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Replies to supplementary questions raised by Legislative Council Members in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2024-25

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Session No. : 20

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CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-LWB(W)01

(Question Serial No. SV058)

Head: (141) Government Secretariat: Labour and Welfare Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses

Programme: (5) Subvention: Shine Skills Centres

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Alice LAU)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question:

Shine Skills Centres (SSCs) provide 1 060 training places each year. According to the findings of the employment survey on graduates of full-time programmes of SSCs in the 2021/22 academic year (AY), 339 graduates were categorised under open employment, waiting to report duty/seeking employment, supported employment, training at sheltered workshops, planning for/pursuing further study and others. Among them, 97 were in open employment. Why are there differences in the numbers of training places, graduates and those in open employment? Have the Government and/or SSCs followed up with these graduates about the reasons for unemployment and provided further assistance?

Asked by: Hon KWOK Ling-lai, Lillian

Reply:

SSCs provide 1 060 training places each year, comprising 660 full-time and 400 part-time training places. Full-time training programmes are normally of 2-year duration. Such training places cover the first and second years of the programmes, each accounting for about half of the places, i.e. about 330 places. The actual number of graduates for full-time programmes in the 2021/22 AY was 339, which was close to the number of places for the second year of the programmes.

In March 2023, SSCs conducted an employment survey on the graduates of the full-time programmes for the 2021/22 AY. At that time, Hong Kong's economy just started to recover gradually after the epidemic, thus affecting the open employment rate of these graduates to some extent. Moreover, as some graduates did not respond to the employment survey, the figure on open employment so derived may be underestimated.

To help graduates sustain their work motivation and continuous employment in the open market, SSCs provide employment support and follow-up services up to 12 months after graduation, and such support services may continue for a maximum of 3 years for individual graduates on a need basis. Student Counsellors will provide career guidance services for graduates not having joined the workforce, including the arrangement of career-oriented

group activities, workshops, individual interviews and counselling, to improve their interviewing and working skills, adaptability to the work environment, work attitude and interpersonal skills, etc.

In addition, for job seekers with disabilities who are fit for open employment, the Labour Department (LD) provides personalised employment services, including employment counselling, job matching and referral, and post-placement follow-up services. The LD implements the Work Orientation and Placement Scheme to encourage employers to hire persons with disabilities.

For persons with disabilities who are unable to take up open employment, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) subvents non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to provide vocational rehabilitation and training services, such as sheltered workshops, supported employment, integrated vocational rehabilitation services centres and integrated vocational training centres, etc., to enable persons with disabilities with different needs to receive appropriate vocational rehabilitation services in a specially designed training environment so as to learn to adapt to general work requirements.

The SWD has also implemented the Enhancing Employment of People with Disabilities through Small Enterprise Project to provide NGOs with seed money to start up small enterprises/businesses so as to create employment and on-the-job training opportunities for persons with disabilities. Moreover, the SWD has launched the Support Programme for Employees with Disabilities to subsidise employers for procurement of assistive devices and/or workplace modifications to support employment of persons with disabilities.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-LWB(W)02

(Question Serial No. S029)

Head: (170) Social Welfare Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Services for the Elderly
(4) Rehabilitation and Medical Social Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Social Welfare (Charmaine LEE)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question:

I would like to follow up on the controlling officer's reply to an initial question raised by a Legislative Council Member regarding the examination of the Estimates of Expenditure 2024-25 (Reply Serial No. LWB(W)048). According to the reply from the Labour and Welfare Bureau, the Government has commissioned the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals (TWGHs) to operate the 24-hour Designated Hotline for Carer Support (the Carer Hotline), with 30 phone lines answered by over 100 professional social workers on shift duties. The annual expenditure involved is about \$12 million. In the connection, would the Government please advise the following:

