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Your Ref.: CB3/PAC/R83
Our Ref. : 0004-0035-0030-0040-1-P002
Tel. No. : 28925151
Fax No. : 28380757

Deliver through email: hhchan@legco.gov.hk
kmho@legco.gov.hk
pkwlai@legco.gov.hk

Ms Shirley CHAN
Secretary for Public Accounts Committee
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

10 January 2025

Dear Ms Chan,

Public Accounts Committee
Consideration of the Director of Audit's Report No. 83 Chapter 5
Residential Care Service Voucher Scheme for the Elderly

In response to the enquiries raised in the letter from Public Accounts Committee dated 18 December 2024, please see the information and responses at the appended attachment (both in Chinese and English version).

Yours sincerely,

(Ms YAN Lai-ming)
for Director of Social Welfare

c.c. Secretary for Labour and Welfare (email: slwo@lab.gov.hk)
Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (email: sfst@fstb.gov.hk)
Director of Audit (email: ncylam@aud.gov.hk)

Public Accounts Committee
Consideration of the Director of Audit's Report No. 83: Chapter 5
Residential Care Service Voucher Scheme for the Elderly
Response of the Social Welfare Department

Part 1 : Introduction

- (1) According to paragraph 1.17 of the Report No. 83 of the Director of Audit Report (“Audit Report”), please inform the rank and salary of the 33 staff involved in the administration of Residential Care Service Voucher (RCSV) Scheme for the Elderly.

In end of March 2024, 33 staff involved in the administration of the RCSV Scheme for the Elderly. Their rank and salary are listed as follows

Rank	Notional Annual Mid-point Salary (\$)	Number of persons
Senior Social Work Officer	1,290,180	1
Social Work Officer	1,038,900	3
Assistant Social Work Officer	688,680	16
Social Work Assistant	429,300	1
Social Security Officer	521,520	1
Social Security Assistant	349,440	3
Executive Officer II	573,540	2
Assistant Clerical Officer	309,780	3
Clerical Assistant	241,980	3

Part 2 : Administration of Residential Care Service Voucher Scheme for the Elderly

- (2) According to paragraph 2.4 of the Audit Report, during the period from March 2017 to March 2024, 3 110 RCSVs out of the total of 7 110 RCSVs issued were cancelled and the reason for cancellation for 2 258 RCSVs was decease of the elderly persons. Social Welfare Department (SWD) please inform any plans to shorten the waiting time of Care and Attention (C&A) places and Nursing Home places?

For 2 258 vouchers cancelled due to the decease of the elderly persons as mentioned in the Audit Report, the elderly persons were those using voucher for subsidised residential care service or being issued with voucher and planned to be

admitted to residential care home for the elderly (RCHE) before decease, but not those being waitlisted for subsidised residential care service (RCS) when passed away. In fact, RCSV adopting the principles of “money-following-the-user” and “users pay in accordance with affordability”, the RCSV Scheme provides an additional choice for elderly persons waitlisting for subsidised residential care places to be admitted to the participating Residential Care Homes for the Elderly (RCHEs), i.e. Recognised Service Providers (RSPs), of their choice without having to wait. The RCSV Scheme has all along been receiving positive feedback from elderly users. The number of elderly persons using RCSV increased by more than one-fold from around 2 200 in end October 2021 to some 4 600 in end November 2024.

The Government is making its best endeavour to increase the number of RCS places through the implementation of RCSV and invitation of new contract home, with the aim of providing about 6 200 additional subsidised RCS places by the end of 2027. Besides, in June 2023, the Government enhanced the Incentive Scheme to Encourage Provision of RCHE Premises in New Private Developments which increased the number of eligible RCHEs and their concerned Gross Floor Area(GFA) exempted from payment of land premium in land transactions between developers and the Government, and exempting such GFA from counting in the original total permissible GFA of the site. Furthermore, the Government continued to implement and enhance the Residential Care Services Scheme in Guangdong to provide an additional choice for elderly persons waitlisting for subsidised residential care places through Standardised Care Need Assessment Mechanism for Elderly Services (SCNAMES) to be admitted to the participating RCHEs in Guangdong without having to wait.

