

For discussion
on 14 January 2020

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
PANEL ON WELFARE SERVICES**

Formulation of a New Hong Kong Rehabilitation Programme Plan

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the progress of the formulation of a new Hong Kong Rehabilitation Programme Plan (RPP), and the strategic directions, themes and strategic recommendations of the new RPP.

Background

2. RPP sets out the strategic directions and measures to address various service needs of persons with disabilities, which include residential and community support services, employment support services, provision of barrier-free facilities and transport, healthcare, education, sports and arts, etc. RPP was last reviewed and updated in 2007. To keep rehabilitation services abreast with the times, the Chief Executive announced in the 2017 Policy Address that the Government has asked the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee (RAC) to commence work in formulating a new RPP.

3. The RAC has set up a Review Working Group and five Task Forces (Special Needs, Employment Support, Mental Wellness, Inclusive Culture and Accessibility) to take forward the task. The RAC has commissioned the Hong Kong Polytechnic University Consulting Team (PolyU Consulting Team) as the main consultant to assist the Review Working Group in examining the long-term planning of various rehabilitation and care services for persons with disabilities and related macro issues, and to launch public engagement exercise.

4. The Review Working Group has also made reference to other relevant consultancy studies, including an evaluation study on the Pilot Scheme on On-site Pre-school Rehabilitation Services; and a consultancy study on Rehabus services. The PolyU Consulting Team has been assisting the Review Working Group in consolidating the findings of the Task Forces on specialised issues, with a view to mapping out the overall strategic directions and recommendations for the new RPP. The Review Working Group and Task Forces will ensure an appropriate interface and division of work with other relevant policy reviews and statistical surveys.

Challenges and Opportunities of Rehabilitation Services

5. The RAC has noted that there have been new developments in matters related to persons with disabilities internationally and in the local community in the past decade, particularly the new profile and characteristics of the disability population in Hong Kong. Hence, there is a need to review the current RPP for enhancing medium and long-term planning of rehabilitation services, with a view to keeping these services abreast with the times and address the emerging changes in the needs of persons with disabilities. These challenges and opportunities include:

- (1) United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) applicable to Hong Kong: The UNCRPD has entered into force for the People's Republic of China since 31 August 2008 and is applicable to Hong Kong. The purpose of the UNCRPD is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity. The new RPP is the first plan to be formulated after the application of the UNCRPD to Hong Kong.
- (2) Profile of persons with disabilities population in Hong Kong: The latest round of survey on persons with disabilities conducted by the Census and Statistics Department was completed in 2013. The estimated population of each of the disability types in 2013 was higher than that in the 2007 survey. In addition, the number of persons aged 50 and above with intellectual disability has increased. From 2001 to 2013, the number of children with special needs in Hong Kong, in particular the number of children with autism and Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, has registered a significant increase; the

number of persons with disabilities attaining post-secondary education and the number of students with special education needs pursuing full-time locally-accredited sub-degree and undergraduate programmes are also on the rise.

- (3) Development of technology: The development of technology in the fields of healthcare, rehabilitation, information and communication, etc. over the past decade has created enormous opportunities for persons with disabilities. The PolyU Consulting Team considers that the application of technology can promote interpersonal communication, access to information, learning and working, which in turn helps persons with disabilities overcome difficulties and barriers in daily life. In addition, the application of technology is conducive to timely identification of issues arising from early onset of ageing among persons with disabilities. Some countries have set up assistive technology exhibition centres on the latest available assistive devices; for provision of professional advice to persons with disabilities on the choice of suitable devices and training programmes for users and their care staff in operating these devices. Furthermore, experiential zones that feature barrier-free living environment have also been set up in these centres to enable visitors to better understand the challenges encountered by persons with disabilities at home, as well as the importance of providing them with various assistive devices and barrier-free home designs, with a view to facilitating the promotion of rehabilitation technology in the community.
- (4) Application of “International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health” (ICF): This classification framework divides disability-related components into two basic elements: body functions and structure under medical model; and individual activity limitations and participation constraints under environmental model. ICF can be applied in clinical assessment, compilation of statistics, formulation of personalised care and rehabilitation programmes, and setting priorities for social services, etc.

Guiding Principles

6. The RAC has adopted the following three guiding principles in the formulation of the new RPP, taking account of the challenges and opportunities mentioned above:

- (1) Abiding by the purpose of UNCRPD: to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, attach importance to the core values of “ autonomy and independence”, “accessibility”, “diversity”, etc;
- (2) Adopting a life span approach in examining the needs of persons with disabilities in different aspects and stages of their lives; and
- (3) Facilitating cross-sectoral and inter-departmental collaboration to establish a disability inclusive society for persons with disabilities.

