

**For discussion on
21 October 2011**

Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services

Policy Initiatives of the Labour and Welfare Bureau for 2011-12

Purpose

The Chief Executive delivered his 2011-12 Policy Address on 12 October 2011. This paper sets out the key welfare initiatives in the 2011-12 Policy Address and Policy Agenda.

New Initiatives

Strengthening elderly care services

2. In respect of elderly care services, we will adhere to the policy objective of “ageing in place as the core, institutional care as back-up” and introduce further enhancement.

Plan for a pilot scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for elders

3. The Elderly Commission published its consultancy study report on community care services (CCS) for the elderly in July this year. The study examined how CCS could be strengthened through a more flexible and diverse mode of service delivery, to provide better support for elders who age at home. One of the key recommendations is for the Government to introduce a CCS voucher scheme which allows eligible elders to choose CCS that suit their needs.

4. We plan to introduce a four-year pilot scheme to test this idea. Government subsidy will be provided directly to elders who have been assessed to be eligible for subsidised long-term care service. We will make reference to the arrangement for existing subsidised CCS when setting the Government subsidy level, co-payment rate and means test mechanism under the pilot scheme. Participants can choose from a range of centre-based and home-based services, which we hope will be provided by different types of service providers including social enterprises.

5. To ensure smooth implementation, the pilot scheme will be tentatively launched in two phases in selected districts, starting from 2013-14. The first phase will be for elders with moderate impairment. Subject to the outcome of this phase, we may include elders with severe impairment in the second phase. We will work out the implementation details in the coming year.

Increase subsidised residential and community care places

6. Meanwhile, we will continue to strengthen conventional subsidised services by increasing the provision of residential care, day care and home care places.

Increase bought places and enhance their quality

7. Residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) participating in the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme (EBPS) are categorised into EA1 and EA2 homes, the former having higher spatial and staffing requirements. We will upgrade EA2 homes to EA1 level as and when they can meet the higher requirements and increase the supply of EA1 places.

Introduce a “Residential Care Supplement” under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme

8. Besides, as many elders still reside in non-subsidised residential care homes, we propose to introduce a Residential Care Supplement for recipients of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) aged 60 or above who occupy non-subsidised residential care places, at a rate equal to the Community Living Supplement (currently \$250 a month), so as to ease their financial burden. Persons with disabilities or in ill-health, who are on CSSA and occupy non-subsidised residential care places, irrespective of age, will also be eligible. The proposal is expected to benefit about 30 000 recipients.

Enhance the support for demented elders

9. Dementia Supplement (DS) is provided to subvented RCHEs, private EBPS homes and subsidised day care centres/units which take care of demented elders so that they can employ additional staff and/or procure relevant professional services for this purpose. We will increase the amount of DS for these service units to enhance their support for

demented elders.

Make preparation for a new scheme for the provision of Old Age Allowance to Hong Kong elders who choose to move to live in Guangdong

10. Most of the Hong Kong elders who choose to retire on the Mainland reside in Guangdong (GD). Indeed, the relationship between Hong Kong and GD is unique, given our close geographical, logistical, economic and social ties. As we take forward the Framework Agreement on Hong Kong/Guangdong Co-operation and with major transport infrastructure projects coming on stream, the two places are moving towards greater integration. Against this background, we propose to introduce a GD Scheme under the Social Security Allowance Scheme so that Hong Kong elders who move to live in GD can receive Old Age Allowance (OAA) there.

11. The GD Scheme has basically the same eligibility criteria as OAA in Hong Kong. Present recipients of OAA, or elders who intend to apply for OAA, may opt for the GD Scheme instead. They can also opt out of the GD Scheme in future, return to reside in Hong Kong and continue to receive OAA. This is a highly flexible arrangement.

