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### Replies to supplementary questions raised by Legislative Council Members in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2025-26

**Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare**

**Session No. : 9**

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**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**S-LWB(W)01**

**(Question Serial No. S053)**

Head: (170) Social Welfare Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Family and Child Welfare

Controlling Officer: Director of Social Welfare (Edward TO)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question:

1. With reference to Table 1 of Annex 1 of LWB(W)046, please provide this Committee with the total expenditure for various child care service centres in the past year, along with a detailed breakdown of resource allocation across different service types.
2. With reference to Table 3 of Annex 1 of LWB(W)046, would the Government please clarify the reasons for the low utilisation rates across various types of services? Is this because of insufficient promotion? Please also provide the number of service places and the average utilisation rates for each district.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Man-ki, Maggie

Reply:

1. The total expenditure and resource allocation for aided standalone child care centres (CCCs), aided CCCs attached to kindergartens (KGs), Occasional Child Care Service (OCCS), Extended Hours Service (EHS), the Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project (NSCCP), and the After School Care Programme for Pre-primary Children [ASCP(PC)] in the past year are tabulated as follows:

Service type	2024-25 Revised estimate (\$ million)
Aided standalone CCC	82.4
Aided CCC attached to KG	204.2
OCCS	62.4
EHS	97.1
NSCCP	226.6
ASCP(PC)	32.1
Total	704.8

2. The utilisation rates of child care services are affected by multiple factors. Generally speaking, when choosing child care services, parents will consider factors such as the service operator's background, service features, centre facilities, location of the premises and their accessibility, etc., in addition to their family's child rearing needs. The Social Welfare Department (SWD) will continue to review the planning of child care services, taking into account the overall situation of service supply and demand, and individual factors in specific districts, including the number of service places and

utilisation rates, land supply situation and demographic changes, etc. Follow-up measures will be taken in a timely manner, including strengthening service promotion, increasing the number of centres and allocation of service places, to better meet the service demand of the community. The number of places and average utilisation rates of the abovementioned child care services in the past year (April to December 2024), broken down by District Council district, are set out at Annex.

**Number of places and average utilisation rates/number of service users for standalone CCCs, CCCs attached to KGs, OCCS, EHS, and NSCCP (April to December 2024)**

District	Standalone CCC Note 1		CCC attached to KG Note 2		OCCS		EHS		NSCCP Note 3	
	Number of places	Average utilisation rate (%)	Number of places	Average utilisation rate (%)	Number of places	Average utilisation rate (%)	Number of places	Average utilisation rate (%)	Number of places	Number of service users
Central & Western	48	100.0	3 111	19.0	14	48.0	99	36.0	92	284
Southern	-	N.A.	1 161	49.0	17	61.0	73	73.0	92	204
Islands	136	90.0	1 315	26.0	12	29.0	27	13.0	92	505
Eastern	260	47.0	3 730	43.0	22	48.0	175	40.0	92	317
Wan Chai	48	100.0	1 530	35.0	17	62.0	88	49.0	92	174
Kwun Tong	397	58.0	1 351	58.0	48	55.0	249	50.0	184	414
Wong Tai Sin	-	N.A.	558	71.0	32	65.0	206	49.0	92	371
Sai Kung	-	N.A.	5 066	24.0	22	57.0	94	30.0	92	360
Kowloon City	1 152	55.0	4 753	35.0	23	53.0	151	38.0	92	107
Yau Tsim Mong	131	77.0	2 128	46.0	22	34.0	139	39.0	92	518
Sham Shui Po	162	75.0	1 663	42.0	32	69.0	179	53.0	184	457
Sha Tin	177	99.0	2 163	63.0	31	66.0	149	43.0	184	515
Tai Po	92	100.0	1 601	33.0	19	72.0	111	43.0	92	370
North	207	54.0	1 203	46.0	21	63.0	105	51.0	92	275
Yuen Long	152	90.0	1 559	77.0	39	55.0	144	53.0	184	854
Tsuen Wan	244	50.0	1 190	65.0	19	60.0	98	42.0	92	291
Kwai Tsing	60	100.0	1 186	53.0	35	48.0	127	38.0	92	414
Tuen Mun	172	75.0	1 779	49.0	34	46.0	172	42.0	184	574
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 438</b>	<b>65.0</b>	<b>37 047</b>	<b>41.0</b>	<b>459</b>	<b>56.0</b>	<b>2 386</b>	<b>45.0</b>	<b>2 116</b>	<b>7 004</b>

N.A. - Not applicable

Note 1 2 standalone CCCs in Sham Shui Po and Kwun Tong commenced service in September and October 2024 respectively.

