

**Legislative Council  
Special Meeting of Panel on Welfare Services  
on 23 September 2020**

**Support for Carers and Provision of Residential Care Services for  
Persons with Disabilities**

**Responses to List of Follow-up Actions and Motions Passed**

At the special meeting of the Panel on Welfare Services on 23 September 2020 at which “support for carers and provision of residential care services for persons with disabilities” was discussed, the Administration was requested to provide responses to the list of follow-up actions and the five motions passed.

2. The Administration’s responses to the issues concerned are set out below.

**Support for Special School Leavers and Their Parents**

3. The Education Bureau (EDB) attaches great importance to the articulation pathways of special school leavers and has been providing special schools with resources to support their students in life planning education and career guidance activities such as career exploration. Every school year, EDB organises a seminar on “Life Planning - Multiple Pathways for Special School Leavers (Vocational Training and Adult Services)”. Representatives from the Social Welfare Department (SWD), Vocational Training Council (VTC) and Labour Department are invited to introduce the latest developments of their respective services to the teachers and social workers of special schools. EDB will explore with SWD organising seminars or workshops on other relevant themes to further enhance the professional capability of special school staff, including school social workers, to support school leavers and their families.

4. Besides, EDB, SWD, VTC and the Hong Kong Special Schools Council will continue to meet annually to discuss matters relating to post-school placement for special school leavers. Latest developments of various post-school services and relevant information would be shared so as to strengthen the support and assistance to special schools in applying for appropriate post-school services for students. For planning the various types of services suitable for special school leavers, EDB will also

continue to provide the projected number of special school leavers every school year for VTC and SWD's reference.

5. At the school level, special schools pay continuous attention to the conditions of their students and families, and will refer those in need to District Support Centres for Persons with Disabilities (DSCs) or Integrated Family Service Centres (IFSCs) subvented by SWD for providing appropriate support for students and families concerned. Moreover, special schools in general will follow up on school leavers' adaptation to daily life for two years after they have left school and when they are waiting for post-school services. Should the schools identify any special circumstances of the school leavers and their families that reflect their needs for support, the schools will refer them to DSCs or IFSCs as appropriate. In October 2020, EDB has issued a letter to all special schools to urge them to review the conditions of the students, school leavers of the last three school years and their families, and refer those in need to DSCs or IFSCs for support if necessary. EDB has also reminded the special schools to communicate with the parents of students and map out as early as possible how to jointly support the students, including boarders, should special modes of teaching be adopted due to the epidemic during this school year.

### **Residential Care Services for Persons with Disabilities**

6. With keen service demand for residential care services (RCS) for persons with disabilities, SWD will continue to actively identify suitable RCS premises through multi-pronged means, including reserving suitable sites in new/re-development projects, using vacant government premises/school premises/public housing units where practicable, purchasing RCS places through the Bought Place Scheme (BPS) for Private Residential Care Homes for Persons with Disabilities (RCHDs), and encouraging non-governmental organisations' (NGOs) better utilisation of their sites concerned for providing RCS places under the Special Scheme on Privately Owned Sites for Welfare Use. From 2020-21 to 2024-25, SWD has plans to provide about 2 500 additional RSC places.

7. Some Members have suggested whether the provision of RCS in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area would be explored. This would need to take into account the views of persons with disabilities and stakeholders in the first place as well as other relevant considerations.

8. For sustainable service planning, the Administration will take forward the recommendation of the Persons with Disabilities and Rehabilitation Programme Plan that the planning ratio of providing 36 RCS places for every 10 000 persons aged 15 or above be incorporated into the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines.

### **Community Support for Persons with Disabilities and Their Carers**

9. SWD subvents NGOs for providing community care and support services for persons with disabilities and their carers, with a view to facilitating persons with disabilities to live in and integrate into the community, as well as supporting carers.

#### Centre-based Services

10. DSCs, Parents/Relatives Resource Centres (PRCs), Support Centres for Persons with Autism (SPAs) and Social and Recreational Centres for the Disabled (S&RCs) respectively provide a wide range of centre-based support services for persons with disabilities, covering living skills training, care, social, psychological, recreational, personal development programmes etc. For their families/carers, support services include care skills training, mutual support and experience sharing activities, educational courses/seminars/workshops, provision of information on community resources and service referral, emotional support and counselling services, etc., for enhancing caring capabilities and lessening stress.

