

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)1976/10-11
(These minutes have been
seen by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/WS

Panel on Welfare Services

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 11 April 2011, at 10:45 am
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building

Members present : Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che (Chairman)
Hon WONG Sing-chi (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon LI Fung-ying, SBS, JP
Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, SBS, JP
Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC
Hon Paul CHAN Mo-po, MH, JP
Dr Hon LEUNG Ka-lau
Hon WONG Kwok-kin, BBS
Hon IP Wai-ming, MH
Dr Hon PAN Pey-chyou
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip

Member absent : Dr Hon Samson TAM Wai-ho, JP

Public Officers attending : Item V

The Administration

Ms Florence HUI, JP
Under Secretary for Home Affairs

Miss Winnie TSE
Principal Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs
(Civic Affairs) 3

The Social Enterprise Advisory Committee

Dr Jane LEE
Deputy Director and Head of College of Business and
Finance, HKUSPACE

Mr SIU Chor-kee, MH
Managing Director, Ocean Empire Food Shop
(Holdings) Ltd

Mr Howard LING
HKCSS – HSBC Social Enterprise Business Centre –
Senior Consultant

Professor Stephen CHEUNG, BBS, JP
Dean, School of Business and Professor (Chair) of
Finance, Hong Kong Baptist University

Item VI

Ms Irene YOUNG Bick-kwan
Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 2

Ms Betty HO Siu-ping
Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare
(Welfare) 3

Dr Daisy DAI Siu-kwan
Chief Manager (Primary & Community Services),
Hospital Authority

Clerk in attendance : Miss Betty MA
Chief Council Secretary (2) 4

Staff in attendance : Ms Yvonne YU
Senior Council Secretary (2) 4

Miss Karen LAI
Council Secretary (2) 4

Miss Maggie CHIU
Legislative Assistant (2) 4

Action

I. Confirmation of minutes

[LC Paper No. CB(2)1410/10-11]

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 2011 were confirmed.

II. Information paper(s) issued since the last meeting

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1284/10-11(01), CB(2)1336/10-11(01), CB(2)1349/10-11(01) and CB(2)1356/10-11(01)]

2. Members noted that the following papers had been issued since the last meeting -

- (a) the referral from Duty Roster Members regarding the seven-year residence requirement under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ("CSSA") Scheme and the provision of child care services;
- (b) the joint submission from the St. James Settlement, Christian Concern For The Homeless Association, The Salvation Army Integrated Service for Street Sleepers and Society for Community Organization on the support services for street sleepers;
- (c) the letter dated 24 March 2011 from Mr WONG Sing-chi to the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, and copied to the Panel, on the provision of subvented residential care services; and
- (d) the letter dated 25 March 2011 from Ms Emily LAU regarding the enhancement of the design requirements governing the provision of barrier-free access and facilities for persons with

Action

disabilities.

III. Items for discussion at the next meeting

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1429/10-11(01) to (02)]

3. Members agreed to discuss the following items proposed by the Administration at the next meeting on 9 May 2011 at 10:45 am –

- (a) Enhanced support for elders, persons with disabilities and persons in ill health under the CSSA Scheme, and additional provision for social security recipients; and
- (b) Proposed injection into the Trust Fund for Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome.

4. Referring to the joint submission from the St. James' Settlement, Christian Concern for the Homeless Association, The Salvation Army Integrated Service for Street Sleepers and Society for Community Organization on the support services for street sleepers (LC Paper No. CB(2)1336/10-11(01)), the Chairman suggested that the Panel should also discuss the subject matter at the next regular meeting on 9 May 2011. Members agreed. Members further agreed that deputations would be invited to give views on the subject.

IV. Way forward to follow up the subject of poverty alleviation

[LC Paper Nos. ESC31/10-11 and CB(2)1429/10-11(03)]

5. The Chairman advised that at the meeting of the House Committee ("HC") on 18 March 2011, members agreed that the proposal for the appointment of a subcommittee to study issues relating to poverty alleviation be referred to the Panel for consideration.

