

**For information on
11 January 2021**

**Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services
Measures to enhance community and residential care services
for the elderly**

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the community and residential care services for the elderly provided by the Government, and the relevant enhancement measures implemented by the current-term Government.

Community and residential care services for the elderly

2. The policy objective of the Government on elderly services is to accord priority to the provision of home care and community care, which are supplemented by residential care. The aim is to assist elderly persons to age in place in their familiar communities for as long as possible. The Government has allocated an increasing amount of resources in this sector. The estimated recurrent expenditure on elderly services in 2020-21 is around \$12.3 billion, representing an approximately 17% increase compared to the 2019-20 revised estimate of around \$10.5 billion, and an approximately 60% increase compared to the 2017-18 actual expenditure of around \$7.7 billion at the beginning of the current-term Government.

Overview on community care services

3. Home care services for the elderly, including Integrated Home Care Services (Frail Cases) (IHCS(FC)) and Enhanced Home and Community Care Services (EHCCS), provide frail elderly persons with basic and special nursing care, rehabilitation exercises, escort services, personal care, meals, carer support services, etc. On the other hand, frail elderly persons may opt for day care services to receive care, rehabilitation exercises and social activities in day care centres for the elderly.

4. In addition, the Pilot Scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly (CCSV Pilot Scheme) supports ageing in place for frail elderly persons using a “money-following-the-user” principle. Elderly persons may choose a suitable recognised service provider (RSP) to receive centre-based, home-based or a mix of both services according to their needs.

5. Respite service provides elderly persons ageing in the community with short-term day care or residential care. It provides relief for carers so that they may receive short-term rests or attend to other matters when required. It aims at encouraging and helping elderly persons to continue living in the community for as long as possible.

6. To support elderly persons with dementia, the Government has adopted a multi-disciplinary and cross-sectoral approach to provide services. Dementia Community Support Scheme has been implemented in 41 District Elderly Community Centres. It is estimated that over 2 000 elderly persons will be served annually. The Government has also allocated additional resources to service units providing community care and support services as well as residential care services to enhance dementia care and relevant staff training.

Enhancement measures on community care services

7. To provide better support to frail elderly persons to age in place, the Government has strengthened home care services by increasing 2 000 service quota under EHCCS in 2019 and 3 000 service quota under the IHCS(FC) in October 2020 and 2021. Overall, the service quota of home care services for the elderly has been gradually increased from 8 365 in July 2017 to 13 365 in 2021. On centre-based day care services, the Government has implemented in May 2020 the Bought Place Scheme on Day Care Units for the Elderly to set up seven new day care units. The number of service units has been increased to 88 over the territory, providing a total of over 3 500 service quota.

8. The Government launched the Third Phase of the CCSV Pilot Scheme from October 2020 with more enhancement measures. The number of CCSV vouchers has been increased from 3 000 in July 2017 to 8 000 in October 2020. As at end-November 2020, there were around a total of 227 RSPs and 6 700 voucher holders.

9. To enhance respite service for the elderly, the Government introduced a measure in 2018 to purchase additional residential places from private residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) participating in the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme (EBPS), so as to provide more designated residential respite service quota. There are now 197 RCHEs providing a total of 341 subsidised residential respite places. Meanwhile, there are 44 day care centres for the elderly providing a total of 192 subsidised day respite service quota. Furthermore, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) launched a web-based vacancy enquiry system for residential respite service in December 2019 to facilitate the public to find suitable vacant places and make applications to the respective service units.

Overview of residential care services

10. There are currently 336 RCHEs in Hong Kong providing subsidised residential care places for elderly persons who are assessed to have long term residential care service need under the Standardised Care Need Assessment Mechanism for Elderly Services (SCNAMES). These include 120 subvented RCHEs, 35 contract homes, 170 private RCHEs participating in EBPS, 6 subvented nursing homes, and 5 self-financing nursing homes participating in Nursing Home Place Purchase Scheme. The total number of subsidised bed places is around 29 000.

11. In addition, with the Pilot Scheme on Residential Care Service Voucher for the Elderly (RCSV Pilot Scheme), the Government provides an additional choice for elderly persons in need of residential care services and an incentive for RCHEs to enhance their services. As at end-November 2020, there were in total 137 recognised service providers and 1 813 current RCSV users.

12. The Residential Care Services Scheme in Guangdong purchases services from two RCHEs operated by Hong Kong non-governmental organisations in Shenzhen and Zhaoqing, with a view to providing an additional option for elderly persons who are on the Central Waiting List for subsidised care and attention places and choose to live in the Mainland. As at end-November 2020, 158 persons participating in the Scheme were residing in the two concerned RCHEs.

