

立法會
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Panel on Welfare Services

Subcommittee on Issues Relating to the Silver Age Card

Minutes of the fourth meeting
held on Monday, 31 May 2021, at 10:45 am
in Conference Room 2B of the Legislative Council Complex

Members present : Hon Wilson OR Chong-shing, MH (Chairman)
Hon YIU Si-wing, BBS
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, SBS, MH, JP
Hon KWOK Wai-keung, JP
Hon Vincent CHENG Wing-shun, MH, JP

Public Officers attending : Item I

Mr HO Kai-ming, JP
Under Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Ms Wendy FUNG Shuk-man
Chief Social Work Officer (Elderly)³
Social Welfare Department

Mr Terry NG Wai-yuen
Senior Systems Manager (Industry Development)²
Office of the Government Chief Information Officer
Innovation and Technology Bureau

Item II

Ms Leonie LEE Hoi-lun
Principal Assistant Secretary for Food & Health
(Health)¹
Food and Health Bureau

Dr Rita HO Ka-wai
Head, Non-Communicable Disease Branch
Department of Health

Dr Deacons YEUNG Tai-kong
Director (Cluster Services)
Hospital Authority

Mr Daniel LO
Chief Manager (Allied Health)
Hospital Authority

Ms Ada WONG Wai-han
Chief Social Work Officer (Elderly)¹
Social Welfare Department

Clerk in attendance : Ms Maisie LAM
Chief Council Secretary (2) 3

Staff in attendance : Mr Roger CHUNG
Council Secretary (2) 3

Miss Alison HUI
Legislative Assistant (2) 3

Action **I. Application of technology to facilitate older persons to integrate into the community and age in place**
[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1109/20-21(01) to (03)]

The Subcommittee deliberated (index of proceedings attached at **Annex**).

- Admin 2. The Subcommittee requested the Administration to advise:
- (a) the percentage of persons aged 60 to 64 having used the Internet and electronic services;
 - (b) the expenditure incurred and the number of service units that had completed the setting up of Wi-Fi services under the four-year pilot project to provide free Wi-Fi services at service units operated by subvented or subsidized organizations under the Social Welfare Department;
 - (c) the number of residential care homes for the elderly using video communication applications for residents to communicate with their family members during the coronavirus disease 2019 epidemic; and
 - (d) in table form details of the measures in place to facilitate the application of technology for older persons to integrate into the community and age in place, including the targets, performance indicators, implementation progress, expenditure estimate and room for improvement of each measure.

3 Members agreed that the Subcommittee would conduct a visit to the Gerontech Education and Rental Service Centre to better understand the latest gerontech applications in Hong Kong.

II. Health status and average healthcare expenditure of persons aged 60 to 64 in Hong Kong

[LC Paper No. CB(2)1109/20-21(04)]

4 The Subcommittee deliberated (index of proceedings attached at **Annex**).

- Admin 5. The Subcommittee requested the Administration to advise the percentage of persons who were aged 60 or above with mild or moderate dementia and their carers that could benefit from the Dementia Community Support Scheme.

III. Any other business

6 The Subcommittee agreed to discuss "Poverty situation of persons aged 60 to 64 in Hong Kong and measures to assist these persons" and "Consumption patterns of persons aged 60 to 64 in Hong Kong and business opportunity of the silver age market" at the fifth meeting of the Subcommittee to be scheduled.

(Post-meeting note: On the instruction of the Chairman, the fifth meeting of the Subcommittee was subsequently scheduled for 28 June 2021 from 11:00 am to 12:30 pm. Members were informed vide LC Paper No. CB(2)1235/20-21 issued on 28 June 2021 that with the concurrence of the Chairman, the meeting originally scheduled on that day was cancelled as the Black Rainstorm Warning Signal was in force within two hours before the appointed time of the meeting. The fifth meeting was subsequently held on 16 July 2021 from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm to discuss the two items originally scheduled for discussion at the meeting on 28 June 2021 and another item which was scheduled for discussion at the July meeting of the Subcommittee.)

