

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
PANEL ON WELFARE SERVICES**

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

**The Administration's response to issues of concern
raised by Members at the meeting
on 11 March 2013**

Purpose

This paper provides the Administration's response to the issues raised by Members at the meeting of the Panel on Welfare Services held on 11 March 2013 regarding the manpower situation of non-professional front-line care-takers engaged in subvented homes and community care services for the elderly.

The Issues

2. At the above-mentioned meeting held on 11 March, Members asked for the following information:

- (a) *the statutory staffing requirements for various types of residential care homes for the elderly;*
- (b) *the Administration's plan in offering more training places to meet manpower demand for long-term care services and enhance the promotion ladder for care staff;*
- (c) *whether the master's degree programmes in occupational therapy and physiotherapy currently offered by the Polytechnic University of Hong Kong would be suspended; and*
- (d) *whether the funding allocation under the Lump Sum Grant 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.

The Administration's Response

Statutory staffing requirements for various types of residential care homes for the elderly

3. The minimum staffing requirements of each type of staff of the respective type of residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) as set out in Schedule 1 of the Residential Care Homes (Elderly Persons) Regulation (Cap. 459A) are summarised as follows:

Type of Staff	Type of RCHEs		
	Care and Attention Home (C&A Home)	Aged Home	Self-care Hostel
Home manager	1 home manager	1 home manager	1 home manager
Ancillary worker	1 ancillary worker for every 40 residents or part thereof between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m.	1 ancillary worker for every 40 residents or part thereof between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m.	1 ancillary worker for every 60 residents or part thereof between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m.
Care worker (CW)	a. 1 CW for every 20 residents or part thereof between 7 a.m. and 3 p.m.; b. 1 CW for every 40 residents or part thereof between 3 p.m. and 10 p.m.; c. 1 CW for every 60 residents or part thereof between 10	No CW is required	No CW is required

Type of Staff	Type of RCHEs		
	Care and Attention Home (C&A Home)	Aged Home	Self-care Hostel
	p.m. and 7 a.m.		
Health worker (HW)	Unless a nurse is present, 1 HW for every 30 residents or part thereof between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m.	Unless a nurse is present, 1 HW for every 60 residents or part thereof	No HW is required
Nurse	Unless a HW is present, 1 nurse for every 60 residents or part thereof between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m.	Unless a HW is present, 1 nurse	No nurse is required

Note : As an additional requirement for a C&A home or an aged home, any two persons, being a home manager, an ancillary worker, a CW, a HW or a nurse, shall be on duty between 6 p.m. and 7 a.m.

4. Respective types of RCHEs should at all times meet the above minimum staffing requirements. For those RCHEs which provide nursing home places, they also have to be registered under the Hospitals, Nursing Homes and Maternity Homes Registration Ordinance (Cap. 165) enforced by the Department of Health (DH) and are required to meet the staffing standard under that Ordinance.

The Administration's training programmes for paramedical and care staff in elderly care services

5. To alleviate the shortage of allied health professionals in the welfare sector, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University commenced the two-year Master programmes in Occupational Therapy (OT) and Physiotherapy (PT) in January 2012, providing a total of about 60 training places (about 30 for each programme). The Social Welfare Department (SWD) has implemented a training sponsorship scheme at

the same time to provide funding support of \$17.7 million for non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to sponsor the tuition fees of students enrolled in these respective programmes to encourage them to join the welfare sector upon graduation. Students are required to serve at the relevant NGOs for no less than two years upon graduation. As regards whether the institution would continue to organise a new round of self-financing master's degree programmes, tertiary institutions in Hong Kong enjoy institutional autonomy and academic freedom including the operation of academic programmes. In planning for the programmes, institutions will usually take into consideration, inter alia, factors such as the demand for the programmes, teaching capacity and resources, overall development plan and priorities, etc.

6. Separately, with the support of the University Grants Committee, the student intakes of Bachelor of Science (Hons) OT and Bachelor of Science (Hons) PT programmes have been increased by 44 places (i.e. from 46 to 90 places) and 40 places (i.e. from 70 to 110 places) per cohort in the 2012-15 triennium. The first-year first-degree places in nursing have also been increased by 40.

7. SWD has also collaborated with the Hospital Authority to organise the two-year full-time Enrolled Nurse (EN) Training Programme for the Welfare Sector (Training Programme) since 2006. A total of 12 training classes have been organised, providing a total of about 1 500 training places. The EN Training Programme is fully subsidised by the Government. The trainees are required to sign an undertaking to work in the welfare sector for two consecutive years upon graduation. SWD will organise 10 more classes of the EN Training Programme providing more than 1 200 training places in five years from 2013-14.

8. For the care staff, to qualify for the HW registration, a person should have completed an approved training course and satisfy the Director of Social Welfare (DSW) that he is a suitable person to be so registered. As of 1 January 2013, there were around 12 200 registered HWs in Hong Kong. Training courses for HWs are offered by different training bodies in Hong Kong. All these courses have been approved by DSW in accordance with the requirement under Cap. 459A with standardised training content, training hours and format of

assessment. As of 1 January 2013, there were 31 training bodies, including NGOs and tertiary institutions, organising 54 approved training courses for HWs for RCHEs. More than 1 500 HWs are trained by these training bodies annually to meet the manpower demand of the RCHE sector. In 2012-13, 16 out of the 54 approved courses are funded by the Employees Retraining Board (ERB) while others are offered on a self-financing basis.

9. Although there is no compulsory training for CWs required by law, CWs are encouraged to receive training relevant to their duties. In practice, SWD requires Enhanced Bought Place Scheme (EBPS) homes to ensure that 75% of their CWs have received relevant training with a view to upgrading the service standards of these private homes. Various training bodies provide training courses or topical training courses on elderly care for CWs. For instance, ERB offers training course on “Certificate in Care Worker Training” and “Certificate in Elderly Home Care Training” for in-service CWs or interested persons. In 2012-13 (up to end-December 2012), there were about 600 persons enrolled in the “Certificate in Care Worker Training”¹. Separately, SWD and DH have been jointly providing training for RCHE care staff including CWs on a regular basis. About 2 100 care staff of RCHEs attend these training courses annually.

Qualifications Framework

10. The Education Bureau has assisted the elderly care service sector to set up an Industry Training Advisory Committee (ITAC) in February 2012 to implement Qualifications Framework (QF) in the sector. QF will help establish an accessible articulation pathway to promote lifelong learning with a view to enhancing the quality of the local workforce. Specifically, ITAC will draw up Specifications of Competency Standards for the sector, setting out the skills, knowledge and outcome standards required of employees in different functional areas, and providing a basis for course providers to design training courses to meet the needs of the sector.

¹ There was no class of the course on "Certificate in Elderly Home Care Worker Training" during the said period.

The Lump Sum Grant subvention system

11. Under the Lump Sum Grant subvention system, NGOs are provided with subvention to meet the staffing and service requirements as set out in the Funding and Service Agreements. To facilitate NGOs in complying with the statutory minimum wage requirement, additional annual recurrent resources of \$49.5 million have been allocated to NGOs since May 2011. Additional annual recurrent resources of \$11.5 million have been allocated to NGOs arising from the revision of the statutory minimum wage rate to \$30 per hour with effect from 1 May 2013.

Advice Sought

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

Labour and Welfare Bureau
Social Welfare Department
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