Enhancement measures on residential care services

13. The Government would purchase additional EA1 places under EBPS in five consecutive years starting 2019-20, with a total target of 5 000 additional places. The total 1 750 places in the first batch of purchase have commenced service progressively in 2019-20 and 2020-21. The 1 200 places in the second batch of purchase which are expected to commence service progressively starting 2021-22.

14. To support social and rehabilitation needs of the residents of private RCHEs, SWD has implemented a four-year Pilot Scheme on Multi-disciplinary Outreaching Support Teams for the Elderly (MOSTE) since February 2019. District-based professional teams comprising social workers, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and speech therapists have been set up to provide outreach services for residents in private RCHEs. The outreach speech therapy service under MOSTE is also provided for elderly residents with swallowing difficulties or speech impairment living in contract homes (including the Day Care Units attached to the contract homes) and self-financing RCHEs/nursing homes.

15. To further enhance the monitoring of RCHs, in June 2017, SWD set up the cross-sectoral Working Group on the Review of Ordinances and Codes of Practice for Residential Care Homes (Working Group) comprising Legislative Council members, members from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the private sector operating RCHEs and RCHDs, the Elderly Commission and the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee, academics, service users/carers, independent members and representatives from the Hong Kong Council of Social Service and the Labour and Welfare Bureau. The Working Group completed the relevant review in May 2019 and put forward 19 recommendations covering statutory minimum staffing requirements, statutory minimum area of floor space per resident, requirements on operators, registration systems for home managers and health workers, relevant penalties, etc. For some of the recommendations involving the Code of Practice for Residential Care Homes (Elderly Persons) and the Code of Practice for Residential Care Homes (Persons with Disabilities), SWD amended the two Codes of Practice accordingly and they have taken effect since January 2020. For those involving the Residential Care Homes (Elderly Persons) Ordinance (Cap. 459) and the Residential Care Homes (Persons with Disabilities) Ordinance (Cap. 613), they have to be implemented by way of

legislative amendments. The Government is conducting preparatory work for the legislative amendments.

Increasing elderly service facilities

16. As at end-November 2020, SWD is implementing 63 development projects to provide new contract homes and day care services, with about 8 400 residential care places for the elderly (including subsidised and non-subsidised places) and about 2 500 day care places for the elderly expected to commence service starting from 2020-21.

17. To help address the shortage of welfare premises, the Government allocated \$20 billion to purchase premises in private market for the provision of about 160 welfare facilities including the setting up of 15 day care centres across the territory. The Government also implemented the Special Scheme on Privately Owned Sites for Welfare Uses (Special Site Scheme) to encourage NGOs to better utilise their own sites through expansion, redevelopment or new development to provide or increase those welfare facilities considered by the Government as being in acute demand, in particular additional places of elderly services. If all the projects under Phase One of the Special Site Scheme could be smoothly implemented, about 7 500 residential care places for the elderly (including subsidised and non-subsidised places) and about 1 500 day care places for the elderly would be provided.

18. Moreover, in order to provide a stable supply of appropriate social welfare facilities to satisfy the mid to long-term needs of the society, the Government will invite the Hong Kong Housing Authority and Hong Kong Housing Society to explore providing welfare premises, in particular RCHEs which are much needed by the community, equivalent to 5% of the total GFA in suitable future public housing developments on the premise that it will not impact on public housing supply and other supporting facilities.

Gerontechnology

19. The Government launched the \$1 billion Innovation and Technology Fund for Application in Elderly and Rehabilitation Care in December 2018 to subsidise eligible elderly and rehabilitation service units to procure/rent and try out

technology products, thereby improving the quality of life of service users as well as reducing the burden and pressure on care staff and carers. Thus far, three batches of grants totalling over \$200 million have been approved, subsidising about 970 eligible elderly and rehabilitation service units to procure or rent over 4 200 technology products. Elderly care service units accounted for about 66% of the total approved grants. For the fourth batch of applications closed on 2 November 2020, a total of around 3000 applications from about 640 service units have been received. Vetting of the applications is currently underway. In addition, soft meals can be made using gerontechnology, which enable elderly persons with swallowing problems to enjoy the pleasure of eating food again. From October 2020, the Government has provided additional resources for subsidised elderly service units for the provision of soft meals for elderly persons with swallowing problems. The total number of beneficiaries is estimated to be about 12 000 per year.

Advice sought

20. Members are invited to note the measures implemented by the current-term Government to enhance community and residential care services for the elderly.

**Labour and Welfare Bureau
Social Welfare Department
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