Note 2 Figures provided by the Education Bureau as at September 2024.

Note 3 Starting from September 2024, on the basis of 1 service team in each of the 18 districts in Hong Kong, SWD has added an additional service team in districts with higher service demands, namely Kwun Tong, Sham Shui Po, Sha Tin, Tuen Mun, and Yuen Long. As a result, the number of service teams in Hong Kong has increased from 18 to 23. Each service team is required to provide a minimum of 92 service places (i.e. the total number of places in all 18 districts should be at least 2 116). Service operators may flexibly increase the number of home-based child care service places beyond this requirement to meet the actual service demands.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**S-LWB(W)02**

**(Question Serial No. S054)**

Head: (170) Social Welfare Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Family and Child Welfare

Controlling Officer: Director of Social Welfare (Edward TO)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question:

1. LWB(W)192 mentioned that “the expenditure of a child care centre (CCC) depends on the number of places it provides. For an aided standalone CCC offering 100 places, the estimated annual expenditure is about \$7.9 million.” In this regard, please provide a detailed breakdown of the specific areas where the expenditure for each CCC is allocated.
2. LWB(W)192 also mentioned that “after understanding the services and arrangements of ancillary facilities provided by the CCC, parents can directly apply for the services from the service operator. By understanding the circumstances of the parents and their children, the service operator can also provide more flexible support to families in need, and effectively address the service needs of different districts.” In this connection, please inform this Committee of the situation and data gathered since January 2024, including the number of working families in Hong Kong, the number of service applications submitted to service operators, the number of successful applicant families, and the number of enquiry cases. If such data is unavailable, please provide an explanation.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Man-ki, Maggie

Reply:

1. The Social Welfare Department (SWD) provides subsidies to service operators of aided standalone CCCs to cover costs, including staff salaries, administrative support, minor repairs and maintenance, rental and management fees, etc. Some CCCs receive additional funding to provide Extended Hours Service and/or Occasional Child Care Service.
2. Since parents can apply directly for CCC services from the service operators based on their needs, without being waitlisted under a central system, and the applications are handled by the respective service operators, SWD does not have statistical information on the applications for these services.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**S-LWB(W)03**

**(Question Serial No. S055)**

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 (Edward TO)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question:

1. The reply mentioned that the “Scheme is expected to incur a total expenditure of about \$107.9 million for 2025-26.” Please provide a detailed breakdown of expenditures by area.
2. Will any portion of the expenditure be used to support the Care Teams in implementing the pilot Scheme? If so, please provide the details. If not, why?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Man-ki, Maggie

Reply:

1. The Government will extend the District Services and Community Care Teams (Care Teams) – Scheme on Supporting Elderly and Carers (the Scheme) to all 18 districts across the territory in April 2025, with a total expenditure of about \$107.9 million. This expenditure will cover (1) subsidies for 452 Care Teams to implement the Scheme; (2) subsidies for eligible elderly persons and persons with disabilities (PWDs) to install and use emergency alarm systems (known as “Safety Bell”); (3) expenses for upgrading and maintaining the household information management platform used by the Care Teams; and (4) the cost for employing short-term staff by the Social Welfare Department to assist in co-ordinating the Scheme.
2. Over 80% of the total expenditure will be used to directly subsidise 452 Care Teams. These subsidies can only be used by the Care Teams to provide services for households of singleton and doubleton elderly, and carers of elderly persons and PWDs, as well as for related purposes, including but not limited to volunteer allowances, expenses for computer systems, promotional services/activities under the Scheme, rental and use of venues, relevant insurance premiums, remuneration for auditors/auditing fees, costs for the maintenance and repair of equipment/facilities, and central administrative expenses of participating organisations, etc.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**S-LWB(W)04**

**(Question Serial No. SV027)**

Head: (170) Social Welfare Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Family and Child Welfare

Controlling Officer: Director of Social Welfare (Edward TO)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question:

Regarding the number of calls received by the Designated Hotline for Carer Support (the Carer Hotline) and the average case handling time, the Bureau stated in its reply (LWB(W)33) that there were approximately 62 800 calls, with an average call duration of about 20 minutes. Regarding the nature of calls received by the Carer Hotline, there were 33 570 calls related to emotional issues and 1 596 calls related to mental health issues, together accounting for approximately 56% of the total. As social work services are the primary form of support provided, would the Bureau please provide the number of cases that received second-tier support, such as counselling services or other forms of assistance?

