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Panel on Welfare Services

**Updated background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 12 May 2014**

**Vocational rehabilitation services and residential care services
for persons with intellectual disabilities**

Purpose

This paper provides a brief account of the discussions of the Panel on Welfare Services ("the Panel") and the Joint Subcommittee on Long-term Care Policy ("the Joint Subcommittee") regarding the provision of vocational rehabilitation services and residential care services ("RCS") for persons with intellectual disabilities.

Background

RCS for persons with disabilities

2. To identify persons with disabilities with genuine need for residential services and to match them with appropriate types of services, a Standardized Assessment Tool for Residential Services for People with Disabilities was implemented with effect from 1 January 2005. All applicants for subvented residential services for persons with disabilities must be assessed by the Tool to ascertain their residential services needs before they are put on the Central Waiting List or admitted to their required service units.

3. According to the Administration, various kinds of subsidized RCS are provided to those who cannot live independently or cannot be adequately cared for by their families. RCS for persons with intellectual disabilities include Hostel for Severely Mentally Handicapped Persons, Hostel for Moderately Mentally Handicapped Persons ("HMMH"), Supported Hostel, Care and Attention Home for Severely Disabled Persons, Hostel for Severely Physically

Handicapped Persons ("HSPH"), Integrated Vocational Training Centre (Residential Service), Small Group Home for Mildly Mentally Handicapped Children/Integrated Small Group Home and Residential Special Child Care Centre, etc. In line with the strategic directions enshrined in the Hong Kong Rehabilitation Programme Plan, the Government has introduced a statutory licensing scheme for residential care homes for persons with disabilities ("RCHDs") to regulate their standards and operation since November 2011. As a complementary measure, the Government has also launched a pilot Bought Place Scheme ("BPS") for private RCHDs since October 2011 with a view to encouraging private operators of RCHDs to upgrade the service standard, shortening the waiting time for services by increasing the overall supply of subsidized residential care places, and helping the market develop more service options. As at November 2013, the Social Welfare Department ("SWD") has bought a total of 245 places from six private RCHDs. It will raise the ceiling number of places to be bought in each RCHD from the existing 55% of its recognized capacity to 70%, so as to provide more service options for persons with disabilities.

4. In addition to RCS, the Administration provides a wide range of employment and vocational rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities (including persons with intellectual disabilities) so as to equip them with job skills that meet market requirements and assist them in securing suitable employment commensurate with their abilities. These services and measures include sheltered workshops ("SWs"), supported employment, integrated vocational rehabilitation services centres ("IVRSCs"), integrated vocational training centres (day service), on the job training programme for people with disabilities and Sunny Way – on the job training programme for young people with disabilities, etc. Furthermore, for persons with severe intellectual disabilities who are unable to benefit from vocational rehabilitation training, day activity centers ("DACs") provide them with day care and training in daily living skills and simple work skills. As at December 2013, a total of 11 987 subsidized residential care places and 16 938 subsidized day training and vocational rehabilitation places are provided for persons with disabilities (including persons with intellectual disabilities).

Members' deliberations

Measures to increase the provision of residential care places for persons with disabilities

5. The Panel was consulted on the Administration's proposal to set up two new integrated rehabilitation services centres and two rehabilitation service facilities for persons with disabilities at its meetings on 11 May 2009 and

10 December 2012 respectively. Members noted with grave concern about the long waiting time for HSPH and HMMH (the average waiting time for HSPH in 2008 was as long as 106.8 months and that for HMMH was 84.4 months in 2011-2012). The Panel held a strong view that the provision of subvented RCS for persons with disabilities should be expedited to shorten the average waiting time to a reasonable timeframe. Members called on the Administration to seriously consider providing residential care homes and hostels for mentally handicapped persons in Government premises such as public housing blocks or Government Office Buildings. Members reiterated the need for the Administration to formulate long-term plan and set targets for the provision of RCHDs.

6. The Administration explained that it had been actively identifying suitable premises for setting up RCHDs through long, medium and short term planning. On long term planning, SWD maintained close contact with relevant government departments including the Lands Department, the Planning Department and the Housing Department, with a view to reserving sites in new development or re-development projects as far as practicable for setting up rehabilitation service facilities. On medium term planning, the Administration would bid for vacant premises at government buildings and vacant school premises for provision of rehabilitation facilities. On short term planning, the Administration would actively identify vacant public housing units for conversion into RCHDs. From 2013-2014 to 2017-2018, SWD had earmarked sites in 14 development projects for the construction of new subsidized RCHDs. The Administration anticipated that about 2 140 additional residential care places and about 1 590 additional day training places would be provided for persons with disabilities between 2014-2015 and 2017-2018.

