

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)350/13-14
(These minutes have been
seen by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/WS

Panel on Welfare Services

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 11 March 2013, at 10:00 am
in Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex

Members present : Hon CHAN Yuen-han, SBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, SBS, JP
Dr Hon LEUNG Ka-lau
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, BBS, MH, JP
Hon Alice MAK Mei-kuen, JP
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH
Hon TANG Ka-piu

Members absent : Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC
Hon CHAN Han-pan
Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan

Member attending Hon SIN Chung-kai, SBS, JP

**Public Officers : Item III
attending**

Mrs Anna MAK
Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Services)
Social Welfare Department

Mr FUNG Man-lok
Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Youth and
Corrections)
Social Welfare Department

Ms Wendy CHAU
Chief Social Work Officer (Corrections)
Social Welfare Department

Item IV

Mr CHOW Wing-hang
Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare
(Welfare) 4
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Mr TAN Tick-yee
Chief Social Work Officer (Elderly) 1
Social Welfare Department

Item V

Mrs Elina CHAN
Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare
(Welfare) 3
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Miss Cecilla LI
Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Elderly)
Social Welfare Department

**Attendance by : Item V
invitation**

Baptist Oi Kwan Social Service

Ms Maggie SIU
Service Coordinator

Hospitals, Clinics and Nursing Workers Union

Ms POON Wai-yin
Chairman

Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions Social
Service Unions Committee

Mr CHENG Ching-fat
Member

Community Care and Nursing Home Workers General
Union

Ms CHAN Yim-ling
Executive Member

Hong Kong Chinese Women's Club

Ms Anita WONG Yiu-ming
Elderly Services Director

Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Welfare Council

Ms Melissa LUK Loi-tai
Service Director

The Hong Kong Society for the Aged

Mr Clive CHAN Kwok-on
Service Director (Group 1)

Hong Kong Family Welfare Society

Ms Annie LO Ka-lok
Head of Service

The Salvation Army

Mr Pitmas SIOK Yu-yeung
Service Supervisor

Hong Kong Association of Gerontology

Ms Stella CHEUNG Yuk-har
Executive Director

The Hong Kong Council of Social Service

Ms Grace CHAN Man-yee
Chief Officer (Elderly Service)

Clerk in attendance : Mr Colin CHUI
Chief Council Secretary (2) 4

Staff in attendance : Ms Catherina YU
Senior Council Secretary (2) 4

Ms Rita LAI
Senior Council Secretary (2) 1

Miss Karen LAI
Council Secretary (2) 4

Miss Maggie CHIU
Legislative Assistant (2) 4

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I. Information paper(s) issued since the last meeting

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)686/12-13(01), CB(2)732/12-13(01) and CB(2)736/12-13(01)]

Members noted that the following papers had been issued since the last meeting –

- (a) a letter dated 22 February 2013 from The Elderly Services Association Hong Kong requesting the Panel to hold a joint meeting with the Panel on Manpower to receive views from deputations on the manpower situation of residential care homes for the elderly ("RCHEs") [LC Paper No. CB(2)686/12-13(01)];
- (b) a referral memo and an extract from the Public Accounts Committee Report No. 59 concerning the Community Investment and Inclusion Fund [LC Paper No. CB(2)732/12-13(01)]; and
- (c) a letter dated 27 February 2013 from HK Evergreen Association

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of the Elderly requesting the Panel to hold a joint meeting with the Panel on Manpower to receive views form deputations on the manpower problem of RCHEs [LC Paper No. CB(2)736/12-13(01)].

II. Items for discussion at the next meeting

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)737/12-13(01) and (02)]

2. Members agreed to discuss at the next meeting scheduled for 16 April 2013 the following items proposed by the Administration –

- (a) Updates on Child Development Fund; and
- (b) Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged.

3. Referring to a letter received from a deputation, the Deputy Chairman sought members' view on the deputation's request for discussing the provision of child care services at the next Panel meeting. Mr TANG Ka-piu, on the other hand, suggested that it would be high time to discuss the latest progress on the implementation of the licensing scheme for residential care homes for persons with disabilities ("RCHDs") at the Panel meeting in April given that the grace period for individual RCHDs to put in place suitable arrangements for application for a licence or certificate of exemption would end in mid-May 2013. Members agreed to Mr TANG's suggestion.

III. Integrated community-based services for offenders

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)737/12-13(03) and (04)]

4. At the invitation of the Chairman, Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Services) ("DDSW(S)") briefed members on the implementation of the integrated community-based services for offenders by the Social Welfare Department ("SWD") since 3 July 2012, details of which were set out in the Administration's paper.

Provision of probation service

5. Referring to the submission of the Social Work Officer Grade Branch of the Hong Kong Chinese Civil Servants' Association ("SWO Grade Branch") (LC Paper No. CB(2)761/12-13(01)) which was tabled at the meeting, Dr Fernando CHEUNG said that he concurred with its views

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on the deficiencies of the current provision of probation service which was based on the location of the courts handling the offence case concerned. Under such arrangement, Dr CHEUNG was concerned that a Probation Officer ("PO") might need to travel afar for the purpose of conducting home visits to a probationer put under his or her supervision pursuant to the Probation of Offenders Ordinance (Cap. 298) ("POO") if the latter's residence was far away from the location of the court. Reciprocally, it would also be difficult for a probationer to report to his or her PO during office hours. In the light of such inconvenience and time wastage, Dr CHEUNG asked how the Administration could address the issues. Mr Albert HO expressed a similar concern in view of the additional pressure exerted on the shortage of manpower for provision of probation service.

6. Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Youth and Corrections) ("ADSW(Y&C)") responded that the current mode of allocating cases in need of probation service to POs serving the respective magistrates' court had been adopted since its introduction in 1950s. In the light of the expression of a view that district-based probation service should be provided, i.e. allocation of cases on the basis of offenders' residence which was similar to provision of other social services, a consultation with POs of SWD was conducted in 2009. While SWD did not have a strong view on the subject, it was noteworthy that if district-based allocation method was adopted, a PO would have to handle, instead of only cases referred by the magistrates in the same court that his or her Probation and Community Service Order Offices ("PCSO") was serving, but cases referred by all seven Magistrates' Courts in the territory. According to the results of the staff consultation, the majority of the 100 odd POs supported the continuation of the current practice.

