, etc. Our aim is to enhance carers’ capability through training so as to alleviate their stress resulting from caring for the elders. At present, there are a total of 33 DECCs participating in the Scheme. Carers who have completed the training will be recruited as carer-helpers, providing care service for elders at the district level. To date, over 900 carers have been trained and another 1 500 are receiving training under the Scheme. In view of the positive response, we will further extend the Scheme to NECs. The new round of training is expected to commence in April. About 80 centres will join the Scheme and an additional 4 500 carers is expected to be trained.

(b) Integrated Discharge Support Trial Programme for Elderly Patients

In the 2007-08 Budget, the Government has earmarked \$96 million for implementing a 3-year “Integrated Discharge Support Trial Programme for Elderly Patients” (the Programme) in collaboration with the Hospital Authority, with the aim of enhancing the support to elderly hospital dischargees and their carers so as to help them stay in the community. The three pilots under the Programme were launched in March and August 2008, and July 2009 in Kwun Tong, Kwai Tsing and Tuen Mun respectively. The entire programme is expected to serve a total of 20 000 elders and 7 000 carers. Upon the completion of the Programme, the Government and the Elderly Commission (EC) will evaluate its effectiveness and consider the way forward.

(c) Home Environment Improvement Scheme for the Elderly

The Government has earmarked one-off funding of \$200 million in 2008-09 for launching a 5-year “Home Environment Improvement Scheme for the Elderly” to help elders without family support, living in dilapidated homes and lacking financial means to improve their home conditions. It is expected that 40 000 elderly households will benefit from this Scheme.

The Way Forward

10. Looking ahead, the Government will continue to allocate resources to help elders age in place and strengthen the support for carers. As mentioned above, we will increase the number of day care places for the elderly and will further expand the “District-based Scheme on Carer Training”.

11. In line with the policy of supporting “ageing in place as the core, institutional care as back-up”, the Government will work with EC to examine how home care services for the elderly may be strengthened through a more flexible and diverse mode of service delivery, thereby encouraging social enterprises and the private market to develop related services.

Labour and Welfare Bureau

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