

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)643/13-14(02)

Ref : CB2/PS/1/12

Panel on Welfare Services and Panel on Health Services

Joint Subcommittee on Long-term Care Policy

**Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat for
the meeting on 14 January 2014**

Integrated Home Care Services for the elderly

Purpose

This paper provides a brief account of the past discussions at the Legislative Council and its committees on the Integrated Home Care Services ("IHCS") for the elderly.

Background

2. According to the Administration, to achieve the policy objective of ageing in place, which is in line with the wish of most elderly people, the Social Welfare Department ("SWD") has rolled out a wide array of subsidized community care services ("CCS"), broadly grouped under centre-based day care services and home-based support services¹, to serve the multifarious needs of elderly people in the community.

3. Supported by 60 IHCS Teams, IHCS are part of SWD's subsidized home care services covering care management, nursing care, rehabilitation exercise, meals delivery, escort services, home modifications, and support services to the carers, etc. IHCS are classified into two categories according to the needs of elderly persons, namely Frail Cases and Ordinary Cases. Only those elderly persons who have been assessed as being in the

¹ Centre-based day care services are provided by 64 Day Care Centres/Units for the Elderly. As of 31 December 2012, there were 2 609 day care places in the territory. Home-based support services mainly include IHCS and the Enhanced Home and Community Care Services. As of 31 December 2012, there were about 23 400 elderly persons receiving such home-based services.

state of either moderate or severe level of impairment by the Standardized Care Need Assessment for Elderly Services ("SCNAMES") are eligible for IHCS (Frail Cases). For IHCS (Ordinary Cases), users are not required to go through the assessment of SCNAMES.

Members' deliberations

Acute shortfall of services

4. Members had repeatedly raised concern about the long waiting time for home-based CCS including IHCS, especially for singleton elders in districts such as Kwun Tong, Wong Tai Sin and Sham Shui Po. Members urged the Administration to shorten the waiting time and increase funding to enhance the services provided for the helpless elderly persons in the community.

5. The Administration advised that as at the end of December 2012, the numbers of cases receiving IHCS (Frail Cases) and IHCS (Ordinary Cases) were 1 065 and 19 209 respectively. There were 444 frail elderly persons waiting for frailty-tested services under IHCS and the Enhanced Home and Community Care Services ("EHCCS")². The average waiting time was about two months.

6. The Administration further advised that the Central Waiting List for allocation of subsidized long-term care services did not capture the number of applicants waiting for IHCS (Ordinary Cases) or its waiting time. According to the non-governmental organizations operating IHCS (Ordinary Cases), as at 31 December 2012, around 4 400 elderly cases were reported to be on the waiting list, while there were about 17 300 elderly persons receiving the services. The Administration would continue to keep in view the demand for IHCS with a view to meeting the service need of the elderly as appropriate.

Re-integrating fragmented services

7. According to the Administration, whilst continuously expanding the existing services, it adopted a new mindset and allocated additional funding for new initiatives over the years to address the needs of the elderly.

² Both IHCS (Frail Cases) and EHCCS provide a comprehensive package of home-based services for eligible elderly persons in the community. The eligibility criterion for EHCCS is the same as that for IHCS (Frail Cases) which is mentioned in paragraph 3 above.

These included the Integrated Discharge Support Programme for Elderly Patients ("IDSP") (a pilot scheme launched in collaboration with the Hospital Authority ("HA") in 2008 to provide "one-stop" services for elderly patients discharged from hospitals in three pilot districts³); the Pilot Scheme on Home Care Services for Frail Elders (a pilot scheme launched in March 2011 in eight pilot districts to provide home-based support services for those elderly who had been assessed as severely impaired by SCNAMES and were waiting for a subsidized nursing home place); and the Pilot Scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly (a pilot scheme with its first phase launched in September 2013 in eight selected districts, under which eligible elderly persons could choose CCS that suited their individual needs freely and flexibly through the use of voucher).

8. Members and deputations attending the meetings of the Joint Subcommittee on Long-term Care Policy in March and July 2013, however, expressed concern that the above-mentioned schemes were piecemeal and fragmented. They called on the Administration to reintegrate the various home-based services including IHCS, EHCCS and IDSP into a more coordinated programme of elderly services. More specifically, they suggested that the home-based services for elderly persons should be offered according to their level of impairment, and elderly persons suffering from dementia should be taken care of in residential care homes for the elderly; and that in the long term, the Administration should project the long-term care needs of elderly persons in terms of manpower planning and funding allocation, so as to increase the service quotas for subsidized CCS.

9. The Administration explained that the existing CCS development was not yet matured. To enhance the services, SWD had rolled out new initiatives to provide more flexible services, for example, the CCS Voucher would provide elderly persons with a mixed mode of home care and part-time day care services. Services currently provided under IHCS would be included in the recognized scope of home care services under the mixed mode. To cope with challenges arising from the ageing population, the Administration also provided other types of CCS, which included day care services for the elderly, to help frail elderly persons age in the community. It expected that 182 new day care places for the elderly would commence operation in 2013-2014 and SWD would continue to attend to and follow up on the needs of the elderly persons.

³ In view of the positive response, the pilot scheme was regularized in 2011-2012, with its coverage extended to all districts. A total of 15 hospitals under HA, in collaboration with 12 Home Support Teams operated by nine non-governmental organizations, had participated in IDSP.

10. As regards long-term planning, the Administration explained that the number of elderly persons in need of subsidized long-term care services in the future hinged on various factors such as advancement in medical services, awareness of the public on healthcare, and preference for CCS over residential care services for the elderly. The Administration had put in place measures to increase the manpower supply of nurses, paramedical staff and front-line care workers. It had kept in view the needs for commitments in long-term plans on the financial support for elderly care services in the future.

Financial assistance for elderly waiting for IHCS (Ordinary Cases)

11. Member were advised at the meeting of the Subcommittee on Poverty on 17 December 2013 that the Community Care Fund provided financial assistance for elderly persons aged 65 or above from low-income families, who were on the waiting list for IHCS (Ordinary Cases) for household cleaning service and escorting services for medical consultations. The relevant assistance programme was launched in 2011 and extended in December 2012 to provide a monthly subsidy of not more than \$560 for elderly persons aged 65 or above with a household income not exceeding 75% of the Median Monthly Domestic Household Income. Eligible elderly persons could receive the subsidy until 31 March 2014 the latest.

Relevant papers

12. A list of the relevant papers on the Legislative Council website is in the **Appendix**.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
10 January 2014

Appendix

Relevant papers on Integrated Home Care Services for the elderly

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Legislative Council	23 June 2010	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 58 – 70
Joint Subcommittee on Long-term Care Policy	26 February 2013 (Item I)	Agenda Minutes
Joint Subcommittee on Long-term Care Policy	26 March 2013 (Item I)	Agenda Minutes
Finance Committee	11 April 2013	Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2013-2014 Pages 260-262, 494-495 and 583 – 585
Legislative Council	24 April 2013	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 63 – 70
Subcommittee on Poverty	24 May 2013 (Item II)	Agenda Minutes
Joint Subcommittee on Long-term Care Policy	2 July 2013 (Item I)	Agenda Minutes
Subcommittee on Poverty	17 December 2013 (Item I)	Agenda

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