

For information  
16 February 2016

**Legislative Council**  
**Panel on Welfare Services**  
**Subcommittee on Issues Relating to the**  
**Future Development of Elderly Services Schemes**

**Issues Relating to Community Support and Care Services**

**Purpose**

This paper sets out the various kinds of subsidised community care and support services currently provided to the elderly persons and their carers by the Government.

**Policy on Elderly Care**

2. “Ageing in place as the core, institutional care as back-up” is the Government’s fundamental elderly care policy. Ageing in place is the cherished wish of most elderly persons. With adequate community care and support services, despite their long-term care needs, many elderly persons can continue to age in their own place without being admitted to residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) prematurely. To this end, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) provides a range of subsidised services, including centre-based and home-based community care services and carer support services to assist elderly persons to age in place.

**Centre-based Services**

(A) Day Care Centres/Units for the Elderly (DEs/DCUs)

3. DEs/DCUs serve those elderly persons who have been assessed to be of moderate or severe level of impairment by the Social Welfare Department’s (SWD’s) Standardised Care Need Assessment Mechanism for Elderly Services (SCNAMES) and are suitable for day care services. DEs/DCUs provide personal care, nursing care, rehabilitation exercise and social activities for these frail elderly persons, as well as carer support service for their carers. As at 31 December 2015, there was a total of 72 DEs/DCUs providing 3 011 day care places in the territory, serving about 4 390 elderly persons. The average waiting time was around six months. To provide better care and support services for the

frail elderly persons and their carers, the Government will continue to increase the provision of day care places and provide extended hours service at a designated new DE/DCU in each district.

4. In 2016-17, 70 new day care places are expected to commence service, of which 20 will be providing extended hours service for needy elderly persons in the districts. As at December 2015, SWD has earmarked sites in 14 development projects for the setting up of DEs/DCUs, which are expected to commence service progressively from 2017-18 onwards, providing about 680 additional places. In addition to these development projects, the Labour and Welfare Bureau and the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are actively pursuing some 60 projects under the Special Scheme on Privately Owned Sites for Welfare Uses whereby the NGOs may, through expansion, redevelopment or new development on their sites, provide more service facilities, particularly elderly and rehabilitation service facilities. Based on the rough estimation of the applicant organisations, about 17 000 additional elderly and rehabilitation service places, including 2 000 additional day care places for the elderly, would be provided if all the proposals received under the scheme could be implemented smoothly.

5. Dementia Supplement is provided to DEs/DCUs so that they may employ additional professional staff (such as occupational therapists, nurses and social workers) or purchase relevant professional services to take care of demented elderly persons and organise training programmes for them. In 2015-16, the allocation of Dementia Supplement for subsidised DEs/DCUs amounted to \$17.6 million. From April 2015 to September 2015, about 950 training programmes were organised for the demented elderly persons and their carers in DEs/DCUs.

#### (B) Elderly Centre Services

6. The Government, through elderly centres located in different districts, encourages and helps elderly persons develop a fulfilled social life and provides various support services for them. At present, there are 210 subvented elderly centres in different districts in Hong Kong providing support services including counselling, referral, assistance in handling long-term care service applications, emotional support, health education, arrangement of social and recreational activities, meal services, carer training, etc. These centres also provide reaching-out service for hidden and vulnerable elderly persons to encourage and assist them to develop their social life, and provide referral and support service for those in need.

7. Starting from 2014-15, the Government has allocated additional recurrent funding of about \$160 million annually for 210 elderly centres, including District Elderly Community Centres (DECCs) and Neighbourhood Elderly Centres (NECs), to strengthen the community support and service for elderly persons and their carers.

8. The Lotteries Fund allocated about \$900 million in 2012-13 to SWD for implementing the Improvement Programme of Elderly Centres by phases over a period of six years to enhance the physical setting of 237 DECCs, NECs and Social Centres for the Elderly (including self-financing centres), and purchase more advanced equipment and facilities, such as computers and health/gymnastics equipment, to encourage elderly persons to pursue lifelong learning and exercise more, as part of the efforts to promote the concepts of “Active Ageing” and “Ageing in Place”. As at end-December 2015, the Lotteries Fund Advisory Committee had allocated funding to 145 elderly centres. Renovation works have commenced in succession. Currently 80 elderly centres have completed the works and re-opened for service with a new look.

