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Panel on Welfare Services

Updated background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat for the meeting on 9 January 2017

Provision of rehabilitation services and residential care services for persons with disabilities

Purpose

This paper provides a brief account of discussions at meetings of the Council and relevant committees on the provision of rehabilitation services and residential care services ("RCS") for persons with disabilities.

Background

2. To identify persons with disabilities with genuine need for RCS 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 RCS for persons with disabilities must be assessed by the Tool to ascertain their RCS 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 RCS¹ are provided to those who cannot live independently or cannot be adequately cared for by their families. In line with the strategic directions enshrined in the Hong Kong Rehabilitation Programme Plan, the Administration has introduced a statutory licensing scheme for residential care homes for persons with

¹ Residential care services for persons with disabilities include Hostel for Severely Mentally Handicapped Persons, Hostel for Moderately Mentally Handicapped Persons, Supported Hostel, Care and Attention Home for Severely Disabled Persons, Hostel for Severely Physically Handicapped Persons, Long Stay Care Home, Halfway House, Care and Attention Home for the Aged Blind, 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.

disabilities ("RCHDs") to regulate their standards and operation since November 2011. As a complementary measure, the Administration has also launched the Bought Place Scheme for Private Residential Care Homes for Persons with Disabilities ("BPS") on a pilot basis 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 RCS places, and helping the market develop more service options. BPS has been regularized since October 2014.

4. In addition to RCS, the Administration provides a wide range of rehabilitation services with a view to assisting persons with disabilities to develop their physical, mental and social capabilities to the fullest possible extent and promoting their integration into the community. These services and measures include sheltered workshops ("SWs"), integrated vocational rehabilitation services centres ("IVRSCs"), integrated vocational training centres (day service), 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.

Members' deliberations

Provision of residential care places for persons with disabilities

5. Noting with grave concern about the long waiting time for hostels for mentally handicapped persons, some Members 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 time frame. To alleviate the shortfall of RCS, the Administration should consider allocating a certain percentage of the total floor area of new public rental housing ("PRH") projects to RCHDs. The Administration should also seriously consider providing RCS places for persons with disabilities and hostels for mentally handicapped persons in Home Ownership Scheme flats and government premises such as public housing blocks or Government Office Buildings. To increase the supply of Hostel for Severely Mentally Handicapped Persons ("HSMH") places, the Administration should consider introducing BPS for private HSMHs.

6. The Administration advised that as at end-February 2016, there were 2 405 subsidized places for hostels for moderately mentally handicapped persons ("HMMHs") and 3 611 subsidized HSMH places. In the coming few years, an additional 1 036 DAC places and 896 HSMH cum DAC places would be provided. Apart from the additional 896 HSMH places which would be provided by 2017-2018, another 607 additional HSMH places would be provided through redevelopment or expansion on the sites owned by

non-governmental organizations, particularly those under the Special Scheme on Privately Owned Sites for Welfare Uses ("the Special Scheme"). If all the 63 preliminary proposals received under the Special Scheme could be implemented smoothly, about 8 000 additional places for rehabilitation services would be provided.

7. Noting with concern that some private RCHDs did not meet the requirements under BPS, some Members considered that the Administration should assist private RCHDs in meeting the required standards, thereby increasing the supply of subsidized RCS places. According to the Administration, it had been continuously increasing the provision of RCS places. Since the regularization of BPS in October 2014, the cap of subsidized places in each home had been raised from 55% to 70% and the target number of places had been increased from 300 to 450. As at end-September 2016, the Administration provided a total of 12 931 subsidized RCS places (including 450 subsidized places provided under BPS) for needy persons with disabilities, nearly double the number of RCHD places of about 6 400 places in 1997. The Administration would continue to subsidize private RCHDs under the Financial Assistance Scheme to undertake improvement works so as to meet the licensing requirements and standards.

Setting targets for provision of and waiting time for residential care services for persons with disabilities

8. Some Members reiterated the need for the Administration to formulate a long-term plan and set targets for the provision of RCHDs and hostels for mentally handicapped persons. They took the view that the Administration should make a pledge for reducing the waiting time for RCS places. According to the Administration, it would be difficult to set such a target as the waiting time would be affected by various factors, such as the location preference of individual waitlistees and the slow turnover of RCS places due to ageing of persons with disabilities, particularly the ageing of persons with intellectual disabilities. The Administration considered it necessary to review the mode of services having regard to the ageing of persons with disabilities. To this end, the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee had set up a Working Group on Ageing of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities to examine in detail the service needs having regard to the ageing of persons with intellectual disabilities as well as the provision and the mode of the related services. A survey on the service users' profiles was being conducted to collect data for studying the supply of and demand for the services. The Administration would continue to bid for vacant premises in government buildings and vacant school premises and actively identify vacant PRH units for the provision of rehabilitation services. The Administration would also enhance community care services, which would help alleviate the demand for RCS.

