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16 July 2019

Clerk to Panel on Manpower
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong
Miss Betty MA

Dear Miss MA,

Thank you for your letter of 28 June to the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, relaying Hon SHIU Ka-chung's questions regarding the manpower situation of the elderly care service sector. I am authorized to reply as follows.

Navigation Scheme for Young Persons in Care Service

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) will continue to provide 1 200 training places under the Navigation Scheme for Young Persons in Care Services (the Navigation Scheme) within 5 years starting from 2020-21, with enhancement measures including an extension of the age range of trainees, reduction of working hours per week to allow trainees to pursue their studies more effectively, increase of salaries, etc, with a view to attracting more young people to join the social welfare care sectors. SWD will exchange views with the operating agencies through regular meetings on the implementation and outcome of the Navigation Scheme, so as to ensure that the arrangements are consistent with the objectives and continue to review the effectiveness of the scheme.

Since the launch of the Navigation Scheme in 2015, there were a total of 1 018 trainees recruited by the operating agencies as at end-December 2018. Among them, 314 trainees graduated. Based on the information provided by the trainees upon graduation, 186 graduates planned to stay in social welfare service units including subvented residential care homes for the elderly or for persons with disabilities operating by the non-governmental organisations, self-financing homes,

contract homes and private residential care homes and day care service units, etc. SWD does not maintain information on the number of graduates being employed in each type of the residential care homes. We note that 417 trainees have withdrawn from the Navigation Scheme mainly for reasons such as pursuing further studies, finding the job nature not suitable, having secured another job or personal reasons.

Supplementary Labour Scheme

The Government operates different schemes for employers to apply for importation of labour on account of their actual operational circumstances, so as to supplement skills not readily available in the local labour market and sustain the competitiveness and development needs of Hong Kong. Depending on the skill levels and/or educational requirements of the job vacancies concerned, employers may apply to the Immigration Department for admission of professionals or to the Labour Department (LD) for importation of workers at technician level or below under the Supplementary Labour Scheme (SLS).

There are no overall or industry-specific quota ceilings under SLS. For each application, LD will ascertain whether the employment terms offered by the employer are appropriate. In accordance with the SLS requirements, employers are required to launch a four-week open recruitment exercise in Hong Kong to accord priority to filling available job vacancies with local workers. Upon completion of the recruitment procedures by the employer, LD will analyse each application so as to assess whether the employer has sincerity to recruit/train local workers; its genuine need for manpower; size of its local workforce, etc. LD will then invite members of the Labour Advisory Board (LAB) to give views on LD's recommendations. LD will thoroughly assess various factors and the views and justifications provided by LAB members, before approving or refusing the concerned application for importation of labour as appropriate.

To further alleviate the manpower shortage in the elderly care service sector, SWD introduced measures in April 2014, allowing private residential care homes for the elderly participating in the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme to apply for importation of care workers under SLS for their non-bought places.

LD does not have information on the qualifications of or the languages spoken by imported care workers employed by employers.

Yours sincerely,



(Desmond Wu)

for Secretary for Labour and Welfare

c.c. Director of Social Welfare (Attn: Ms Wendy FUNG)
Commissioner for Labour (Attn: Mr Tony CHIU)