- (3) **According to paragraph 2.8 of the Audit Report, does SWD plan to encourage the Voucher holder (VH) to use the voucher as early as possible upon issuing the voucher ? If yes, please elaborate. If not, please give the reasons.**

The Residential Care Service Voucher Office (RCSVO) of the SWD will provide service briefing to each applicant and casework support service to all VHs to assist them in choosing suitable RCHE, so as to encourage the VH to use the voucher as early as possible upon issuance of the voucher. Support would be provided to the elderly persons continuously upon their admission to the RCHEs joining the RCSV scheme. At the same time, SWD should respect the choice of VHs. If the elderly persons are indecisive about the admission to RCHE after the issuance

of vouchers, SWD will render community support services to them according to their needs.

(4) **Regarding the 5 704 applications received in 2022-23 and 2023-24 in paragraph 2.10 of the Audit Report, SWD please provide :**

(a) For processing of 3 179 completed applications with RCSVs issued, please list out the number of cases according to the time interval between RCSVs application date and RCSVs issuance date (between the same date and 1 week, over 1 week and up to 1 month, over 1 month and up to 3 months, over 3 months and up to 5 months, over 5 months and up to 8 months)

(b) For processing of 2 195 completed applications without issuance of RCSVs, please list out the number of cases according to the time interval between RCSVs application date and RCSVs issuance date (between the same date and 1 week, over 1 week and up to 1 month, over 1 month and up to 3 months, over 3 months and up to 5 months, over 5 months and up to 8 months) ; and

(c) The reason of the 94 rejected applications.

(a) & (b) In general, RCSVO takes around eight weeks to complete the processing of the assessments upon receiving applications, arranging of service briefing till the issuing of the voucher. Upon SWD's review on those applications required longer processing times, the reasons for taking longer processing time were (i) the SCNAMES assessment result of the applicant was not valid (the assessment result is more than 1 year), and thus needed to wait for the re-assessment; (ii) the family members had divergent views on the RSCV application and needed time to reach consensus; (iii) the applicant was put on the small pool of the Central Waiting List (CWL) for other subsidised RCHE place and the applicant/the family members needed time to consider the choice between the options of RSCV and other subsidised RCHE; and (iv) the family members was out of contact despite the caseworker's attempts. While handling the applications, RCSVO staff will keep following up the applicants' condition under whatever circumstances and will issue the voucher at once upon completion of the applications.

Regarding 5 704 applications received in 2022-23 and 2023-24, the processing time distribution is listed on the tables as follows :

3 179 applications completed with RCSVs issued :

Time interval between RCSVs application date and RCSVs issuance date	Number of cases
same date and 1 week	22
over 1 week and up to 1 month	1157
over 1 month and up to 3 months,	1829
over 3 months and up to 5 months,	156
over 5 months and up to 8 months	15

2 195 applications without issuance of RCSVs :

Time interval between RCSVs application date and application completion date	Number of cases
same date and 1 week	263
over 1 week and up to 1 month	911
over 1 month and up to 3 months,	823
over 3 months and up to 5 months,	166
over 5 months and up to 8 months	32

(c) Out of 94 rejected applications, 84 applicants were assessed to be not suitable for C&A Home place. The remaining 10 applicants were not on the CWL for C&A home or Nursing Home.

(5) **According to paragraph 2.11 of the Audit Report, the SWD was required to contact the responsible workers (RWs) within 7 working days upon completion of service briefings. For the 5 704 applications received in 2022-23 and 2023-24, SWD please inform :**

(a) The number of cases which had tried to initiate first contact with the RWs within the required 7 working days ; and

(b) The number of cases which had not tried to initiate first contact with the RWs within the required 7 working days and the reasons.