- (1) The Government has indicated that, in order to provide prompt assistance to carers, the number of phone lines has been increased to 30, thus ensuring that there are no situations where calls go unanswered or lines are busy. TWGHs collects specific statistics for evaluation purposes, such as the waiting time for callers to be connected to operators during different time periods and the frequency of callers aborting the call or experiencing sudden disconnections while waiting to be connected to operators. Would the Government please advise when will the related statistics be provided?
- (2) The Social Welfare Department (SWD) currently does not maintain related statistics. Does the Government have any plans to develop an electronic system for maintaining such statistics?
- (3) Are there any measures in place to evaluate the follow-up work on the calls received by the Carer Hotline?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Man-ki, Maggie

Reply:

- (1) According to supplementary information provided by the service operator, since the launch of the Carer Hotline on 26 September 2023, hotline social workers have answered calls within 30 seconds during morning, afternoon and overnight hours. In the fourth quarter of 2023, an average of about 800 calls per month were aborted by callers while waiting to be connected. If calls were unanswered due to busy lines,

hotline social workers would try to contact the callers according to voicemail messages. The telephone system of the service operator does not keep records of sudden disconnections.

- (2) SWD will regularly collect relevant statistics and other information related to the service from the operator.
- (3) The service operator is required to provide the services specified in the relevant Funding and Service Agreement, which sets out the essential service requirements, as well as output and outcome standards. To collect feedback from service users, social workers answering the Carer Hotline will ask callers about their level of satisfaction with the hotline service before ending the conversation. SWD will review the service operator's performance and service effectiveness under the existing Service Performance Monitoring System, and will maintain liaison with the service operator to continuously improve the services.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-LWB(W)03

(Question Serial No. SV060)

Head: (170) Social Welfare Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Services for the Elderly
(4) Rehabilitation and Medical Social Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Social Welfare (Charmaine LEE)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question:

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) has commissioned the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals (TWGHs) to operate the Designated Hotline for Carer Support (the Carer Hotline). In this connection, would SWD and TWGHs please provide the following information:

- (a) the waiting time for callers to be connected to operators during different time periods;
- (b) the frequency of callers aborting the call or experiencing sudden disconnections while waiting to be connected to operators;
- (c) the number of hours per shift for social workers who answer the Carer Hotline, and the average handling time for each case; and
- (d) whether resources have been set aside to survey the opinions of the service users of the Carer Hotline and their situations after using the service, in order to assess the effectiveness of the Carer Hotline and related follow-up work.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Man-ki, Maggie

Reply:

- (a) According to supplementary information provided by the service operator, since the launch of the Carer Hotline on 26 September 2023, hotline social workers have answered calls within 30 seconds on average during morning, afternoon and overnight hours.
- (b) In the fourth quarter of 2023, an average of about 800 calls per month were aborted by callers while waiting to be connected. If calls were unanswered due to busy lines, hotline social workers would try to contact the callers according to voicemail messages. The telephone system of the operator does not keep records of sudden disconnections.
- (c) Social workers are assigned to the 24-hour Carer Hotline in 3 shifts per day. The average handling time for each case is 21 minutes.
- (d) The service operator is required to provide the services specified in the relevant Funding and Service Agreement, which sets out the essential service requirements, as well as output and outcome standards. To collect feedback from service users, social workers

answering the Carer Hotline will ask callers about their level of satisfaction with the hotline service before ending the conversation. SWD will review the service operator's performance and service effectiveness under the existing Service Performance Monitoring System, and will maintain liaison with the service operator to continuously improve the services.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-LWB(W)04

(Question Serial No. SV056)

Head: (170) Social Welfare Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Social Security

Controlling Officer: Director of Social Welfare (Charmaine LEE)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question:

In 2024-25, the estimated expenditure on the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme is about \$23.055 billion, representing an increase of 1.9% compared to the revised estimate of expenditure for 2023-24, and accounting for 19.2% of the estimated total expenditure of the Social Welfare Department (SWD) for 2024-25. During the same year, the estimated expenditures on the Old Age Allowance (OAA), the Old Age Living Allowance (OALA), the Guangdong (GD) Scheme and the Fujian (FJ) Scheme under the Social Security Allowance (SSA) Scheme are expected to increase by 10.4%, 17.8%, 38.6% and 31.3%, respectively. The total subsidy amount will reach \$51.6 billion, accounting for 42.9% of SWD's estimated total expenditure for the year. Given the ageing population, the expenditure on SSA is expected to continue growing, posing a significant financial burden on the Government. In this regard, what measures does the Department plan to take in response, and what preparations have been made?