Public Engagement

7. The public engagement exercise for the formulation of the new RPP is divided into three stages, namely: Scoping, Formulation of Recommendations and Consensus Building:

- (1) Scoping Stage: to define the scope of the new RPP and identify the key issues that need to be addressed, to commence discussion with various sectors of the community and to collate their views;
- (2) Formulation of Recommendations Stage: to analyse the key issues identified and examine the overall direction and possible options for consideration to address these issues; and
- (3) Consensus Building Stage: to discuss with various sectors of the community the final recommendations of the new RPP and build up a consensus on these recommendations.

8. The public engagement exercise for the Scoping Stage was completed in June 2018. More than 1 000 persons participated in it and over 70 written submissions were received. The public engagement exercise for the Formulation of Recommendations Stage began in December 2018 and was completed in May 2019. More than 1 000 persons participated in it and over 100 written views were received. The Report on Formulation of Recommendations Stage has been uploaded onto the website of the PolyU Consulting Team (www.rs.polyu.edu.hk/rpp) for public viewing.

Vision, Strategic Directions, Themes and Strategic Recommendations

9. In view of the above guiding principles and views collected at the first two stages of the public engagement exercise, the RAC has proposed to adopt the vision and four strategic directions for the new RPP as follows :

Vision:

Recognise the diversified developmental needs of persons with disabilities;
Respect the autonomy and independence of persons with disabilities;
Establish a disability inclusive society that enables persons with disabilities to develop their capabilities, unleash their potential and contribute to society.

Strategic Directions:

- I. Provide timely and appropriate support to equip persons with disabilities with the ability to cope with changes at different stages during their lifespan.
- II. Enhance community care services to enable persons with disabilities and their families living in the community to obtain necessary support, and be admitted to residential care homes as soon as possible when in need.
- III. Promote disability inclusive culture, facilitate accessible environment, transportation and access to information so that persons with disabilities can fully participate in social life.
- IV. Ensure sustainable development of diversified services for persons with disabilities in response to the changing needs.

The RAC considers that, under the above proposed strategic directions, the Government could keep track of the implementation of the various recommendations and make appropriate adjustments as necessary, so as to render the new RPP a "living document".

10. The PolyU Consulting Team and the Task Forces have completed the study of issues concerned and proposed 62 strategic recommendations under 20 themes (see table below) as covered by the four strategic directions. In view of the RAC's earlier agreement to the Government's approach of "implementation of enhancement measures as and when they are ready", various strategic recommendations are at different stages of implementation: short-term recommendations have been implemented; medium-term recommendations have had preliminary implementation plans; and long-term recommendations would need

further consultation with departments or stakeholders concerned for finalising the implementation plans.

Strategic Direction I. Provide timely and appropriate support to equip persons with disabilities with the ability to cope with changes at different stages during their lifespan.

| | Strategic Recommendations |
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| Theme 1 | Pre-school rehabilitation services |
| | 1. Continuously monitor the demand and examine the need for further increasing the places of pre-school rehabilitation services with a view to achieving “zero waiting time” for children assessed to have special needs |
| | 2. Provide early intervention for children who show signs of special needs (Tier-1 children); and explore the feasibility of integrating the support for Tier-1 and Tier-2 children, and adopt a school-based integrated service model to provide comprehensive, flexible and ongoing support to cater for children with various levels of special needs at different stages |
| | 3. Upon substantial shortening of the waiting time, reposition various pre-school rehabilitation services for further enhancing services, so as to achieving the target of early intervention |
| Theme 2 | Transitional support from kindergartens to Primary One |
| | 4. Establish a mechanism for information transfer from pre-school rehabilitation service units to primary schools such that children identified as having special needs at kindergartens can receive early attention and appropriate services when they proceed to Primary One |
| | 5. Enhance transitional support and early identification of the needs of children with special needs for helping them integrate in primary schools smoothly; and explore providing appropriate transitional bridging and support services for these children |