### **Home-based Services**

9. As at 31 December 2015, there were about 25 300 elderly persons receiving home-based services, including the Integrated Home Care Services (IHCS) (Ordinary Cases), IHCS (Frail Cases), and Enhanced Home and Community Care Services (EHCCS). At present, these services are provided by 60 IHCS Teams and 34 EHCCS Teams in the territory.

#### **(A) IHCS (Ordinary Cases)**

10. IHCS (Ordinary Cases) provide a range of community support services to elderly persons, people with disabilities and needy families living in the community. These services cover meal delivery services, escort services, personal care, simple nursing care and household cleaning. Elderly users of IHCS (Ordinary Cases) are not required to go through SCNAMES assessment. To ensure consistency in processing the applications and provide suitable services to elderly persons with pressing needs as soon as possible, a supplementary information sheet was drawn up by SWD in collaboration with the social welfare sector in July 2015 for use by frontline social workers. According to the statistics provided by NGOs operating these services, as at 31 December 2015,

around 3 750 elderly cases were reported to be on the waiting list, while there were about 17 200 elderly persons receiving the services.

(B) IHCS (Frail Cases) and EHCCS

11. Elderly users of IHCS (Frail Cases) or EHCCS should have been assessed to be of moderate or severe level of impairment by SCNAMES. Both services provide a comprehensive package of home care and community support services to users based on their level of frailty and disability. The scope and frequency of services are designed according to their needs. The range of services include personal care, basic and special nursing care, rehabilitation exercise, counselling services, 24-hour emergency support services, day respite service, home environment risk assessment and home modifications, household cleaning, meal delivery services, escort services and carer support services, etc. Since March 2015, the Government has provided additional 1 666 places for EHCCS and enhanced the service content of both the existing and additional places (including addition of elder sitting and on-site carer training) so as to provide better support for frail elderly persons living at home. The total number of home-based community care service (CCS) places for frail elderly persons now stands at 8 365. As at 31 December 2015, the average waiting time was about six months.

## **Carer Support**

(A) Carer Training

12. Carers play a vital role in assisting elderly persons to age in place. The Government attaches great importance to the support provided to carers. DECCs, NECs, DEs/DCUs, and Home Care Service teams across the territory are providing support services to carers of elderly persons. These services include the provision of information, training and counselling, assistance in forming carers' mutual support groups, establishment of resource centres, demonstration and loan of rehabilitation equipment, etc.

13. SWD launched the District-based Trial Scheme on Carer Training in October 2007 to promote basic elderly care skills through training programmes and to engage those who have completed training to provide care for the elderly. To further enhance the training for carers, the Scheme has been regularised since 2014-15, with an annual recurrent funding of some \$6.7 million provided to subvented elderly centres for organising training programmes for carers.

(B) Respite Service for the Elderly

14. Respite service is also important as it provides support to carers, relieves their stress, and allows them to take a short break when necessary, thereby encouraging and assisting elderly persons to age in the community. There are two types of respite service for the elderly, namely day respite service and residential respite service.

15. For day respite service, currently 35 subvented DEs/DCUs are providing 154 designated day respite places. Individual DEs/DCUs can also make use of their casual vacancies to provide respite service. SWD will continue to designate additional day respite places in newly established subvented DEs/DCUs.

16. As for residential respite service, apart from the 23<sup>1</sup> designated residential respite places provided by subvented RCHEs and contract homes, casual vacancies of the subsidised places of all subvented nursing homes, care-and-attention homes and contract homes are also being utilised for providing residential respite service. Since March 2012, all private RCHEs participating in the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme have also joined forces in providing residential respite service. SWD is also providing additional designated residential respite places in new contract homes commencing service from 2015-16.

