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LABOUR AND WELFARE BUREAU
GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT

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18 January 2019

Mr Anthony Chu
Clerk
Public Accounts Committee
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Mr Chu,

**Follow-up to Public Accounts Committee Report No. 63
Provision of long-term care services for the elderly**

Thank you for your letter of 4 January 2019 to the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, seeking information on various matters about elderly services. I am authorised to reply as follows.

Number of residential care places and day care places for the elderly

2. As at end of March 2018, there was an accumulated total number of 27 360 subsidised residential care places and 47 137 non-subsidised residential care places for the elderly in Hong Kong; compared to end-March 2017, these include respectively 228 and 92 new subsidised and non-subsidised residential care places provided in two completed development projects of residential care homes for the elderly (“RCHes”) and one project under the Special Scheme on Privately Owned Sites for Welfare Uses (“the Special Scheme”) in 2017-18.

3. Besides, as at end of March 2018, there was an accumulated total number of 3 202 subsidised day care places for the elderly in Hong Kong; compared to end-March 2017, there are 143 new subsidised day care places.

Effect on waiting time for residential care places by the elderly

4. In view of the rising service demand, the Government will continue to increase service places for the elderly through a multi-pronged approach. The Government is implementing 35 development projects for the provision of new contract RCHEs, contract RCHEs cum day care units for the elderly and day care centres for the elderly. It is estimated that about 3 700 residential care places (including subsidised and non-subsidised places) and 1 250 day care places for the elderly will be progressively provided from 2018-19 onwards. In addition, the Government has been implementing the Special Scheme. Assuming that all the proposals for elderly services under the Special Scheme could be implemented smoothly, about 7 000 residential care places and about 2 000 day care places for the elderly could be provided. Moving forward and in response to the welfare sector's request, the Government plans to implement a new phase of the Special Scheme aiming at increasing the provision of much-needed welfare facilities including elderly services. The new phase of the Special Scheme will be launched in April 2019.

5. Apart from the above, the Social Welfare Department has been implementing the Pilot Scheme on Residential Care Service Voucher ("RCSV") for the Elderly ("the Pilot Scheme") since March 2017, offering a total of 3 000 RCSVs by phases from 2017 to 2019, with a view to providing an additional service choice for the elderly. Besides, the Chief Executive announced in the 2018 Policy Address to purchase an additional 5 000 EA1 places under the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme ("the EBPS") in the next five years to increase the supply of subsidised residential care places for the elderly.

6. The waiting time for subsidised residential care places by the elderly is affected by a number of factors, including whether the applicant has any special preference in terms of a particular RCHE, as well as the location, diet and religious background of RCHEs, whether the applicant accepts subsidised residential care places provided under the EBPS and the Nursing Home Place Purchase Scheme, whether the applicant has requested joining family members and / or relatives in a particular RCHE, the turnover rate of the selected RCHEs, etc. As a matter of fact, about 99% of applicants on the Central Waiting List have personal and specific requirements for the location of their selected RCHEs, including 26% who have indicated that they would accept and await a particular RCHE only.

As such, it is not possible to estimate the direct impact of the increase in service places on the waiting time for residential care places for the elderly.

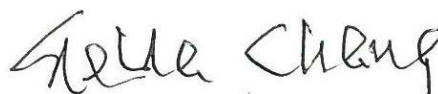
Plan of provision of additional long term care services for the elderly in the next five years

7. For the next five-year plan from 2018-2019 to 2022-2023, additional residential care places for the elderly are expected to be provided through the completion of 12 development projects for the provision of RCHEs. On the other hand, additional day care places for the elderly are expected to be provided through 14 development projects for setting up day care centres / units for the elderly, and a new scheme to set up day care units for the elderly at qualified private and self-financing RCHEs through purchase of places from them. It is estimated that about 1 275 additional residential care places for the elderly (including subsidised and non-subsidised places), and 742 additional day care places will be provided in the next five years. The development timetable of individual projects is subject to change as we continue to work out the details of the projects.

8. Moreover, the Government's plan to purchase an additional 5 000 EA1 places under the EBPS in the next five years as announced in the 2018 Policy Address will also increase the supply of subsidised residential care places for the elderly, and enhance the overall service quality of private RCHEs.

9. Furthermore, it was announced in the 2018 Policy Address that the Government will provide an additional 2 000 service quota under the Enhanced Home and Community Care Services within 2019, and another 1 000 vouchers under the Second Phase of the Pilot Scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly in 2019-20, bringing the total to 7 000, to support ageing in place for elderly persons with moderate or severe impairment.

Yours sincerely,



(Miss Stella Chang)

for Secretary for Labour and Welfare

c.c. Director of Social Services (Attn: Mr TAN Tick-ye)