

For information
on 13 July 2020

Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services
Progress of the Pilot Scheme on
Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the progress of the Pilot Scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly (the Pilot Scheme).

Background

2. “Ageing in place as the core, institutional care as back up” is the Government’s policy on elderly services. Apart from the provision of a range of subsidised community care services (CCS), the Social Welfare Department (SWD) obtained \$380 million from the Lotteries Fund (LF) to implement the First Phase¹ of the Pilot Scheme, providing 1 200 community care service vouchers from September 2013 to August 2017 to support ageing in place for frail elderly persons under the “money-following-the-user” mode.

3. The LF has allocated extra funding of about \$1 billion to SWD for implementation of the Second Phase² of the Pilot Scheme from October 2016 to September 2020, which is more flexible in meeting the various needs of elderly persons. New measures include the expansion of scope of service targets to cover not only elderly persons who are moderately impaired and on the Central Waiting List (CWL) for Subsidised Long Term Care (LTC) Services, but also those who are severely impaired. Service vouchers at five different values are also offered for the elderly persons to choose from according to their individual needs. Furthermore,

¹ The First Phase of the Pilot Scheme was implemented in Eastern, Kwun Tong, Wong Tai Sin, Sham Shui Po, Kowloon City, Yau Tsim Mong, Sha Tin, Tai Po, Tsuen Wan and Tuen Mun.

² The Second Phase of the Pilot Scheme is extended to all the 18 districts in the territory.

mixed mode of centre-based and home-based care services, as well as residential respite service are provided. To further strengthen community care and support services, the Second Phase of the Pilot Scheme has made 3 000 vouchers available from October 2016 onwards, which has gradually been increased to the current 7 000. As announced in the 2019 Policy Address, an additional 1 000 vouchers will be provided to bring the total to 8 000 to serve more elderly persons in need.

The Pilot Scheme

4. The Pilot Scheme provides subsidy directly to the voucher holders in the form of service vouchers for them to choose the CCS that suit their needs. Based on the voucher holders' household income, the Pilot Scheme offers a co-payment arrangement of six levels on a sliding scale from 5% to 40% of the voucher value. Eligible elderly persons may decide on suitable voucher values, Recognised Service Providers (RSPs), required types of service³ required and service packages according to their individual needs. The SWD Centralised Team collaborates with responsible workers in various districts to provide dedicated support and assistance to the elderly persons holding the vouchers, and makes service information of individual RSPs available to the elderly persons and their carers through SWD Elderly Information Website (www.elderlyinfo.swd.gov.hk).

Service Provision

5. The current 179 RSPs participating in the Pilot Scheme are operated by 38 non-governmental organisations receiving subventions from SWD, eight non-profit-making organisations / social enterprises and 16 private organisations. SWD will continue to invite more eligible organisations to become RSPs under the Pilot Scheme to provide more services.

6. As at end-June 2020, SWD has invited eligible elderly persons whose application dates on the CWL for subsidised LTC services are on or before 31 March 2020 to join the Pilot Scheme. There are around 6 000 existing voucher holders, among whom over 4 200 are receiving services

³ The types of service include day care service, home care service, residential respite service and speech therapy service.

under the Pilot Scheme, with 41% of them receiving day care service, 34% of them receiving home care service and 25% of them receiving both day care and home care services.

Progress of Evaluation and Extension of the Pilot Scheme

7. SWD has commissioned the Sau Po Centre on Ageing from the University of Hong Kong (Sau Po Centre) to conduct an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Second Phase of the Pilot Scheme. The preliminary findings indicate that the Pilot Scheme is effective in enhancing frail elderly persons' quality of life and reducing carers' stress and burden. The enhancement measures for the Second Phase of the Pilot Scheme, including flexible service mode and service scope, expansion of the scope of service targets to cover not only elderly persons who are moderately impaired but also those who are assessed as severely impaired, and the establishment of the SWD Centralised Team to provide dedicated support and assistance for voucher applicants and holders etc., also satisfy the needs of service users.

8. Having regard to the preliminary findings of the study by Sau Po Centre and the operational experience of the Pilot Scheme, the Third Phase of the Pilot Scheme will be launched from October 2020 to September 2023 with more enhancement measures to further increase service supply and provide diversified choices for frail elderly persons.

Key Enhancement Measures

9. To encourage more different service operators to join the Third Phase of the Pilot Scheme, SWD has revised the eligibility criteria to make applications for becoming RSPs, which will enable medical institutions and medical/rehabilitation service operators with proven experience of directly providing CCS to participate in the Pilot Scheme.

10. In addition, under the Third Phase of the Pilot Scheme, only the floor and ceiling of the voucher value⁴ will be set to facilitate the RSPs to work out more flexible service packages that suit the needs of service users,

⁴ From \$4,130 to \$9,870 per month (2020-21 price level)

which will reduce their administrative work. Besides, SWD will strengthen the IT system to enhance the RSPs' service effectiveness to the service users and facilitate the related service arrangement.

Way Forward

11. Sau Po Centre is conducting a comprehensive analysis on the data and views collected in the evaluation of the Second Phase of the Pilot Scheme. SWD will examine the evaluation report and make reference to the experience of implementing the Third Phase of the Pilot Scheme in considering the way forward for the Pilot Scheme.

Advice sought

12. Members are invited to note the progress of the Pilot Scheme.

Labour and Welfare Bureau
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