(a) & (b) After receiving the application forms, RCSVO of SWD will inform the applicants/their family members and the RW by letter or emails to arrange the service briefing on RCSV Scheme. After completion of the service briefing, RCSVO will contact the RW for the SCNAMES assessment result report. If the SCNAMES assessment report is invalid (i.e. over one year), the RW is required

to arrange reassessment for the applicant. Since record of contacts with the RWs within 7 working days upon completion of service briefings were kept in individual applicant's casefile, RCSVO did not compile the related figures. To streamline and speed up the application process for RCSV, with effect from August 2024, the RCSVO can download the applicants' SCNAMES assessment reports directly from the Long Term Care Services Delivery System (LDS) so there is no need to obtain this information from the RWs.

- (6) **According to paragraph 2.13 and 2.14 of the Audit Report, for 228 RCSVs with decisions of the VHs to opt-in or opt-out of the RCSV Scheme recorded, the longest time for recording the decision upon the expiry of the trial period is 9 months and was accepted by the SWD. In view of the above, SWD please inform any plans to specify the timeframe for considering those VHs who had used the RCSVs but had not continued using the RCSVs after the expiry of the trial period and did not reply whether to opt-in the RCSV Scheme as leaving the RCSV Scheme? If yes, please elaborate. If not, how the SWD to ensure that the VHs timely use the RCSVs ?**

Under current mechanism, if VHs did not reply upon the expiry of trial period, no matter whether the VHs had used the RCSVs, the RCSVO would contact the VHs or their family members by all means to confirm their decisions. Regarding the timeframe for considering those VHs who had not continued using the RCSVs upon the expiry of trial period as leaving the Scheme in the RCSV System, SWD agrees to the recommendation of the Audit Report and has formulated the mechanism and measures. If the VH who had used RCSV service during the trial period but was not using the service when the trial period expired while the reply slip has not been received upon the expiry date of trial period, the VH and/or the family member will be notified by a letter, issued within 7 days after the expiry date of trial period that the case will be closed in RCSVO in 3 weeks from the expiry date of the trial period. Apart from the aforementioned enhanced measures, RCSVO will timely issue notifications to follow up and update records in the RCSV System reminding workers of RCSVO to take necessary steps to follow up.

- (7) **According to paragraph 2.14(a), SWD please inform the reasons of 12 VHs whose decisions on whether to opt in or out from RCSV Scheme were not recorded in RCSV System.**

According to record, among the mentioned 12 VHs, 6 VHs had never used the

RCSV service during trial period, 2 VHs had used voucher service but discharged from the RSPs during the trial period and changed to be under the care of domestic helper, and 4 VHs had continued using RCSV service at the same RSPs after the trial period. Regarding the RCSVO staff only marked their follow-up work on the VHs' individual case file without updating the record of VHs' decisions in the RCSV System, the RCSVO has strengthened the supervision through the staff sharing sessions, individual supervision sessions and enhancement of the office managerial support to implement the internal guides on how to handle the expired voucher cases after the trial period.

- (8) **According to paragraph 2.17 & 2.18, please inform why 17 VHs had been discharged from the RSPs for over 3 months but the SWD failed to cancel their RCSVs as at 31 March 2024 according to the guidelines?**

Upon the discharge of the abovementioned 17 VHs from the RSPs, SWD had stopped the corresponding subsidies to the RSPs on the same day. We agree that RCSVO's failing to cancel the invalid RCSVs according to the guidelines may affect the number of available vouchers to be issued. Thus, SWD had adopted the recommendation of the Audit Report and enhanced the guidelines to specify the timeframes clearly, including require staff of RCSVO to send notification SMS/email/letter to VHs, who had not used the vouchers issued after the trial period for 2 consecutive months to remind them that vouchers will become invalid if the vouchers had not been used for 3 consecutive months without special circumstances for consideration. RCSVO staff will cancel the voucher which had not been used for 3 consecutive months within 3 working days. Regarding some special conditions, such as the voucher had not been used for 3 consecutive months and the RCSVO was informed of the decease of that VH, RCSVO staff will confirm the death record of the VH with the Immigration Department before updating the record in RCSV System. The RCSVO had reminded all staff in the regular staff sharing session and set reminder in the RCSV System to cancel the RCSVs timely in the System. Upon future system enhancement, RCSVO will add a function to cancel the invalid vouchers automatically.