7. Dr Fernando CHEUNG, however, was concerned about the discrepancy of the views on the subject between those expressed by SWO Grade Branch and the respondents of the consultation. He maintained that it would facilitate contacts between POs and probationers put under their statutory supervision if probationers were assigned to POs on the basis of the former's residence. He called on the Administration to study the matter again. DDSW(S) responded that the Administration would keep in view the situation. In practice, arrangement had been made to facilitate the use of service by probationers such as POs meeting them near the latter's workplace.

8. Mr TANG Ka-piu called on the Administration to give due regard to the views on the subject expressed by Dr Fernando CHEUNG and SWO Grade Branch. Given that some probationers might be involved in more

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than one offence, he asked whether it would be more appropriate to make reference to their residence when the courts referred their cases to POs for follow-up. On the other hand, he also expressed concern that offenders might prefer not to receive probation supervision in their own residential area because of the labelling effect. Mr TANG requested the Administration to conduct a comprehensive review of the integrated model one year after its operation.

9. DDSW(S) responded that with the adoption of the Client Information System, SWD was able to share client data across different service units for operational and other purposes, including case assignments to the same PO for follow-up, regardless of multiple offences committed by a probationer in different districts.

10. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung was in support of the district-based provision of probation service. In his view, POs should, instead of wasting considerable time on travelling, focus their efforts on professional service. DDSW(S) said that Mr LEUNG's view would be taken into account in the review to be conducted.

Clash of PO's roles

11. Dr Fernando CHEUNG concurred with SWO Grade Branch's view on clash of roles played by a PO who was required to provide rehabilitative counselling and guidance to an offender through group work service in addition to the statutory supervisory and monitoring role. The Deputy Chairman shared a similar concern. Having regard to the difficulties of a PO in discharging the two different types of duties, both members considered it reasonable for such work to be undertaken by a specialized team in SWD or outsourced to non-governmental organizations ("NGOs") as suggested by SWO Grade Branch.

12. DDSW(S) responded that the role of a PO was to assist probationers in making positive changes in their attitude and behaviour through social work service intervention so that they could rehabilitate from their offending behaviour within the community. On the social work approach, it could take the form of professional casework or group work service. DDSW(S) stressed that under POO, a PO would advise, assist and befriend the probationer and the ultimate goal of probation service was to assist offenders to re-integrate into the community as law-abiding citizens through social work approach with the adoption of different modes of intervention. Thus, playing the dual roles of providing statutory supervision to the probationer while at the same time helping the

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probationer through social work intervention, be it by casework or group work approach, was part and parcel of a PO's duty.

13. Dr Fernando CHEUNG was particularly concerned about the arrangement of a PO and the probationers under his or her supervision in the same group, which might intensify the clash of roles. To his knowledge, group work service was undertaken by a specialized team in the past. DDSW(S) advised that group work service provided by a specialized team was the practice before the implementation of the integrated model but all along, individual service units also provided group work services according to the needs of their probationers. DDSW(S) said that the supervising POs would assess each case and identify suitable group work service, including those organized by their own units or other units, which best suits their probationers' rehabilitation needs. She further stressed that the Administration was open-minded on the matter and advised that Dr CHEUNG's view would be taken into account in the review on the integrated model.

14. The Deputy Chairman held the view that the clash of roles was unavoidable if a PO, who supervised a probationer pursuant to a probation order, was also required to provide counselling service to the same probationer, which might involve development of some kind of trust and personal relationship. The Deputy Chairman therefore expressed queries about the effectiveness of group work service. To address the problem, he considered outsourcing the service as the best solution. Otherwise, due regard should be given to the grouping for conducting group work service.

15. Mr TANG Ka-piu called on the Administration to give due regard to the views on the subject expressed by Dr Fernando CHEUNG and SWO Grade Branch. Mr TANG further enquired whether probationers received group work service on a voluntary basis. In his view, it would have a bearing on the provision of the service to be undertaken by a specialized team or to be outsourced to NGOs. DDSW(S) replied that while the court might order a probationer to attend group work service as arranged by the PO, some probationers might receive group work service voluntarily. She reiterated that the objective was to help offenders change their offending behaviour and start afresh through social work approaches, with different modes of intervention.

16. The Chairman echoed a similar view on the difficulties and conflicts arising from the dual roles played by POs as expressed by SWO Grade Branch in its submission. Noting that the respective duties of providing probation service and group work service were undertaken by different

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staff prior to the implementation of the integrated model, the Chairman raised queries as to whether such implementation could achieve streamlining of manpower. She sought justifications for the new arrangement.

17. DDSW(S) responded that the staffing establishment remained unchanged following the implementation of the integrated model and all resources of the former offices were allocated to the new offices under the integrated model. ADSW(Y&C) added that prior to July 2012 group work service under the Community Support Service Scheme ("CSSS") was provided in the form of group counselling and structured activities to help young offenders stay law-abiding and develop socially acceptable behaviour and there were two CSSS Centres run by SWD serving the whole territory. However, it caused inconvenience as probationers might need to travel across districts to the CSSS Centres in order to take part in the group work activities. To address the problem and having regard to the probationers' service needs of similar nature within a district, district-based group work service was therefore provided under the integrated model, taking account of the fact that POs had received the relevant professional training for provision of casework as well as group work services. The Chairman, however, maintained that the issue of conflicting roles had not been thoroughly addressed. Specifically, it would be difficult for a PO, who could advise on the probationers' status, to establish individual relationship with the latter in the capacity of a social worker. She urged the Administration to give due regard to the SWO Grade Branch's view on the difficulties of playing different roles by POs and the call for outsourcing the group work service to NGOs.

18. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung echoed a similar concern about clash of POs' dual roles which involved different perspectives and professional knowledge and judgement. In response to Mr LEUNG's enquiry, DDSW(S) said that the officer-in-charge of the PCSO was also a registered social worker who would provide professional supervision to the POs to ensure that the cases were handled properly and professionally. Mr LEUNG, however, remained concerned about the conflicting roles of a PO in discharging statutory duties.

[The Chairman informed members that the meeting would be extended to 1:15 pm.]