- 7 There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:14 pm.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
17 November 2021

**Proceedings of the fourth meeting of
the Subcommittee on Issues Relating to the Silver Age Card
held on Monday, 31 May 2021, at 10:45 am
in Conference Room 2B of the Legislative Council Complex**

Time marker	Speaker(s)	Subject(s)	Action required
<i>Agenda item I – Application of technology to facilitate older persons to integrate into the community and age in place</i>			
000548 - 001019	Chairman Admin	<p>Opening remarks</p> <p>Members noted the information note and background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat on the subject under discussion. [LC Papers No. CB(2)1109/20-21(02) and (03)]</p> <p>Briefing by the Administration [LC Paper No. CB(2)1109/20-21(01)]</p>	
001020 - 001745	Chairman Mr LEUNG Che-cheung Admin	<p>Mr LEUNG Che-cheung suggested that the Administration should engage non-governmental organizations ("NGOs") to reach out to hidden elders to teach them on the use of digital technology products. He enquired about the number of hidden elders, institutionalized elders, elders receiving care services and elders with dementia visited under the Information and Communications Technology Outreach Programme for the Elderly ("the Outreach Programme") launched by the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer ("OGCIO"), and whether the Administration would subsidize needy elders to use mobile data service at home.</p> <p>The Administration advised that:</p> <p>(a) adult recipients of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ("CSSA") who were not residing in any residential institution were entitled to telephone-related grant to cover, among others, expenses related to mobile data service. Where necessary, elders not on CSSA could use their Old Age Living Allowance to cover the relevant expenses; and</p> <p>(b) efforts had been and would continuously be made by subvented elderly centres to approach hidden elders through outreach services. To improve the quality of life of institutionalized elders and elders receiving care services, the Social Welfare Department ("SWD") launched the \$1 billion Innovation and Technology Fund for Application in Elderly and Rehabilitation Care ("I&T Fund") in December 2018 to subsidize, among others, NGOs and private organizations subsidized by SWD that provided residential care services and community care and support services for the elderly to procure, rent and trial use technology products. Separately, with a funding allocation of about \$205 million by the Lotteries Fund ("LF"), SWD launched a four-year pilot project in January 2020 to progressively provide free Wi-Fi services at around 1 350 service units operated by subvented or subsidized organizations under SWD ("the Pilot Project").</p>	
001746 - 003136	Chairman Mr YIU Si-wing	Holding the view that adopting digital technology in daily living could enhance the mental health and well-being of elders, Mr YIU	

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	Admin	<p>Si-wing expressed disappointment that the paper provided by the Administration had no mention of the concrete plans, service targets, estimated expenditure and timetable of how it would promote the adoption of digital technology among persons aged between 60 and 64 who were more willing and able to embrace digital technology. In response, the Administration advised that:</p> <p>(a) the estimated expenditures of the latest round of the Outreach Programme and the Enriched Information and Communications Technology Training Programme for the Elderly ("the Training Programme"), which were two programmes implemented by OGCIO to help elders to integrate into the digital community, were both around \$10 million. For the former, outreach services were provided to about 8 000 elders in the previous two-year round which would soon be completed and it was anticipated that the new round which had just commenced would benefit more than 10 000 elders. As regards the latter, around 2 600 elderly persons had benefited so far. The target number of beneficiaries under the next round of the Training Programme, which was planned to be launched in end-2021, would be worked out in due course; and</p> <p>(b) the target set by OGCIO in 2018 was to raise the percentages of the elderly in using the Internet and electronic services to 70% by 2023. According to the findings of the Thematic Household Surveys conducted by the Census and Statistics Department, the percentage of persons aged 65 or above who had used the Internet during the 12 months before enumeration had increased from 62.2% in 2019 to 65.9% in 2020.</p> <p>On the response provided by the Administration in paragraph (b) above, Mr YIU Si-wing considered that OGCIO should aimed at increasing the target to 80% in the future, and requested the Administration to explore if there were available statistics on the percentage of persons aged 60 to 64 having used the Internet and electronic services.</p> <p>Noting that only about \$200 million had been granted under the \$1 billion I&T Fund, Mr YIU Si-wing suggested that the scope of the I&T Fund should be extended to subsidize needy persons aged 60 or above to purchase smartphones or tablets so that those who had learnt to use digital technology products could have access to hardware for adopting more digital technology in their daily living. He further suggested that to achieve the above objective, subsidy should be provided to needy elders to meet their expenses of using mobile data service. Referring to the recent approval of the Finance Committee for an injection of \$1.1 billion into LF in view of the latest financial position of LF, he cast doubt about the appropriateness to allocate a one-off funding of \$205 million for the implementation of the Pilot Project and enquired about the progress. In response, the Administration advised that:</p> <p>(a) the \$1 billion earmarked for the I&T Fund would be disbursed in five years. So far, three tranches of grants totalling over \$200 million had been approved for about 970 elderly and</p>	Admin

