

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)1307/10-11(02)

Ref : CB2/PS/1/09

Panel on Welfare Services

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

**Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 28 March 2011**

**Pilot Scheme on Home Care Services
for Persons with Severe Disabilities**

Purpose

This paper gives a brief account of past discussions of the Panel on Welfare Services ("the Panel") and the Subcommittee on Residential and Community Care Services for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly ("the Subcommittee") on the Pilot Scheme on Home Care Services for Persons with Severe Disabilities.

Background

2. According to the Administration, the primary objective of the Government in providing community care and support services for persons with disabilities ("PWDs") is to make available training and support to PWDs according to their needs, to assist them in developing their potential, to enable them to continue to live independently at home and to prepare them for full integration into the community.

3. The Financial Secretary announced in the 2010-2011 Budget the introduction of the pilot scheme to enhance the home care services for persons with severe disabilities.

Deliberations by members

4. At the meeting on 8 March 2010, the Panel was briefed on the pilot scheme on home care services for persons with severe disabilities. Members noted that some 6 500 PWDs were on the waiting lists for various types of subsidised residential care service and the situation was most acute for those with severe disabilities. By end-September 2009, the number of persons with severe physical and/or mental disabilities on the waiting lists were 1 970 for hostel for severely mentally handicapped persons, 407 for hostel for severely physically handicapped persons and 345 for care and attention home for severely disabled persons. The average waiting time for these services in 2008-2009 was 4.3 years, 9.4 years and 3 years respectively. In the light of this, the Administration advised that, as announced in the 2010-2011 Budget, a one-off funding of \$163 million would be sought under the Lotteries Fund for implementing a three-year pilot scheme on home care services for persons with severe disabilities. The new services would be tried out in Tuen Mun and Kwun Tong which had the largest number of persons with severe disabilities (273 and 264 persons respectively) waiting for subvented residential care services at hostel for severely mentally handicapped, hostel for severely physically handicapped persons and care and attention home for severely disabled persons.

5. Members were advised that given the conditions of persons with severe physical and/or mental disabilities and the level and intensity of care they required, a new package of home-based support services including personal care and escort service, occupational therapy/physiotherapy rehabilitation training service and nursing care service would be provided to meet their care and training needs. The enhanced services would be delivered by non-governmental organisations ("NGOs") which were operating rehabilitation services in the respective districts through invitation of proposals. Taking into account the lead time for securing funding and identification of NGO operators, the three-year pilot scheme would commence in the fourth quarter of 2010-2011 and end in the third quarter of 2013-2014 and was expected to serve a total of about 540 persons with severe disabilities upon its full operation. The expected number of service users was estimated based on the number of persons with severe disabilities waiting for subvented residential care services at hostel for severely mentally handicapped, hostel for severely physically handicapped persons and care and attention home for severely disabled persons in the districts concerned.

6. While welcoming the pilot scheme, members took the view that the

Administration should under no circumstances regard community care services as a substitute for the provision of subsidised residential care services. The Administration assured members that PWDs who joined the pilot scheme would remain on the waiting lists for subsidised residential care services. As undertaken in the Chief Executive's 2009-2010 Policy Address, the Government would provide 939 additional places in the coming two years, including the setting up of two integrated rehabilitation service centres in Kwai Chung and Ho Man Tin in the coming year, providing a total of 490 residential places. The Administration advised that the enhanced support services sought to facilitate PWDs' continued living at home while waiting for residential care services, and help relieve the stress of their family carers.

7. Some members were concerned about the long-term commitment of the Government in providing the enhanced home care services given that one-off funding was provided for the services. The Administration advised that the pilot scheme was in line with the strategic directions of providing support for service users and their family carers. Reviews would be conducted in the course of and upon the completion of the pilot scheme. It was open minded on the service scope of the pilot scheme and did not rule out the possibility of increasing the quota of service users or expanding the pilot scheme to cover all districts if the scheme was proven effective. Should the review findings of the pilot scheme be encouraging, the Administration would consider financing the projects under the recurrent funding and extending the scheme to other districts after the three-year pilot period.

8. At the Subcommittee meeting on 13 July 2010, members were briefed on the progress of implementation of the pilot scheme. According to the Administration, a monthly fee comparable to the prevailing fee scale of centre-based Day Care Service for Persons with Severe Disabilities at \$988 per month would be charged for a full package of services comprising about 76 hours of personal care and escort service, two visits by an occupational therapist/physiotherapist and one visit by a nurse under the pilot scheme. Users could choose to receive the services on an hourly basis. In line with the prevailing fee scale of the community support services and District Support Centres for Persons with Disabilities, an hourly rate of \$33 for personal care and escort service, and \$42 and \$51 per visit respectively for nursing care and occupational therapist/physiotherapist rehabilitation training service would be charged.

9. Some members took the view that the pilot scheme should be expanded to cover all eligible persons with severe disabilities in the 18

districts, irrespective of whether they were on the waiting lists for subvented residential care services. To enable PWDs to live in the community and to relieve the burden of their family members in taking care of PWDs at home, members had requested time and again the Administration to consider introducing a carer allowance or providing subsidy to PWDs for the employment of domestic helpers.

10. The Administration stressed that it was mindful of the acute waitlisting situation of residential care services for PWDs. The pilot scheme sought to facilitate PWDs' continued living at home while waiting for residential care services, and help relieve stress of their family carers. Participants of the pilot scheme would be provided with a package of home-based support services to meet their care and rehabilitation needs, which were different from the personal care provided by family carers or domestic helpers. The Administration further advised that mid-term and final reviews would be conducted to assess the long-term feasibility of the pilot scheme before its completion. If the review findings were encouraging, the Administration would consider bidding necessary funding for the projects on a longer term and extending the pilot scheme to other districts after the three-year pilot period.

11. The Administration will provide the Subcommittee with an update on the progress for implementing the pilot scheme at the meeting on 28 March 2011.

Relevant papers

12. A list of relevant papers and documents is in the **Appendix** for members' reference. The papers and documents are available on the Legislative Council website at <http://www.legco.gov.hk/>.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
22 March 2011

Appendix

Relevant papers on Pilot Scheme on Home Care Services for Persons with Severe Disabilities

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Welfare Services	8 March 2010 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes
Subcommittee on Residential and Community Care Services for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly	31 May 2010 (Item I)	Agenda Minutes
Subcommittee on Residential and Community Care Services for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly	13 July 2010 (Item II)	Agenda Minutes

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