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Panel on Welfare Services

**Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 13 January 2020**

**Pilot Scheme on Home Care and Support
for Elderly Persons with Mild Impairment**

Purpose

This paper provides background information on the Pilot Scheme on Home Care and Support for Elderly Persons with Mild Impairment ("the Pilot Scheme") and summarizes the major views and concerns expressed by Members during previous discussions on the subject.

Background

2. According to the Administration, the Pilot Scheme was launched by the Community Care Fund ("CCF") in December 2017 to provide, on a co-payment basis, home care and support services to low-income elderly persons with mild impairment. The Pilot Scheme will last for a period of three years and is administered by the Social Welfare Department ("SWD"). The Pilot Scheme offers about 4 000 service quota.

3. Under the Pilot Scheme, 55 integrated home care services ("IHCS") teams under 24 non-governmental organizations ("NGOs") operating IHCS (ordinary cases ("OC")) will assess the conditions of the elderly persons waitlisted for IHCS(OC), with a view to identifying the elderly persons with mild impairment and providing them with home care and support services.

4. The Pilot Scheme will adopt five co-payment categories on a sliding scale, and eligible elderly persons are required to co-pay an

amount of the service value.¹ SWD will determine the amount of co-payment according to the monthly household income of the elderly persons. After deducting the amount of co-payment, all remaining service value will be paid by CCF. Additionally, elderly persons may choose to receive services on the basis of each meal or service hour according to their individual needs.

5. In February 2018, SWD commissioned the Sau Po Centre on Ageing of The University of Hong Kong ("Sau Po Centre") to evaluate the effectiveness of the Pilot Scheme. The consultation team conducted focus groups and interviews with the approved service providers, service users and their carers to collect their views on the Pilot Scheme during the evaluation process. The evaluation was expected to be completed by end-2019.

Deliberations by Members

6. At the meeting of the Panel on Welfare Services ("the Panel") on 13 March 2017, the Administration briefed members on the implementation of the Pilot Scheme. A question written relating to the Pilot Scheme was raised at the Council meeting of 20 March 2019. The major concerns and views expressed by Members and the responses given by the Administration are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

Service values under the Pilot Scheme on Home Care and Support for Elderly Persons with Mild Impairment

7. At the Panel meeting on 13 March 2017, members expressed concern that the highest service value for meal/home services under the Pilot Scheme was \$2,500 per month whereas the unit cost per IHCS case per month was only \$1,924. They enquired about the reasons for a higher subsidy under the Pilot Scheme.

8. According to the Administration, when compared with IHCS(OC), the types of services to be provided under the Pilot Scheme would be more comprehensive. In addition to home care services, the Pilot Scheme would incorporate the case management approach which had not been adopted in the provision of IHCS(OC). Under the case management approach, service providers would be required to arrange

¹ The monthly service values under the Pilot Scheme cover meal and home services. There are nine different values for meal service (ranging from \$550 to \$2,750 per month with effective from 1 January 2020) and five different values for home services (ranging from \$536 to \$1,608 per month with effective from 1 January 2020). The service values will be adjusted annually according to the Composite Consumer Price Index.

eligible elderly persons to receive services for preventing functional deterioration according to their physical health conditions.

Capacity of service providers

9. Some Panel members were concerned whether the IHCS Teams could cope with the service demand arising from the Pilot Scheme. They asked whether the Administration would request service providers to recruit additional staff for providing service under the Pilot Scheme. The Administration advised that CCF provided a funding of \$383 million to cover the expenditure of the Pilot Scheme, including service providers' staff costs. Besides, service providers would be required to meet the staffing requirement as specified by the Administration.

10. Some Panel members took the view that as the existing IHCS Teams were already overloaded, they would not be able to provide service under the Pilot Scheme and might have difficulties in recruiting suitable staff even with additional resources. The Administration should therefore extend the invitation for participation in the Pilot Scheme as service providers beyond the 24 NGOs, with a view to increasing the number of IHCS Teams.

11. According to the Administration, since the 24 NGOs were experienced in the provision of meal and home care services, it was expected that they would require less time in preparing for the implementation of the Pilot Scheme and have more flexibility in staff recruitment. Subject to the evaluation results of the Pilot Scheme, the Administration would consider enlarging the pool of service providers if the Pilot Scheme was to be regularized.

Evaluation of the Pilot Scheme on Home Care and Support for Elderly Persons with Mild Impairment

12. Some Panel members were concerned about the implication on the service users of the Pilot Scheme and their carers if the services discontinued after the end of the pilot period. The Administration advised members that if the evaluation results of the Pilot Scheme recommended that the Scheme should be enhanced or regularized, the Administration would provide recurrent funding for provision of home care services for elderly persons with mild impairment.

Assessment tool

13. At the Council meeting of 20 March 2019, a written question was raised on the assessment tool used by the IHCS Teams for identifying elderly persons with mild impairment. In its written reply, the

Administration advised that SWD commissioned Sau Po Centre to design a simple and standardized assessment tool to identify elderly persons with mild impairment and analyse their service needs, so as to provide them with suitable home care and support services. The IHCS Teams had been using the assessment tool to conduct comprehensive assessments on elderly persons on aspects such as their cognition/communication, mood/psycho-social well-being, functional status, health conditions, disease diagnoses, nutritional issues, procedures/treatments, etc. The assessment tool was designed with reference to the assessment tool of the internationally recognized InterRAI Check-Up.

Relevant papers

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

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
6 January 2020

**Relevant papers on
Pilot Scheme on Home Care and Support
for Elderly Persons with Mild Impairment**

Meeting	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Welfare Services	13 March 2017 (Item VI)	Agenda Minutes LC Paper No. CB(2)2079/16-17(01)
Legislative Council	20 March 2019	Official Record of Proceedings (Pages 107-113)

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