Support for offenders

19. In respect of the review on the integrated model which would be

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conducted one year after its implementation in around July 2013, the Deputy Chairman was of the view that it should include the workflow on provision of advisory and counselling services before the trial and the aftercare services upon completion of the probation service. In particular, the Deputy Chairman was concerned about the provision of support at the pre-trial stage given that very often first-time offenders would be helpless and the whole family would be under great pressure. He sought information in this regard.

20. DDSW(S) said that upon receipt of a request from a court requiring a social enquiry or investigation of an accused person, a PO would immediately contact the family concerned and provide support as necessary, in particular young persons for whom family support was important. The PO would make recommendation on the treatment to be received by the offender, which would help him/her re-integrate into the community. For an offender who was put under a probation order, a welfare plan would be formulated to address different needs of the offender and/or his/her families, including finance, accommodation, employment and education. In addition, referrals would be made to other government departments, and professional service such as clinical psychological services as appropriate. Upon completion of the probation supervision, the case would be closed if there was no need for further welfare assistance. Otherwise, the person/family concerned would be referred to other welfare service units for follow-up as appropriate.

21. Echoing a similar concern about the advisory and counselling services provided to the accused while awaiting trials, in particular the youngsters, Mr TANG Ka-piu said that to his knowledge, many new arrivals and ethnic minorities did not understand thoroughly their rights under the law and the legal proceedings involved. He appealed to SWD to strengthen the provision of such services.

22. In response, DDSW(S) informed members that there was a referral mechanism whereby the Hong Kong Police Force ("the Police") would refer cases to SWD for intervention at the pre-trial stage as necessary. In the light of members' concern, SWD would liaise with the Police in respect of further strengthening the mechanism.

23. Mr Alan LEONG expressed a similar view on the necessary support for the accused persons, in particular those who experienced emotional distress and anxiety in the face of a trial. He referred to a news report last year on a suicide case of a female nurse suspected of committing shoplifting repeatedly prior to the court hearing, and that pre-trial

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counselling service was not available because of POs' focus on handling cases referred by the courts. In his view, it was imperative to provide support for the accused persons who had emotional disturbance in a timely manner, rather than being referred by the court at a later stage. In this connection, Mr LEONG enquired whether the support service had been strengthened in this regard following the integration and whether consideration would be given to allowing front-line people, including the Police and the lawyers of the Duty Lawyer Service, who might have initial contacts with the accused, to make referrals.

24. In recognition of the need for emotional support service for those prosecuted and awaiting trials, DDSW(S) advised that POs primarily handled cases referred to them by the courts in accordance with the division of work. As stated earlier, SWD would strengthen the collaboration with the Police in respect of case referrals. In practice, cases would be referred to the Integrated Family Service Centres ("IFSCs") of SWD or NGOs for follow-up. In addition, SWD would also enhance the liaison with the Duty Lawyer Service with regard to providing support for the needy people.

25. While expressing appreciation of the referral mechanism in place, Mr Alan LEONG held the view that the Administration should be proactive in approaching people in need of help and provide the service as necessary. He requested the Administration to enhance the publicity efforts in the dissemination of the availability of such service. The Chairman shared a similar view. She further pointed out that it was particularly important for first-time offenders as they were helpless and had no knowledge about seeking help when facing difficulties. DDSW(S) assured members that SWD would liaise with the relevant government departments and units and further strengthen the efforts to raise public's awareness of the availability of such service.

26. Mr Albert HO noted with concern complaints about the insufficient provision of clinical psychological service for offenders. To his knowledge, it was a long-lasting problem given that clinical psychologists ("CPs") were preoccupied with preparing reports for court cases as requested by the courts. He sought information on the relevant staffing establishment.

27. In response, DDSW(S) said that currently there were five teams with more than 40 CPs in SWD serving the whole territory. According to the record, the number of probation cases requiring clinical psychological service was limited and clinical psychological support would be provided

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to offenders as required.

28. Mr Albert HO, however, remained concerned about the service needs and enquired whether a referral mechanism was put in place to follow up cases as appropriate. DDSW(S) replied in the affirmative and advised that referrals would be made by POs as necessary. As regards urgent cases, a CP would meet with service users for provision of counselling service within a week as far as practicable.

29. At the request of Mr Albert HO, DDSW(S) undertook to provide information on the number of CPs participating in the integrated community-based services for offenders, and the amount of time they spent on preparing reports for the courts and providing counselling services to offenders respectively.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration reverted to the Panel on the requisite information vide LC Paper No. CB(2)1038/12-13(01) on 25 April 2013.)

30. The Deputy Chairman expressed concern about prosecution cases which were not referred by the courts to receive probation service. ADSW(Y&C) responded that the courts might refer cases to the PO who was on duty in each court to follow up the welfare assistance to the accused persons and/or their families as necessary.

31. The Deputy Chairman sought detailed information on the court social service provided by the Society of Rehabilitation and Crime Prevention, Hong Kong ("SRACP"). He called on the Administration to conduct a review on the provision of court social work service and to consider increasing the subsidies as appropriate with a view to ensuring availability of social work service at each court of law.

32. DDSW(S) said that SWD provided subsidies to SRACP for engagement of at least three social workers providing court social work service. Whilst agreeing to take into account the Deputy Chairman's view in the review, she stressed the importance of using the public resources effectively.

33. At the request of Mr TANG Ka-piu, DDSW(S) undertook to provide a flow chart illustrating how the accused persons could receive advisory services from social workers before their trials under the integrated model. DDSW(S) further emphasized that as mentioned earlier, members of the public could approach IFSCs directly for assistance. In response to Mr

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TANG's enquiry about information on provision of advisory services for offenders at the pre-trial stage in terms of percentage or number of offenders, she said that SWD did not have such statistics.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration provided the Panel with the flow chart vide LC Paper No. CB(2)1038/12-13(01) on 25 April 2013.)

34. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung raised queries as to the effectiveness of IFSCs' provision of service to address the needs of the offenders in the light of a wide range of services rendered by them.

35. Mr TANG Ka-piu echoed a similar concern about the effectiveness of IFSC's provision of service. He doubted whether cases could be handled by experienced social workers engaged by NGOs in accordance with guidelines and in a timely manner.