12. At present, there is a one-year continuous residence rule for OAA. Applying this rule to the GD Scheme would mean that Hong Kong elders who have already settled in GD would need to come back to stay in Hong Kong for one year in order to be eligible. We fully understand the difficulties that these elders face, and are aware that if a substantial number of elders return to stay briefly in Hong Kong at the same time, there may be considerable pressure on local public resources and services. We will therefore consider putting in place a special one-off arrangement at the initial stage of implementing the GD Scheme to allow elders who satisfy all other eligibility criteria except the one-year continuous residence rule to benefit from the GD Scheme without having to first return to stay in Hong Kong.

13. We are drawing up the details of the proposal and aim at developing more concrete plans between the end of 2011 and early 2012.

Enhancing rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities

Provide additional places for rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities

14. To meet the diverse needs of persons with disabilities in different stages of their lives, we will continue to enhance rehabilitation services to strengthen the capabilities of persons with disabilities and facilitate their full integration into society. We will continue to provide additional places for pre-school, day and residential rehabilitation services, in accordance with the directions set out in the 2007 Hong Kong Rehabilitation Programme Plan.

Promote employment for persons with disabilities

15. To promote the employment for persons with disabilities, the Government strives to provide vocational rehabilitation training and employment support for persons with disabilities. In 2001-02, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) was provided with a one-off allocation of \$50 million to introduce the “Enhancing Employment of People with Disabilities through Small Enterprise Project” (3E’s Project). Through granting seed money to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) for the setting up of small enterprises, the 3E’s Project creates job opportunities for persons with disabilities. As at March 2011, 66 businesses had been set up under the 3E’s Project, creating over 520 job positions specifically for persons with disabilities. In order to create more job opportunities for persons with disabilities, we will inject \$100 million into the 3E’s Project and extend its funding period from a maximum of two years to three years.

16. On the other hand, we plan to provide subsidies to employers of persons with disabilities for the procurement of assistive devices and carrying out workplace modification work, thereby enabling employees with disabilities to work more efficiently. Moreover, through providing a \$500 mentorship award as financial incentive, we encourage employers to render workplace guidance to persons with disabilities and help them adapt to new jobs.

Strengthen community support service for persons with severe physical disabilities

17. We have all along endeavoured to develop and strengthen

community support services for persons with disabilities, thereby facilitating them to integrate into the community, and providing their carers with support. In 2008, SWD set up the Transitional Care and Support Centre for Tetraplegic Patients, providing pilot residential, day training and residential respite care services for tetraplegic patients. As the services have been proved effective, we will regularise it next year to provide continuous service for persons in need and help to relieve the pressure of their carers.

Enhancing mental health social rehabilitation services

18. The new district-based and one-stop service delivery mode of the Integrated Community Centres for Mental Wellness (ICCMWs) has been rolled out across the territory since October 2010, providing integrated mental health community support services for persons with mental health problem, their families and local residents. To meet the varying needs of service users, services provided range from early prevention to risk management through public education, day training, counselling, outreaching visits and, where required, direct liaison with the Hospital Authority (HA) for urgent medical consultation. We will continue to strengthen the manpower of these centres so that they can provide comprehensive and accessible services for more persons in need, and dovetail with HA's Case Management Programme to provide timely and appropriate support to persons with severe mental illness living in the community.

19. At present, there are 24 ICCMWs operated by NGOs across the territory. Amongst them, six are already operating in permanent accommodation. SWD has also identified suitable sites for other nine ICCMWs, and some of them are carrying out preparatory work, including local consultation. For other ICCMWs which have not yet secured permanent accommodation, they will flexibly make use of their existing facilities in their district network for provision of one-stop services. For example, the operators will provide services including outreaching visits, group services, casework counselling, activities and community education in schools and welfare services units. SWD also supports ICCMWs which have yet to secure permanent accommodation to lease suitable commercial premises for use as temporary service centres.

