

For discussion  
on 23 May 2011

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
PANEL ON WELFARE SERVICES**

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

**The Administration's response to issues of concern  
raised by Members at previous meetings**

**Purpose**

This paper provides the Administration's response to issues of concern raised by Members at previous meetings.

**Issues of concern**

*(a) The Administration's concrete plan in place to increase the provision of and shorten the waiting time for subsidised residential care places for persons with disabilities and the elderly*

Residential care places for persons with disabilities

2. For persons with disabilities who cannot live independently or cannot be adequately cared for by their families, the Administration has taken measures to meet their residential care needs, to improve their quality of life and to help them develop independent living skills. In accordance with the 2007 Rehabilitation Programme Plan, the Administration has been adopting a three-pronged approach to encourage participation from different sectors in providing diversified residential care services for persons with disabilities, viz –

- (a) regulating the residential care homes for persons with disabilities, so as to ensure the service quality on one hand and help the market develop residential care homes of different types and operational modes on the other;

- (b) supporting non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to develop self-financing homes; and
- (c) continuing to steadily increase the number of subsidised residential care home places.

3. In line with these strategic directions, the Government has introduced a Bill into the Legislative Council for the establishment of a licensing scheme for residential care homes for persons with disabilities (RCHDs). In tandem, the Government has launched a 4-year pilot Bought Place Scheme for private RCHDs since October 2010 with a view to encouraging private operators of RCHDs to upgrade service standard, shortening the waiting time for services by increasing the overall supply of subsidised residential care places, and helping the market develop more service options. The Scheme targets to purchase 300 places by two phases. Subject to meeting the requirements of the scheme by the selected operators, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) expects to purchase about 100 residential care places in 2011-12.

4. Furthermore, the Government has been continuously increasing the provision of subsidised residential places in recent years. At present, there are about 11 682 subsidised residential care places for persons with disabilities, representing an increase of about 81.3% since 1997. Over the past three years, we have provided 1 015 additional subsidised places in RCHDs. Coupled with the allocation for recurrent expenditure already earmarked, the Government will provide a total of 1 046 additional residential care places in 2010-11 and 2011-12.

#### Residential care places for the elderly

5. We have been deploying resources to increase the supply of subsidised residential care places for the elderly, including the adoption of a multi-pronged approach to speed up the provision of subsidised residential care places that provide nursing or a continuum of care (COC). This entails increasing the proportion of NH places in existing contract residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) from an average of 50%

to 90%, purchasing vacant nursing home (NH) places from self-financing elderly homes, making full use of the space in existing subvented homes to provide more COC places.

6. Out of the 18 existing contract RCHEs, six would have raised the proportion of NH places to 90% by the end of 2011. We will continue to work with the remaining contract RCHEs to increase the provision of NH places. In addition, SWD launched the Nursing Home Places Purchase Scheme (NHPPS) in 2010, under which 124 NH places from four self-financing NHs commenced operation in April 2011. An additional 260 COC places have also been created in 2010-11 by utilising the space in subvented homes.

7. Together with our continued effort in constructing new contract RCHEs, an additional 1 205 NH places (representing more than 50% of the existing provision) will come on stream between this financial year and 2014-15.

8. Regarding subsidised care-and-attention home (C&A) places, our strategy is to increase the provision of places through the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme (EBPS). The Government has earmarked \$62.2 million to provide an additional 793 higher-quality bought places (i.e. EA1 places) in 2011-12 and 2012-13. As of end-February 2011, the average waiting time for a bought place in an EBPS home was about nine months. We believe that the new rounds of EBPS purchase exercise will help shorten the waiting time further and encourage more quality private RCHEs to join the scheme.