Asked by: Hon HONG Wen, Wendy

Reply:

The Government implements a non-contributory social security system to provide suitable cash assistance for needy individuals. This system comprises the CSSA Scheme and the SSA Scheme (which includes OAA, OALA and Disability Allowance). With an ageing population, Hong Kong is expected to see a continuous rise in the number of recipients under the social security system. The Government will closely monitor the situation and review the cash assistance schemes as necessary, depending on the circumstances, to ensure financial sustainability.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-LWB(W)05

(Question Serial No. SV057)

Head: (170) Social Welfare Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Social Security

Controlling Officer: Director of Social Welfare (Charmaine LEE)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question:

The expenditure on the Integrated Employment Assistance Programme for Self-reliance (IEAPS) and enhanced employment support services provided by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) commissioned by the Social Welfare Department (SWD) in 2023-24 is about \$160 million. From April to the end of December 2023, a total headcount of 15 292 persons received employment support services under the scheme, accounting for about 5% of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) recipients. Among them, only 351 and 37 headcounts of persons left the CSSA net after securing employment and returning to mainstream schooling respectively. Collectively, they account for 2.5% of IEAPS participants in headcount and 0.1% of CSSA recipients, indicating a relatively low success rate. What is the Government's view on the effectiveness of IEAPS? Is it worthwhile to continue implementing the scheme in the long run?

Asked by: Hon HONG Wen, Wendy

Reply:

In January 2013, SWD launched IEAPS, under which NGOs are commissioned to provide services to able-bodied CSSA recipients aged between 15 and 64. The aim of IEAPS is to encourage and assist them in increasing their employability and securing paid employment.

In April 2020, SWD enhanced the services to improve the effectiveness of NGOs in providing the relevant services. The enhanced employment support services include (a) providing employment counselling and training services; (b) assisting recipients in obtaining up-to-date information on labour market, job vacancies and retraining courses; (c) assessing the needs of recipients and providing them with tailor-made and focused employment support services; and (d) arranging job matching for them. Furthermore, NGOs will provide post-employment support services for at least 3 months to those who have secured employment. SWD has also enhanced its collaborations with the Labour Department, the Employees Retraining Board (ERB) and NGOs. For example, arranging for NGOs to use ERB's Training Consultancy Service and relaxing the arrangement for Temporary Financial Aid to cover more job seeking-related activities, such as transport and taking meals away from home.

For recipients to leave the CSSA net after securing paid employment, their income has to meet their basic household needs. If it does not, CSSA, as a safety net of last resort, will continue to provide them with cash assistance. Therefore, it is not advisable to evaluate the effectiveness and worthiness of the scheme simply by the number of persons in headcount leaving the CSSA net alone.

Based on past experience, the causes of unemployment amongst able-bodied CSSA recipients vary. In addition to personal behavioural and family issues, it may also involve external environmental factors such as the impact of the pandemic on the general economy, families and individuals. SWD's contract with NGOs will expire in September 2025. SWD will review the relevant services before the contract expires.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-LWB(W)06

(Question Serial No. SV059)

Head: (170) Social Welfare Department
Subhead (No. & title): ()
Programme: (3) Services for The Elderly
Controlling Officer: Director of Social Welfare (Charmaine LEE)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question:

The annual actual expenditure on the Navigation Scheme for Young Persons in Care Services (the Navigation Scheme) increased from \$67.8 million in 2020-21 to \$82 million in 2023-24 (as at end-December 2023). Meanwhile, the number of admissions decreased from 418 to 225, with the expenditure per trainee increasing from about \$160,000 to \$360,000. Given the drop in admissions, what factors contributed to the increase in the overall actual expenditure or expenditure per trainee?