Asked by: Hon KWOK Ling-lai, Lillian

Reply:

As at 31 December 2024, among the 62 800 calls received, there were 1 093 cases that required further support through referrals for counselling or social welfare services. Moreover, there were 93 cases that required emergency support or outreach visits.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**S-LWB(W)05**

**(Question Serial No. SV028)**

Head: (170) Social Welfare Department

Subhead (No. & title): ( )

Programme: (1) Family and Child Welfare

Controlling Officer: Director of Social Welfare (Edward TO)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question:

Regarding foster care service, the Bureau indicated in its reply from the previous year that the revised estimate for foster care service in 2023-24 was approximately \$253 million, with a provision of 1 230 service places. However, in LWB(W)017, the Bureau reported that the actual number of service users in 2023-24 was 863, while the expenditure remained unchanged at \$253 million. Could the Bureau account for the discrepancy in the figures, and explain why the expenditure remained the same despite a reduction in the number of service users?

Asked by: Hon KWOK Ling-lai, Lillian

Reply:

In 2023-24, the Social Welfare Department allocated \$253 million to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) operating foster care service to provide 1 230 foster care places, while the actual number of children receiving foster care service was 863. The provision covered items such as incentive payments, maintenance grant and setting-up grant for foster children, etc. disbursed to foster parents through NGOs on an actual cost basis. NGOs disburse incentive payments/allowances based on the actual numbers of foster families and foster children. They are required to refund the unspent amount to the Government in the following year if there is any surplus in the provision for the relevant items.

- End -



**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**S-LWB(W)06**

**(Question Serial No. SV029)**

Head: (170) Social Welfare Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Services for The Elderly

Controlling Officer: Director of Social Welfare (Edward TO)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question:

Regarding the Navigation Scheme for Young Persons in Care Services (Navigation Scheme), the document indicates a total expenditure of \$266 million over 5 years. In 2022-23, 222 trainees were enrolled in the Navigation Scheme, with an expenditure of \$40.5 million. In 2023-24, the number of trainees increased slightly to 225, yet the expenditure more than doubled to \$82 million. In contrast, by the final year (i.e. 2025-26), the expenditure was merely \$4.2 million, while the number of trainees dropped to 141. What accounts for these discrepancies?

Asked by: Hon KWOK Ling-lai, Lillian

Reply:

The Social Welfare Department launched the Navigation Scheme in 2015-16 and enhanced it in 2020-21. The annual expenditure includes the operating cost of the service operators, training fees, the incentive allowance for trainees on top of their salaries, and training subsidies for the service units.

As trainees can join or drop out of the Navigation Scheme at different times, the actual number of trainees admitted by each service operator and the number of trainees eligible for the incentive allowance vary from year to year. In addition, service operators may also utilise resources from previous years, freed up by trainee dropouts, to admit trainees beyond the training quota for the current year. Therefore, the average expenditure per trainee cannot be deduced and compared based on the number of admissions or the expenditure incurred in any given year.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**S-LWB(W)07**

**(Question Serial No. SV016)**

Head: (170) Social Welfare Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (3) Services for The Elderly

Controlling Officer: Director of Social Welfare (Edward TO)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question:

Regarding the Residential Care Service Voucher (RCSV) Scheme for the Elderly, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) regularly conducts surprise visits to recognised service providers to observe their operations, review relevant records, etc. Would the Government please provide supplementary information on the effectiveness of these surprise visits, including the number of residential care homes inspected, follow-up actions taken by SWD or relevant departments, the number of verbal warnings issued, and the number of prosecutions initiated?

Asked by: Hon LAM So-wai

Reply:

In the past 3 years (as at the end of December 2024), SWD identified a total of 23 cases of non-compliance under the RCSV Scheme during service monitoring visits, primarily related to fee-charging issues. SWD promptly followed up to ensure that the residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) involved implemented the recommended improvements. Relevant information on the service monitoring visits is set out in the table below:

Year	No. of visits	No. of RCHEs visited	No. of verbal advice issued
2022-23	131	116	0
2023-24	199	166	1
2024-25 (as at end-December 2024)	272	203	22

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**S-LWB(W)08**

**(Question Serial No. SV019)**

Head: (170) Social Welfare Department

Subhead (No. & title): ( )

Programme: (3) Services for The Elderly

Controlling Officer: Director of Social Welfare (Edward TO)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question:

