

For discussion on
11 May 2020

Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services

Social Welfare Support for Community Housing

Purpose

In accordance with the suggestions of some Members, the Panel on Welfare Services has invited the Government to attend its meeting on 11 May 2020 for, among others, the Social Welfare Department (SWD)'s briefing to Members on the provision of social welfare services for community housing in districts.

Social welfare services at district level

2. Community housing mainly refers to the transitional housing projects implemented by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) under the support of the Transport and Housing Bureau (THB). According to the THB, the NGOs operating community housing, depending on the scale and nature of individual projects, will provide their tenants with different kinds of support services according to their tenants' needs, including social support services provided by social workers. The operating organisations will also refer residents in need for appropriate social welfare services.

3. As many community housing projects are located in developed areas, the Government has already had social welfare facilities established in those areas, with supporting social welfare services provided therein through the SWD and NGOs subvented by the SWD. To ensure that district service units could address the needs of residents, the District Social Welfare Offices (DSWOs) of the SWD monitor the needs for welfare services in various districts on an on-going basis, especially having regard to population growth and demographic changes in their respective districts resulting from the completion of the new

residential development (including community housing). DSWOs will liaise with the operating organisations of community housing to understand the needs of the residents who have newly moved in, with a view to better assessing and enhancing the arrangement of welfare services at district level.

4. The social welfare support provided by the SWD and the NGOs subvented by the SWD at district level includes, but is not limited to, the following –

- (a) Supporting services for families: The 67 Integrated Family Service Centres (IFSCs) and Integrated Services Centre (ISCs) located in different districts across the territory, operated by the SWD or subvented NGOs, provide a spectrum of preventive, supportive and remedial family services to address the needs of those in need (which may include the residents of community housing projects). IFSCs/ISCs will promote their services and identify families in need by means such as pamphlets, posters, newsletters, road shows, outreaching, as well as collaboration with other government departments / district organisations. Among these measures, the SWD identifies needy families who are reluctant to seek help as early as possible through the Family Support Programme. Under the Programme, social workers will, through telephone calls, home visits and other outreaching services, contact families with social isolation problems and refer them to a host of support services. Furthermore, relevant service units will recruit and train volunteers (including those with personal experience in overcoming family problems or crises) who will contact the aforementioned families and encourage them to receive appropriate services for building a community care and support network. IFSCs/ISCs will also keep close liaison with the operating organisations of community housing to build partnership and referral network to ensure needy residents are referred for appropriate family service;
- (b) Supporting services for elderly persons: The 41 District Elderly Community Centres and 170 Neighbourhood Elderly Centres across the territory, operated by NGOs subvented by the SWD, offer community support services at district / neighbourhood level and provide a range of comprehensive services to enable elderly persons living in community housing to lead a healthy, respectful and dignified life;

- (c) Supporting services for persons with disabilities: The 16 District Support Centres for Persons with Disabilities and 24 Integrated Community Centres for Mental Wellness across the territory provide one-stop community support services for persons with disabilities or mental health needs (including those moving into community housing projects) and their family members and carers. These Centres aim to enhance their domiciliary and community living skills, so as to facilitate their integration into the community;
- (d) Supporting services for young persons: The 139 Integrated Children and Youth Services Centres (ICYSCs) across the territory, operated by subvented NGOs, provides support services to children and youth aged 6-24. Through flexible application of social work intervention strategies (including casework, group work and community work) on different platforms (i.e. centre, school, or community) and use of information technology, ICYSCs provide guidance and counselling, supportive programmes, developmental and socialisation programmes, and community engagement programmes for children and youth; and
- (e) Outreaching and networking support services: In the three old urban districts, namely Kowloon City, Sham Shui Po and Yau Tsim Mong, the SWD has set up seven Family Support Networking Teams (FSNTs) operated by NGOs. FSNTs provide outreaching and networking services for vulnerable families (including unemployed persons and youth, new arrivals, low income persons, elderly singletons, ethnic minorities, etc.) and refer needy cases to appropriate service units for relevant social welfare services.

5. The SWD will continue to assess the needs of the residents who will move into the community housing units and flexibly deploy community resources, with a view providing appropriate social welfare services so that the residents can adapt to the new community environment as soon as possible. The SWD will also collaborate with the operating organisations of community housing and stakeholders in the districts, so as to develop a caring community and support network for those in need (especially vulnerable families).

Advice sought

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

Social Welfare Department

May 2020