*(b) The respective numbers of additional subsidised residential care places for persons with disabilities and the elderly to be provided in the next five years, together with a breakdown by types of services, district distribution and the project development stage*

#### RCHDs

9. As at the end of April 2011, the Government has already earmarked ten sites in future development projects for the construction of new RCHDs. We estimate that there will be an additional provision of

around 1 006 residential care places in the next five years (2012-13 to 2016-17), subject to the progress of project planning and preparatory work. Details are set out in the table below -

<b>District</b>	<b>Service targets</b>	<b>2012-13 to 2016-17</b>
Kowloon West	Severely physically handicapped persons, severely mentally handicapped persons, moderately mentally handicapped persons and the ex-mentally ill persons	320
Kowloon East		200
New Territories West		210
New Territories East		226
Hong Kong Island		50
<b>Total</b>		<b>1006</b>

Note : The numbers of places are estimated on the basis of the information and projects in hand. Given that these projects are still in the planning stage, the type of service and number of places to be provided in each project may change subject to the actual size and design of the premises, etc. Hence, we are not able to provide a breakdown of the estimated service places by service type at this stage.

The Government will continue to step up efforts in identifying new resources and suitable sites for setting up new RCHDs in order to maintain a steady increase in the provision of subsidised residential places for persons with disabilities.

### RCHEs

10. About 2 300 subsidised residential care places for the elderly will come into service between now and 2014-15. Details are set out in the table below.

<b>Year</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2012-13</b>	<b>2013-14</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>Total</b>
No. of NH places <sup>Note 1</sup>	594 (256)	278	287	46	<b>1 205</b>
No. of C&A places <sup>Note 2</sup>	644 (393)	411 (400)	21	0	<b>1 076</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 238</b>	<b>689</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>2 281</b>

Note 1: The above NH places will be provided through seven new contract RCHEs and NHPPS. The seven contract RCHEs are located in Central and Western, Islands, Sha Tin, Sham Shui Po and Yau Tsim Mong districts. Figures in brackets denote the number of additional places to be created under NHPPS.

Note 2: The C&A places will be provided all over the territory. Figures in brackets denote number of additional places to be created under EBPS.

11. Apart from the above additional places for which resources have been earmarked, we will continue to seek new resources for increasing the supply of subsidised residential care places, having regard to the demand of places, the supply of various types of places in the self-financing and private markets, and the progress of construction works of the new contract RCHEs.

*(c)The mechanism and planning parameters for identifying suitable sites and earmarking sites/premises for setting up residential care homes for persons with disabilities and the elderly*

12. The Government has been proactively identifying suitable sites for use by elderly and rehabilitation service facilities. To this end, SWD maintains close contact with relevant government departments including the Lands Department (LandsD), Planning Department (PlanD) and Housing Department (HD), with a view to reserving sites in new development or re-development projects as far as practicable for setting up elderly and rehabilitation service facilities. SWD also keeps a close watch on whether government properties, school premises, etc. released from re-engineering of services may be used for elderly and rehabilitation services.

13. When developing or converting premises into RCHDs, the Government needs to ensure that the premises (in terms of space and building structure, etc.) is able to conform to the statutory requirements on fire services installations, e.g. visual fire alarm, fire detection system, automatic sprinkler system and emergency vehicular access, etc.. Besides, to meet the fire safety requirement, RCHD premises should not be more than 24 metres above street level. This height restriction will be incorporated as a proposed licensing requirement of residential care homes for persons with disabilities. The premises should also be able to

meet the statutory requirements on provision of barrier free access, means of escape, ventilation and natural lighting, etc., as stipulated under the Buildings Ordinance / Regulations. Moreover, SWD needs to consider whether the premises have sufficient space to provide complementary support services (e.g. day training services, etc.) in addition to bed space.

14. On site selection, SWD will analyse the service demand in each district and identify suitable sites, having regard to the information in the computerised waiting list system (including the number of applicants, waiting time and location preference, etc.) as well as the supply of rehabilitation services in the districts concerned. In addition, SWD needs to consider if the location of the site concerned is accessible by public transport facilities. The planning parameters and the user clause laid down by PlanD and LandsD respectively should also be taken into account to ensure that the site is suitable for the development of an RCHD. After a site is identified, SWD has to conduct local consultation to ensure that there is community support for the RCHD project.