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		<p>rehabilitation service units to procure or rent over 4 200 items of technology products. Vetting of the fourth tranche applications had been completed and the fifth tranche application was closed recently. It was estimated that a total of over 1 600 service units would be benefitted from the I&T Fund, which would improve the quality of life of their service users and reduce the burden and pressure of care staff and carers; and</p> <p>(b) it would advise in writing the expenditure incurred and the number of service units that had completed the setting up of Wi-Fi services under the Pilot Project, which aimed at encouraging the 1 350 service units operated by subvented or subsidized organizations under SWD to make use of more efficient and convenient technology products as well as web-based resources to enhance service quality.</p>	<p>Admin</p>
<p>003137 - 004335</p>	<p>Chairman Mr Vincent CHENG Admin</p>	<p>Expressing concern about the slow implementation progress of the I&T Fund and the Pilot Project, Mr Vincent CHENG was dissatisfied that the Administration's paper had failed to provide concrete information on these two measures. The Administration advised that popular products approved for elderly service units under the I&T Fund included smart hospital beds with extra low position, equipment and assessment tools for occupational therapy/physiotherapy/speech therapy, companion robot, anti-wandering system, wireless health monitoring equipment, etc. As regards the Pilot Project, grants had been approved for around 1 260 service units to set up Wi-Fi services.</p> <p>Given that no visiting at residential care homes for the elderly ("RCHEs") was allowed some time during the coronavirus disease 2019 epidemic unless on compassionate grounds and his experience suggested that some RCHEs still used telephone without video for their residents to maintain contact with their family members, Mr Vincent CHENG asked how the Administration had made use of information technology to facilitate institutionalized elders and elders living alone to stay connected with the society.</p> <p>The Administration advised that during the epidemic when no visiting was allowed unless under special circumstances and on compassionate ground, welfare service units had maintained contact with and provided appropriate support to service users by telephone and video communication applications to understand their needs. RCHEs were also advised to give every possible assistance to family members of their residents as far as practicable so that they could maintain contact with the residents through video communication. The Chairman and Mr Vincent CHENG requested the Administration to advise in writing the number of RCHEs which had employed such means during the epidemic.</p> <p>Mr Vincent CHENG urged the Administration to foster cross-bureaux or cross-sector collaboration to map out innovative initiatives for the benefit of elders through the application of technology. In response, the Administration advised that:</p>	<p>Admin</p>