- (9) **Regarding the service fees of RSPs from paragraph 2.29 & 2.30 of the Audit Report, please inform :**

- (a) **Since the launch of the RCSV Scheme, the number of discussions of the service fees and fee-charging items between the SWD and RSPs;**
- (b) **The number of times of updating the fee-charging items and the details of**

**the updated amount upon the discussion between the SWD and RSPs;
and**

- (c) As the SWD states that price lists shown in the Elderly Information Website (EIW) are for reference only, please inform the difference between the actual price and the price shown on the Elderly Information Website and the reasons of the difference.**

(a) & (b) The “standard service package” covered by the voucher value includes accommodation within shared rooms; at least 3 meals a day plus snacks; basic and special nursing care; staff on duty 24 hours per day; personal care service; 2 rehabilitative individual or group service sessions per week; regular visits by a registered medical practitioner; social or recreational activities on regular basis; laundry service; social work service and basic medical care services on regular basis (only applicable to VHs of nursing home places). According to the Service Agreement, the voucher value may be revised upwards or downwards from time to time as the SWD may at his absolute discretion determine and announce in writing.

For items outside the scope of the “standard service package” provided upon VHs’ request and choice, the RSPs should follow the Service Agreement to inform Government Representative, VHs and their family members for any change of fees and charges in writing at least 30 days in advance of the effective date of implementation. After receiving the notification of change of fees and charges, the RCSVO will contact the RSP by phone or by email for acknowledgment and examining the price adjustment to assure the right of VHs in choosing their self-pay items. During the scrutiny of fees and charges, the staff of RCSVO will make the price comparison with the previous fee changing application, identify those similar items with a large variation in price level in the RSP or among RSPs, scrutinise the fee changing and liaise with the RSP for adjustment if necessary. If the pricelist includes items of the “standard service package” or consumable items, the RCSVO will request the RSP to remove such charging items.

SWD agrees to the recommendation of Audit Commission that the difference of fees and charges of similar items among RSPs would be recorded for reference. The scrutiny of pricelists of RSPs would be strengthened to ensure the uploaded price lists are accurate and specify the VHs have rights to choose/not choose the self-pay services.

- (c) As mentioned above, for any change of fees and charges, the RSPs should

inform the Government Representative in writing at least 30 days in advance of the effective date of implementation. RCSVO needs time to examine the items concerned, and will request further information regarding the adjusted pricelist items for further examination as needed. Only after that the RCSVO will upload that adjusted pricelist onto the EIW.

(10) **According to paragraph 2.31 of the Audit Report, there are RSPs delayed or failed to reply for voucher value adjustment on 2024. In view of that, please inform / explain :**

- (a) **Do the SWD implement any follow-up actions for 11 RSPs which still did not reply in August 2024. If yes, please elaborate. If not, please give the reasons;**
- (b) **Any plans to request RSPs to update the bed fees on EIW as required. If yes, please elaborate. If not, please give the reasons; and**
- (c) **Why the documentation for scrutinising the update of fees according to the voucher value adjustment by the SWD was not available but 15 RSPs were reimbursed with the voucher services subsidy based on the updated voucher value by the SWD.**

(a) RCSVO had already contacted 11 RSPs which did not reply in August 2024 to confirm their acknowledgement of the voucher value adjustment.

(b) Apart from contacting each RSPs to confirm their acknowledgement of the voucher value adjustment, RCSVO also requested all RSPs to submit the updated pricelist of the new financial year so as to upload onto EIW.