20. To resolve the problems relating to permanent accommodation of ICCMWs in the long run, we are actively identifying suitable premises in various districts through long, medium and short-term planning. For

long-term planning, SWD will continue to keep in close contact with relevant government departments, including the Lands Department, Planning Department, Housing Department, etc. in order to reserve premises for ICCMWs at the planning stage of new development or redevelopment projects. In the medium term, we will closely monitor the availability of government property and school premises which will become vacant as a result of service re-engineering. In the short term, we will also explore the possibility of converting vacant public housing units into ICCMWs.

21. Meanwhile, we, together with the service operators of ICCMWs, will continue to organise service briefings and activities to enhance local residents' understanding and acceptance of ICCMWs. We call upon district leaders and residents to support the services of ICCMWs and accept the setting up of these centres in the community so that comprehensive and accessible mental health services and support can be provided for ex-mentally ill persons and local residents as early as possible.

Public Transport Concessions for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities

22. To build a caring and inclusive society, we should encourage the elderly and persons with disabilities to participate more in community activities. To fulfill their corporate social responsibilities, some public transport operators have been offering different fare concessions to passengers, including the elderly and persons with disabilities. Such concessions are the commercial decisions of individual public transport operators.

23. The Government proposes to use public resources to facilitate the provision of fare concessions for elderly persons aged 65 and above and CSSA recipients aged between 12 and 64 with 100% disabilities and Disability Allowance recipients of the same age group to travel on the general Mass Transit Railway lines, franchised buses and ferries at a concessionary fare of \$2 per trip on all days and at all times. This concession scheme will be non-means-tested and will not affect the beneficiaries' eligibility for other government assistance. It is expected that about 1.1 million persons will benefit from the scheme. The Government will periodically reimburse the public transport operators on an accountable basis the fare revenue forgone in implementing this new initiative. The Government will discuss with the public transport

operators and urge them to continue to absorb the cost of their existing fare concession schemes for the elderly and persons with disabilities, and not to withdraw their existing fare concessions for passengers as a result of the Government's additional commitment.

Enhancing support for children and families

Enhancing residential child care services

24. To support children who are not adequately cared for by their families and young people with behavioural or emotional problems, the Government has all along been subsidising NGOs to provide various kinds of residential child care services, including institutional services such as children's home, boys/girls' home and boys/girls' hostel, etc., as well as non-institutional services such as foster care service and small group home, etc. All residential child care services are provided free of charge.

25. In order to strengthen the support for families and children in need, we will further enhance residential child care services. In this connection, we will increase the number of residential child care places (including service places of foster care service, small group home, children's home, boys/girls' home and boys/girls' hostel) in phases from 2012-13 onwards. We will also raise the foster care allowance, including the maintenance grant for foster children and incentive payment for foster parents.

Enhancing integrated family services

26. Integrated Family Service Centre (IFSC) is the backbone of Hong Kong's family welfare services. The 61 IFSCs over the territory have all along been providing a continuum of preventive, supportive and remedial family welfare services in a one-stop manner.

27. To more effectively prevent and address family problems, prevent family problems from deteriorating and lessen the workload of social workers at IFSCs, the Government will allocate additional resources to set up four new IFSCs in districts with greater service demand to provide services for needy families, including specific target groups such as single parents, new arrivals, ethnic minorities and cross-boundary families. This will bring the total number of IFSCs from 61 at present to 65.

Enhancing support services for youth

Increasing youth outreaching services

28. District Youth Outreaching Social Work Teams seek to reach out and provide counselling and guidance to youths who participate less in conventional social or youth activities and are vulnerable to undesirable influences. To better tackle the growing problem of juvenile gangs, we will set up additional youth outreaching teams in three districts, namely Tseung Kwan O, Ma On Shan and Tung Chung. With the additional teams, we can reach out to more youths at risk, counsel and refer them to other mainstream services to help solve their problems in good time.

