

**For discussion
on 29 March 2010**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
PANEL ON WELFARE SERVICES**

**Subcommittee on Residential and Community Care Services
for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly**

**Long-term Strategy for Increasing the Provision of Subsidised Residential
Care Places for Persons with Disabilities**

Purpose

This paper informs Members on the Government's long-term strategy for increasing the provision of subsidised residential care places for persons with disabilities (PWDs).

Overview

2. The overall objective of our rehabilitation policy is to support the full integration of PWDs into society. To this end, the Government provides a range of rehabilitation services seeking to assist PWDs in developing their physical, mental and social capabilities to the fullest possible extent and to promote their integration into the community. For those PWDs who cannot live independently or cannot be adequately cared for by their families, the Government provides various types of subsidised residential care services to meet their diversified residential needs at different stages of their lives. These services include -

- (a) Hostel for Severely Mentally Handicapped Persons;
- (b) Hostel for Moderately Mentally Handicapped Persons;
- (c) Supported Hostel;
- (d) Care and Attention Home for Severely Disabled Persons;
- (e) Hostel for Severely Physically Handicapped Persons;
- (f) Long Stay Care Home;
- (g) Halfway House;
- (h) Care and Attention Home for the Aged Blind;

- (i) Small Group Home for Mildly Mentally Handicapped Children/Integrated Small Group Home;
- (j) Residential Special Child Care Centre; and
- (k) Integrated Vocational Training Centre (Residential Service).

Standardised Assessment Mechanism for Residential Services for PWDs

3. To maximise the utilisation of various residential services for PWDs, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) has implemented the Standardised Assessment Mechanism for Residential Services for PWDs (the Mechanism) since January 2005 after a series of pilot studies and consultations with the Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Welfare Services, the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee and relevant stakeholders including parents associations, rehabilitation professions of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the Hospital Authority and special schools. Under the Mechanism, a comprehensive Standardised Assessment Tool (the Tool) is adopted to ascertain the residential service need of the PWDs and match them with the appropriate level and category of service. In October 2005, a Review Working Group comprising parent representatives and rehabilitation professionals was set up to review the practicality of the Tool and the operation of the Mechanism. Noting that the Tool was effective in assessing the care needs of PWDs and the general acceptance of the Mechanism by the stakeholders, the Review Working Group recommended that the Mechanism and application of the Tool be maintained.

4. As at February 2010, a total of 6 114 assessments have been conducted under the Mechanism since its implementation, of which 5 559 cases (91%) were assessed to be in need of various types of residential services while 555 cases (9%) suitable for day training or community support services. There are two appeals lodged against the assessment results received so far, including one which was heard by the Appeal Board¹ set up under the Mechanism while the other was settled through mediation before putting up for the Appeal Board's consideration. Training workshops and refresher training on the Tool have been organised regularly to train up qualified assessors and strengthen their knowledge on community support services. SWD will continue to monitor the operation of the Mechanism and conduct review where necessary.

¹ To safeguard the interests of the applicants, all applicants are informed, upon completion of the assessment, of their right to appeal in case they disagree with the assessment results. The Appeal Board for the Mechanism, with membership comprising rehabilitation professionals from the health sector, service providers from the welfare sector and parent representatives, has been set up since implementation of the Mechanism to handle appeals against the assessment results.

Strategies for Increasing the Provision of Subsidised Residential Care Places for PWDs

5. In accordance with the 2007 Rehabilitation Programme Plan, the Government has been adopting the following three-pronged approach to encourage participation from different sectors in providing residential care services for PWDs -

- (a) continuing to steadily increase the number of subsidised residential care home places;
- (b) regulating the residential care homes for PWDs through a statutory licensing scheme, so as to ensure their service quality on one hand and help the market develop residential care homes of different types and operational modes on the other; and
- (c) supporting NGOs to develop self-financing homes.

6. In line with the policy directions, the Government has been continuously increasing the provision of subsidised residential places in recent years. At present, there are about 11 100 subsidised residential care places for PWDs, representing an increase of about 74% over the number of places in 1997. Over the past three years, we have provided 517 additional subsidised places in residential care homes for persons with disabilities (RCHDs). The Government expenditure on rehabilitation and medical social services under SWD has also risen from \$1,395 million in 1997-98 to \$3,378 million in 2009-10, representing an increase of 142%. As of 2009-10, 37.4% (or \$ 1,263 million) of the expenditure is for the provision of residential care services for PWDs.

7. We are mindful of the increasing demand for various rehabilitation services for PWDs, in particular for some residential care services, such as the Hostel for Severely Mentally Handicapped Persons and the Hostel for Moderately Mentally Handicapped Persons, which have longer waiting lists. The current provision, the number of PWDs on the waiting list and the average waiting time for the respective types of subvented residential care homes are set out at **Annex**. To meet service demand, the Government has stepped up efforts to provide additional subsidised residential care places as undertaken in the 2009-10 Policy Address and announced in the 2010-11 Budget. In this regard, the Government has earmarked sites in public housing estate developments, projects under the Urban Renewal Authority as well as vacant Government

premises etc for provision of residential care services. We estimate that an additional 939 residential care places, of which 460 (or about 50%) are for hostels for persons with severe disabilities which have a longer waiting time, will come on stream in the coming two years. This amounts to 14% of the 6 700 plus PWDs on the waitlist. We are fully committed to overcoming difficulties encountered in identifying suitable premises for setting up new rehabilitation facilities including residential care homes for PWDs and will continue to solicit greater local support for setting up of these facilities.