(c) According to the Service Agreement, the voucher value may be revised from time to time by SWD. By the 1st of April in each year, SWD may unify the adjustment of voucher value making reference to the monthly cost of bought placement of EA1 under 'Enhanced Bought Place Scheme' (the cost of bought placement will draw reference to the adjustment of Composite Consumer Price Index). Apart from notifying the VHs by letter, SWD also sends written notification to each RSP. In general, RSPs will adjust the fee of subsidised residential service by following the voucher value adjustment. RSPs are also allowed to adopt flexible measures including maintaining the fee lower than the new voucher value or setting a later date for the fee adjustment. RSPs should state at the reply slip of the notification letter for adopting the flexible measures. The RCSVO will contact those RSPs which have not submitted the reply slip of adjusting the fee arrangement to confirm their

acknowledgement of the relevant voucher value adjustment and will reimburse with the voucher services subsidy based on the adjusted voucher value and effective date by the SWD.

- (11) **According to paragraph 2.36(b) of the Audit Report, please inform is there any VHs choose not to receive add-on services by the contract homes but still have to pay for the relevant services. If yes, please provide the relevant number of cases and the involved amount.**

If the VHs choose to admit to the contract homes which provide add-on services, the relevant contract homes have to introduce the content of the add-on services to the VHs and VHs or their family members who shall sign the agreement on the add-on services. According to SWD record, no VHs disagree to receive the add-on services from the contract homes.

- (12) **According to paragraph 2.39 and 2.40 of the audit report regarding the add-on services fee of contract home, SWD please inform:**

- (a) Is there any plan to strengthen the examination and monitoring of price levels of add-on services among contract homes, to reduce the difference in price among different RSPs; if yes, please elaborate; if not, please state the reason; and**
- (b) Is there any plan to impose punishment to those RSPs wrongly charged the add-on services fees; if yes, please elaborate; if not, how does SWD ensure that the RSPs do not overcharging?**

(a) Add-on services only applicable to the contract home with approved monthly fee lower than the voucher value, and charging of such services will not exceed the voucher value, so it will not impose extra expenditure from the Government. As add-on service is under the service of RCSV Scheme, RSPs are required to submit related items and their prices to SWD for scrutiny. SWD has already formulated standardised workflow, including comparing the price on similar items of other RSPs to consider whether the price is reasonable and comply with the service scope of RCSV Scheme when examining the pricelist submitted by RSP. RCSVO will discuss with the corresponding RSP and request for rectification of the price when necessary.

(b) SWD already had implemented measures to ensure that RSPs charged the VHs or add-on services in accordance with the add-on service forms. RCSVO would check the provision records of add-on services during service

monitoring visits of RSPs; would advise the concerned RSP to discuss with the affected RCSV user/relative about the compensation proposal if under-provision of add-on services was identified (such as providing compensated service). If the voucher user/relative agreed to the compensation proposal, the RSP shall arrange the compensated services to the voucher user according to the agreed schedule and provide relevant records to RCSVO for checking. If no compensation plan could ultimately be agreed or the provision of compensatory additional services was not feasible due to some reasons (e.g. discharge or death of the voucher user concerned), the RSP shall refund to the Government and/or the voucher user/relative as appropriate. RCSVO had adopted the suggestions from Audit Report to specify in its guidelines the mechanism on scrutiny of add-on service fees and arrangement for handling incorrect fee charged cases as well as enhance scrutiny of RSPs' add-on service fees.

Part 3 : Monitoring of Recognised Service Providers

- (13) **According to paragraph 3.15 to 3.19 of the audit report, SWD please inform:**
- (a) Have monitoring action and punishment been taken to those RSPs had over-charged the consumable items; if yes, please elaborate; if not, please state the reason;**
 - (b) Have monitoring action and punishment been taken to those RSPs charged consumable items from VHs not in price list; if yes, please elaborate; if not, please state the reason; and**
 - (c) Have monitoring action and punishment been taken to those RSPs not providing required quantity of consumables; if yes, please elaborate; if not, please state the reason.**

(a) SWD had taken immediate effect of contacting those RSPs having over-charged the consumable items to refund the over-payment to the VHs or their family members within the deadline set. It was confirmed that those RSPs had completed the refund before the deadline.