Regarding the Residential Care Services Scheme in Guangdong (GDRCS Scheme), how will the Government enhance its publicity efforts to ensure that elderly persons currently waiting for subsidised residential care homes (RCHs) in Hong Kong have access to comprehensive information about the scheme? Moreover, has the Government conducted any research or analysis on the enquiries received to understand the factors influencing elderly persons or their families in deciding whether or not to participate in the GDRCS Scheme, with a view to enhancing the scheme? If so, what are the details? If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Man-kwong

Reply:

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) has been promoting the GDRCS Scheme through various channels. These include providing the latest information about the scheme on SWD's website, uploading introductory videos of participating RCHs for the Elderly (RCHEs) to SWD's YouTube channel, and holding briefing sessions and district coordinating committee meetings to introduce the scheme to caseworkers from referring offices who handle elderly persons' applications for long-term care (LTC) services so that they can promote the scheme to eligible elderly persons and their families. In addition, in November 2024, SWD broadcast a 4-episode promotional video series titled “灣區安老知多啲” on television. The videos have been uploaded to SWD's YouTube channel for continuous viewing, and are being shown at all LTC referring offices to ensure elderly persons and their families understand the scheme's services and the conditions of participating RCHEs. In March 2025, SWD launched a government promotional video with the theme “Greater Bay Area: An Ideal Option for Retirement”. Broadcast on television, the video introduces RCHEs and services offered under the scheme, covering various aspects such as environment, facilities and services, etc. to provide the public with more information about the scheme.

The Government has implemented the scheme to provide an additional option for Hong Kong elderly persons who are waitlisted for subsidised residential care places and interested in retiring in Guangdong (GD). Whether or not an elderly person participates in the scheme depends on various factors, such as the ease of visits by family members and friends, and

medical treatment arrangements, etc. SWD will engage a Hong Kong-based non-governmental organisation (NGO) experienced in Mainland social services to provide care services for elderly persons participating in the scheme and their families. In addition to supporting elderly persons in adapting to life in RCHEs in GD, the NGO will conduct standardised care need assessment for elderly persons from Hong Kong who have settled in Mainland cities within the Greater Bay Area, and follow up on the applications of eligible elderly persons to join the scheme. These services are expected to be rolled out in May 2025. Moreover, to address the concerns of elderly persons regarding medical expenses, SWD is currently finalising the implementation details of a 2-year pilot scheme. Expected to launch in the second half of 2025, this scheme aims to share part of the medical costs incurred by elderly participants in relevant Mainland cities. The annual subsidy is capped at RMB10,000 per person for outpatient services, and RMB30,000 per person for inpatient services. The above enhancement measures are expected to provide greater convenience for elderly persons interested in retiring in GD.

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**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**S-LWB(W)09**

**(Question Serial No. S0043)**

Head: (170) Social Welfare Department

Subhead (No. & title): ( )

Programme: (3) Services for The Elderly

Controlling Officer: Director of Social Welfare (Edward TO)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question:

It is evident from Annex 2 of both LWB(W)135 and LWB(W)140 that the utilisation rates of day care centres/units for the elderly (DEs/DCUs) are consistently high, with most exceeding 80% and some even surpassing 100%. However, there are only 662 day respite service places available for the elderly across all 18 districts in Hong Kong. Many carers have shared their frustrations, saying that the difficulty in finding these day care centres sends their stress levels "through the roof." Given Hong Kong's ageing population and the Government's promotion of ageing in place, there appears to be a lack of support services for carers. Does the Government have plans to systematically expand these services in the future?

Asked by: Hon LI Sai-wing, Stanley

Reply:

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) has all along been committed to providing a wide range of subsidised community care and support services to enable elderly persons to age in place while providing various types of support to carers. Among these services, the number of subsidised day care service places for the elderly increased from 3 059 in July 2017 to 4 123 in December 2024, with the average waiting time significantly reduced from 11 months to 4 months. The number of day respite service places for the elderly also increased substantially from 252 in March 2023 to 662 in December 2024, covering all districts across Hong Kong. In 2024-25 (as at the end of December 2024), the average utilisation rate of day respite service of DEs/DCUs was about 52%.

In addition, SWD increased the number of service places for Enhanced Home and Community Care Services by 2 000 in October 2019, and added a total of 3 000 service places for Integrated Home Care Services (Frail Cases) in October 2020 and April 2021. As at the end of December 2024, the number of subsidised home care service places had increased to 13 365. SWD also increases the number of Community Care Service Vouchers by 1 000 in 2025-26, bringing the total to 12 000, to allow more eligible elderly persons the flexibility to choose recognised service providers and service packages based on their needs.