8. While the Government will maintain its commitment to increasing the number of subsidised residential care home places, we will continue to encourage NGOs to develop self-financing homes through providing assistance in identifying suitable premises, support for concessionary rental and funding for fitting-out cost in setting up self-financing homes. To this end, a total of 325 residential places for persons with various degrees and types of disabilities operated on self-financing basis are being provided.

New initiatives to increase the provision of subsidised residential care places - pilot Bought Place Scheme (BPS)

9. To regulate the operation of RCHDs and ensure their service quality, the Government will introduce the Residential Care Homes (Persons with Disabilities) Bill into LegCo in the current legislative session to implement a statutory licensing scheme on the RCHDs.

10. In tandem with the legislative proposal, the Government will formulate suitable complementary measures including a pilot Bought Place Scheme for private RCHDs (BPS) to encourage private RCHDs to upgrade their service standards; to increase the supply of subsidised residential care places, thereby shortening the waiting time for subsidised residential service; and to help the market develop more service options for PWDs. SWD will adopt a two-phased approach in purchasing BPS places over the 4-year pilot period, with an initial purchase of around 100 places in the first year, building up to a total of 250 or 300 from the second year onwards. Having regard to the response of service users, the number of new homes coming on stream, the quality of places to be provided by private RCHDs and their response etc, SWD will consider suitable adjustment to the number of places to be purchased.

11. To encourage the operators to upgrade the service standards of the private RCHDs, the BPS homes will have to comply with the enhanced

standards as stipulated under BPS, including the staffing requirement and the requirement on net floor area per resident, as well as a set of service quality standards relating to facilities, meal provision, health care, fee charging, social activities, etc. Irrespective of the number of BPS places to be bought in a private RCHD, the entire home will have to comply with the upgraded standards under the pilot scheme. To ensure the quality of service provided by the BPS homes, a monitoring group comprising PWDs and stakeholders will be set up for this purpose.

Service Quality and Monitoring RCHDs

12. The Government is also mindful of the service quality provided by the RCHDs. In preparation for the licensing scheme, SWD has since 2006 implemented a Voluntary Registration Scheme (VRS) for private RCHDs as an interim measure to encourage private RCHD operators to enhance their service quality. Under the VRS, information on private RCHDs meeting the basic requirements in general management, health care, fire safety and building safety will be uploaded to SWD's homepage for public viewing. Apart from conducting regular quarterly visits to RCHDs registered under the VRS, SWD also conducts quarterly visits to private RCHDs not on the VRS list and all self-financed RCHDs run by NGOs, with a view to giving them guidance and advice as appropriate.

13. For the subvented RCHDs, SWD plays an equally important role in monitoring the service quality provided through the respective Funding and Service Agreements as agreed with the operating NGOs. Under the Service Performance Monitoring System, SWD monitors these RCHDs through various service performance monitoring tools, e.g. output/outcome standards, essential service requirements, Service Quality Standards, review visits, surprise visits to ensure that their service quality, operation and corporate governance meet the required levels. For new services and those units with identified problem areas in service performance, SWD will also conduct on-site assessments and require the concerned NGOs to make improvement, if necessary.

Additional Provision of Subsidised Residential Care Places for PWDs Under Planning

14. According to present information, we estimate that there will be an additional provision of around 1 400 subsidised residential care places for PWDs in the next five years, subject to the progress of project planning and

preparation works. We will continue to step up our efforts in identifying new resources and suitable sites for setting up new RCHDs in order to maintain a steady increase in the provision of subsidised residential places for PWDs.

Advice Sought

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

Labour and Welfare Bureau
Social Welfare Department
March 2010

**Provision, number of PWDs on the waiting list and
average waiting time
of the respective types of subvented residential care homes**

Type of Service	Existing Provision of Places in Respective Residential Care Services in 2009-10	Number of PWDs on the Waiting List (as at December 2009)	Average Waiting Time in 2008-09 (in months)
Hostel for Severely Mentally Handicapped Persons	3 058	1 921	51.6
Hostel for Moderately Mentally Handicapped Persons	2 178	1 321	39.6
Supported Hostel	400	926	27.2
Care and Attention Home for Severely Disabled Persons	857	328	36
Hostel for Severely Physically Handicapped Persons	528	375	112.4
Long Stay Care Home	1 407	919	22.9
Halfway House	1 509	735	5.6
Care and Attention Home for the Aged Blind	825	83	2.6
Small Group Home for Mildly Mentally Handicapped Children / Integrated Small Group Home	56	63	14.9
Residential Special Child Care Centre	110	52	13.8
Integrated Vocational Training Centre (Residential Service)	170	N.A. ^{Note}	N.A. ^{Note}

Note : Integrated Vocational Training Centre (Residential Service) admits service users directly and hence the SWD does not capture statistics in this respect.