Asked by: Hon KWOK Ling-lai, Lillian

Reply:

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) launched the Navigation Scheme in 2015-16. The annual expenditure includes the operating cost of the operating agencies, training fees, and training subsidies for the service units. To attract more young people to the social welfare care sector, SWD enhanced the Navigation Scheme in 2020-21 by increasing the training subsidies provided to the service units, and introducing a new incentive allowance for the trainees on top of their salaries, etc.

As trainees can join or drop out of the Navigation Scheme at different times, the actual number of trainees admitted by each operating agency and the number of trainees eligible for the incentive allowance vary each year. Therefore, the average expenditure per trainee cannot be deduced and compared based on the number of admissions or expenditure incurred in individual year.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-LWB(W)07

(Question Serial No. SV053)

Head: (170) Social Welfare Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Family and Child Welfare

Controlling Officer: Director of Social Welfare (Charmaine LEE)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question:

What is the number/headcount of beneficiaries under the Ethnic Minority (EM) District Ambassador pilot scheme (pilot scheme) since its launch? Has the Government evaluated whether adequate welfare support services and relevant resources have been provided to EMs under the pilot scheme? If yes, how was the evaluation conducted?

Asked by: Hon LAM Lam, Nixie

Reply:

The pilot scheme was launched in October 2020. As at December 2023, it has contacted over 27 000 EMs. With positive feedback and support from various stakeholders, the Government has extended the pilot scheme for 3 years to 2026. The Social Welfare Department will keep reviewing the implementation of the pilot scheme and examine the way forward for the services.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-LWB(W)08

(Question Serial No. SV054)

Head: (170) Social Welfare Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Family and Child Welfare

Controlling Officer: Director of Social Welfare (Charmaine LEE)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question:

Regarding the Neighbourhood Support Child Care Programme (NSCCP), please provide the following information:

- (a) What are the percentages of home-based child carers under NSCCP who meet and do not meet the relevant performance standards, respectively?
- (b) Is there a need to allocate additional resources to strengthen the evaluation and follow-up of the performance of home-based child carers? If yes, is it financially feasible?
- (c) Are the overall resources provided for NSCCP sufficient? Will additional resources be allocated to meet the demand for home-based child care service (HCCS) in the community?

Asked by: Hon LAM Lam, Nixie

Reply:

- (a) To ensure service quality, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) has consistently required service operators under NSCCP to establish mechanisms for recruiting, assessing, selecting and training home-based child carers, as well as for service matching. Social workers from service operators are required to conduct monthly home visits to home-based child carers currently providing services, while child care workers will provide them with individual training/supervision. In addition, service operators are required to continuously evaluate and follow up on the performance of home-based child carers. Under NSCCP, only home-based child carers whose performance meets the standards will be assigned to provide care services.
- (b) & (c) SWD will increase the incentive payment for home-based child carers under NSCCP from April 2024 and the number of places of HCCS from the fourth quarter of 2024. It will also strengthen the training and monitoring of home-based child carers, and the training framework will be applicable to existing home-based child carers, too. The above measures will incur an additional annual recurrent expenditure of about \$293.3 million.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-LWB(W)09

(Question Serial No. SV055)

Head: (170) Social Welfare Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Family and Child Welfare

Controlling Officer: Director of Social Welfare (Charmaine LEE)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question:

Please provide the specific timetable and order for extending the After School Care Programme for Pre-primary Children (ASCP(PC)) to cover the remaining 9 districts. Have resources been earmarked for implementing this extension, or will additional resources be required in the future?

Asked by: Hon LAM Lam, Nixie

Reply:

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) will extend ASCP(PC) to cover all districts in Hong Kong in phases within a period of 3 years starting from 2024. The number of centres participating in ASCP(PC) will increase from 16 to 28, while the number of places will increase from 672 to 1 176. SWD is currently formulating details of the service extension, and plans to invite non-governmental organisations to submit proposals in the second quarter of 2024, with a view to launching the first phase of service extension in the first quarter of 2025. The annual estimated expenditure for the service extension is about \$14.2 million.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-LWB(W)10

(Question Serial No. SV050)

Head: (170) Social Welfare Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (7) Young People

Controlling Officer: Director of Social Welfare (Charmaine LEE)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question:

Does the Government plan to extend the existing School-based After School Care Service Scheme (the Scheme) to kindergartens? If so, when is the implementation expected?