36. DDSW(S) responded that IFSCs' social workers, be they employed by SWD or NGOs, were trained social workers and were required to pursue continued learning to meet job requirements. Should there be urgent cases, officers-in-charge of IFSCs would arrange suitable social workers to follow up as necessary.

Implementation of integrated-model

37. In response to Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung's enquiry about the reorganization of services, DDSW(S) advised that a Steering Group for Review of Community-based Services for Offenders, after an intensive review and study, recommended in November 2011 an integrated model to provide a more comprehensive and convenient one-stop professional service for offenders.

38. In response to Mr TANG Ka-piu's enquiry about the locations of the seven PCSOs following the merging of the 11 probation offices, the Community Service Orders Office and the two CSSS Centres, DDSW(S) advised that in determining the locations of the seven PCSOs, SWD had balanced different views and needs, and considered the pros and cons of setting up offices at such locations. Most of the offices were located at or near the court buildings to facilitate the liaison with the courts and interview with the offenders.

39. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung said that the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong supported the implementation of

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the integrated model for community-based services for offenders, which could facilitate the use of resources effectively and provide a more comprehensive and convenient one-stop professional service for service users. Citing the Administration's re-organization of a support programme for employment launched earlier, Mr LEUNG, however, was concerned whether similar redundancy of contract posts was involved in the process of streamlining the service delivery, which involved merging of 11 probation offices to seven PCSOs. Mr LEUNG sought information on the number of staff involved.

40. DDSW(S) advised that the implementation of the integrated model on community-based services for the offenders was a cost-neutral exercise. All human resources of the former offices (i.e. 18 Social Work Officers and 142 Assistant Social Work Officers) were allocated to the seven PCSOs and the Co-ordinating Office of Community Service Orders based on the workload of each office. The number of site supervisors, who were non-civil service part-time staff, also remained unchanged.

41. In response to Mr LEUNG Che-cheung's enquiry about the conduct of review, DDSW(S) said that the initial feedback collected from the courts, the district management and concerned offices showed that the integrated model had worked smoothly. A more in-depth review would be conducted in July 2013 to collect feedback from the service users on the implementation of the integrated model for community-based services.

42. Mr POON Siu-ping was concerned whether the implementation of the integrated model had streamlined the provision of services and helped address the overlapping of services. He sought information on a comparison of POs' workload before and after the implementation of the integrated model.

43. DDSW(S) said that according to a comparison study, the average number of cases handled by a PO in the period of July to December 2012 was 42 as compared to 49 in the same period prior to the implementation of the integrated model, which represented some kind of improvement in terms of reduced workload.

Naming of service users

44. Dr Fernando CHEUNG expressed concern about the possible labelling effect of using the term "offenders" for people who received the community-based services, in particular the probation service, under the integrated model. He enquired whether the Administration would

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consider renaming these people such as "釋囚 discharged prisoners" or "更生人士 rehabilitated offenders ". In response, DDSW(S) explained that the integrated community-based services for offenders, apart from the probation service, also included the Community Service Orders Scheme which was a community-based sentence option pursuant to the Community Service Orders Ordinance (Cap. 378). Since "offenders" was a term used in the law and by other government bureaux/departments and the courts, consensus had to be reached in respect of an alternative nomenclature to be adopted for the service users. Yet, the Administration was mindful of the labelling effect of the term and would strive to minimize its negative implications.

IV. Promoting active ageing

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)737/12-13(05) and (06)]

45. At the invitation of the Chairman, Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 4 ("PAS(W)4") and Chief Social Work Officer (Elderly) 1 of SWD briefed members on the Administration's initiatives relating to the promotion of active ageing, details of which were set out in the Administration's paper.

Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme for the Elderly and Eligible Persons with Disabilities ("the Concession Scheme")

46. Pointing out that the service users of elderly centres were aged 60 or above while the target beneficiaries of the Concession Scheme were aged 65 or above, Mr TANG Ka-piu raised concern about the long-lasting problem of different minimum age requirements for different services/concession schemes for the elderly. He said that a considerable number of the elderly aged 60 to 64, who earned no income, faced difficulties in participating actively in community activities because of high transportation costs. Mr TANG called on the Administration to conduct a comparison study on social integration between elderly aged 60 to 64 and those aged 65 or above. Citing the example of the half-fare concession per trip on Mondays to Saturdays, except public holidays, offered to senior citizens aged 60 to 64 when travelling on Citybus Hong Kong Island Franchised routes, he was of the view that the Administration should offer even greater fare concession to senior citizens. He enquired whether the Administration would consider relaxing the age requirement for the Concession Scheme to 60 with a view to facilitating the integration of more elderly people into the community.

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47. PAS(W)4 responded that the age requirements and eligibility criteria for the different assistance and concession schemes targeted at the elderly peoples might vary, having regard to their needs at different age. For instance, some courses under the Elder Academy Scheme ("EA Scheme") were offered to elderly aged 50 or above to cater for life-long learning at an earlier stage. As for the Concession Scheme, PAS(W)4 said that the Administration had made reference to the public transport operators' practice of offering concessionary fare of \$2 per trip to elderly aged 65 or above. PAS(W)4 informed members that the coverage had continuously been expanded. The third phase of the Concession Scheme, covering the New Lantao Bus and ferries, was launched on 3 March 2013. As the Concession Scheme had just been implemented for a short period of time, the Administration would take into account the operational experience and conduct a comprehensive review, including the age requirement, three years after it had been fully implemented to assess the long-term financial, transport and welfare implications.

48. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen considered it a good motive to encourage the elderly to make use of the \$2 concessionary fare per trip under the Scheme, regardless of the travel distance, to participate in community activities. He, however, noted with concern media reports on the wastage of public money resulting from some elderly taking cross-harbour tunnel buses for short trips which did not involve harbour crossing. Given that the Administration had to pay the public transport operators concerned the difference between the regular fare and \$2, it was estimated that a significant portion of the expenditure had been inappropriately spent. Mr CHAN asked whether the Administration was aware of the possibility of such misuse when the Concession Scheme was drawn up and whether a review would be conducted. To address the problem, he suggested that consideration be given to adopting alternative concessionary modes. For instance, percentage discount of the transportation fare instead of a flat rate of \$2 per trip.