6. The Chairman said that even if a subcommittee was to be appointed, it could not commence work immediately as three subcommittees on policy issues had already been on the waiting list. In the meantime, he considered that the subject could be followed up by the Panel and that the Administration should be requested to make periodic progress report to the Panel on the work of poverty alleviation. The Chairman then sought members' views on the matter.

Action

7. Mr TAM Yiu-chung expressed support for following up the subject by the Panel. He agreed that it would be appropriate for requesting the Administration to make periodic progress report to the Panel.

8. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan shared the view that the subject should first be followed up by the Panel. In his view, the Administration should be requested to report on the specific implementation timetable and progress in respect of various areas of work relating to poverty alleviation.

9. Mr Frederick FUNG said that while he acknowledged that even if a subcommittee was formed, it could not commence work immediately, he considered it more appropriate for the proposed subcommittee to be set up under HC given that poverty alleviation straddled across various policy areas. He inclined to pursue the proposal of seeking the agreement of HC to appoint the subcommittee if it was envisaged that the proposed subcommittee could be activated in the current legislative term. In the meantime, he raised no objection to the Panel to continue to follow up issues relating to poverty alleviation.

10. Pointing out that the Panel had already appointed two subcommittees which were currently placed on the waiting list, Ms LI Fung-ying expressed concern about the commitment of individual members if another subcommittee on poverty alleviation were to be formed. Ms LI said that the former subcommittees on poverty alleviation had examined thoroughly policies and measures relating to poverty alleviation, and relevant reports with recommendations had been drawn up upon completion of work. In her view, members should focus their work on following up with the Administration on the outstanding recommendations on poverty alleviation. She did not see the need for the appointment of a subcommittee on poverty alleviation again, and she considered it appropriate for the Panel to follow up the subject.

11. Mr Frederick FUNG reiterated the view that the proposal for the appointment of a subcommittee under HC and requesting the Administration to make progress report to the Panel on poverty alleviation was not mutually exclusive.

12. After discussion, the Chairman said that the Administration should first be requested to advise the Panel on the work progress and implementation timetable of various areas of work on poverty alleviation.

Action

It would then consider whether HC should be invited to consider the proposal to appoint a subcommittee.

V. Development of social enterprises

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1429/10-11(04) to (05)]

13. At the invitation of the Chairman, Under Secretary for Home Affairs ("USHA") briefed members on the Government's on-going efforts in and new measures for promoting the development of social enterprises ("SEs"), as detailed in the Administration's paper.

14. Referring to the Chinese rendition of "conscience consumption" (良心消費) in paragraph 14 of the Administration's paper, Mr TAM Yiu-chung opined that the expression would give rise to a negative connotation of being "unscrupulous" if the customers did not use SE products and services. To encourage the consumption of SE products and services among the general public, consideration should be given to revising the expression to "愛心消費".

15. USHA explained that the term "良心消費" was the translation of "conscience consumption". Having regard to members' concern, the Administration would bring up the issue for the consideration of the Social Enterprise Advisory Committee ("SEAC").

16. Pointing out that the Government had provided financial support to SEs for promoting their sustainability, Mr TAM considered that it would be equally important for the Administration to help SEs raise their service standards and quality, with a view to developing prestigious brands that were widely accepted by the community. To his knowledge, some overseas SE products had demonstrated their successful experience in this respect. He appealed to the Administration to make reference to overseas successful experience in promoting local SEs to develop products under their own brand names with local characteristics, with a view to expanding the business, say, by way of franchise.

17. USHA said that further scaling up SE business was the Administration's major area of work in respect of SE development. For instance, a series of improvement measures had been implemented under the Enhancing Self-Reliance Through District Partnership Programme ("the ESR Programme") to promote the sustainable growth of SEs. Specifically,

Action

successful SEs would be encouraged to reinvest their profits in the enterprises. USHA further said that the Administration and SEAC would endeavour to enhance the collaboration between the business sector and SEs as the former could help provide practical experience and knowledge to SEs on business operation.