Further extend 3 000 temporary work opportunities for one year

29. As a special measure introduced during the economic downturn, 3 000 temporary work opportunities were created in April 2008 for young people aged between 15 and 29 in the NGOs subvented by SWD for three years, with a view to enhancing the employability of young people through providing working experience. The purpose of creating these temporary posts is to assist young people in open employment rather than retaining them in these posts in the long term. With the gradual recovery of the economy, the provision for this initiative will lapse in March 2012 originally. To allow more time for the young people to equip themselves for the labour market and for the welfare service units to make the necessary adjustments, we decide to further extend the posts to March 2013 as needed.

Review various employment assistance programmes under the CSSA Scheme

30. Currently, SWD provides various employment assistance service programmes to help employable CSSA recipients return to the labour market and achieve self-reliance. These programmes include the Integrated Employment Assistance Scheme, the Special Training and Enhancement Programme for CSSA recipients aged 15 to 29, and the New Dawn Project for single parents. We will conduct a comprehensive review to integrate and improve these programmes with a view to enhancing effectiveness and achieving synergy. The NGOs operating the new programme will have greater flexibility in deploying resources, and can therefore provide more suitable assistance to the CSSA recipients.

Progress of Ongoing Initiatives

Poverty alleviation

Implementing and improving short-term food assistance service

31. By the end of August 2011, short-term food assistance service projects had already served over 60 000 people. To continue the service and introduce improvement, including providing more food varieties and fresh food, we plan to seek the approval of the Finance Committee of LegCo towards the end of this year for additional funding. We will consult the LegCo Panel on Welfare Services (the Panel) in November.

Co-ordinating efforts through the Task Force on Poverty

32. The Task Force on Poverty (TFP) will continue to co-ordinate efforts across the Government in tackling poverty and follow up the recommendations of the former Commission on Poverty (CoP). Most of the CoP's recommendations have been or are being implemented. The TFP will closely monitor the poverty situation in Hong Kong and explore initiatives/measures which can help the disadvantaged and people in need.

Implementing Child Development Fund projects

33. Since its establishment, the Child Development Fund (CDF) has received overwhelming support from the community and its projects have been running smoothly. So far, three batches of projects have been rolled out, benefiting more than 4 400 children from a disadvantaged background. Taking into account the implementation experience of these projects, we will consider the long-term model of CDF for promoting child development in Hong Kong.

Welfare planning

Following up on long-term social welfare planning

34. After the submission of the report on “Long-term Social Welfare Planning in Hong Kong” (the report) by the Social Welfare Advisory Committee (SWAC) to the Administration on 4 July, we consulted the Panel on the report and heard the deputations' views at its meetings on 11 July and 22 August respectively. We are now considering

the way forward and will brief the Panel once we have completed the exercise.

Services for children

Continuing to implement and extend the Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project

35. To support parents who are unable to take care of their children temporarily because of work or other reasons, the Government subsidises NGOs to provide a wide range of child care services and strives to increase the flexibility of the services.

36. In October 2008, SWD launched the three-year Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project (NSCCP) on a pilot basis. Carers in the neighbourhood are hired and trained to take care of children at the carers' homes or at centres run by the service operators. NSCCP is able to achieve the dual objectives of providing needy parents with more flexible child care service and promoting mutual assistance in the neighbourhood. We will regularise it and extend its geographical coverage from 11 districts at present to all 18 districts by the end of this year so as to benefit more needy families.

Continuing to implement and extend the Comprehensive Child Development Service

37. The Comprehensive Child Development Service (CCDS) is a joint initiative of the Labour and Welfare Bureau, Education Bureau, Department of Health, HA and SWD launched in 2005. The service enables the early identification of pregnant women, mothers and children in need, and their referral to suitable health or welfare service units for follow-up and support services. CCDS currently covers about half of the total population in Hong Kong. To enhance the support for needy children and their families, we will extend CCDS in phases to all 18 districts from 2011-12 onwards.

Services for youth

Continuing to implement the Pilot Cyber Youth Outreaching Projects

38. SWD will continue to implement the pilot Cyber Youth Outreaching Projects to address the changing needs of youths, in

particular youths at risk and hidden youths. The three-year pilot projects have been launched and operated by three NGOs since August 2011. SWD will also commission a consultant by the end of October 2011 to conduct an evaluation study to examine the effectiveness of the pilot project and the feasibility of interfacing this new service mode with the existing youth services and make recommendations on the way forward.