9. Some Members took the view that although there might be factors affecting the waiting time for rehabilitation services, the Administration should attempt to estimate the reduction in the waiting time under different assumptions. The Administration should set a goal for reducing the waiting time and work towards the goal. According to the Administration, it had evaluated the impact of the additional places to be provided in the coming years on the waiting time for rehabilitation services and would further study the subject matter.

Day training and vocational rehabilitation services

10. Some Members expressed concern about an increase of 30% to 40% in the number of persons with disabilities waiting for long stay care home and the long waiting time for DACs and SWs. The Administration explained that, in recent years, additional places were mostly provided for HMMHs and HSMHs. As such, the waiting time for places in long stay care homes was comparatively longer. The Administration had been proactively identifying sites and premises through a multi-pronged approach for the provision of additional places, including those government properties which would be made available owing to service re-engineering and suitable vacant school premises for setting up RCHDs or day centres. Two Integrated Rehabilitation Services Complex ("IRSC"), one to be constructed at the site of ex-Siu Lam Hospital in Tuen Mun and the other at the site of ex-Kai Nang Sheltered Workshop and Hostel in Kwun Tong, would provide a total of 2 210 additional places for residential care, day training and vocational rehabilitation services. The Administration also planned to convert three vacant school premises into integrated welfare services centres. Together with the two IRSCs and three vacant school conversion projects mentioned above, about 6 000 additional rehabilitation service places would be provided from 2016-2017 to 2020-2021. Of these, there would be some 2 500 RCS places. As at end-February 2016, there were a total of 5 198 subsidized DAC places and 4 412 subsidized IVRSC places in the territory for persons with disabilities in need. The Administration would keep in view the demand for vocational rehabilitation services and increase the service quotas of DACs and SWs accordingly.

Quality and monitoring of residential care homes for persons with disabilities

11. In his 2016 Policy Address, the Chief Executive had announced that the Administration would comprehensively strengthen the monitoring of residential care homes for the elderly ("RCHEs") and RCHDs, with measures including enhancing inspection and supervision, improving the regulatory mechanism and promoting staff training, etc. In addition, the Administration planned to re-organize the Licensing Office of RCHEs and Licensing Office of RCHDs under SWD in 2016-2017. The two Offices would be merged into a new branch for licensing and regulatory purposes, and manpower would be significantly increased by about 50% so as to enhance inspection and monitoring of residential care homes on all front.

12. At its meeting on 12 December 2016, the Panel on Welfare Services ("the Panel") was briefed on the Administration's proposal to create a supernumerary post of Assistant Director of Social Welfare to head the proposed branch for licensing and regulatory purposes. Whilst supporting the proposal, the Panel considered that the incidents involving the Bridge of Rehabilitation Company² had revealed the problem of poor quality of RCHDs in Hong Kong, which required an overhaul of the entire monitoring system. The Panel passed a motion urging SWD to enhance its inspection and, in tandem with the creation of the Assistant Director post, adopt the following measures:

- (a) immediately setting up a committee to reform the relevant legislation and codes, which comprised users, family members, professionals and Members of the Legislative Council ("LegCo"), so as to consider and implement the legislative amendments as well as enhance the service quality of RCHDs within three years;
- (b) opening up the monitoring system for RCHDs and support the setting up of inspection teams in the community, so that stakeholders such as family members, users and professionals could assist in the monitoring work;
- (c) taking over the management of RCHDs if their services were of poor quality. If the takeover was not possible, SWD should immediately strengthen its support to the RCHDs concerned, so as to ensure their service quality. Arrangements for RCHDs should be made for the well-being of their residents rather than for the purpose of administrative convenience; and
- (d) submitting an interim review report to LegCo after the creation of the Assistant Director post for two years, and a final report two years thereafter.

Relevant papers

13. 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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² The former head of the Bridge of Rehabilitation Company was accused of sexually assaulting some female residents with mental disabilities.

**Relevant papers on provision of rehabilitation services
and residential care services for persons with disabilities**

Committee	Date of meeting	Papers
Panel on Welfare Services	10 December 2012 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes
	14 January 2013 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes
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
Panel on Welfare Services	12 May 2014 (Item V)	Agenda Minutes
	8 December 2014 (Items IV and V)	Agenda Minutes
Council Meeting	17 February 2016	Written question (No. 11) on "Monitoring residential care homes for persons with disabilities"
Panel on Welfare Services	1 November 2016 (Item I)	Agenda
Panel on Welfare Services	12 December 2016 (Items IV and V)	Agenda