| Strategic Recommendations | |
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| Theme 3 | Support for Student with Special Educational Needs (SEN) |
| | 6. Implement measures to optimise integrated education; provide additional resources and professional support for schools so as to promote a whole-school intervention model to support and take care of various types of SEN students |
| | 7. Implement measures to optimise special education; provide additional resources and professional support for special schools so as to take care of various SEN students and help them unleash their potential, and better prepare them for future study or school leaving arrangements |
| | 8. Strengthen the training for special education teachers so as to enhance the professional competency of secondary and primary school teacher in supporting SEN students |
| | 9. Provide SEN students with the opportunities of further studies, including the provision of adequate resources and ensuring the opportunities of SEN students receiving higher education |
| Theme 4 | Vocational rehabilitation training and vocational training |
| | 10. Implement a pilot scheme to enhance the existing training model of Integrated Vocational Rehabilitation Services Centres. Through the provision of progressive and diversified vocational training modules, allow students to choose training modules commensurate with their ability and aptitude for preparing for future career development; at the same time, review the suitability of various vocational rehabilitation services in place and explore the feasibility of gradually replacing Sheltered Workshops based on the effectiveness of the pilot scheme |
| | 11. Enhance the vocational training programmes, provide extended support for students at workplace, and introduce retraining programmes to strengthen vocational and skill training services so that students are better equipped for new jobs or change of employment in the open market |

| | Strategic Recommendations |
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| Theme 5 | Employment support |
| | 12. Explore integrating and optimising the pilot schemes that encourage employment of persons with disabilities to allow more flexible utilisation of funding; continuously optimise employment schemes as to increase the incentives and stability of the employment of persons with disabilities |
| | 13. Promote workplace adaptation, innovative technology, creative arts, etc as a multi-pronged approach to expand the employer network and new job types for persons with disabilities with different qualifications and abilities, and to provide internship programmes for graduates |
| | 14. Continuously increase subsidies to employers to employ persons with disabilities and to purchase assisted devices, and undertake modification works of workplace; shorten application time and simplify application process |
| | 15. Adopt joint job matching and promotion strategy, coupled with a one-stop information platform and employment support flow, in enhancing job-matching and follow-up services, and reducing employers' cost in information search for obtaining effective support |
| | 16. Continuously optimise the “Enhancing Employment of Persons with Disabilities through Small Enterprise” Project and promote the development of social enterprises by facilitating the lease of suitable properties under the “Socially Caring Leasing Arrangement” |
| | 17. Establish disability-friendly workplace through innovative promotional strategies |
| Theme 6 | Ageing of persons with disabilities |
| | 18. Examine measures to further promote health awareness of persons with disabilities to alleviate early onset of ageing; prevent abrupt deterioration of health condition arising from incidents |

| | Strategic Recommendations |
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| | such as falling and stroke, and enhance the quality of care through wider application of technology products |
| | 19. Provide special and targeted services for persons with disabilities to cope with their ageing and health deterioration, including swallowing problem arising from ageing |
| | 20. Provide one-stop and continuous rehabilitation training, care and residential services for ageing persons with disabilities, who can no longer benefit from services at vocational rehabilitation services/training programmes (e.g. Sheltered Workshops), at their residential homes through a pilot scheme, allowing them to remain in a familiar environment without moving to other hostels due to their age and changes in body functions; and review the relevant notional staffing and schedules of accommodation |
| | 21. Set up a “Special Needs Trust” to provide reliable and affordable trust services for parents with sufficient assets for meeting the long-term daily needs of their children with special needs after they pass away |
| Theme 7 | Medical rehabilitation |
| | 22. Continuously optimise the Child Assessment Service to ensure that children with urgent and more serious conditions are accorded with higher priority in assessment through a triage system |
| | 23. Enhance the overall accessibility of the healthcare environment and facilities through the analysis on entrances, walkways, healthcare facilities, signage, escape facilities and application of navigation techniques |
| | 24. Continuously enhance special dental services and evaluate their effectiveness, including the Special Oral Care Service at the Hong Kong Children’s Hospital for children with intellectual disability, Healthy Teeth Collaboration launched by the Department of Health to provide free oral check-ups, dental treatments and oral health education for adults with intellectual disability |

Strategic Direction II. Enhance community care services to enable persons with disabilities and their families living in the community to obtain necessary support, and be admitted to residential care homes as soon as possible when in need.