To further enhance the monitoring on RSPs' fee-charging, apart from the unannounced monitoring visits and random selection of the VHs for inspection of the fee-charging record and related documents in the RSPs, SWD will also randomly contact the family members of VHs. If irregularities in the fee-charging is found, SWD will request the corresponding RSP to refund the payment to the VHs as appropriate. RCSVO, under the mechanism in place, will issue

advisory notice or sanctions (include suspension of admission of new VH for six months). On the other hand, SWD will through different means such as the annual sharing session and correspondences, etc., to strengthen RSPs' knowledge of the fee-charging related clauses as well as the good practice for improving their service quality.

(b) Regarding the findings from the Audit Report of those RSPs charged consumable items from VHs not in pricelist, upon SWD's investigation and clarification with Audit Commission, the special nutritional drinks of a specified brand which were not included in the pricelist, were in fact prescribed by a medical officer attending the VH. For the case that the monthly fee of diapers exceeding 8 pieces per day, it was consumable item provided by the RSP to the VH requiring high daily consumption in view of the family's difficulty and upon request. Though these types of special or individualised items could not be exhausted in the pricelist, SWD had reminded those RSPs to record clearly the provision reasons, the specific item and fee-charging arrangement.

SWD has stipulated clearly in all the related documents of RCSV about the principles and requirements of all fee-charging items, and required all RSPs to follow strictly the Code of Practice for Residential Care Homes (Elderly Persons) in handling fee-charging matters.

(c) To ensure those eligible VHs for receiving care supplement can obtain the required quantity of diapers, SWD urged RSPs to document the daily usage of diapers for the VH. For individual VHs not required to use the quantity of at least six pieces of diapers with special concerns, RSPs have to record the reasons (such as the case described in Paragraph 3.18 of the Audit Report that the resident was undergoing toileting training so the usage of diapers was decreased). SWD had revised the relevant guidelines on service monitoring visit to ensure the coverage of all service requirement (such as the provision of required quantity of diapers). SWD will also implement proper follow-up action or sanctions if the RSPs failed to provide the relevant documents during the service monitoring visit.

- (14) **According to paragraph 3.22 of the audit report, SWD please inform whether it has taken monitoring action and imposed punishment on the RSPs that they have failed to formulate contingency plans for manpower shortage in accordance with the service agreement; if yes, please elaborate; if not, please state the reason?**

According to the Service Agreement, RSPs shall develop contingency plans to ensure the uninterrupted provision of voucher services during emergency situations (including shortage of manpower, outbreak of an epidemic and fire, etc.) or when there are difficulties for RSPs in providing any of the voucher services. RCSVO will issue advisory notice if RSPs fail to derive contingency plan leading to interruption to provide services to VHs according to the Service Agreement. If the situation continued, RCSVO will impose sanction on the RSPs.

(15) **According to paragraph 3.29 of the audit report regarding the warning letter issued by SWD to the RSPs that is found to have breached the service agreement, SWD please inform:**

- (a) The number of warning letters issued each year and the non-compliance items of the concerned RSPs;**
- (b) From above, the number of RSPs involved in related warning letters;**
- (c) The number of RSPs that have to suspend from admission of VHs due to receiving more than 2 warning letters each year; and**
- (d) From above, the shortest and longest time for the relevant RSPs suspending from admission of VHs.**

(a) to (d) The status of RSP would be temporarily suspended for at least six months if it receives more than two warning letters, or one warning letter with more than two warning items within 12-month period. The RSP's status would be temporarily suspended for at least three years if the operator has been convicted of any offence under the "Residential Care Homes (Elderly Persons) Ordinance" (Cap.459) or any other criminal offence directly related to the operation of that RSP. Upon the expiry of suspension, the status of RSP can only be resumed when it meets the qualification requirement of track record again (i.e. not receiving more than two warning letters or more than two warning items of default in a warning letter within 12-month period and such warning items of default must not be issued within the 6-month period immediately preceding the date of resuming the RSP status, and not being convicted of any offence under the Residential Care Homes (Elderly Persons) Ordinance (Cap.459) or any other criminal offence directly related to the operation of that RSP within three years).