Asked by: Hon TIEN Puk-sun, Michael

Reply:

The Government implemented the Scheme in the 2023/24 school year. There are currently a total of 59 primary schools participating, offering a total of 2 915 service places. The Scheme allows primary students in need (especially those from single-parent families) to stay after school to receive care and learning support, enabling their parents to go to work. The Government will evaluate the effectiveness of the Scheme in due course, and determine its way forward based on the evaluation results and views from stakeholders.

Currently, the Social Welfare Department subsidises non-governmental organisations to operate Extended Hours Service at 169 pre-primary institutions, allowing pre-primary children under the age of 6 in need to continue receiving care in the original institutions they attend. The aim is to support parents who cannot take care of their children temporarily due to work or other reasons.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-LWB(W)11

(Question Serial No. SV051)

Head: (170) Social Welfare Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Services for The Elderly
(4) Rehabilitation and Medical Social Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Social Welfare (Charmaine LEE)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question:

In late September last year, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) launched the Designated Hotline for Carer Support 182 183 (the Carer Hotline), which is answered by professional social workers. The purpose of the Carer Hotline is to reduce stress and burden experienced by carers in their daily caregiving responsibilities. Will SWD consider developing a mobile phone application to provide similar services?

Asked by: Hon TIEN Puk-sun, Michael

Reply:

SWD has requested the service operator of the Carer Hotline to develop a mobile phone application that provides non-voice chat functionality. The application is expected to be launched in mid-2024.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-LWB(W)12

(Question Serial No. SV052)

Head: (186) Transport Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (5) Transport Services for Persons with Disabilities and Government Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme for the Elderly and Eligible Persons with Disabilities

Controlling Officer: Commissioner for Transport (Ms Angela LEE)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question:

Regarding the Government Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme for the Elderly and Eligible Persons with Disabilities (the \$2 Scheme), please advise on the following:

- (a) Is there any duplication of resources between the \$2 Scheme and the Public Transport Fare Subsidy Scheme (PTFSS)?
- (b) What are the reasons for extending the \$2 Scheme to cover residents' services (RS) and what are the considerations in choosing which RS to cover?
- (c) Beneficiaries of the \$2 Scheme may be prompted to take long-haul routes because of insufficient or reduced short-haul routes, thus leading to the "short rides on long bus routes" situation, as well as increasing government expenditure on reimbursing the participating bus operators. In this connection, how will the Government ensure the sustainability of the \$2 Scheme? For example, will the Government require the participating bus operators to provide a specified minimum number of short-haul routes?

Asked by: Hon HO King-hong, Adrian Pedro

Reply:

- (a) The Government launched PTFSS in 2019 to relieve the fare burden of commuters who use local public transport services for daily commuting and whose public transport expenses are relatively high. At present, under PTFSS, the Government provides a subsidy amounting to one-third of the commuters' actual monthly public transport expenses in excess of \$400, subject to a subsidy cap of \$400 per month per Octopus.

The \$2 Scheme enables elderly people and eligible persons with disabilities to travel on designated public transport modes and services at a concessionary fare of \$2 per trip.

The aim is to build a caring and inclusive society in Hong Kong by encouraging the beneficiaries to participate more in community activities.

The monthly threshold under PTFSS is currently at \$400. A beneficiary under the \$2 Scheme would have to travel over 200 times in a month (i.e. travelling 6 to 7 times a day on average) in order to qualify for subsidy under PTFSS. The actual public transport expenses for beneficiaries of the \$2 Scheme will normally not exceed the threshold of PTFSS, rendering the chance of “double benefits” very slim.

Given their different policy objectives, modes of operation and target beneficiaries, the two schemes basically do not overlap. The Transport Department (TD) will continue to closely monitor the proper and efficient operation of the two schemes to ensure proper use of the public funds.