| Strategic Directions | |
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| Theme 8 | Community support services for persons with disabilities |
| | 25. Continuously enhance the capacity of existing community support services (including increasing the number of District Support Centres for Persons with Disabilities, Support Centres for Persons with Autism and Parents/Relatives Resources Centres) and home-based support services |
| | 26. Launch new services and integrate existing ones with a view to providing a coherent continuum of community support services for persons with different levels of care needs, including setting up new rehabilitation service centres for persons with severe disabilities having intensive care needs and living at home, by integrating the service of day care centres and home care services in a flexible manner, and providing appropriate support for persons with severe disabilities based on the changes in service needs at different stages during their lifespan; and explore applying the ICF framework in devising a structure comprising rehabilitation objectives, intervention, assessment and evaluation to facilitate data and experience sharing among rehabilitation organisations |
| | 27. Implement a pilot scheme to provide timely support for ex-mentally ill persons on the waiting list of Halfway Houses through multi-disciplinary outreaching support teams and peer supporters; at the same time reviewing different options of the service model for Halfway Houses, so that appropriate mechanism can be set up to monitor the unique service supply and demand to ascertain the need to increase the capacity of Halfway Houses and the outreaching service; and explore a service framework of transitional support for ex-mentally ill persons in their recovery pathway after discharge from hospitals |

| Strategic Directions | |
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| | 28. Continuously update the service targets and model of Integrated Community Centres for Mental Wellness (ICCMWs) to ensure that core services of ICCMWs in all districts can meet the performance standards; and formulate thematic performance indicators for additional resources to be allocated in the future, to facilitate ICCMWs in timely updating their service targets and model in view of demographic and regional characteristics and enhancing collaboration with local partners, with a view to providing appropriate services suitable for residents in the district concerned |
| Theme 9 | Community support services for family members or carers of persons with disabilities |
| | 29. Increase the number of residential respite places and achieve better utilisation of designated residential respite places to strengthen support for carers and provision of emergency placement service for persons with disabilities |
| | 30. Enhance support for carers by increasing the service capacity of Parents/Relative Resource Centres and Social and Recreational Centres; explore the feasibility of integrating these centres as a district network to provide fundamental supports |
| | 31. Consolidate the pilot scheme on carer allowance and with other related pilot schemes |
| | 32. Continuously review support for self-help organisations to promote self and mutual support among persons with disabilities and their carers |
| Theme 10 | Residential care services |
| | 33. Strengthen the service quality of residential care homes through upgrading the statutory staffing requirements; adjusting upward the statutory minimum area of floor space per resident; raising the accountability of licensees; and mandating registration of home managers and continuous training of health workers |

| | Strategic Directions |
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| | 34. Explore measures to optimise the queuing mechanism for residential care homes for persons with disabilities, so as to reduce incidents of pre-mature admission |
| Theme 11 | Technology products and assistive devices |
| | 35. Make use of the “Innovation and Technology Fund for Application in Elderly and Rehabilitation Care” to subsidise elderly and rehabilitation service units to procure, rent and trial use technology products, so as to improve the service quality and alleviate the work pressure of care staff |
| | 36. Explore the feasibility of promoting the application of assistive technology in the community through collaboration between the new Community Rehabilitation Day Centres and organisation(s) equipped with the knowledge of application of innovative technology products |
| Theme 12 | Diversified community care and day services |
| | 37. Explore the model of providing diversified community care and day services for persons with disabilities, including examining the prioritisation of various community support services (including carer support) and different options of the funding model. |

Strategic Direction III. Promote disability inclusive culture, facilitate accessible environment, transportation and access to information so that persons with disabilities can fully participate in social life.

| | Strategic Directions |
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| Theme 13 | Disability-inclusive culture |
| | 38. Increase resource allocation to reinforce the spirit and core values of the UNCRPD and promote disability inclusive culture |

| Strategic Directions | |
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| Theme 14 | Mental health-friendly community |
| | 39. Continuously launch promotional activities to advocate mental health, provide service information, and eliminate stigmatisation and discrimination against mental illness through mass and social media |
| | 40. Launch a scheme to promote mental health-friendly workplace to provide information pack and support of mental health for employers and employees; and enhance the acceptance towards ex-mentally ill persons in workplace |
| | 41. Explore early intervention and referral mechanism for people with mild emotional issues |
| Theme 15 | Accessibility of community environment and services |
| | 42. Conduct research on the international standards/best practices/guidelines on universal design, and taking full account of the constraints and opportunities in Hong Kong, formulate feasible, achievable and practical strategies and recommendations; adopt the methodology of “Travel Chain Analysis” to identify various barriers and propose measures to eliminate the barriers, with a view to creating an accessible community and living environment. |
| | 43. Promote wider application of information and communication technology to facilitate access of persons with disabilities to services, with priority study in the areas of shopping, catering, banking, leisure/entertainment services. |
| Theme 16 | Accessible information |
| | 44. Prepare and publish the minimum standards and design guidelines for accessible websites and mobile applications for providing information to the public, and monitor the implementation in public and private organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs); provide incentives for non-profit-making |