Day training and vocational rehabilitation services

7. Members of the Joint Subcommittee expressed concern about an increase of 30% to 40% in the number of persons with disabilities waiting for long stay care home and the waiting time for DACs and SWs (the average waiting time for DACs and SWs were 57.6 months (1 257 persons on the waiting list as at the end of March 2013) and 12.6 months (2 515 persons) respectively).

8. The Administration explained that, in recent years, additional places were mostly provided for hostels for severely and moderately mentally handicapped persons, and comparatively the waiting time for places in long stay care homes was longer. An additional 30 DAC places (not attached to vocational training – residential service) and 50 additional DAC places would be offered in North District and Tin Shui Wai respectively in 2013-2014. Currently a total of 9 300 SW and IVRSC places were offered, 80% of which were places not attached to residential service. An IVRSC providing 160 additional places

would be set up in Yuen Long in the 2015-2016 financial year, 80% of which would be for SWs. The Administration would keep in view the demand for vocational rehabilitation services and increase the service quotas of DACs and SWs accordingly.

Manpower planning for RCHDs

9. The Joint Subcommittee considered it necessary for the Administration to formulate plans to address the manpower shortage problem of RCHDs. The Administration advised that, to ascertain the manpower demand in the welfare sector, SWD conducted regular projections on the manpower demand for various types of paramedical and care staff in the welfare sector (particularly the manpower demand in elderly care and rehabilitation services). The projections took into account relevant factors such as the existing situation of supply and demand, additional manpower demand arising from new initiatives/projects planned for implementation in future and the ageing population etc., with due reference to other related surveys and views of the welfare sector.

10. According to the Administration, to alleviate the manpower supply problem, training had been strengthened for various ranks of staff servicing RCHDs. Approved health worker training courses were offered in 16 training institutes, providing a total of 56 training courses applicable to RCHDs. The Employees Retraining Board provided training places to upgrade the health care skills of existing staff of RCHDs and health workers who were interested to work in RCHDs. Participants who had successfully completed the training course might apply for registration as health workers according to the Residential Care Homes (Persons with Disabilities) Regulation. In addition, SWD had collaborated with the Hospital Authority in offering the enrolled nurse training programme since 2006. SWD was fully subsidizing the tuition fees for the whole course, provided that trainees of the enrolled nurse training programme met the requirement of working in the welfare sector for a continuous period of no less than two years after satisfactory completion of the training.

Service quality of RCHDs

11. Noting that the staff to resident ratio in RCHDs which had participated in the Pilot BPS was 1:8, some Panel members expressed grave concern about the standard and service quality of RCHDs. According to the Administration, it had solicited views from different stakeholders in drawing up the BPS scheme, with a view to encouraging private RCHDs to upgrade their service standards, increasing the supply of subsidized residential care places and helping the market develop more service options. The service standard set for RCHDs participating in BPS had exceeded the licensing requirements and these RCHDs

were required to provide residents occupying non-BPS places with the same level of service as BPS residents so as to benefit more persons with disabilities. To monitor RCHDs, a Service Quality Group was set up comprising community members and residents' parents who would conduct unannounced visits to RCHDs and offer feedback on the service.

Relevant papers

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

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
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Appendix

Relevant papers on vocational rehabilitation services and residential care services for persons with intellectual disabilities

Committee	Date of meeting	Papers
Panel on Welfare Services	10 February 2003 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes
	5 January 2004 (Item II)	Agenda Minutes
	14 June 2004 (Item III)	Agenda Minutes
	21 March 2006 (Items IV & V)	Agenda Minutes
	9 July 2007 (Item II)	Agenda Minutes
	12 November 2007 (Item V)	Agenda Minutes
	11 May 2009 (Item V)	Agenda Minutes
	14 March 2011 (Item V)	Agenda Minutes
	10 December 2012 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes
	14 January 2013 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes

Committee	Date of meeting	Papers
Joint Subcommittee on Long-term Care Policy	29 January 2013 (Item I)	Agenda Minutes
	26 February 2013 (Item I)	Agenda Minutes
	2 July 2013 (Item I)	Agenda Minutes

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