- (b) As mentioned in part (a) above, the policy objective of the \$2 Scheme is to enable the beneficiaries to travel on designated public transport modes and services at a concessionary fare with a view to building a caring and inclusive society in Hong Kong. The Government also noted that some RS operators wished to be covered under the \$2 Scheme.

Given that the nature of RS is unique and their fares are determined on the basis of agreement of the RS operators and the owners or residents of relevant properties, the Government must ensure that the service scope and operation mode of RS operators joining the \$2 Scheme meet all the requirements for “public transport”. For this reason, the Government has already made clear publicly that any application from RS operators for admission to the \$2 Scheme would only be considered on a case-by-case basis if they can prove that the RS route concerned could meet all the following three prerequisite conditions:

- (1) the RS route is made accessible to all members of the public without any restriction and any preferential treatment to the property owners/residents would also apply to other members of the public;
- (2) there is no direct and parallel public transport alternatives; and
- (3) the RS operators fully comply with TD’s fare control and monitoring requirements similar to those for red minibus and kaito, including registration of fares with TD, installation of an Octopus payment system on admitted routes to ensure adherence to pre-set registered fares for calculating reimbursement of differential fares, as well as strengthening of the internal control system and submission of annual assurance and audit reports on the relevant patronage and differential fare under the \$2 Scheme prepared by independent auditors in accordance with the relevant standards issued by the Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants.

TD has put in place a vetting and monitoring mechanism to ensure that the RS routes applying for admission to the \$2 Scheme comply with the above three conditions.

- (c) TD will plan for, and franchised bus companies will provide, long-haul and short-haul bus services with regard to passenger demand to meet the needs of passengers. According to our records, the overall number of short-haul bus routes has increased instead of decreased in the past three years.

The Financial Secretary announced in the 2024-25 Budget to review the mode of operation of the \$2 Scheme with a view to maintaining the financial sustainability of the Scheme. The Government has stated clearly that it will maintain the policy intent of the \$2 Scheme to build a caring and inclusive society by encouraging the beneficiaries to participate more in community activities, and has no intention to cancel the Scheme or change the existing beneficiary groups. The Government will take into account the effectiveness of different options in containing the growth of expenditure in the review and factors including the practicability of these options.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-LWB(W)13

(Question Serial No. S026)

Head: (186) Transport Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (5) Transport Services for Persons with Disabilities and Government Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme for the Elderly and Eligible Persons with Disabilities

Controlling Officer: Commissioner for Transport (Ms Angela LEE)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question:

Please provide the relevant data in the tables below:

- (1) the Government's reimbursement of the revenue forgone to the participating franchised bus operators under the Government Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme for the Elderly and Eligible Persons with Disabilities (the \$2 Scheme) in respect of persons aged 60 to 64, persons aged 65 or above and eligible persons with disabilities from 2021-22 to 2023-24; and

	2021-22 Actual (\$'000)			2022-23 Actual (\$'000)			2023-24 Revised estimate (\$'000)		
	Persons aged 65 or above	Eligible persons with disabilities	Persons aged 60 to 64	Persons aged 65 or above	Eligible persons with disabilities	Persons aged 60 to 64	Persons aged 65 or above	Eligible persons with disabilities	Persons aged 60 to 64
The Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) Limited									
Citybus Limited									
New World First Bus Services Limited									

Long Win Bus Company Limited									
New Lantao Bus Company (1973) Limited									

(2) the numbers of average daily passenger trips taken by the beneficiaries under the \$2 Scheme from 2021-22 to 2023-24, with a breakdown by franchised bus operator.