18. Prof Stephen CHEUNG of SEAC shared the view of Mr TAM Yiu-chung that SEs should aim to run independently under individual brand names, although it was not an easy task especially during the development stage. Nevertheless, he cited that a dessert shop in Tai Kok Tsui run by an SE was very well received in the community and had established its own brand name. Prof CHEUNG advised that collaboration had been developed among the business and academic sectors as well as SEs to enhance social entrepreneurship. To his knowledge, some franchisees had expressed interests in cooperating with SEs to run chain stores so as to transfer expertise to the SE operators. In addition, as part of their course work, students of the Master of Business Administration programme run by his university would provide advice to SEs on their marketing niches and formulation of business strategies.

19. Mr SIU Chor-kee of SEAC shared his experience in running SE projects through tripartite partnership among the Government, the business sector and SEs. Mr SIU said that being an owner of a chain of Chinese congee shops, he had, in collaboration with a non-governmental organisation ("NGO"), launched an SE project under the ESR Programme for the production of rice dumplings by ex-offenders for sale in his food stores since three years ago. Job opportunities and job-related training on catering services were also provided to the newly-discharged rehabilitated offenders. Upon the completion of the training, most participants had joined the catering sector. Mr SIU added that recognition to this type of SE project could be given in the forthcoming "Be a Friend to SE" Campaign.

20. Citing the operational experience of a vegetarian restaurant as an example, Mr Howard LING of SEAC said that the operation of SEs could be sustainable and expandable. He elaborated that the HKCSS – HSBC Social Enterprise Business Centre assisted a group of hearing impaired persons to run a vegetarian restaurant under the ESR Programme. The restaurant also provided a platform for other SEs to sell their products. It had already recorded a net profit of about \$50,000 to \$60,000 per month starting from the sixth month of operation. The success of the business

Action

was largely attributed to the effective use of the strengths of the deaf employees, notably their culinary sense and pleasant personality, and the skills training and experience provided by the veteran staff members to other employees. Mr LING further said that the operator planned to set up a restaurant chain after accumulating adequate capitals, and the serving employees would be invited to run the new business.

21. Noting that the Government had earmarked \$150 million for the continued implementation of the ESR Programme in the next five years, Ms LI Fung-ying was of the view that it would be useful if the Administration would provide the prospective applicants with the operational experience of SEs under the ESR Programme, particularly those making a profit and a loss. Referring to the pilot scheme on awarding Government service contracts to eligible SEs, Ms LI said that there was still room for enhancement of the scheme. Notably, some of the Government service contracts were beyond the capability of SEs and thereby they could not enter the market even though priority bidding was given to them. Ms LI sought clarification on whether more weighting had been given to SEs in bidding for the 52 Government service contracts that were made available for priority bidding by SEs, and the number and types of contracts had been awarded to SEs so far.

Admin

22. USHA advised that whilst the Administration had published booklets to promote success stories of SEs in Hong Kong, it would provide the requisite information after the meeting. USHA added that the operational experience of the successful SEs showed that the major challenge faced by SEs was to operate like commercial enterprises. Hence, the active participation and support of the business sector, for example, placing procurement orders and providing practical advice and skills on operation, was crucial to the success of SEs. The Administration would continue to promote cross-sector collaboration to enhance SE development. As regards the Government service contracts, USHA said that the number of Government service contracts awarded to SEs had been increasing in the past few years, and most of them were cleansing service contracts. Should SEs meet the service standards and requirements, the Administration would give priority to use SE projects and services as far as practicable.

23. Mr Frederick FUNG declared that he was the Chairman of an NGO which had run some SE projects. Mr FUNG took the view that the various initiatives set out in the Administration's paper lacked an overall action plan for promoting SE development. Given that SEAC had been

Action

set up for more than two years, he hoped SEAC would make public its thinking on how to foster the overall SE development and throw light on the role of the Government and the business sector in further promoting the SE development.