(C) Pilot Scheme on Living Allowance for Carers of Elderly Persons from Low Income Families

17. For carers of elderly persons from low income families, the Government rolled out a two-year Pilot Scheme on Living Allowance for Carers of Elderly Persons from Low Income Families (Pilot Scheme) with funding from the Community Care Fund in June 2014. Under the Scheme, 2 000 carers of elderly persons from low income families are provided with living allowance to help supplement their living expenses so that the elderly persons in need of long term care services can, with the help of their carers, receive proper care and continue to age in the community they are familiar with. SWD has commissioned the Sau Po Centre on Ageing of the University of Hong Kong to assist in evaluating the effectiveness of the Pilot Scheme so as to deliberate the way forward. While the Pilot Scheme was originally scheduled for completion in May 2016, the Government proposes to extend the Pilot Scheme and launch

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<sup>1</sup> The number of designated residential respite places will increase to 26 in May 2016.

the Second Phase of the scheme until September 2018.

### **Integrated Discharge Support Programme for Elderly Patients**

18. The Integrated Discharge Support Programme for Elderly Patients (IDSP) aims to provide “one-stop” support services for elderly patients who have just been discharged from hospitals, with a view to reducing their chance of re-admission and providing further support to the carers. The elderly participants of IDSP are not required to go through assessment under SCNAMES. Under the IDSP, pre-discharge planning, post-discharge rehabilitation and home support services are rendered to eligible elderly patients and their carers. The home support services include nursing care, personal care, daytime on-site elder sitting, home modifications, household cleaning, meal delivery services, transportation and escort services, training for carers, etc. IDSP has been regularised since January 2012 to cover all districts. It benefits around 33 000 elderly patients each year. The recurrent expenditure of IDSP in 2015-16 is around \$172.7 million.

### **“Money-following-the-user” Approach towards Integrated Community Care Service**

19. Apart from stepping up CCS under the conventional approach, the Government has also implemented the Pilot Scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly (CCSV Pilot Scheme) with funding from the Lotteries Fund. The CCSV Pilot Scheme aims to test the feasibility of the “money-following-the-user” funding approach, under which the Government provides subsidies to eligible elderly persons in the form of service vouchers, allowing them to choose the service provider, the type of service and the service package that suit their individual needs, thereby realising the principles of “co-payment” and “affordable users pay”.

20. The First Phase of the CCSV Pilot Scheme was launched in September 2013. As at 31 December 2015, a total of 2 794 elderly persons had participated in the CCSV Pilot Scheme with 1 388 being current voucher holders<sup>2</sup>. SWD is preparing for the Second Phase of the Scheme which is expected to launch in the third or fourth quarter this year. An additional 1 800 service vouchers will be issued under the second phase, hence the maximum number of vouchers to be issued under the Scheme may reach 3 000. Furthermore, a number of enhancements will be incorporated into the second phase. These include increased

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<sup>2</sup> There was a quota of 1 200 vouchers under the First Phase. Owing to natural turnover of voucher holders and for optimal utilisation of resources, SWD may issue slightly more than 1 200 vouchers.

flexibility in the choice of service modes, more service providers and voucher values, setting up a Centralised Team to provide assistance to voucher holders, etc. We have consulted the Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services and listened to views of deputations on 11 January 2016 and 6 February 2016 respectively.

### **Long-term Service Planning**

21. In view of the ageing population, the Government has tasked the Elderly Commission (EC) to formulate the Elderly Services Programme Plan (ESPP), and a consultant team was engaged to assist EC in the task. Since its commencement in mid-2014, two stages of public engagement were conducted to collect stakeholders' views on the ESPP, involving 26 focus groups/ public forums and over 1 100 participants. Subjects relating to CCS were covered in the engagement exercises. EC is considering the views collected during the second public engagement exercise and other relevant information in drawing up the preliminary recommendations of the ESPP and planning for the consultation of the next stage.

### **Advice Sought**

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

**Labour and Welfare Bureau  
Social Welfare Department  
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