#### RCHEs

15. In identifying sites for RCHEs, SWD has to take into account various factors, including the demand and supply of the relevant services in the local community, the size of the site, complementary transportation arrangements, planning parameters and user clauses stipulated by PlanD and LandsD, etc.. At the same time, owing to fire safety consideration, all RCHEs must conform with the provisions in relation to RCHE premises under the Residential Care Homes (Elderly Persons) Ordinance (Cap. 459), including the provisions specifying that no part of a RCHE shall be situated at height more than 24 meters above the ground floor; and no RCHEs shall be situated in any part of an industrial building or any premises located immediately above the ceiling or below the floor slab of any godown, cinema and theatre.

16. Apart from the seven new contract RCHEs mentioned in item (b) above, SWD has earmarked sites in another ten development projects for the construction of new contract RCHEs. SWD will continue to identify suitable sites for constructing new contract RCHEs.

*(d) The latest progress in securing permanent accommodation for setting up 16 District Support Centres for Persons with Disabilities and 24 Integrated Community Centres for Mental Wellness throughout the territory*

17. SWD set up 16 District Support Centres for Persons with Disabilities (DSCs) in January 2009 through re-engineering of Home-based Training and Support Service. By adopting a district-based one-stop service mode, DSCs provide persons with disabilities and their families/carers with accessible community support services. At present, three DSCs in Kowloon City/Yau Tsim Mong, Tin Shui Wai and Yuen Long have commenced service at their permanent accommodation. Fitting-out works for the permanent accommodation of seven DSCs in Tsuen Wan/Tsing Yi, Kwun Tong West, Eastern/Wan Chai, Wong Tai Sin, Tseung Kwan O/Sai Kung, Sha Tin and Tai Po are underway, and these seven DSCs are expected to commence service at their permanent accommodation during the period from mid to end of 2011. In addition, SWD is proceeding with the preparatory work, including application for change of land use and application for Lotteries Fund for fitting-out works, etc., for the permanent accommodation of the DSC in Tuen Mun. SWD has also identified suitable premises at development projects for four DSCs and will continue to actively identify suitable premises for the remaining DSC.

18. As regards the Integrated Community Centres for Mental Wellness (ICCMW), there are currently 24 service points across the territory. Apart from the Wellness Centre (安泰軒) in Tin Shui Wai which has secured permanent accommodation, five “Training and Activity Centres for Ex-mentally ill Persons” have been converted into ICCMWs. SWD has also secured two public housing estate premises on Hong Kong Island and in Kowloon East respectively and a new development site in Tin Shui Wai for use as ICCMW premises. Furthermore, SWD has identified another seven sites at public housing estates in Eastern, Islands, Sha Tin, Tsing Yi, Wong Tai Sin, Tai Po and Tuen Mun for the purpose, and is now undertaking the necessary preparatory work which includes consultation with the local communities to enlist support for setting up these service points. Pending availability of permanent accommodation, the operators of other ICCMWs will make

use of suitable premises of their organisations as temporary service points to provide one-stop community support services in their service areas. For some ICCMWs which have no suitable premises in their service areas for the time being, the operators will provide services including outreaching visits, group services, casework counselling, activities and community education through existing facilities and networks, such as schools and welfare services units, in their respective districts.

19. To secure suitable premises for the remaining ICCMWs, SWD will continue to keep in close contact with relevant government departments, including the LandsD, PlanD and HD, etc. in order to reserve premises at the planning stage of new development or redevelopment projects. We will also closely monitor the availability of vacant government properties, school premises and public housing units for conversion into ICCMWs.

20. In tandem, SWD is actively considering other possible alternatives in order to identify suitable premises as early as possible for those ICCMWs which have yet to secure permanent accommodation. SWD is exploring with relevant government departments the feasibility of the proposals of service operators in setting up ICCMWs in suitable commercial premises<sup>1</sup>. Meanwhile, we, together with the service operators, will continue to organise service briefings and activities to enhance local residents' understanding of ICCMWs' services, and to enlist local support with a view to securing permanent accommodation for the remaining ICCMWs as soon as possible.