Franchised bus operator	Calendar year	Persons aged 65 or above	Eligible persons with disabilities	Persons aged 60 to 64
The Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) Limited	2021			
	2022			
	2023			
Citybus Limited	2021			
	2022			
	2023			
New World First Bus Services Limited	2021			
	2022			
	2023			
Long Win Bus Company Limited	2021			
	2022			
	2023			
New Lantao Bus Company (1973) Limited	2021			
	2022			
	2023			

Asked by: Hon ZHANG Xinyu, Gary

Reply:

(1) The Government's reimbursement of the revenue forgone to the participating franchised bus operators under the Government Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme for the Elderly and Eligible Persons with Disabilities (the \$2 Scheme) in respect of persons aged 60 to 64, persons aged 65 or above and eligible persons with disabilities from 2021-22 to 2023-24 is tabulated below:

	Financial year	Persons aged 65 or above	Eligible persons with disabilities	Persons aged 60 to 64 ^(Note 1)
The Kowloon Motor Bus Company	2021-22 Actual (\$'000)	299,491	109,646	_(Note 2)
	2022-23	282,109	97,353	449,153

	Financial year	Persons aged 65 or above	Eligible persons with disabilities	Persons aged 60 to 64 ^(Note 1)
(1933) Limited	Actual (\$'000)			
	2023-24 Revised estimate (\$'000)	368,225	112,163	573,608
Citybus Limited ^(Note 3)	2021-22 Actual (\$'000)	61,111	20,116	_(Note 2)
	2022-23 Actual (\$'000)	59,308	18,921	96,677
	2023-24 Revised estimate (\$'000)	123,739	34,241	190,598
New World First Bus Services Limited ^(Note 3)	2021-22 Actual (\$'000)	50,257	17,030	_(Note 2)
	2022-23 Actual (\$'000)	50,488	15,533	72,841
	2023-24 Revised estimate (\$'000)	25,269	7,258	36,897
Long Win Bus Company Limited	2021-22 Actual (\$'000)	7,966	3,337	_(Note 2)
	2022-23 Actual (\$'000)	7,980	3,177	17,909
	2023-24 Revised estimate (\$'000)	11,363	3,970	24,396
New Lantao Bus Company (1973) Limited	2021-22 Actual (\$'000)	4,332	1,900	834
	2022-23 Actual (\$'000)	5,116	1,770	9,446
	2023-24 Revised estimate (\$'000)	8,967	2,320	13,211

(Note 1) From 27 February 2022, the eligible age of the \$2 Scheme has been lowered from 65 to 60.

(Note 2) Due to timing difference in settlement, the Government's reimbursement of the differential fare to franchised bus operators (except New Lantao Bus) for 27 February to 31 March 2022 in relation to the lowering of the eligible age of the \$2 Scheme to 60 was not reflected in the expenditure of 2021-22.

(Note 3) The franchise of New World First Bus Services Limited merged with Citybus Limited (Franchise 1) on 1 July 2023 to form a new Citybus Limited (Franchise for the Urban and New Territories bus network).

- (2) The numbers of average daily passenger trips taken by the beneficiaries under the \$2 Scheme in the past 3 years, with breakdown by franchised bus operator, are set out in the following table:

Bus operator	Calendar year	Persons aged 65 or above	Eligible persons with disabilities	Persons aged 60 to 64^(Note 4)
The Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) Limited	2021	397 000	49 800	-
	2022	368 400	44 000	202 100
	2023	457 000	49 000	233 000
Citybus Limited ^(Note 5)	2021	57 300	7 900	-
	2022	59 300	7 100	38 600
	2023	121 000	12 000	67 000
New World First Bus Services Limited ^(Note 5)	2021	67 500	8 100	-
	2022	64 700	7 200	34 300
	2023	79 000	8 100	40 000
Long Win Bus Company Limited	2021	5 500	1 000	-
	2022	5 400	1 000	6 000
	2023	7 500	1 200	7 500
New Lantao Bus Company (1973) Limited	2021	2 900	1 300	-
	2022	2 600	1 100	4 900
	2023	5 800	1 500	7 200

(Note 4) From 27 February 2022, the eligible age of the \$2 Scheme has been lowered from 65 to 60.

(Note 5) The franchise of New World First Bus Services Limited merged with Citybus Limited (Franchise 1) on 1 July 2023 to form a new Citybus Limited (Franchise for the Urban and New Territories bus network). The above numbers of average daily passenger trips taken by the beneficiaries are calculated based on the operation periods of individual franchises.

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