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**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**S-LWB(W)10**

**(Question Serial No. S044)**

Head: (170) Social Welfare Department

Subhead (No. & title): ( )

Programme: (3) Services for The Elderly

Controlling Officer: Director of Social Welfare (Edward TO)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question:

As at the end of December 2024, 316 elderly persons from Hong Kong have been admitted to residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) under the Residential Care Services Scheme in Guangdong (GDRCS Scheme). As indicated in the table of LWB(W)146, 3 RCHEs (namely Guangdong Yishou, Guangzhou Tianyue Hexihui, and Foshan Hetai) reported zero admissions.

Has the Government investigated why these 3 RCHEs have attracted no applicants? Will more stringent screening criteria be introduced to ensure that future participating RCHEs better meet the preferences of Hong Kong residents? Will the unpopularity of certain facilities affect the Government's plan to add more RCHEs in the future?

Asked by: Hon LI Sai-wing, Stanley

Reply:

The 3 Mainland RCHEs mentioned in the question joined the GDRCS Scheme as recently as in November 2024. Starting from December 2024, they have gradually been selected by elderly persons in Hong Kong for admission.

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) has adopted a rigorous approach to selecting suitable RCHEs for inclusion in the GDRCS Scheme. When considering each application, SWD not only reviews the application documents but also conducts on-site inspections to assess the overall condition of the RCHE. Applications from RCHEs that fail to meet the service standards set by SWD will not be approved.

Since the expansion of the GDRCS Scheme in July 2023, the numbers of participating RCHEs and elderly persons have been on the rise. SWD will monitor the occupancy of each RCHE, actively promote the GDRCS Scheme, and extend its coverage to other Mainland cities within the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area to provide more options for elderly persons.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**S-LWB(W)11**

**(Question Serial No. S045)**

Head: (170) Social Welfare Department

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

Programme: (3) Services for The Elderly

Controlling Officer: Director of Social Welfare (Edward TO)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question:

The Navigation Scheme for Young Persons in Care Services (Navigation Scheme) offered 1 200 places, with a total expenditure of \$266 million, averaging \$220,000 per trainee. However, out of 486 graduates, only 283 remained in social welfare service units, while the 200 who left accounted for approximately \$44 million of the expenditure. Has the Bureau investigated the reasons behind this high attrition rate? What measures will the Government implement to improve talent retention? Will it consider adopting practices from other schemes, such as requiring graduates to serve in social welfare service units for 2 to 3 years after graduation?

Asked by: Hon LI Sai-wing, Stanley

Reply:

To attract more young people to join the social welfare care sector, SWD enhanced the Navigation Scheme in 2020-21 by expanding the age range of trainees from 18-25 to 17-29, reducing the weekly working hours from 44 to 40 to allow trainees to further their studies more effectively, and raising their salaries and training subsidies, etc.

The enhanced Navigation Scheme recruited a total of 1 377 trainees, of whom 486 had graduated as at the end of December 2024. According to the information provided by some trainees at the time of graduation, 283 indicated that they would continue to be employed in social welfare service units. Since not all graduates provided employment information, this figure may not reflect the complete picture of those remaining in the social welfare sector. Service operators will follow up on the career development of the 221 trainees who remain in the Navigation Scheme upon their graduation, until they complete or leave the scheme. The reasons for trainees to drop out of the Navigation Scheme include pursuing further studies and moving on to other jobs, etc.

The final-year (i.e. 2024-25) intake of the Navigation Scheme was completed in September 2024, with a total of 141 trainees admitted.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**S-LWB(W)12**

**(Question Serial No. S046)**

Head: (170) Social Welfare Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (1) Family and Child Welfare

Controlling Officer: Director of Social Welfare (Edward TO)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question:

According to Annex 2 of LWB(W)150, the number of children served is relatively consistent across all districts, except for Kowloon City, where the centre-based care group has only 5 users. Has the Government examined the reasons for this? Is it because of inadequate promotion or a lack of centres providing the service?

Asked by: Hon LI Sai-wing, Stanley

Reply:

A new service agreement for the Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project began in September 2024. Due to the change in service operator and relocation of the centre-based care group in Kowloon City District, service users need time to understand the new operator's service arrangements and adapt to the new service location. The Social Welfare Department will continue to monitor the service utilisation of the centre-based care group in the district, and liaise with the operator to help it in formulating service promotion strategies and strengthening publicity of the service in order to address the district's demand for the service in a timely manner.

