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**Subcommittee on Residential and Community Care Services for Persons with
Disabilities and the Elderly under the Panel on Welfare Services**

**Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 13 July 2010**

Pilot Scheme on Home Care Services for Persons with Severe Disabilities

Purpose

This paper gives a brief account of past discussions of the Panel on Welfare Services ("the Panel") on the Pilot Scheme on Home Care Services for Persons with Severe Disabilities.

Background

2. According to the Administration, the primary objective of the Government in providing community care and support services for persons with disabilities ("PWDs") is to make available training and support to PWDs according to their needs, to assist them in development their potential, to enable them to continue to live independently at home and to prepare them for full integration into the community.

3. The Financial Secretary announced in the 2010-2011 Budget the introduction of the pilot scheme to enhance the home care services for persons with severe disabilities.

Deliberations by members

4. At the meeting on 8 March 2010, the Panel was briefed on the pilot scheme on home care services for persons with severe disabilities. Members noted that some 6 500 PWDs were on the waiting lists for various types of subsidised residential care service and the situation was most acute for those with severe disabilities. By end-September 2009, the number of persons with severe physical and/or mental disabilities on the waiting lists were 1 970 for hostel for severely

mentally handicapped persons, 407 for hostel for severely physically handicapped persons and 345 for care and attention home for severely disabled persons. The average waiting time for these services in 2008-2009 was 4.3 years, 9.4 years and 3 years respectively. In the light of this, the Administration advised that, as announced in the 2010-2011 Budget, a one-off funding of \$163 million would be sought under the Lotteries Fund for implementing a three-year pilot scheme on home care services for persons with severe disabilities. The new services would be tried out in Tuen Mun and Kwun Tong which had the largest number of persons with severe disabilities (273 and 264 persons respectively) waiting for subvented residential care services at hostel for severely mentally handicapped, hostel for severely physically handicapped persons and care and attention home for severely disabled persons.

5. Members were advised that given the conditions of persons with severe physical and/or mental disabilities and the level and intensity of care they required, a new package of home-based support services including personal care and escort service, occupational therapy/physiotherapy rehabilitation training service and nursing care service would be provided to meet their care and training needs. The enhanced services would be delivered by non-governmental organisations ("NGOs") which were operating rehabilitation services in the respective districts through invitation of proposals. Taking into account the lead time for securing funding and identification of NGO operators, the three-year pilot scheme would commence in the fourth quarter of 2010-2011 and end in the third quarter of 2013-2014 and was expected to serve a total of about 540 persons with severe disabilities upon its full operation. The expected number of service users was estimated based on the number of persons with severe disabilities waiting for subvented residential care services at hostel for severely mentally handicapped, hostel for severely physically handicapped persons and care and attention home for severely disabled persons in the districts concerned.

6. While welcoming the pilot scheme, members took the view that the Administration should under no circumstances regard community care services as a substitute for the provision of subsidised residential care services. The Administration assured members that PWDs who joined the pilot scheme would remain on the waiting lists for subsidised residential care services. As undertaken in the Chief Executive's 2009-2010 Policy Address, the Government would provide 939 additional places in the coming two years, including the setting up of two integrated rehabilitation service centres in Kwai Chung and Ho Man Tin in the coming year, providing a total of 490 residential places. The Administration advised that the enhanced support services sought to facilitate PWDs' continued living at home while waiting for residential care services, and help relieve the stress of their family carers.

7. Some members were concerned about the long-term commitment of the Government in providing the enhanced home care services given that one-off funding was provided for the services. The Administration advised that the pilot scheme was in line with the strategic directions of providing support for service

users and their family carers. Reviews would be conducted in the course of and upon the completion of the pilot scheme. It was open minded on the service scope of the pilot scheme and did not rule out the possibility of increasing the quota of service users or expanding the pilot scheme to cover all districts if the scheme was proven effective. Should the review findings of the pilot scheme be encouraging, the Administration would consider financing the projects under the recurrent funding and extending the scheme to other districts after the three-year pilot period.

8. The Administration would provide an update of the pilot scheme to the Subcommittee at the meeting on 13 July 2010.

Relevant papers

9. Members are invited to access the Legislative Council website at <http://www.legco.gov.hk/> to view the Administration's paper for and the relevant minutes of the Panel meeting on 8 March 2010.

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