49. PAS(W)4 responded that the Administration was aware of the media reports concerned. As stated earlier, the detailed arrangements under the Scheme, including the rate of concessionary fare, would be reviewed after it had operated for three years to ensure effective assistance to the elderly and the proper use of public resources. It was observed that the average daily passenger trips under the Scheme had been slightly increased since the launch of the Scheme.

50. Referring to a similar question raised by him at a Council meeting in 2012, Mr SIN Chung-kai enquired whether the Administration had plans to

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extend the Concession Scheme to the tram service. He understood that there were calls from the elderly for such extension as they considered the tram service to be more elderly-friendly and convenient vis-à-vis the bus service. It was envisaged that with the provision of subsidy for taking trams or even free rides, more elderly people would prefer using the tram service, thereby saving considerable public money when compared to using the bus service.

51. PAS(W)4 said that the Administration noted the frequent use of the tram service by the elderly. He pointed out the Hong Kong Tramways Limited had since 1994 been offering concessionary fares for the elderly, the current tram fare for elderly aged 65 or above was \$1.1, which was below \$2. The Concession Scheme therefore did not apply to the tram service. Nevertheless, Mr SIN Chung-kai's view would be taken into consideration in the review.

52. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung held the view that the Administration should make providing fare concessions to the elderly a condition when awarding public transport franchise to operators. As such, it would not be necessary for the Government to pay the difference between the regular fare and \$2 to the operators.

53. The Chairman expressed disappointment at the deficiencies of the Concession Scheme as pointed out by members, including the minimum age requirements and the mode of transport.

Overview of promoting active ageing

54. Pointing out the significant change of the elderly profile in terms of education standard and energetic level over the years, the Deputy Chairman held the view that the Governments' allocation of resources for provision of elderly services was not able to effectively address the various needs of the different sectors of the elderly population. In view of the ageing population with about one million people aged 65 or above, the Deputy Chairman considered that the current elderly services were inadequate. Given a longer life expectancy of the population, the Administration should formulate long-term policies on life-long learning and leisure, such as outdoor activities on culture and history and providing more courses through broadcasting on radio, to enrich elderly's retirement life. In this connection, the Deputy Chairman considered that the Administration should increase the allocation of resources to the Elderly Commission ("EC"), which was tasked to, among others, co-ordinate the planning and development of various programmes and services for the elderly.

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55. PAS(W)4 said that the Administration acknowledged the need to keep up with the times when promoting active ageing. To this end, the school-based EA Scheme had launched in collaboration with schools and social welfare agencies since 2007 to encourage elderly people to lead an active and flourishing life through continuous learning. Having regard to the ageing population who were of a higher education level and income, the Administration would collaborate more systematically with the eight tertiary institutions in the development of new courses so as to address their specific needs. To improve penetration of the courses, PAS(W)4 further informed members that the Administration was exploring with the mass media in launching courses so that they could reach a wider audience. Details would be discussed with the relevant media and EC.

56. Referring to "Care for the Elderly" made by the former Chief Executive in 1997 as a strategic policy objective of the Government, Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung expressed dissatisfaction about little enhancement of the services rendered to the elderly over the years. Given that a substantial proportion of the elderly were in poverty, he held the view that the Administration should implement a universal retirement protection scheme to ensure financial security for the elderly, so that they could enjoy their twilight years. He enquired about the Administration's poverty alleviation measures for the elderly.

57. PAS(W)4 responded that a Task Force on Social Security and Retirement Protection was set up under the Commission on Poverty to study the subject of retirement protection. As a first step, a comprehensive study was being conducted to examine the viability and sustainability of the existing three-pillar system of retirement protection which comprised the social security system, the Mandatory Provident Fund and voluntary private savings and family support.

58. While supporting the Government's various initiatives to enable the elderly to lead an enjoyable golden age, the Chairman expressed disappointment at the ineffectiveness of the measures adopted for achieving such purpose. In her view, they lagged far behind the pace of development in the society and little enhancement had been made over the years. She was particularly concerned about the limited resources made available to meet the diversified needs and interests of the elderly.

59. Citing the development of caring and support networks at the community level as an example, the Chairman pointed out that the Administration should formulate long-term and sustainable policies for

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such development, instead of launching the 75 district projects under the Neighbourhood Active-Ageing Project. In the face of a growing ageing population in Hong Kong, the Government should take a more proactive role in promoting active ageing at the community level. The Chairman urged the Administration to seriously consider increasing the allocation of resources for promoting active ageing. Given EC's advisory and monitoring role in respect of the Government's formulation and implementation of elderly policy, the Chairman further suggested that EC be invited to a future meeting to discuss the possible directions for making recommendations to the Government for further improvement in and development of the initiatives relating to the promotion of active ageing to best address the diversity in elderly people's needs, so as to ensure that they could lead a fulfilled and happy life.

V. Manpower situation of non-professional front-line care-takers engaging in subvented homes and community care services for the elderly

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)737/12-13(07) to (08), CB(2)761/12-13(02) and (03)]

60. At the invitation of the Chairman, Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Elderly) ("ADSW (Elderly)") briefed members on the manpower situation of non-professional front-line care staff in subvented residential care homes for the elderly and community care services for the elderly, details of which were set out in the Administration's paper.

Views of deputations

61. At the invitation of the Chairman, 11 deputations presented their views on the subject. A summary of their views and concerns is in the **Appendix**.

Discussion

62. In response to the views of deputations, ADSW (Elderly) advised that –

- (a) the Administration fully understood the manpower demand for elderly care service. In the light of the increasing elderly population and manpower shortage in the care industry, it was necessary for different stakeholders to work closer to address the problem. She shared the view of the representative of the Hospitals, Clinics and Nursing Workers Union that it was

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important to promote a concept of caring for the elderly among care staff and members of the public through training and education;

- (b) in respect of manpower development and attracting young people to join the care industry, the Industry Training Advisory Committee ("ITAC") of the elderly care sector under the Qualifications Framework ("QF") had been set up in February 2012. The committee comprised representatives of various stakeholders and organizations, and was actively drawing up Specifications of Competency Standards ("SCS") for the sector in order to set out the competency standards required at different levels under QF. Upon completion of industry-wide consultation on the draft SCS, training providers might develop appropriate training programmes accordingly; and
- (c) funding for the lump sum grant ("LSG") to non-governmental organizations ("NGOs") for providing welfare service had increased more than 40% since the inception of the LSG subvention system about 12 years ago. Acknowledging difficulties encountered when the system was launched in the early stage, the Labour and Welfare Bureau and SWD were actively liaising with the stakeholders in the welfare sector with a view to exploring the area for enhancing the LSG subvention system and ensuring proper use of public resources, in particular NGOs' LSG cumulative reserve which amounted to some \$2 billion at present.