- End -



**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**S-LWB(W)13**

**(Question Serial No. S047)**

Head: (170) Social Welfare Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (4) Rehabilitation and Medical Social Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Social Welfare (Edward TO)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question:

Many people have been invited to apply for the Scheme on Providing Subsidy for Higher Disability Allowance Recipients in Paid Employment to Hire Carers (the Scheme to Hire Carers). Nevertheless, the numbers of applications and beneficiaries were small. Has the Government reviewed the reasons behind? Would high eligibility thresholds be a reason for this?

Asked by: Hon LI Sai-wing, Stanley

Reply:

All Higher Disability Allowance (HDA) recipients are regularly invited by the Social Welfare Department to apply for the Scheme to Hire Carers. However, to qualify for the scheme, applicants must be recipients of HDA under the Social Security Allowance Scheme, engaged in paid employment (excluding self-employment or work-from-home arrangements), make a monthly income between \$7,950 and \$31,800, and employ a full-time carer. Hence, the number of subsidy recipients is smaller than the number of invitees. To ensure proper use of public funds, the Government must establish appropriate eligibility requirements like income thresholds.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**S-LWB(W)14**

**(Question Serial No. S048)**

Head: (170) Social Welfare Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Social Security

Controlling Officer: Director of Social Welfare (Edward TO)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question:

According to the data provided in the Government's reply, over the past 2 years, more than 10 000 individuals received support. However, only about 10% successfully secured employment, and about 5% managed to leave the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) net.

Has the Government reviewed the existing support measures or followed up on the employment services for CSSA recipients?

Are there plans to evaluate or enhance the relevant services in the future?

Is the Government satisfied with these outcomes? Specifically, regarding the ability of CSSA recipients to leave the CSSA net, does the Government have any strategies to promote their upward mobility?

Asked by: Hon LI Sai-wing, Stanley

Reply:

The 5-and-a-half year Employment Support Services (EmSS) contract period will end in September 2025. Taking into account the past experience of EmSS, public views on EmSS as well as the labour market situation in recent years, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) will replace EmSS with the Support Programme for the Unemployed (SPU) starting from October 2025.

SPU will be operated on a pilot basis for 2 years by non-governmental organisations and/or other organisations. All unemployed able-bodied CSSA recipients aged 15 to 59 will be mandated to participate in SPU and take up unpaid work on a weekly basis arranged by SPU operators, until they have secured gainful employment or returned to mainstream education. Incompliance with the unpaid work requirement will result in CSSA stoppage for the participant and his/her household. Meanwhile, SPU participants will continue to have access to a range of free employment services and training resources as well as relevant training allowances provided by the Labour Department and the Employees Retraining Board.

SWD expects SPU to be more effective in motivating the unemployed able-bodied CSSA recipients to connect with the community, develop a work habit and accumulate work experience to enhance employability, thereby reducing their reliance on CSSA in the long term.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**S-LWB(W)15**

**(Question Serial No. SV018)**

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 (Edward TO)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question:

Regarding the District Services and Community Care Teams – Scheme on Supporting Elderly and Carers (the Scheme), the expenditure for 2024-25 was \$9.20 million with around 7 000 needy households visited, which represents an average unit cost of about \$1,300 per household. For 2025-26, the Scheme will expand to all 18 districts across the territory, with an expected expenditure of \$107.9 million and a target of visiting 60 000 households. This results in an average unit cost of approximately \$1,800 per household. Would the Government please elaborate on the factors contributing to the increase in unit costs?

Asked by: Hon TAN Yueheng

Reply:

The expenditure of the Scheme was \$9.20 million in 2024-25. The Government initially estimated that during the pilot phase, 36 Care Teams in Tsuen Wan and the Southern District would contact/visit 5 400 needy households of singleton and doubleton elderly, as well as carers of elderly persons and persons with disabilities. The Care Teams ultimately contacted/visited over 7 000 households, exceeding the key performance indicator.