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		<p>(a) the Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Fund inaugurated in 2013 sought to connect different sectors, including businesses, NGOs, academics and philanthropies, to create social impacts through innovative solutions that addressed poverty and social exclusion. As at end-April 2021, a total of 28 projects targeting at elderly persons had been funded to promote digital inclusion. The Fund had also funded the first landscape study on gerontechnology in Hong Kong in 2017 and had appointed an intermediary in December 2020 to design, develop and operate an inclusive one-stop Gerontechnology Platform to foster the development and application of gerontechnology so as to facilitate older persons to integrate into the community and age in place. The three-year project had commenced in January 2021; and</p> <p>(b) with the support of the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust, the Gerontech Education and Rental Service Centre and the Gerontech Cleaning and Maintenance Service Centre were set up in Shatin to provide, among others, rental service of gerontechnology products for older persons aged 60 or above in the district under a pilot scheme.</p>	
004336 - 005109	Chairman Admin	<p>The Chairman opined that Hong Kong had lagged behind in both the application of technology to facilitate older persons to integrate into the community and age in place, and the promotion of adopting digital technology among elders. On the former, he enquired about the Administration's concrete plan to foster the development of gerontechnology. As regards the latter, he asked whether the Administration would commission an independent third party to assess the effectiveness of the Outreach Programme and the Training Programme implemented by OGCIO in achieving its target to raise the percentages of the elderly in using the Internet and electronic services to 70% by 2023.</p> <p>The Administration advised that:</p> <p>(a) OGCIO had no plan to commission an independent study to assess the effectiveness of the Outreach Programme and the Training Programme at this stage;</p> <p>(b) the Gerontechnology Platform comprised four basic functionalities, namely a knowledge hub; network and capacity building; consultancy, localization and testing support for gerontechnology products; and impact assessment. Its schedule was to complete the website development and roll out the knowledge hub in July and November 2021 respectively. Network and capacity building activities for the supply-side stakeholders would be conducted on an ongoing basis throughout the three-year project period. The provision of consultancy service would be of the same arrangement. The target of the Platform was to conduct testing for not less than 10 locally developed gerontechnology products in the residential setting in phases during the three-year period and complete the testing of two locally developed gerontechnology products in the community setting by March 2022. The latest</p>	

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		<p>landscape study on gerontechnology in Hong Kong would be completed in October 2021, whereas the interim and the final report of impact assessment would be completed in November 2022 and February 2024 respectively; and</p> <p>(c) the rental service of gerontechnological products provided by the Gerontech Education and Rental Service Centre might be extended to other districts at a later stage.</p> <p>The Chairman proposed and members agreed that the Subcommittee would conduct a visit to the Gerontech Education and Rental Service Centre. Separately, the Chairman requested the Administration to advise in writing and in table form details of the measures in place to facilitate the application of technology for older persons to integrate into the community and age in place, including the targets, performance indicators, implementation progress, expenditure estimate and room for improvement of each measure to ensure that the use of public funds was value for money.</p>	Admin
<i>Agenda item II – Health status and average healthcare expenditure of persons aged 60 to 64 in Hong Kong</i>			
005110 - 005628	Chairman	Items for discussion at the fifth meeting of the Subcommittee	
005629 - 010224	Chairman Admin	Briefing by the Administration [LC Paper No. CB(2)1109/20-21(04)]	
010225 - 011031	Chairman Mr YIU Si-wing Admin	<p>Mr YIU Si-wing pointed out that many persons aged between 60 and 64 would suffer from non-communicable diseases, as evidenced by the findings of the population health survey conducted by the Department of Health ("DH") in 2014-2015 that the percentage of persons who were diagnosed with hypercholesterolaemia was higher in the age group of 60 to 64 than that of the age group of 65 to 84 (i.e. 74.2% vis-à-vis 68.7%). Noting that the average charges paid by patients of the Hospital Authority who were aged 60 to 64 was around \$1,180 in 2019-2020, Mr YIU Si-wing asked whether consideration could be given to providing persons aged between 60 and 64 with health care vouchers of an annual amount of \$1,000, which was equivalent to half the amount of the health care vouchers for elderly persons aged 65 or above, to meet their expenses for private primary healthcare services. The Administration responded that the suggestion had to be considered together with the eligible age of other welfare policies.</p> <p>Noting that colorectal cancer and lung cancer were the two most commonly diagnosed cancers among persons aged 60 to 64, Mr YIU Si-wing enquired whether the Administration would introduce a territory-wide lung cancer screening programme of a nature similar to the Colorectal Cancer Screening Programme to facilitate the identification of asymptomatic persons having early stage disease. The Administration explained that all screening methods had their limitations and the existing lung cancer screening methods did not justify with evidence a population-based screening programme. It would keep in view international and local evidence in this regard.</p>	