Provision of manpower

63. Dr Fernando CHEUNG expressed grave concern about the results of a survey conducted by the Hong Kong Council of Social Service ("HKCSS") in January 2013 on the manpower situation of non-professional front-line care-takers engaging in subvented homes and community care services for the elderly ("the Survey Results"). Dr CHEUNG considered it alarming that there were about 1 000 vacancies among some 8 100 posts of care takers and that the wastage rate was up to 20% in 2012. In the light of such a serious labour shortage which was unacceptable, coupled with the weak staffing establishment in the residential care homes for the elderly ("RCHEs"), he envisaged that the quality of the care service for frail elders would inevitably deteriorate. He urged the Administration to formulate long-term manpower planning to address such a manpower

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situation.

64. Mr POON Siu-ping shared a similar concern about the manpower provision in RCHEs. Although a number of training courses for health workers and care workers had been offered by the Employees Retraining Board over the years, Mr POON said that only a small number of trainees stayed in the RCHE sector in the long term upon completion of the training. In his view, the Administration should collect relevant statistics and conduct a review of the situation.

65. ADSW (Elderly) responded that difficulties in retaining staff in the RCHE sector were largely due to the working environment, remuneration package and whether the staff was committed to serving the elderly. While the Government welcomed suggestions from stakeholders in the industry and would take proactive measures to alleviate the manpower shortage, it was equally important for the RCHE operators to take initiatives and provide incentive to retain their staff.

66. Dr Fernando CHEUNG expressed concern about the discrepancy between the wage supposed to pay to care workers in subvented RCHEs and the actual payment. There were concerns about possible embezzling of subvention by RCHE operators. Ms Anita WONG of the Hong Kong Chinese Women's Club clarified that there were two types of front-line staff taking care of the elderly in RCHEs. While the statutory wage level for the post of care worker (elderly service) was some \$8,000, the salary for personal care worker ranged from some \$11,000 to \$14,000. Ms WONG stressed that it was still unattractive for young people or even middle-aged females to work as personal care workers in the RCHE sector because of the obnoxious nature of work and the lack of promotion prospect.

67. The Deputy Chairman was concerned about the recruitment and retention difficulties of paramedical staff, including nurses, occupational therapists ("OTs") and physiotherapists ("PTs") in the RCHE sector. He sought clarification on whether the master's degree programmes in OT and PT currently offered by the Polytechnic University of Hong Kong would be suspended.

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LSG subvention

68. Dr Fernando CHEUNG and Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung considered the LSG subvention arrangement to be the crux of the problem of manpower shortage in the subvented RCHEs operated by NGOs. Concerns were raised as to the lack of a stringent mechanism to monitor the

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implementation of LSG subvention arrangement. Having regard to the ageing population and the increasing demand for quality elderly residential care service, Mr LEUNG considered that the additional recurrent funding of \$164 million in the 2013-2014 Budget for enhancement of the elderly care service was insufficient. He called on the Administration to provide more resources and to make service pledge as appropriate to increase the manpower supply of front-line care staff with a view to enhancing the service quality of the sector.

69. ADSW (Elderly) responded that the Administration had continuously allocated more resources to increase the subvention for subsidized RCHE places. The monthly unit subsidy of a subsidized EA1 place under the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme by the Government had been increased from some \$6,700 in 2009-2010 to \$8,000 in 2011-2012 and further to some \$8,400 in 2012-2013, and subject to approval of the 2013-2014 Budget, an allocation of additional recurrent funding of \$164 million to increase the subvention of the residential care places. The increase in unit subsidy and subvention was intended to strengthen the manpower supply.

70. Dr Fernando CHEUNG held the view that it was incumbent upon the Administration to monitor the proper use of the public money under the LSG subvention arrangement. He said that the issue would need to be further followed-up by the Panel on Welfare Services and its Joint Subcommittee on Long-term Care Policy.

Short-term measure

71. Dr Fernando CHEUNG and the Deputy Chairman expressed support for HKCSS's suggestion that as a short-term measure to address the problem of manpower shortage in RCHEs, SWD should provide personal care workers in subvented homes with a special allowance, funded by the Lotteries Fund and equivalent to two points in the Government's master pay scale, so as to ease the difficulties in staff recruitment and retention. Dr CHEUNG added that the use of an earmarked funding for such specified purpose should be properly monitored.

72. The Deputy Chairman said that in view of the obnoxious nature of work in the RCHE sector and that employees were more prone to work injuries, it was understandable that employees preferred to work in other industries such as security service. He recalled that as a measure to retain the paramedical staff, including OT and PT, additional funding had been provided by the Government from 2009 for the provision of a special allowance for these staff and RCHE operators had to top up the salaries in

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order to offer more competitive salaries for recruitment and retention of paramedical staff or hire of such services. Referring to the Survey Results, he drew members' attention to the procurement of treatment and care services by about 30% of the respondent operators because of manpower shortage in RCHEs. In the light of the costly expenditure involved, which amounted to some 57 000 hours each month, the Deputy Chairman held a strong view that the Administration should make provision of a special allowance so as to retain the front-line care workers.

73. In response, ADSW (Elderly) reiterated that there was an allocation of additional recurrent funding of \$164 million in the 2013-2014 Budget to increase the subvention for 7 000 residential care places with continuum of care, so that RCHEs could provide more targeted services for the elderly, and to upgrade 7 850 ordinary residential care places in subvented RCHEs to places with continuum of care. The operators had full autonomy and flexibility in the deployment of subvention, who might either employ more staff for RCHEs or enhance the remuneration package for staff, in the light of the increasing care needs for residents of RCHEs due to their deteriorating health conditions. She added that the Administration was aware of the procurement of services from service providers by the RCHE operators because of shortage of paramedical staff like OTs, PTs or speech therapists. In response, the Deputy Chairman said that to his knowledge the staff concerned were mainly the non-professional front-line workers in RCHEs.