In 2025-26, the Government has extended the Scheme to all 18 districts across the territory. It is expected that during the 12-month implementation period of the Scheme, the Care Teams will contact/visit over 60 000 households in need. The number of households contacted/visited finally will only be available upon conclusion of the Scheme at the end of March 2026.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**S-LWB(W)16**

**(Question Serial No. S041)**

Head: (170) Social Welfare Department

Subhead (No. & title): ()

Programme: (2) Social Security

Controlling Officer: Director of Social Welfare (Edward TO)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question:

The Government provides a grant for emergency alarm system (EAS) (commonly known as “Safety Bell”) to elderly persons under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme. In this connection, please provide this Committee with the following information:

- (a) What is the age distribution of elderly persons receiving the grant for EAS (i.e. the number and percentage of such persons in the following age groups: 65 to 70, 70 to 80, and 80 or above) in the past 5 years?
- (b) What are the household sizes and corresponding percentages of elderly persons receiving the grant for EAS in the past 5 years? Please present the data using the following table.

Year/Household Size	1 person (%)	2 persons (%)	3 persons (%)	4 persons or more (%)
2020				
2021				
2022				
2023				
2024				

- (c) Given the use of public funds to cover the costs of EAS, is there an established mechanism to regularly review the service quality of various EAS providers? If so, what are the details? If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon TANG Ka-piu

Reply:

- (a) The number and percentage of CSSA recipients aged 65 or above receiving the grant for EAS from 2020-21 to 2024-25, broken down by age group, are set out at Annex.
- (b) The Social Welfare Department (SWD) does not maintain information on the household sizes of CSSA recipients receiving the grant for EAS.

- (c) CSSA recipients are free to choose a suitable EAS service provider according to their specific needs. As is the case with other special grants under the CSSA Scheme, SWD has not designated any service providers for EAS services.

**Number and percentage of CSSA recipients aged 65 or above receiving the grant for EAS from 2020-21 to 2024-25 by age group**

Year	Number of CSSA recipients receiving the grant for EAS				Percentage relative to the number of CSSA recipients in the same age group (%)			
	Aged 65 to 69	Aged 70 to 79	Aged 80 or above	Total	Aged 65 to 69	Aged 70 to 79	Aged 80 or above	Total
2020-21	3 542	13 172	15 494	<b>32 208</b>	13	27	28	<b>25</b>
2021-22	3 081	12 557	14 507	<b>30 145</b>	12	26	27	<b>24</b>
2022-23	2 755	11 923	13 242	<b>27 920</b>	11	25	27	<b>23</b>
2023-24	2 471	11 463	12 322	<b>26 256</b>	10	24	26	<b>22</b>
2024-25 (end-December 2024)	2 286	11 255	11 960	<b>25 501</b>	10	23	25	<b>21</b>

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**S-LWB(W)17**

**(Question Serial No. S049)**

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:

It is proposed that the concessionary fare of the \$2 Scheme be changed to "\$2 flat rate cum 80 per cent discount" and the number of concessionary trips be limited to 240 per month. According to the Bureau's data, the average number of beneficiaries (excluding eligible persons with disabilities) taking more than 240 trips per month is only 280 (including 110 persons aged 65 or above and 170 persons aged 60 to 64). The Bureau also replied at the meeting that Octopus system modification would involve a cost of about \$68 million and the Government would bear two-thirds of it (i.e. about \$45.33 million). In this regard, will the Bureau explain why it considers it appropriate to set the trip limit at 240 trips for the sake of 280 beneficiaries, while it will take \$45.33 million of public money and one more year until April 2027 to implement the "concessionary trips limit" arrangement? Will it review the proposed trip limit and set it at a reasonable number between 120 and 240 (after excluding eligible persons with disabilities, the number of beneficiaries taking 120 to 240 trips is 31 000) so as to enhance the sustainability of the scheme? If yes, what are the details? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon KAN Wai-mun, Carmen

Reply:

The policy intent of the Government Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme for the Elderly and Eligible Persons with Disabilities (the \$2 Scheme) is to build a caring and inclusive society by encouraging the beneficiaries to participate more in community activities. The Government's principle in formulating the refined arrangements is to preserve the policy intent of the \$2 Scheme, while striking the best balance between enhancing its sustainability and minimising its impacts to the beneficiaries.

One point of community consensus about the \$2 Scheme is that concessionary trips should not be unlimited. Implementing the "concessionary trips limit" arrangement can tackle cases of extremely high number of passenger trips taken. Data obtained from the first 3

months upon full implementation of the real-name registration system for the \$2 Scheme showed that the average numbers of daily concessionary trips taken by persons aged 60 to 64, persons aged 65 or above and eligible persons with disabilities were 1.4, 1.0 and 1.3 respectively. Among the 2.5 million beneficiaries, only about 360 took more than 240 concessionary trips per month. The Government has adopted a relaxed approach by limiting the number of concessionary trips at 240 per month (about 8 trips per day on average). Supposing that a beneficiary travels twice a day and with each occasion involving interchange trips, a maximum of 8 trips will still meet the beneficiary's travelling needs. Moreover, since the cap is applied on a monthly basis, there will be greater flexibility for beneficiaries to balance out the difference when they occasionally take more than 8 trips on one day.