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		<p>Taking the view that the prevalence rates of dementia would be on the rise given an ageing population and carers of persons with dementia were always under immense pressure, Mr YIU Si-wing sought information on the percentage of persons who were aged 60 or above with mild or moderate dementia and their carers that could benefit from the Dementia Community Support Scheme, and urged the Administration to strengthen the support to these persons. The Administration agreed to provide the requisite statistics in writing, adding that the Scheme had been extended to all hospital clusters from May 2019 onwards.</p>	Admin
011032 - 012158	<p>Chairman Mr LEUNG Che-cheung Admin</p>	<p>Mr LEUNG Che-cheung shared the view that health conditions of the population would start to deteriorate after the age of 60 and it was not uncommon that persons aged between 60 and 64 would suffer from cardiovascular diseases. To reduce the healthcare burden of the community, the Administration should subsidize persons in this age group to undergo medical check-up by, say, lowering the eligible age for the Elderly Health Care Voucher Scheme to 60 for detection of any early sign of diseases and encourage physical activity among persons aged 60 to 64 for health maintenance. The Administration responded that:</p> <p>(a) influenza vaccination was an effective means in preventing influenza and its complications. Persons aged 50 or above were eligible to receive free or subsidized seasonal influenza vaccination, as the case might be, under the Government Vaccination Programme or the Vaccination Subsidy Scheme; and</p> <p>(b) while a person's risk of developing non-communicable and chronic diseases was age-dependent, adopting healthy lifestyles at an early age could effectively tackle the risk factors for diseases. Maintaining regular physical activity starting from childhood and continuing into adult years would bring many health benefits. Promoting physical activity participation among children and adolescents as well as adults was one of the interventions to be enhanced under the document entitled "Towards 2025: Strategy and Action Plan to Prevent and Control Non-communicable Diseases in Hong Kong" promulgated by the Administration in 2018.</p>	
012159 - 013223	<p>Chairman Mr KWOK Wai-keung Admin</p>	<p>Mr KWOK Wai-keung enquired about the strategic plan of the Administration to prevent the healthcare problems arising from an ageing population. He suggested that the Administration could make reference to the "decent homes standard" of the United Kingdom and develop a set of well-being standards for elders for the provision of appropriate interventions to maintain their quality of life. On the health of women aged between 60 and 64, he was concerned about whether territory-wide screening programmes targeted cervical cancer and breast cancer were available as a tool for secondary prevention of these two cancers. He noted that the Mainland had provided women with free screening targeted cervical cancer and breast cancer.</p> <p>The Administration advised that promoting primary care, setting up District Health Centres and strengthening the community care and</p>	

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		<p>support services for elderly persons through the 90 day care centres/units for the elderly, the 31 enhanced home and community care services teams, the 61 integrated home care services teams and the 211 elderly centres subvented by SWD were some measures it put in place to address the problem of an ageing population.</p> <p>On the prevention of cervical cancer and breast cancer, the Administration advised that women aged 25 to 64 who ever had sex could receive regular cervical screening under the Cervical Screening Programme. For women aged 65 or above, they could receive cervical screening under DH's Elderly Health Service. The above part, a three-year Pilot Scheme on Subsidized Cervical Cancer Screening and Preventive Education for Eligible Low-income Women had once been rolled out in December 2017 under the Community Care Fund. Separately, as announced in the Chief Executive's 2020 Policy Address, the Administration would adopt a risk-based approach for breast cancer screening. The Food and Health Bureau would brief the Panel on Health Services on women's health, including details of the breast cancer screening pilot programme, in June 2021.</p> <p>The Chairman requested that the Administration to take note of members' views regarding the healthcare needs of persons aged between 60 and 64, including the suggestion to lower the eligible age for the Elderly Health Care Voucher Scheme to 60 and to strengthen the preventive health measures for persons of this age group.</p>	
<i>Agenda item III – Any other business</i>			
013224 - 013246	Chairman	Closing remarks	