Tackling domestic violence

Implementing the Victim Support Programme for Victims of Family Violence

39. The Government is committed to combating domestic violence. The Victim Support Programme for Victims of Family Violence (VSP), which was launched in June 2010, has provided support services for about 600 victims of domestic violence. The VSP, which is run by an NGO with funding provided by SWD, aims to enhance support services to victims of domestic violence, including those undergoing the judicial process. Through the VSP, the victims will be provided with information on the relevant legal proceedings and community resources (such as legal aid service, accommodation, treatment and childcare support, etc.) that are available to them. They will also be provided with emotional support and company in going through the judicial process to alleviate their fear and helplessness. Through close collaboration with case workers, it is expected that the victims will be empowered and supported to resume normal life and functioning.

Monitoring the implementation of the Domestic and Cohabitation Relationships Violence Ordinance

40. In June 2009, we introduced the Domestic Violence (Amendment) Bill 2009 (the DV Bill) into LegCo to extend the protection provided under the former Domestic Violence Ordinance (DVO) to same-sex cohabitants. Following the passage of the DV Bill in December 2009, the amended DVO, which has been renamed as the Domestic and Cohabitation Relationships Violence Ordinance (DCRVO), came into effect on 1 January 2010. We will continue to monitor the implementation of the DCRVO.

Implementing the batterer intervention programme and anti-violence programme for abusers

41. Upon completion of the two-year pilot project on batterer intervention programme (BIP) in March 2008, SWD has continued to implement the BIP for suitable abusers mainly involved in spouse/cohabitant battering as a component of their counselling service. To cater for the needs of different types of batterers, suitable treatment models will further be developed. In 2010-11, SWD has started providing BIP for women on a pilot basis.

42. Separately, SWD launched an anti-violence programme (AVP) in August 2008 as provided for under the Domestic Violence (Amendment) Ordinance 2008⁽¹⁾, which seeks to change the abusers' attitude and behaviour. The AVP is psycho-educational in nature and is suitable for all types of domestic violence abusers. NGOs have been engaged in delivering the AVP. With the enactment of DCRVO, the AVP has been extended to same-sex cohabitants involved in violence cases since January 2010.

Enhancing public education and training for professionals

43. SWD will continue to launch publicity campaign and public education initiatives to enhance public awareness of the problem of domestic violence, build up social capital and create a caring and resilient community. To enhance the frontline professionals' knowledge and skills in handling different types of domestic violence and further promote multi-disciplinary collaboration, SWD will continue to strengthen the training programmes for the relevant professionals.

Setting up of the Standing Child Fatality Review Panel

44. SWD launched a pilot project to review cases of children who died of natural or non-natural causes in February 2008. The objective of the review was to examine the relevant child death cases with a view to identifying patterns and trends for formulation of prevention strategies and promoting multi-disciplinary and inter-agency cooperation in the prevention of avoidable child death. A review panel of this pilot project

⁽¹⁾ Under the amended DVO, the court may, in granting a non-molestation order, require the abuser to attend a programme approved by the Director of Social Welfare that seeks to change the attitude and behaviour of the abuser.

was set up by SWD to review child death cases which occurred in 2006 and 2007.

45. The pilot project was completed in 2010 and the review panel of the pilot project released its final report in January 2011. Findings of the pilot project were reported to the Panel in February 2011. The review panel also conducted evaluation of the pilot project in consultation with the participants (including the NGOs involved), and concluded that the pilot project had met its objectives and was effective in facilitating inter-sectoral and multi-disciplinary exchange and collaboration in the prevention of avoidable child deaths. In view of the successful experience and positive feedback received, SWD has accepted the recommendation of the review panel of the pilot project and set up a standing Child Fatality Review Panel in June 2011 to continue to review child death cases.

Rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities

Implementing the Pilot Scheme on Home Care Service for Persons with Severe Disabilities

46. Persons with severe physical and/or intellectual disabilities require a higher level of care and support. The Government is mindful of their special care needs and the immense pressure faced by their family carers. We launched the three-year pilot scheme in March 2011 to provide persons with severe disabilities who are living in the community and are on the waiting lists for subvented residential care services with a package of home-based support services, including personal care and escort service, occupational therapist/physiotherapist rehabilitation training service and nursing care service. The objective of the scheme is to facilitate home living of these persons with disabilities while waiting for residential care services, and help relieve the stress of their family carers. The pilot scheme has been tried out in Tuen Mun and Kwun Tong which have the largest number of persons with severe disabilities waiting for residential care services, and expanded to neighbourhood districts, i.e. Kwai Tsing and Wong Tai Sin, in September this year. We will continue to monitor the operation of the pilot scheme, and conduct a mid-term review for further improvement and refinement of the implementation details as appropriate.

Continuing with the legislative exercise for the licensing scheme for residential care homes for persons with disabilities and implementation of relevant complementary measures

47. The Residential Care Homes (Persons with Disabilities) Ordinance (“the Ordinance”) was enacted on 24 June 2011. The commencement notice of the Ordinance and the Residential Care Homes (Persons with Disabilities) Regulation (“the Regulation”) were also submitted to LegCo for scrutiny on 6 July 2011. Subject to the passage of the commencement notice and the Regulation by LegCo, the licensing scheme will come into effect on 18 November 2011.

48. In tandem with the licensing scheme, we introduced a pilot Bought Place Scheme for private residential care homes for persons with disabilities (RCHDs) in October 2010 to encourage operators of private RCHDs to upgrade the service standard of these homes, increase supply of subsidised residential care places, thereby shortening the waiting time and to help the market develop more service options for persons with disabilities. In addition, after the commencement of the Ordinance, we will introduce a Financial Assistance Scheme to subsidise private RCHDs to carry out improvement works to meet the statutory licensing requirements on building and fire safety. To allow time for individual RCHDs to put in place suitable arrangements for application for a new licence/certificate of exemption (“CoE”), there will be a grace period of 18 months starting from the commencement of the Ordinance. During the grace period, no sanction will be imposed on the operation of RCHD without a licence/CoE.

Building a barrier-free environment

49. With a view to building a barrier-free environment, the Government has taken forward a comprehensive retrofitting programme costing \$1.3 billion to upgrade the barrier-free facilities in about 3 700 existing Government premises and facilities and about 300 properties under the Housing Authority. Among them, around 3 300 premises and facilities will have retrofitting works completed by June 2012. We will report regularly the works progress of the programme to the Equal Opportunities Commission, LegCo, Rehabilitation Advisory Committee and the public.

50. Apart from upgrading the barrier-free facilities, the Government also strives to improve the management of these facilities

and raise the venue management's awareness on accessibility issues. To this end, since April 2011, individual bureaux and departments have designated an Access Co-ordinator to facilitate the coordination of accessibility issues within the bureaux/departments. Moreover, an Access Officer has also been appointed for each venue/facility to handle accessibility issues at the venue.

Enhancing transport services for persons with disabilities

51. In keeping with the Government's on-going efforts to improve the accessibility of public transport for persons with disabilities, Rehabus provides point-to-point scheduled and dial-a-ride transport services for persons with disabilities who have difficulties in using public transport. Having regard to service demand, we will continue to enhance the Rehabus Fleet by adding new vehicles and replacing old ones.

Promoting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

52. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (the Convention) has entered into force for the People's Republic of China, including the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, since 31 August 2008. To promote the spirit and core values enshrined in the Convention, the Government has substantially increased the allocation for public education activities since 2009-10. The Government has also strengthened civil service training to enhance civil servants' knowledge in the application of the spirit of the Convention in their daily work. Promotion of the Convention is an ongoing initiative. The Government will continue to promote the Convention in close collaboration with the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee, rehabilitation sector, District Councils and the community at large with a view to building an equal and barrier-free society.