Manpower planning and development

74. Miss Alice MAK was of the view that neither LSG subvention nor additional funding from the Government's budget could address the root problem of acute labour shortage in the RCHE sector. She took the view that the Administration should conduct a comprehensive review of the elderly policy and formulate an overall manpower planning for the RCHE sector, including manpower requirement projection for different types of staff in RCHEs, such as health workers, nurses and care workers and to take into consideration the salary structure of these staff and their training needs.

75. Expressing concern about the profile of care staff who were mostly aged people with low education standard, Miss Alice MAK called on the Administration to develop a promotion ladder for advancement in the RCHE sector so as to attract young people to join the sector. The Chairman echoed a similar view. Noting that the construction industry had taken specific measures to attract young people to join the industry

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which also faced similar labour shortage, the Chairman held the view that it was imperative that a promotion ladder with specific requirements for different levels be developed under QF to facilitate articulation among different qualifications as appropriate in the care industry. Given the unattractive nature of work, she stressed the importance of making available a career ladder for advancement in the care industry. As an illustration, she said that the introduction of a new grade of health care assistant under the Hospital Authority years ago, which had made the staff development of the ward assistants possible, had strengthened nursing support to patients and relieve nurses of simple care duties.

76. ADSW (Elderly) responded that the implementation of QF for the elderly care sector was to make available comprehensive learning pathways for young people to join the sector and to facilitate sustainable development. However, there were reservations about raising the threshold for front-line workers as it would make it difficult for some people without the necessary academic attainment to join the sector. As regards knowledge, skills and experience already acquired, a Recognition of Prior Learning mechanism under QF would be put in place to enable employees to obtain formal recognition of their competence and experience acquired, so that they could pursue continuous learning without starting from scratch.

77. Mr CHENG Ching-fat of the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions Social Service Unions Committee declared that he was a co-opted member of the ITAC's SCS Drafting Subcommittee of the Elderly Care Service. To his knowledge, the implementation of QF in the care industry would give recognition to existing workers' skills, knowledge and work experience. With qualifications so obtained, employees might pursue further studies at different levels to obtain higher qualifications. However, he was disappointed that there was no creation of additional promotion posts in the RCHE sector.

Statutory staffing requirements for RCHEs

78. Mr POON Siu-ping was concerned that the existing statutory requirements for RCHEs had been adopted for about 17 years. He was of the view that the Administration should conduct a review on whether an increase in the staffing complement of RCHEs was necessary.

79. In response, ADSW (Elderly) advised that the statutory staffing requirements were devised following extensive consultation with a wide range of stakeholders in the elderly care sector, and were still considered appropriate for ensuring minimum acceptable standards for RCHEs. In

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effect, SWD had been providing RCHEs which offered subsidized places with resources more than the minimum staffing requirements stipulated in the Residential Care Homes (Elderly Persons) Regulation (Cap. 459A).

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80. The Chairman and the Deputy Chairman requested the Administration to provide information on the statutory staffing requirements for various types of RCHEs (including high care level home, medium care level home and low care level home) and the calculation formulae.

81. ADSW (Elderly) said that the minimum staffing requirements of each type of staff of the respective type of RCHEs, including care and attention home, aged home and self-care hostel respectively, were set out in Schedule 1 of the Residential Care Homes (Elderly Persons) Regulation. As at end of December 2012, the majority of the licensed RCHEs were care and attention homes.

Motion

82. The Chairman put the following motion moved by Dr Fernando CHEUNG to vote –

"鑒於院舍及社區照顧服務的前線護理人員流失及空缺率偏高，影響服務質素，本委員會促請政府為前線護理人員提供特別津貼，並監察有關機構，以確保該項津貼用於挽留現有員工及吸引新人加入服務；同時檢討各類院舍的人手編制，並制訂長期護理服務人手規劃及護理人員晉升階梯，以改善護理服務質素及晉升方向。"

(Translation)

"That, given that the high wastage and vacancy rates of front-line care staff have imposed an impact on the quality of residential and community care services, this Panel urges the Government to provide a special allowance for front-line care staff and monitor the relevant organizations to ensure that the allowance is used to retain the existing staff and attract new entrants to the services, meanwhile reviewing the staffing establishments for various types of homes and developing the manpower planning for long-term care services and the promotion ladder for care staff, so as to enhance the quality of

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care services and the direction for advancement."

Five members voted in favour of the motion and one member abstained. The Chairman declared that the motion was carried.

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83. In conclusion, the Chairman requested the Administration to provide information on the following –

- (a) the statutory staffing requirements for various types of residential care homes for the elderly.
- (b) its plan in offering more training places to meet manpower demand for long-term care services and enhance the promotion ladder for care staff; and
- (c) whether the funding allocation under the LSG subvention system was adequate to meet the manpower requirements mentioned in paragraph (a), taking into consideration the staffing cost as per the statutory minimum wage.

VI. Any other business

84. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 1:09 pm.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
22 November 2013

Panel on Welfare Services

Meeting on Monday, 11 March 2013 at 10:00 am

Manpower situation of non-professional front-line care-takers engaging in subvented homes and community care services for the elderly

Summary of views and concerns expressed by deputations

No.	Name of deputation	Major views and concerns
1.	Baptist Oi Kwan Social Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● According to the results of a survey conducted by the Hong Kong Council of Social Service ("HKCSS") in January 2013 on the manpower situation of non-professional front-line care-takers engaging in subvented homes and community care services for the elderly ("the Survey Results"), there were around 1 000 vacancies for care workers. In the light of such acute shortage of manpower and the fact that about half of the care workers aged between 50 and 59, it was important to attract new entrants to join the care industry so as to stabilize the provision of manpower. ● Given the obnoxious nature of work in residential care homes for the elderly ("RCHEs"), the Administration should, apart from increasing the wage level of care workers, draw up their proactive measures to attract young people to work in the RCHE sector, including raising the image of care workers and making improvement to the working environment. ● On the job training should be provided to care workers to enhance their skills in taking care of the elderly in RCHEs.
2.	Hospitals, Clinics and Nursing Workers Union	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● While a number of training courses for health workers and care workers had been offered by the Employees Retraining Board ("ERB") over the years, it was understood that only a small number of the trainees who had completed the training stayed in the RCHE sector in the long term. ERB should conduct a review in this regard. ● Apart from increasing the wage level of front-line workers in RCHEs and improving the working environment as well as providing the necessary training, it was equally important for the Government to promote a concept of caring for the elderly so as to attract young people to