24. With reference to overseas experience and the past discussions of the former subcommittees on poverty alleviation, Mr Frederick FUNG said that he would broadly classify SEs into welfare SEs and profit-making SEs, under which the former had to rely on the Government's funding support to run their business and the latter would be operating on a self-financing mode. As for the latter type of SEs, he considered that the provision of seed grants during their initial operation stage was crucial to the sustainable development. Citing his experience in running a SE project as an example, Mr FUNG said that it took almost five years for the business to make a breakeven. He urged the Administration to provide more support for SEs, such as further extending the funding period of the ESR Programme from the proposed three years to five years. In his view, the scope of SE business should be focused on two areas, viz. exploring those market niches which the business sector was reluctant to take on (e.g. waste treatment), and those aimed to create job opportunities for the disabled and other socially disadvantaged groups. He then invited views from SEAC members on the future directions for SE development in Hong Kong.

25. Prof Stephen CHEUNG said that in addition to the ESR Programme, the Administration had launched the Community Investment and Inclusion Fund and the Enhancing Employment of People with Disabilities through the Small Enterprise Project to provide funding support for the start-up of business by welfare organisations including SEs.

26. As the Chairman of the ESR Advisory Committee, Prof Stephen CHEUNG said that SE projects under the ESR Programme should aim to develop "social capital" (i.e. they should not aim at profit maximization, but to reinvest principally the profit in the business) on the one hand and to operate on a self-financing basis on the other. About one-third of the SE projects under the ESR Programme were able to achieve or exceed the original targets, and another one-third were unable to be sustainable and decided to terminate their business. Prof CHEUNG further said that SEAC was mindful of the difficulties faced by SEs in running their business like commercial enterprises. The professional advice from the business sector on the operation and management of SEs were proven to be useful for equipping the SE practitioners. To encourage and facilitate the

Action

establishment of more SEs, SEAC had reviewed the ESR Programme and put forward a series of new improvement measures for the Programme. These included extending the funding period from two years to three years, accepting applications from non-profit-making organisations which had not been registered under section 88 of the Inland Revenue Ordinance (Cap. 112), and inviting more entrepreneurs to share their business expertise for the further development of SEs.

27. USHA said that the Administration was mindful that if SEs were to diversify in trades and to operate with corporate management practices, it was necessary for them to have the continual support of various sectors of the community, and in particular, the private enterprises. In addition to the improvement measures for the ESR Programme, SEAC had offered valuable advice on the formulation of new initiatives for the sustainable growth of SEs, such as the SE Training Programme and the SE Award Scheme as detailed in the Administration's paper.

28. Responding to Mr Frederick FUNG, Dr Jane LEE of SEAC said that since its establishment, SEAC had focused its discussions on the Government's existing policies and measures for promoting the development of SEs. This apart, SEAC had invited views from the stakeholders and deliberated on the social mission and vision of SEs. Dr LEE further said that while the Government played a pivotal role in formulating the strategy and policies on the SE development, collaboration between the business sector and SEs would on the one hand help provide practical experience and knowledge to SEs on business operation and facilitate strategic partnership on the other, and thereby creating a win-win situation. It was encouraging that in recent years, many entrepreneurs had offered valuable advice to SEs on strategic partnership and business operation. Dr LEE added that based on overseas experience, the mode of operation of SEs and the nature of businesses were very diverse.

29. Dr PAN Pey-chyou declared that he was a member of three organisations which had been implementing SE projects. He shared the views that SEs needed support of funding and consultancy advice on business operation. Referring to the pilot scheme launched in 2008 to give eligible SEs priority in bidding for Government service contracts, Dr PAN sought more information on the total number of contracts awarded to SEs, together with the project values and the number of employees concerned. He asked whether the Administration would conduct an evaluation study on the effectiveness of the scheme, and if so, whether the

Action

evaluation report would be made available. Dr PAN further asked about the criteria for determining the eligibility of SEs for priority bidding for the Government service contracts.

Admin

30. USHA advised that under the second phase of the pilot scheme, 52 Government service contracts valued at \$20 million with some 400 job opportunities were made available for priority bidding by SEs. This did not necessarily mean that all the contracts had been awarded to SEs as the latter would need to meet the service requirements as stipulated in the respective tenders. At the request of Dr PAN, USHA agreed to provide further information on the different types of Government service contracts awarded to SEs, together with the values of the contracts and the number of job opportunities created as well as the evaluation findings of the pilot scheme.

31. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung took the view that SEs should primarily be positioned to achieve social objectives, which included creating job opportunities for and enhancing the employability of the socially disadvantaged. Hence, profit maximization was not the primary goal of SEs, although SEs should be operating on a self-financing basis. In view of the unique characteristics of SEs, Mr LEUNG considered that more funding source and support were required for the start-up and sustainable growth of SEs. In his view, the ESR Programme could be further enhanced for promoting the sustainable growth of SEs. Notably, the maximum amount of \$3 million seed grants for a period of three years were barely adequate for meeting the start-up costs of an enterprise, such as renovation and rental expenses. Moreover, the funding period should be extended from three years to four years to tie in with the general two-year term of tenancy agreements.

32. USHA agreed that in pursuit of the social objectives of SEs, the operating costs of SEs would sometimes be higher than the commercial enterprises, and SEs would find it difficult to compete with the commercial enterprises. She believed that when the SE sector showcased the tangible and intangible benefits of SEs, this would appeal to the public support for the SE products and services. To this end, the Government had been committed to organising a wide range of public education and publicity programmes on promoting the concept of "conscience consumption". She stressed that it was the Government's objective in promoting the sustainable growth of SEs and the accumulation of social capital. As regards the funding period under the ESR Programme, USHA said that the

Action

Administration had just introduced a series of improvement measures to the Programme, which included extending the funding period from a maximum of two years to three years. The Administration would review the new initiatives in due course.

33. Dr Jane LEE elaborated on the content of the SE Training Programme. She said that the Programme was specifically designed taking into account the characteristics of SEs, which aimed to nurture more social entrepreneurs to achieve the sustainable growth and social objectives of SEs. The major objective of the training course was to better equip existing or potential social entrepreneurs, which would cover important concepts such as appreciation of social mission and values, effective use of social capital, etc. The training programme also sought to empower the participants, and change their mindset on the social impact of SEs and how to achieve it.

34. Mr Howard LING added that the launch of the SE Award Scheme would give recognition to successful SEs which operated and created social capital in Hong Kong. The areas of outstanding performance to be honoured included the creation of social impact and the development of transferable skills. The SE Award Scheme would also showcase the best practices of SEs for the reference of the sector.

35. The Chairman declared that he was a committee member of the Senior Citizen Home Safety Association which ran a SE project on providing personal emergency link services for the elderly. He said that the success of the project was largely attributed to the support from the Government departments, notably the Housing Department and the Social Welfare Department which rendered assistance to the needy households to subscribe the services. Having regard to the operational experience of the above SE project, the Chairman took the view that SEAC should consider advising the Administration on drawing up policies and administrative measures to encourage Government departments to support the sustainable growth of SEs. For instance, consideration would be given to allocating vacant government premises to SEs to facilitate the set-up of SEs.

36. Prof Stephen CHEUNG advised that SEAC was aware of the views of the stakeholders on how to further promote the sustainable growth of SEs. To his understanding, the relevant bureaux/departments as well as the business sector had made concerted efforts to foster the development of SEs, such as incorporating SE development in the revitalisation plan of

Action

government buildings and offering concessionary rental to SEs. A recent example was the inclusion of some SE projects in the revitalisation plan of the Central Market. In his view, the business sector could shoulder corporate social responsibility, with a view to supporting and creating an enabling environment for the sustainable development of SEs, say, by offering concessionary rental to SEs.

VI. Integrated Discharge Support Programme for elderly patients
[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1411/10-11(01) and CB(2)1429/10-11(06)]

37. At the invitation of the Chairman, Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)2 ("DS(W)2") briefed members on the progress of the three pilot projects under the Integrated Discharge Support Programme for Elderly Patients ("the Programme") and the Government's plan to extend the Programme to cover all districts in 2011-2012, as detailed in the Administration's paper. DS(W)2 elaborated that the Programme comprised three projects in Kwun Tong, Kwai Tsing and Tuen Mun, launched in March and August 2008, and July 2009 respectively, with total funding amounted to \$96 million. In view of the positive response to the Programme, the Financial Secretary had announced in the 2011-2012 Budget that the Government would allocate an additional funding of \$148 million to make it a regular service and extend its coverage from the current three districts to all districts within 2011-2012.

