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LABOUR AND WELFARE BUREAU
GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT

Central Government Offices
Tim Mei Avenue
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21 October 2021

Ms Maisie LAM
Clerk to the Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Ms Lam,

**Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services
Subcommittee on Issues Relating to the Silver Age Card
Follow-up Items**

At the meetings of the Subcommittee on Issues Relating to the Silver Age Card on 26 February, 31 May and 16 July 2021, Members requested the Government to provide supplementary information. I am authorised to provide a consolidated reply as follows.

Follow-up items of the meeting on 26 February 2021

2. The Government has earlier provided discussion papers on the welfare benefits of persons aged 60 to 64 –

| Areas of concern | Paper number |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Feasible measures and implementation timetable for introducing the Silver Age Card | LC Paper No. CB(2)811/20-21(01) |

| Areas of concern | Paper number |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Welfare measures currently provided for members of the public aged between 60 and 64 | LC Paper No. CB(2)811/20-21(01) |
| Living conditions of members of the public aged between 60 and 64 under the poverty line | LC Paper No. CB(2)1212/20-21(01) |
| Retirement or employment status of members of the public aged between 60 and 64 | LC Paper No. CB(2)950/20-21(02) |
| Health conditions of members of the public aged between 60 and 64 and overview of their average medical expenses | LC Paper No. CB(2)1109/20-21(04) |
| The positive impacts to be brought about by the consumption patterns of members of the public aged between 60 and 64 and the Silver Age products on the economy of Hong Kong | LC Paper No. CB(2)1212/20-21(03) |

Follow-up items of the meeting on 31 May 2021

Proportion of persons aged 60 to 64 having used the Internet

3. According to a Thematic Household Survey conducted by the Census and Statistics Department in 2020, the proportion of persons aged 60 to 64 having used the Internet in the past 12 months before enumeration was 95.8%.

Application of technology in welfare service units

4. Through the allocation by Lotteries Fund, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) launched a four-year pilot project to provide free Wi-Fi service progressively at SWD-subsidised service units operated by non-governmental organisations from January 2020 onwards. As at end-August 2021, over \$148 million were approved, involving 1 270 service units, among which 1 039 service units have commenced Wi-Fi service.

5. During the pandemic, SWD has encouraged operating organisations of the residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) to make

use of mobile phones and video communication devices to help elderly residents keep in touch with their family members and to enhance communication between the family members and staff of RCHEs. Service units receiving subvention or subsidy from SWD may apply for the “Innovation and Technology Fund for Application in Elderly and Rehabilitation” to procure, rent and trial use related technology products. Subvented RCHEs/nursing homes and contract homes operated by non-governmental organisations may also participate in the “Jockey Club Facilities Enhancement Scheme for Pandemic Preparedness at Residential Care Homes” rolled out by the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust in December 2020 to obtain one-off subsidy to purchase suitable equipment and devices for upgrading their safety and infection control facilities, including telecommunication equipment/devices. SWD does not keep the number of RCHEs using video chat applications for elderly residents to communicate with their family members.

Measures to promote the adoption of digital technology among the elderly

6. The Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) has implemented a number of measures to facilitate the elderly in integrating into the digital society and ageing in place, involving a total expenditure of about \$23 million. Among others, OGCIO has launched several rounds of the “ICT Outreach Programme for the Elderly” (Outreach Programme) since 2013-14. Non-profit-making elderly services organisations have been commissioned to visit the elderly across the territory, including those who are living in RCHEs, receiving day care and home care services and the hidden elderly, and organise various activities to enable the elderly to experience digital living, thus encouraging them to make greater use of digital technology. From December 2018 to July 2021, the Outreach Programme provided around 30 000 outreach services to more than 7 500 elderly persons.

7. A new round of the two-year Outreach Programme was launched in March 2021. More interesting technological elements have been introduced, such as broadcasting digital technology tutorial video clips through smart robots and making use of drones for conducting virtual community tours for the elderly. This enables them to experience the benefits brought by digital technology to their daily life and strengthens their connection with the community. It is anticipated that the new round of the programme will benefit more than 10 000 elderly persons.

8. In addition, OGCI launched the “Enriched ICT Training Programme for the Elderly” (Training Programme) in February 2019, offering over 100 advanced digital training courses for the elderly with basic knowledge of digital technology for free. Topics included e-government services, cloud tools, cyber security, use of e-wallet and health management, etc. The first round of Training Programme was completed in August 2021, benefiting around 3 200 elderly persons. OGCI plans to launch a new round of Training Programme in end-2021 and arrange more young people to act as course instructors to promote harmony across generations.

9. From October 2019 to September 2021, the “Elderly IT Learning Portal”, launched by OGCI, has introduced 24 learning modules for the elderly to learn on their own, including protection of mobile devices, cyber security and the use of common mobile applications such as “LeaveHomeSafe”, “iAM Smart” and “HK eMobility”.

Dementia Community Support Scheme

10. The Food and Health Bureau, in collaboration with the Hospital Authority (HA) and SWD, launched the “Dementia Community Support Scheme” (DCSS) as a two-year pilot scheme in February 2017. It has been regularised since February 2019 and aims at providing support services to elderly persons in the community diagnosed with mild or moderate dementia referred by HA, or members of District Elderly Community Centres suspected of having features of early dementia. As at end-June 2021, DCSS provided services to some 5 300 elderly persons, among which around 95% were referred by HA. The Government does not maintain statistics on the number of elderly persons with dementia and their carers in Hong Kong, therefore we could not provide the percentage of elderly persons with mild or moderate dementia and their carers benefiting from DCSS.

Follow-up items of the meeting on 16 July 2021

Training and continuing education for mature persons

11. The Employees Retraining Board (ERB) has been providing dedicated courses for persons aged 50 or above (“Post-50”) since 2019-20, including placement-tied courses on “Survey Interviewer” and “Organic Farming Assistant” and a non-placement-tied course on “Workplace Re-entry”, to help “Post-50” prepare for re-entering the employment market.

In 2019-20 and 2020-21, a total of 92 trainees completed the dedicated courses.

12. In addition, ERB has been organising “Post-50 Internship Programme” since 2019-20 to encourage the “Post-50” retirees who have the aspiration of re-entering the employment market to better understand the prevailing market circumstances. In 2019-20 and 2020-21, a total of 122 “Post-50” trainees participated in the internship offered by 74 institutions, among which 35 were employed as full-time or part-time staff by participating institutions upon completion of internship.

Employment support services for mature persons

13. All job centres of the Labour Department have set up dedicated counters to provide priority registration and job referral services for job seekers aged 50 or above. Apart from general employment services, job seekers in need (including mature persons) may meet employment officers to obtain personalised employment advisory services. Employment officers will provide job seekers with job search advice and information on the job market and training/retraining, conduct career aptitude assessment, etc., in accordance with their individual needs and preferences, to help them match and find suitable jobs and appropriate employment programmes to enhance their employability.

Yours sincerely,



(Isaac SIN)

for Secretary for Labour and Welfare