The Government's preliminary estimate at the time of the Budget announcement was that the "\$2 flat rate cum 80 per cent discount" arrangement would be implemented no later than September 2026. Upon liaison with the Octopus Cards Limited (OCL) and public transport operators, the "\$2 flat rate cum 80 per cent discount" arrangement can be implemented in April 2026, which is around 5 months earlier than originally estimated. As a result, the Government can achieve additional savings of about \$260 million in 2026-27 compared to the original estimate. As for the "concessionary trips limit" arrangement, we expect that it will be implemented about 1 year after the implementation of the "\$2 flat rate cum 80 per cent discount" arrangement. The Government is glad to see that OCL, apart from fully supporting the Transport Department in the early implementation of the 2 refined arrangements of the \$2 Scheme, has also undertaken to share one-third of the system modification cost.

- End -



**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**S-LWB(W)18**

**(Question Serial No. S052)**

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:

With reference to the replies LWB(W)253 and S-LWB(W)13 in 2024, please provide the following updates:

- (1) the amounts of the Government's reimbursement of the revenue forgone to the participating franchised bus operators (FBOs), with a breakdown into beneficiary groups under the \$2 Scheme (persons aged 65 or above, persons aged 60 to 64 and eligible persons with disabilities) in the financial year 2024-25 in the format of table (i);
- (2) the numbers of average daily passenger trips taken by the beneficiaries relating to various FBOs, with a breakdown into beneficiary groups under the \$2 Scheme in 2024 in the format of table (i); and

FBOs	Persons aged 65 or above	Eligible persons with disabilities	Persons aged 60 to 64
The Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) Limited (KMB)			
Citybus Limited (CTB)			
Long Win Bus Company Limited (LW)			
New Lantao Bus Company (1973) Limited (NLB)			

Table (i)

- (3) the annual farebox revenues of various FBOs (including the amount of the Government's reimbursement of the revenue forgone to the FBO under the \$2 Scheme) in 2023 and 2024 in the format of table (ii).

FBOs	Annual farebox revenue (\$)	
	2023	2024
KMB		
CTB		
LW		
NLB		

Table (ii)

Asked by: Hon ZHANG Xinyu, Gary

Reply:

- (1) The amounts of the Government's reimbursement of the revenue forgone to the participating franchised bus operators (FBOs) under the Government Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme for the Elderly and Eligible Persons with Disabilities (the \$2 Scheme) in the financial year 2024-25 are tabulated as follows:

FBOs	Persons aged 65 or above (\$'000)	Persons aged 60 to 64 (\$'000)	Eligible persons with disabilities (\$'000)	Total revised estimate (\$'000)
The Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) Limited (KMB)	408,541	613,242	114,555	<b>1,136,338</b>
Citybus Limited (CTB)	174,689	259,412	44,533	<b>478,634</b>
Long Win Bus Company Limited (LW)	12,366	26,787	4,327	<b>43,480</b>
New Lantao Bus Company (1973) Limited (NLB)	11,137	16,423	2,603	<b>30,163</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>606,733</b>	<b>915,864</b>	<b>166,018</b>	<b>1,688,615</b>

- (2) The numbers of average daily passenger trips taken by the beneficiaries relating to FBOs <sup>[1]</sup>, with a breakdown into beneficiary groups under the \$2 Scheme in 2024 are tabulated as follows:

<b>FBOs</b>	<b>Persons aged 65 or above</b>	<b>Persons aged 60 to 64</b>	<b>Eligible persons with disabilities</b>	<b>Total</b>
KMB	484 000	243 000	49 000	<b>776 000</b>
CTB	176 000	94 000	17 000	<b>287 000</b>
LW	8 000	8 000	1 000	<b>18 000</b>
NLB	7 000	7 000	1 000	<b>16 000</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>676 000</b>	<b>352 000</b>	<b>69 000</b>	<b>1 097 000</b>

[1] Figures may not add up to total due to rounding off to the nearest thousand.

(3) The annual farebox revenues of various FBOs are commercially sensitive information and thus are not provided.

- End -