Number of RSPs that were suspended from admission of VHs due to receiving more than two warning letters or more than two warning items issued from the SWD, or being convicted of criminal offence stated above are as follows:

Year	Number of RSPs
2019 - 2020	1
2020 - 2021	0
2021 - 2022	1
2022 - 2023	1
2023 - 2024	5

The time for the RSPs suspending from admission of VHs as provided at above table varied from 6 months to 3 years.

- (16) **According to paragraph 3.33(a) of the audit report, SWD is requested to inform why the non-compliances with service agreement were not identified by RCSV Office officers during a service monitoring visit cum on-site supervisory check, and if any punishment be imposed on the related officers for their negligence; if yes, please elaborate; if not, please state the reason?**

When conducting service monitoring visit, staff of RCSVO of SWD will randomly select a specific number of residents' payment records for checking in accordance with the guideline of SWD. The situation mentioned in paragraph 3.33(a) of the audit report was about an RSP not following the updated pricelist for charging the self-pay items. Prior to the monitoring visit, staff of RCSVO had received the notification from the RSP about the fee adjustment and the updated pricelist, and was in the process of discussion with the RSP on the changes. On the day of service monitoring visit, staff of RCSVO had pointed out the problem immediately and given verbal advice to the RSP when it was found that the fees charged by the RSP from VHs were confusing and the pricelist used were inconsistent and some items were still charged according to the old pricelist.

Regarding to the situation mentioned in the audit report, staff of RCSVO had contacted the RSP and requested them to refund to the VHs or their family members the overcharged fee incurred by the confusion, and the RSP had completed the refund within the deadline set by RCSVO. For the items that RSP charged VHs appeared not found in the pricelist, they were in fact included in the effected and updated version. RCSVO had contacted the family members involved and confirmed that they were aware of the updated pricelist and verified that they had used the concerned items. Staff of RCSVO had reminded the RSP again that they should comply with the Service Agreement on the fee charging arrangement and ensure the records were clear and accurate.

Part 4: Other related matters

(17) According to paragraph 4.4(a) of the audit report regarding the matters of RSPs submitting the reimbursement form, SWD please inform:

(a) Since the launch of Voucher Information System for the Elderly (the system) in July 2023, the number of times the system has automatically sent email reminders to RSPs regarding the submission of the above form;

(b) From above, the number of RSP involved;

(c) The number of times the responsible Assistant Social Work Officers (ASWOs) of RCSV Office have directly followed up with the RSPs on the submission of forms; and

(d) From above, the number of RSPs required directly followed up by ASWOs

(a) Since the launch of the System in July 2023, the System automatically sends email to remind RSPs to submit the above reimbursement form by the first day of the month. If the RSPs fail to comply with the requirement to submit the above form on or before the 10th day of the month, the System will send a reminder to RSPs again by the 11th day of the month. Till present, the System had automatically sent a total of 4 119 email to remind the RSPs regarding the submission of the reimbursement form, including the first reminder email for 3 340 times and the second reminder email for 779 times.

(b) Number of RSPs involved are distributed as follows:

Month/Year	Number of RSPs involved	Number of the first reminder email sent to RSPs	Number of the second reminder email sent to RSPs
August 2023	143	121	77
September 2023	190	197	65
October 2023	192	194	61
November 2023	197	197	43
December 2023	196	199	40
January 2024	194	198	33
February 2024	198	202	37
March 2024	197	200	40
April 2024	196	199	51
May 2024	196	199	36

June 2024	197	200	51
July 2024	197	199	41
August 2024	200	203	33
September 2024	202	204	46
October 2024	203	206	36
November 2024	206	209	47
December 2024	210	213	42

(c) & (d) SWD has not kept relevant records for item (c). At present, each RSP is assigned with one ASWO of RCSVO to be responsible for liaison and coordination, including following up RSP's submission of reimbursement application in the System, checking the accuracy of the VHs and the reimbursement amount, and contacting the responsible staff of RSP when necessary, etc. until the RSP received the reimbursement.