11. SWD has been making progressive efforts to strengthen the services:

- (a) in 2019-20, DSCs' casework and rehabilitation training services have been strengthened. From 2020-21 to 2021-22, the number of DSCs will be increased from 16 to 21;
- (b) in 2018-19 to 2019-20, the number of PRCs has been increased from six to 19;
- (c) in 2019-20, the number of SPAs has been increased from three to five, with the manpower of existing centres enhanced;

- (d) in 2020-21, additional resources will be provided for S&RCs to strengthen their community support function, particularly the support for family members/carers; and
- (e) two new community rehabilitation day service centres will be set up for implementing a pilot project which will integrate the services of day care centres and home care services, provide new services catering to the actual impairment level and needs of persons with disabilities having intensive care needs and living at home, and render support to carers.

### Home Care Services

12. Home Care Service for Persons with Severe Disabilities (HCS), Integrated Support Service for Persons with Severe Physical Disabilities (ISS) provide integrated home-based services for persons with disabilities in need, including personal care, nursing care and rehabilitation training. Carer support is covered as well, including counselling services, care skills training, home respite and service referral.

13. From 2019-20, with redeployed and new resources, HCS and ISS will provide services for an additional 1 800 persons with disabilities living in the community. Speech therapy services will be added and transport support increase for each HCS and ISS service team.

### Case Management

14. Case management is implemented by DSCs, HCS and ISS, under which case managers coordinate necessary services for service users and make timely and suitable service referral. Specifically, case managers will, in collaboration with social workers and allied health professionals in the service units, draw up individual care plans with persons with disabilities concerned and/or their families taking account of their service needs. Case managers will also coordinate with relevant social and medical service units to facilitate service referral. Monitoring the implementation of the care plans, case managers will evaluate their effectiveness and effect adjustments in light of service users' evolving needs. As at end June 2020, about 6 200 service users of DSCs, HCS and ISS have received case management services.

## Respite and Emergency Services

15. Day respite and short-term residential respite services are provided for persons with disabilities to help temporarily relieve their family members/carers from the caring duties. While the services are generally provided for a period not exceeding 14 consecutive days, repeated use of services is permissible and service units can extend the period where circumstances so warrant, subject to availability of service vacancies. From 2020-21, SWD will purchase over 40 places as designated residential respite service from RCHDs participating in BPS.

16. SWD also operates a 24-hour hotline to provide emergency support and assistance for persons with disabilities and their carers.

## Mutual Help

17. In addition to the mutual support and experience sharing activities provided by the centre-based community support services mentioned in paragraph 10 above, SWD implements the Financial Support Scheme for Self-help Organisations for Persons with Disabilities/Chronic Illnesses to provide self-help organisations of persons with disabilities and their families/carers with time-defined and project-based funding support. Since 2018-19, the annual funding for the Scheme has been increased from some \$15 million to some \$21 million.

## Special Needs Trust

18. The Special Needs Trust has been set up from March 2019 to provide trust services for parents with sufficient assets to meet the long-term daily needs of their children with special needs after they pass away. As the services have only been in operation for a relatively short period, SWD will examine the operating experience and detailed arrangements at an appropriate time upon fuller service operation.

## Services During COVID-19 Epidemic

19. During the COVID-19 epidemic, SWD has been making adjustments to the operation arrangements of subsidised welfare services (including those for persons with disabilities) as appropriate to ensure that essential and urgent services are maintained. SWD has also encouraged service operators to maintain liaison with and provide support for service users and their families/carers by telephone, video communication and

other practical means. As the epidemic situation has become more stabilised, all subsidised welfare services have been gradually resumed.

### **Policy Study on Carer Support**

20. The Labour and Welfare Bureau has commenced a policy study on strengthening carer support to explore carers' needs in a more comprehensive manner for developing an overall carer policy. The policy study will also examine the way forward and operational details of the pilot schemes for persons with disabilities or their carers as funded by the Community Care Fund, including the Pilot Scheme on Living Allowance for Low-income Carers of Persons with Disabilities, Pilot Scheme on Providing Subsidy for Higher Disability Allowance Recipients in Paid Employment to Hire Carers, and Special Care Subsidy for the Severely Disabled.

**Labour and Welfare Bureau  
Education Bureau  
Social Welfare Department  
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