Elderly care

Upgrading subsidised residential care places for the elderly to provide long-term care

53. Under the Conversion Programme launched by SWD in 2005, 10 700 subsidised residential places for the elderly which do not have a care element or do not provide a continuum of care will be upgraded gradually to long-term care places providing a continuum of care. To

date, 69 subvented homes have participated in the Conversion Programme and they are converting 9 800 places into 5 500 long-term care places.

Improving the home environment of elders

54. To help improve the living environment of elders who live in dilapidated homes, we introduced the “Home Environment Improvement Scheme for the Elderly” in 2008 to subsidise home renovation works and/or the purchase of essential fittings for eligible elderly households.

55. By June this year, we had received altogether 37 000 applications. Work for 25 000 of them had been completed and that for 2 600 partially completed. We expect the scheme to benefit a total of 40 000 elderly households.

Training enrolled nurses for the welfare sector

56. To alleviate the shortage of nurses in the welfare sector, SWD, in collaboration with HA, has been running a two-year full-time programme to train enrolled nurses particularly for the welfare sector since 2006. Nine classes have been organised so far and three more will be organised in the next two years. Together, the 12 classes will provide 1 470 training places. The trainees of the first three classes have graduated and about 88% of them have joined the welfare sector.

Implementing the Pilot Scheme on Visiting Pharmacist Service

57. The Government launched a three-year Pilot Scheme on Visiting Pharmacist Service in 2010 to provide participating RCHEs with subsidised visiting pharmacist services for a period of 12 months. The aim is to enhance the drug management knowledge and capability of RCHEs and their staff. In the first year of the scheme, 26 RCHEs participated. The scheme is now in its second year with another 20 participating RCHEs. The whole scheme seeks to benefit about 70 to 80 RCHEs.

Implementing the “District-based Scheme on Carer Training”

58. We rolled out the “District-based Scheme on Carer Training” in 2007 to enhance the support for elders’ carers. District Elderly Community Centres are given \$50,000 as seed money to run carer

training courses in collaboration with community organisations. The courses teach basic elderly care skills, and those who have completed training can be recruited to provide carer services. At present, there are 119 elderly centres participating in the scheme. Over 7 800 carers have been trained so far.

Implementing the “Pilot Scheme on Home Care Services for Frail Elders”

59. We introduced a “Pilot Scheme on Home Care Services for Frail Elders” in March this year to provide tailor-made service packages for elders who are staying at home and waiting for nursing home places. We expect a total of 510 elders to be served during the three-year period.

Implementing the Integrated Discharge Support Programme for Elderly Patients

60. The Government first introduced the Integrated Discharge Support Programme for Elderly Patients (IDSP) in three districts in 2008 to provide “one-stop” services for elders discharged from hospitals. Services include pre-discharge planning, post-discharge transitional rehabilitation exercise and home care services. IDSP can effectively improve elders’ physical functioning and reduce the rate of unplanned re-admission into hospitals which, in the long run, should help promote ageing in place. In view of the positive outcome of the pilot scheme, we will make IDSP a regular, territory-wide service by the first quarter of 2012. We expect that the full-scale IDSP will benefit some 33 000 elders each year.

One-Off Relief Measures for Social Security Recipients

Providing an extra allowance to CSSA, OAA and DA recipients

61. The Government will implement short-term measures to ease the burden on the grassroots next year, which includes providing an extra allowance to CSSA recipients, equal to one month of the standard rate CSSA payments; and an extra allowance to OAA and DA recipients, equal to one month of the allowances. This proposal will involve an additional expenditure of more than \$1.9 billion. We estimate that about 1.1 million people will benefit. When preparing the Budget for the next financial year, the Financial Secretary will assess the prevailing economic situation and our financial position to work out the

implementation details.

Labour and Welfare Bureau
October 2011