

**For discussion on  
14 December 2015**

## **Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services**

### **Pilot Scheme on On-site Pre-school Rehabilitation Services**

#### **Purpose**

This paper briefs Members on the implementation of the Pilot Scheme on On-site Pre-school Rehabilitation Services (Pilot Scheme).

#### **Present Position**

2. At present, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) provides the following subvented pre-school rehabilitation services for children (from birth to six years old) assessed mainly by the Child Assessment Centres of the Department of Health (DH) to be in need of early professional intervention –

- (a) Early Education and Training Centres (EETCs) provide early intervention programmes for children aged from birth to six assessed to have mild to moderate disabilities with emphasis on the caring and training role of children's families;
- (b) Integrated Programme in Kindergarten-cum-Child-care-centres (IP) provide training for children aged from two to six assessed to have mild disabilities with emphasis on facilitating their integration into mainstream education; and
- (c) Special Child Care Centres (SCCCs) provide special training and care for children aged from two to six assessed to have moderate to severe disabilities to facilitate their growth and development.

3. At present, SWD provides a total of 6 810 pre-school rehabilitation service places, while 5 821 children are waiting for these services<sup>1</sup>. The

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<sup>1</sup> These figures reflect the position as at end-October 2015.

average waiting time, depending on the type of pre-school rehabilitation service, ranges from 13 to 19.6 months<sup>2</sup>. As an interim measure, SWD has been providing a cash subsidy for eligible children to acquire self-financing services under a means-tested Training Subsidy Programme (TSP)<sup>3</sup>.

## **The Pilot Scheme**

4. Recognising the importance of early intervention for children in need of rehabilitation services, the Chief Executive announced in the 2015 Policy Address that the Government would launch a pilot scheme through the Lotteries Fund to invite operators of subvented pre-school rehabilitation services to provide on-site rehabilitation services for children with special needs who are studying in kindergartens (KGs) or kindergarten-cum-child care centres (KG-cum-CCCs) as early as possible.

5. In April 2015, the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB) and SWD convened a consultation session to listen to the views of relevant stakeholders, including principals and teachers of KGs/KG-cum-CCCs as well as representatives of parents associations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) providing Government subvented pre-school rehabilitation services. The stakeholders generally supported the Scheme and urged the Government to make an early start. Most NGOs now providing subvented pre-school rehabilitation services showed interest in participating in the Scheme, expressing their wish to experiment slightly different models under the Scheme to test the viability and effectiveness of such models. The stakeholders also exchanged views with LWB and SWD on the service content of the Scheme.

6. In the light of the views exchanged in the consultation session and having regard to the relevant operational considerations, SWD invited proposals in July 2015 for the Pilot Scheme adopting the following key features -

(a) Objective

The objectives of the Pilot Scheme are to provide -

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<sup>2</sup> As in 2014-15.

<sup>3</sup> The TSP was regularised in October 2014, after the successful implementation of a pilot scheme funded by the Community Care Fund. The means-test is currently set at 75% of Median Monthly Domestic Household Income.

- (i) on-site rehabilitation services forthwith for children with special needs who are attending KGs/KG-cum-CCCs; participating organisations may flexibly deploy part of the service quotas to children waiting for assessment;
- (ii) support for teachers/child care workers, equipping them with knowledge and skills in identifying and working with children with special needs; and
- (iii) support for parents/carers, enabling them to raise their children with special needs with positive attitude and effective skills.

(b) Scope of Service

Each project team under the Pilot Scheme should be organised by an NGO experienced in providing subvented pre-school rehabilitation services. For each project team, the NGO, as the project operator, is required to provide, inter alia, the following services –

- (i) for children with special needs: on-site individual/group training; and on-site classroom observation;
- (ii) for teachers and child care workers: on-site professional consultation, talks/workshops/seminars and demonstration; and
- (iii) for parents/carers : talks/workshops/seminars on knowledge and skills in identifying and working with children with special needs.