*(e) The latest implementation plan for area expansion of the existing 59 day care centres for the elderly*

21. The Government Property Agency has given approval in October 2010 to amend the Schedule of Accommodation (SoA) for 40-place Day Care Centre for the Elderly (DE), increasing the Net Operational Floor Area (NOFA) from 218 m<sup>2</sup> to 267 m<sup>2</sup> (an increase of 22.5%) and set a new SoA for 60-place DE (with an NOFA of 358 m<sup>2</sup>). The updated SoAs have been adopted in planning new projects in the pipeline. SWD will assist the NGO operators of existing DEs in the acquisition of new/additional premises to meet the enhanced spatial standards.

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<sup>1</sup> According to the Fire Services Department, owing to fire safety concerns, setting up of ICCMWs in industrial buildings is not allowed. Relevant departments are studying whether it is suitable for ICCMWs to provide service in commercial buildings.

*(f) The suggestion of introducing a carers allowance for family carers of persons with disabilities and frail elders*

22. Cherishing the family is one of the core values of the Hong Kong society. Hence, the Government has all along been promoting mutual support among family members. We also value greatly the contribution made by home carers to their family members. In this regard, the Government provides a wide range of community care and support services for home carers with a view to helping them discharge their family responsibilities and alleviating their stress.

#### Carers of persons with disabilities

23. For persons with disabilities with financial difficulties, they and their families can meet their basic needs with the financial assistance provided under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme. At present, the CSSA Scheme provides higher standard rates for persons with disabilities together with a range of supplements and special grants. These include “Grant to cover fees for Home Help Service/Integrated Home Care Service”, “Grant to cover costs of Enhanced Home and Community Care Services” and “Grant to cover costs of Community-based Support Projects for People with Disabilities and Their Families” which are granted for those requiring special caring needs. For those medically certified to be in need of constant attendance, a “Care and Attention Allowance” may also be provided to cover the costs of care and attention services at home (including the cost of hiring a carer) on social worker’s recommendation.

24. Apart from financial assistance, the Government provides various kinds of support services. For example, we set up 16 DSCs for persons with disabilities to provide one-stop service for strengthening the support for persons with disabilities residing in the community and their family members. Furthermore, to enhance the care and support services for persons with severe physical and intellectual disabilities, SWD has implemented since March 2011 a three-year pilot scheme for provision of home-based care services for around 540 persons with severe disabilities living in Kwun Tong and Tuen Mun and are on the waiting lists for subvented residential care services. The pilot scheme provides home-based support services including personal care and escort service, occupational therapist/physiotherapist rehabilitation training service and nursing care service to the service users.

## Carers of elders

25. The Government has been providing a range of support services for family members and carers of elders (including provision of information, training and counselling, assistance in forming carers' mutual-assistance groups, setting up resource centres, and giving demonstration and lending rehabilitation equipment, etc.) to help alleviate their pressure. In addition, all subvented RCHEs and DEs/DCUs are providing residential and day respite services respectively for the relief of carers.

26. At the same time, the Government continues to strengthen the community care services for the elderly so that more frail elders can age at home. In this year's Budget, the Financial Secretary announced that the Administration would allocate additional recurrent funding of \$76 million to provide 1 500 additional Enhanced Home and Community Care Services places and 185 day care service places so that more elders can benefit from the services.

27. The various types of support services provided by the Government to family carers aim at helping them fulfill their family responsibilities and promoting mutual support among family members. We believe that the existing arrangement can provide appropriate professional support, which can better address the needs of persons with disabilities, elders, and their carers than the provision of cash allowance to individual family members.

### **Advice Sought**

28. Members are invited to note the content of this paper.

Labour and Welfare Bureau  
Social Welfare Department  
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