No.	Name of deputation	Major views and concerns
		join the RCHE sector.
3.	Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions Social Service Unions Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The lump sum grant ("LSG") approach adopted by the Government in subsidizing the non-governmental organizations ("NGOs") in the operation of RCHEs had given rise to problems in different aspects, including management, retention and recruitment of staff, and different remuneration for work of equal value. The use of subvention under LSG by NGOs should be properly monitored. ● The Government should conduct a review on the statutory staffing requirements for all RCHEs as well as the salary structure for workers in RCHEs operated by NGOs. ● NGOs operating RCHEs should conduct a review on their management and make necessary improvement to address the manpower shortage in the RCHE sector.
4.	Community Care and Nursing Home Workers General Union [LC Paper No. CB(2)908/12-13(01)]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The LSG approach adopted by the Government in subsidizing NGOs in the operation of RCHEs had given rise to problem like different remuneration for work of equal value, which has caused manpower wastage in the RCHE sector. As a result, RCHE residents suffered from the lowering of the service quality. ● The use of subvention under LSG by NGOs should be properly monitored. Query was also raised about the use of LSG Reserve in the operation of RCHEs.
5.	Hong Kong Chinese Women's Club	<p>A member of the HKCSS Specialized Committee on Elderly Services ("SCES").</p> <p>Highlights of the Survey Results on the basis of around 8 100 non-professional front-line care-takers -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● wastage rate up to 24% in 2012 ● vacancies up to 1 000 (i.e. around 12%) as at end of 2012 ● over half of workers aged between 50 to 59 and about 35% aged between 40 to 49 ● education standard of local workers mainly at Form One to Three level and those from the Mainland mainly at junior secondary school level ● reasons for leaving the RCHE sector mainly involving unsatisfactory remuneration (more than 30%) , shift work and work pressure.

No.	Name of deputation	Major views and concerns
6.	Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Welfare Council	<p>A member of HKCSS SCES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Administration should formulate long-term manpower planning for elderly services to ensure that there would be sufficient provision of manpower for the necessary services. It was estimated that an addition of at least 6 000 posts of care takers would be needed by 2016 to address the care needs of those on the Central Waiting List for Subsidised Long Term Care Services of the Social Welfare Department in view of the aging population, in particular those aged over 80. • The Administration should review regularly the Residential Care Homes (Elderly Persons) Ordinance (Cap. 459) and the Residential Care Homes (Elderly Persons) Regulation (Cap. 459A), in particular the statutory staffing requirements for different RCHEs which should be proportionate to the conditions of the residents, so as to ensure provision of quality services for the residents.
7.	The Hong Kong Society for the Aged	<p>A member of HKCSS SCES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a short-term measure to address the problem of manpower shortage in the RCHE sector, it was suggested that the Social Welfare Department provided personal care workers in subvented homes with a special allowance equivalent to two points in the Government's master pay scale, which was to be funded by the Lotteries Fund. It was understood that the allocation of additional recurrent funding of \$164 million in the 2013 - 2014 Budget to increase the subvention for the elderly care services was for the overall increase of manpower in different grades rather than focusing on that for care workers. • Owing to manpower shortage, some welfare organizations had to arrange serving staff to take on additional work or to procure services. According to the Survey Results, nearly 30% of respondents indicated that it was necessary to procure treatment and care services because of manpower shortage. The procurement of care services was around 57 760 hours per month.
8.	Hong Kong Family Welfare Society	<p>A member of HKCSS SCES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In face of the aged staff in the RCHE sector and the aggravation of the situation in a few years'

No.	Name of deputation	Major views and concerns
		<p>time, it was imperative to recruit new entrants to join the sector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The development of the Qualifications Framework for the elderly care service should be expedited, giving due recognition to the working experience in the RCHE sector and making available a career ladder for advancement, so as to attract young people to join the sector. ● The Administration should launch publicity campaign to promote public understanding on Qualifications Framework for the elderly care service. In addition, front-line workers should be provided with incentives for pursuing further studies.
9.	The Salvation Army	<p>A member of HKCSS SCES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Females played an indispensable role in the community care service for the elderly. It had been difficult for these females to join the labour force and they faced immense pressure because of lack of economic protection. ● The Administration should make reference to the overseas practices and consider, in consultation with the stakeholders, introducing care allowance (e.g. in the United Kingdom, Australia and Finland) and care payment (e.g. in Australia) to support care-takers at home.
10.	Hong Kong Association of Gerontology [LC Paper No. CB(2)761/12-13(02)]	<p>A member of HKCSS SCES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Given the implementation of 12-year free education in Hong Kong and the fact that most young people possessed senior education standard, the Administration should review the low entry requirement for care workers in order to attract young people to join the care industry. ● Following the implementation of the statutory minimum wage, difficulties in staff recruitment and retention had increased in the care industry because of the narrowing of the wage gap among the industries in which grass roots worked. It was suggested to raise the wage level of care staff and set up a mechanism for promotion ladder so as to address the problems. ● Consideration should be given to developing the horizontal structure of care staff, including introduction of posts like rehabilitation assistant and activity assistant, so as to provide support for physiotherapists and occupational therapists as well as to attract young people to join the

No.	Name of deputation	Major views and concerns
		sector.
11.	HKCSS [LC Paper No. CB(2)761/12-13(03)]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Administration should attach similar importance to the residential care service to the elderly as to the economy and tourism in Hong Kong. • Making reference to the practice of the Construction Industry Council, it was suggested that the Administration should formulate an overall manpower planning for the RCHE sector, including setting up a promotion ladder and provision of relevant training to different ranks of care staff so as to attract young people to join the RCHE sector. • The LSG subvention to each RCHE in the past years had been insufficient to ensure the provision of quality services, which covered a wide range of items, including food, care taking of demented elders and counselling service.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
22 November 2013