(18) According to paragraph 4.4(b) of the audit report, SWD has provided training to RSPs on the use of the system. In this regard, please inform:

(a) Since the launch of the system in July 2023, the numbers and mode of training provided by SWD;

(b) Number of RSPs participating in the training;

(c) Number of staff of RSPs receiving the training; and

(d) Total hours of the training provided.

(a) & (b) Since the launch of the System in July 2023, SWD has provided 4 times with a total of 13 training sessions, and opened the System for 13 days for trial use by the RSPs. Details are as follows:

	Date	Target	Mode	Number of RSPs participated
1.	29.5.2023 30.5.2023 31.5.2023 1.6.2023 (am and pm, a total of 8 sessions, 3 hours of each session)	Staff of all RSPs	Physical class, staff demonstrated the use of the system and staff of RSPs tried to use the system on the spot	198
2.	16.6.2023 to	Staff of all	The system	Not

	28.6.2023	RSPs	(stimulation system) is opened to staff of RSPs to create user account and try different functions	applicable
3.	11.7.2023 (am and pm) 12.7.2023 (am) (a total of 3 sessions, 3 hours of each session)	Staff of RSPs who had not yet attended the 1 st round training session or who would like to attend training again	Physical class, staff demonstrated the use of the system and staff of RSPs tried to use the system on the spot	58
4.	7.5.2024 (am) 8.5.2024 (am) (a total of 2 sessions, 2 hours of each session)	Staff of all RSPs those providing nursing home place services	Physical class, staff demonstrated the use of the system and staff of RSPs tried to use the system on the spot	29

(c) The total number of staff of RSPs received training is 330.

(d) The total training hours provided is 37 hours.

(19) **According to paragraph 4.9 of the audit report regarding the matters of updating the vacant beds information of RSP, please inform:**

(a) Since the system was launched in July 2023, the number of times that SWD has sent email to remind RSPs to update bed vacancy information in the system;

(b) From above, the number of RSPs that were being reminded;

(c) The number of times that the responsible ASWOs of the RCSV Office has directly followed up with the RSPs on bed vacancy; and

(d) From above, the number of RSPs required direct follow-up by ASWOs.

(a) Since July 2023, the System sent email to RSPs by the 25th of the month to remind them to update bed vacancy information. If the RSPs fail to comply with the requirement to update bed vacancy information in the system on the last day of the month, the System will remind the RSPs through email on the first day of the next month. In order to allow the RSPs to update bed vacancy information as early as possible, RCSVO had advanced the second reminder to the 28th by the

month starting from November 2023. SWD has sent a total of 8 267 emails to remind RSPs to update bed vacancy information, including the first reminder email for 5 326 times and the second reminder email for 2 941 times.

(b) Number of RSPs that have been reminded are as follows:

Month/Year	Number of RSPs involved	Number of the first reminder email sent to RSPs	Number of the second reminder email sent to RSPs
August 2023	184	296	66
September 2023	196	282	78
October 2023	198	293	7
November 2023	200	296	262
December 2023	197	297	194
January 2024	199	303	251
February 2024	198	307	238
March 2024	196	309	219
April 2024	196	308	193
May 2024	197	312	186
June 2024	199	321	164
July 2024	200	323	169
August 2024	201	326	177
September 2024	203	330	162
October 2024	204	331	184
November 2024	210	338	188
December 2024	213	354	203

(c) & (d) During the period from 1.7.2023 to 30.11.2024, the ASWO of RCSVO concerned has contacted 83 RSPs regarding their bed vacancy situation.

Social Welfare Department
10 January 2025