| Strategic Directions | |
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| | social organisations to develop more mobile applications suitable for meeting the special needs of various disability groups, and encourage organisations concerned to promote these applications to a wider population. |
| | 45. Explore the development of “Hong Kong Sign Language” for use in public broadcasting (including news reporting programmes and Government’s Announcements of Public Interest) and official occasions; publish a glossary for “Hong Kong Sign Language”; at the same time preserve the usual sets of sign language used by different groups/sectors for communication in individual social occasions; and upgrade the Working Group on the Promotion and Application of Sign Language under the RAC to a Task Force to advise on the implementation schedule and related strategic development directions and supporting measures in developing “Hong Kong Sign Language” |
| | 46. Prepare a guide on production of easy-to-read version to facilitate the access of persons with intellectual disability and persons with other special cognitive needs to information published by government bureaux/departments, NGOs and public organisations, etc |
| Theme 17 | Accessible transportation systems |
| | 47. Continuously enhance the efficiency of Rehabus services, including setting up a new integrated computerised system; enhancing the shared-use of Dial-a-Ride service; enhance the Scheduled route services and feeder services for hospitals and recreational activities |
| | 48. Continuously enhance the service capacity of the Rehabus fleet to meet the increase in service demand arising from the projected increase in population of persons with disabilities |
| | 49. Explore the feasibility of adopting the ICF framework in determining the priority for using the Rehabus service |

| | Strategic Directions |
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| | 50. Continuously enhance the accessibility of the public transport service system (including franchised buses, MTR, public light buses and taxis) so as to facilitate the travelling of persons with disabilities |
| Theme 18 | Participation in cultural and arts, recreational and sports activities |
| | 51. Ensure that newly built cultural and arts and sport venues, or alterations and additions works of existing venues comply with the prevailing requirements in “Design Manual - Barrier Free Access”, and achieve higher standards than statutory requirements where feasible; explore application of navigation technology to provide indoor positioning and navigation services for persons with disabilities and those in need |
| | 52. Continuously enhance accessibility of the supporting measures and programmes, allowing persons with disabilities to book venues and enrol in events through accessible facilities or services, and to enjoy programmes provided in barrier-free modes |
| | 53. Increase the number of dedicated cultural and arts and sports events for persons with disabilities and provide additional training, including specialised training for instructors to gain better knowledge, techniques and skills when providing training to persons with disabilities |
| | 54. Make use of various funds and subsidy schemes to provide subsidy for dedicated cultural and arts and sports events for persons with disabilities, so as to enable them to unleash their potential and achieve excellence |
| | 55. Enhance public education and employee training for better understanding the arts and sports talents of persons with disabilities and their special needs in using relevant premises/ facilities and services |
| | 56. Establish a cross-sectoral and multi-disciplinary platform dedicated to advise on cultural and arts and sports events and training for persons with disabilities |

Strategic Direction IV. Ensure sustainable development of diversified services for persons with disabilities in response to the changing needs.

| Strategic Directions | |
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| Theme 19 | Planning of premises and services |
| | 57. Regularly update the definition and classification of disabilities to keep abreast with local and international developments with a view to better identifying the needs of persons with different types of disabilities for future service planning; and adopt the ICF framework in the surveys on persons with disabilities |
| | 58. Devise a new demand projection model for future rehabilitation services, with projection of expressed demand based on a rehabilitation service demand formula, taking into account adjustment factors such as population growth rate, offer rejection rate, etc |
| | 59. Incorporate planning ratios for long term residential care and long term community care services into the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines |
| Theme 20 | Manpower and training |
| | 60. Devise a projection model for the manpower requirement of professional/allied health staff and nursing staff on the basis of the projection of the demand for rehabilitation services |
| | 61. Increase manpower supply by exploring measures to improve the recruitment of rehabilitation service workers, their retention, working condition and career development |
| | 62. Explore measures to increase the flexibility of rehabilitation service units to employ and mobilise professional /care staff; and examine measures to attract more talents to the rehabilitation sector |

Way Forward

11. The RAC is conducting the third stage (Consensus Building Stage) public engagement for the formulation of the new RPP for stakeholders to provide their views through different avenues including public consultation sessions, thematic seminars and written submissions. The public consultation period runs from 5 November 2019 to 31 January 2020. It is expected that the RAC would submit the final report on the new RPP to the Government in the first quarter of 2020.

Advice Sought

12. Members are invited to note this paper.

**Labour and Welfare Bureau
Social Welfare Department
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