38. On the operation of the Programme, Chief Manager (Primary & Community Services) of Hospital Authority ("CM(PCS)/HA") said that the primary service targets of the Programme were those elderly hospital discharges who were assessed to have a high risk of unplanned re-admission. To facilitate the early formulation of discharge care plans, the risk level assessment of the elderly patients would be conducted within a few days after their admission into hospitals in accordance with a scoring system.

39. CM(PCS)/HA then elaborated on the preliminary evaluation of the pilot projects. She advised that the scope of the evaluation included the functional outcomes and health-related quality of life of the participating elders, the stress and satisfaction level of the elders' carers, and the elders' utilisation of hospital services after discharge. The preliminary findings showed that the Programme participants showed a significant improvement in functional outcomes and health-related quality of life, whilst carers'

Action

stress was significantly reduced. As regards the utilisation of hospital services after discharge, it was observed that the number of emergency admission to medical wards, attendance at the Accident and Emergency Department and the acute patient days in medical wards had been reduced significantly. In view of the positive response, HA considered that the Programme should be further extended to all districts.

40. While welcoming the Government's plan to make the Programme a regular service and extend its coverage from the current three districts to all districts within 2011-2012, Mr TAM Yiu-chung expressed concern about the impact of the extended Programme on the manpower of the medical and para-medical professionals and whether adequate medical staff could be deployed to support the extended services. Noting that the number of elders to be served under the Programme each year was expected to increase from 8 000 to 33 000, Mr TAM was concerned whether the recurrent funding of \$148 million was adequate to cope with the increased service demand.

41. DS(W)2 said that as explained earlier, the Government would allocate additional recurrent funding of \$148 million to make the Programme a regular service and extend its coverage from the current three districts to all districts within 2011-2012. The recurrent funding would be allocated for setting up the Discharge Planning Teams ("DPTs") in the participating hospitals and for the operation of Home Support Teams ("HSTs") by non-governmental organisations ("NGOs") to be commissioned by HA. DS(W)2 said that there would be a total of 15 hospitals participating in the extended Programme, and the respective service commencement dates were detailed in the Annex to the Administration's paper.

42. CM(PCS)/HA added that the proposal to extend the Programme had in fact been drawn up in last year. The management of hospital clusters had expressed full support for the extended Programme as it would help reduce the risk of unplanned hospital re-admission of elderly patients. HA would endeavour to implement the extended Programme, although the expected service commencement dates might need to be adjusted slightly having regard to the actual staffing situation of individual participating hospitals. CM(PCS)/HA advised that HA had been actively considering various measures to retain and attract healthcare staff. She envisaged that the existing staffing position might be relieved next year. Notably, there would be an increase in the supply of nurses.

Action

43. On the manpower to cope with the growth in service demand arising from the extended Programme, CM(PCS)/HA advised that HA medical professionals mainly played the coordinating role in formulating the discharge care plans, while the post-discharge services were provided by HSTs operated by NGOs. HA would endeavour to adhere to the service commencement dates as far as practicable. CM(PCS)/HA further advised that the new service demand could be met by injection of additional manpower and through re-engineering of existing services. Consideration would also be given to implementing the extended Programme by phases.

44. Ms LI Fung-ying shared Mr TAM Yiu-chung's concern about the provision of necessary medical manpower to cope with the new services provided under the Programme if it was extended to all districts, even if additional funding was allocated for the purpose. Pointing out that concerns about the shortage and long work hours of HA's medical staff had been raised for years, the extension of the Programme would further stretch the existing slim workforce. In her view, the Administration and HA should work jointly to address the manpower shortage problem in HA hospitals.