(c) Service Targets

Children studying in KGs/KG-cum-CCCs and waitlisting for subvented pre-school rehabilitation services, i.e. EETC, IP or SCCC, are target service users. Parents/carers, teachers and child care workers of the children are also target service users. To avoid duplication of services, children with special needs receiving EETC services or training subsidies under the TSP will be allowed to join the Pilot Scheme if they withdraw from the EETC or TSP. If children receiving services from the Pilot Scheme are selected for entry to EETC, IP or SCCC, their parents may choose for their children to remain in the Pilot Scheme or to opt for EETC, IP or SCCC.

(d) Service Content

On-site rehabilitation services will be delivered by the project operators through inter-disciplinary teams, and each of the teams should comprise occupational therapists, physiotherapists, speech therapists, clinical/educational psychologists, social workers and special child care workers. The inter-disciplinary teams provide rehabilitation services and training through various modes, including individual or group training and classroom observation. In addition, NGOs participating in the Pilot Scheme are required to arrange for children (and parents if deemed necessary) to attend education and training centres equipped with the necessary facilities for therapy and training services. Apart from children with special needs, inter-disciplinary teams will provide professional support and assistance for teachers/child care workers and parents, through consultation, demonstration, workshops, talks and seminars, etc..

7. A cross-departmental vetting committee including representatives of LWB, SWD, the Education Bureau and the Department of Health was set up in August 2015 to examine the proposals submitted by NGOs. SWD then notified the applicant NGOs of the vetting results on 22 October 2015. Sixteen NGOs were allocated a total of 29.25 project teams to serve at least 2,925 children studying in some 450 KGs and KG-cum-CCCs over the territory<sup>4</sup>.

8. The Pilot Scheme will span over a period of two years and the Lotteries Fund will allocate over \$420 million for its implementation. Projects under the Pilot Scheme are being implemented in phases: five NGOs have launched their projects in November 2015, six in December 2015, and the remaining five NGOs in January 2016.

9. The 16 participating NGOs are required to fulfil a set of specified output and outcome standards. SWD will closely monitor the delivery of the output and outcome standards in the implementation process and obtain feedback from parents and KGs/KG-cum-CCCs.

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<sup>4</sup> The 16 NGOs are Caritas Hong Kong, Heep Hong Society, Hong Chi Association, Hong Kong Christian Service, Hong Kong Lutheran Social Service, Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Welfare Council Limited, Hong Kong Society for the Protection of Children, Hong Kong Young Women's Christian Association, Po Leung Kuk, The Boys' & Girls' Club Association of Hong Kong, Tung Wah Group of Hospitals, Yan Chai Hospital, Yang Memorial Methodist Social Service, SAHK, Salvation Army and Watchdog. Each team will be required to serve at least 100 children except for one of the teams which will serve at least 25 non-Chinese speaking children.

10. A consultant will be engaged to evaluate the Pilot Scheme, particularly the cost-effectiveness and operability of the projects under the Pilot Scheme, so as to help the Government consider the service model(s) and essential output indicators to be adopted, if the Pilot Scheme is to be regularised.

### **Continuing Pre-school Rehabilitation Services**

11. Apart from exploring the service mode of providing on-site rehabilitation services, the Government will continue to increase the provision of subvented pre-school rehabilitation places. Sites have been reserved for providing about 1 100 additional pre-school rehabilitation places in the next five years. In addition, the Government launched, in September 2013, the Special Scheme on Privately Owned Sites for Welfare Uses, under which NGOs are encouraged to make use of their land through in-situ expansion or redevelopment to provide diversified subvented and self-financing welfare facilities. According to the preliminary estimate by the NGOs participating in this Special Scheme, 3 800 additional pre-school rehabilitation places could be provided.

### **Advice Sought**

12. Members are invited to comment on the Pilot Scheme.

Labour and Welfare Bureau  
Social Welfare Department  
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