45. Noting that the effectiveness of the Programme would be evaluated based on data collected throughout the Programme period, Ms LI Fung-ying asked whether an evaluation would be conducted upon completion of the post-discharge services in order to assess the appropriate duration of home support services. Ms LI further asked about the selection of elderly patients to be assessed under the evaluation exercise.

46. CM(PCS)/HA advised that the program evaluation would include all community-dwelling elderly patients who were recruited to the Programme and discharged during the period for evaluation, irrespective of whether they were referred to HSTs for home support services after discharge. As the Programme was not a long-term home support service scheme, the average duration of home support services was about nine weeks. As part of the evaluation exercise, the functional outcomes of the elderly participants would also be assessed 90 days after they had discharged from hospitals.

47. While noting that the preliminary evaluation findings of the Programme were positive, Dr PAN Pey-chyou cautioned that satisfactory results were usually achieved as far as a new initiative was concerned

Action

because the Administration had attached more importance to the initiative during the early implementation stage, but its overall effectiveness would be diminishing. Dr PAN also noted that the Administration saw a need to include in the service package a time-limited residential care element. He was concerned that the elderly discharges would have difficulties to adapt to a new living environment shortly after discharge from hospitals. He asked about the nature of the residential care in question and under what circumstances would the elderly hospital discharges be provided with such time-limited residential care.

48. CM(PCS)/HA advised that no transitional residential care was provided under the pilot projects. As shown from the operational experience, some participants required intensive short-term nursing and personal care before returning home, and some carers of the discharges would need more time to get prepared for taking care of the discharges at home, the provision of a time-limited residential care would allow the patients to be discharged from hospital in the first instance, and better prepare them for continued rehabilitation in a home living environment.

49. Mr IP Wai-ming commended the efforts made by the Administration and HA in launching the Programme and extending the Programme to cover all districts. He sought more information on the areas for enhancement as highlighted in the feedback collected. DS(W)2 responded that some participants had suggested that a new service element of transitional residential care should be introduced under the Programme. She said that this new service element would be included in the regularised service to be rolled out in all districts.

50. Mr IP Wai-ming noted that the preliminary evaluation findings revealed that carers' stress was significantly reduced, and that the carers were highly satisfied with the training and HST services. To facilitate better understanding of the conduct of the evaluation, Mr IP requested and the Administration agreed to provide information on –

Admin

- (a) the changes in the carers' stress level which were measured by the Relative Stress Scale during the post-discharge period; and
- (b) the content and feedback of the questionnaire survey on carers' satisfaction to HST services provided under the Programme and the training provided to them.

Action

51. While appreciating the collaboration between the Administration and HA in providing support services to the elderly hospital discharges, Mr Albert CHAN considered that the Programme was introduced to fill the existing service gap arising from the inadequate residential care services and community care services for the elderly. This was unfair to the service providers and users of the Programme. Mr CHAN took a strong view that the Administration should be committed to providing adequate residential care places to meet the needs of elderly hospital discharges who required nursing and residential care services.

52. DS(W)2 advised that the services provided under the Programme were by no means a substitute for subsidised residential and community care services for the elderly who required long-term care. The Programme aimed at reducing the risk of unplanned hospital re-admission of elderly hospital discharges through better discharge planning and post-discharge support, thereby enabling these elderly patients to continue to age in place. DS(W)2 further advised that additional funding had been earmarked in the Budget for the provision of additional subsidised residential care places.

[To allow more time for discussion, the Chairman proposed and members agreed to extend the meeting for five minutes beyond its appointed time.]

53. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung expressed concern that it would be a paradox that the Administration could slow down the provision of subsidised residential care places for the elderly, if the Programme was proven to be effective and the elderly could continue to stay at home. In his view, the Administration should be committed to assuming the responsibility of providing adequate subsidised residential care services and community care services for the elderly.

54. DS(W)2 reiterated that the Programme would not undermine the Government's efforts in providing additional subsidised residential care services. CM(PCS)/HA added that the Programme participants would not be denied residential care services if they had such a need. The Programme aimed, among other things, to enhance the post-discharge support services to elderly patients and their carers.

Action

VII. Any other business

55. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:54 pm.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
9 June 2011