

**Elderly Commission**  
**Minutes of the 100th Meeting**

Conference Room 3, G/F, Central Government Offices,  
2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong  
3:00 p.m., 21 August 2019 (Wednesday)

**Present:**

**Chairman**

Dr LAM Ching-choi, SBS, JP

**Members**

Ms CHAN Mei-kit, Maggie, MH

Ms CHAN Yee-ching, Tammy

Mr CHEUNG Leong

Mr CHUA Hoi-wai, JP

Ms CHUNG Wai-yee, Diana

Prof LEE Tze-fan, Diana, JP

Ms LI Fai, Grace

Dr LOU Wei-qun, Vivian

Dr PANG Fei-chau

Mrs SO CHAN Wai-hang, Susan, BBS

Dr TSE Man-wah, Doris

Mr WONG Kit-loong

Ms YU Chui-yee, BBS, MH

Ms Carol YIP, JP

Mr WONG Chung-yan, Johann, JP

Mr FUNG Pan-chung, Chris

Dr LEE Siu-yin, Ruby, JP

Mr LUK Tsz-wai, Ian

Mr WAN Wing-kuen, Andy

Director of Social Welfare

Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Principal Assistant Secretary for Food and Health (Health)

Assistant Director of Health (Elderly Health Service) (Acting)

Assistant Director of Housing (Estate Management) (1) (Acting)

Manager (Elderly Care)<sup>1</sup>, Hospital Authority

**In attendance:**

Mr WU Chia-chun, Desmond

Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Acting)

Mr TAN Tick-yee

Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Elderly)

Ms KWAN Yuen-yuk, Rosemary

Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Licensing and Regulation) (Acting)

Ms SIT Wing-lin	Chief Social Work Officer, Social Welfare Department
Ms WOO Mei-hing, Patricia	Chief Social Work Officer, Social Welfare Department
Mr LEUNG Sing-lung, Edric	Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Ms MAK Ka-ying, Carren	Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Miss YU Sin-ting, Cindy	Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Ms LEE Ngan-chau, Martina	Chief Executive Officer, Labour and Welfare Bureau
Miss LEUNG Pui-yin, Sam	Executive Officer, Labour and Welfare Bureau
Mr LEUNG Fuk-ling, David	Executive Officer, Labour and Welfare Bureau

**Absent with apologies:**

Ms LO Dak-wai, Alexandra, JP  
 Mr WONG Tai-lun, Kenneth  
 Dr YEUNG Ka-ching

**Secretary**

Mr CHONG Kwok-wing, Gordon	Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare
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Dr LAM Ching-choi, the Chairman, welcomed Members to the meeting. In particular, he extended his welcome to a new Member, Ms YU Chui-yee, who first attended a meeting of the Commission. The Chairman also expressed his sincere gratitude to an outgoing Member, Mr Victor LAM Hoi-cheung, for his contribution to the Commission during his tenure.

2. The Chairman reminded Members to make a declaration when there was a potential conflict between their own interests and the matters to be discussed.

**Agenda item 1: Confirmation of the minutes of the 99th meeting**

3. As Members had not proposed any amendments to the Chinese and English versions of the draft minutes issued by the Secretariat on 15 August 2019, the minutes were confirmed.

## **Agenda item 2: Matters arising**

4. There were no matters arising from the minutes of the 99th meeting.

## **Agenda item 3: 2020-21 Elderly Welfare Services Suggestions and Priorities**

(Discussion Paper No. EC/D/01-19)

5. Mr Johann WONG Chung-yan, Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare, said that the Government had commissioned the Social Welfare Advisory Committee (SWAC) in 2007 to conduct a study on the long-term planning of social welfare in Hong Kong to ensure that local policies and services could provide timely and effective response to the changing welfare needs of society. In the report entitled Long-term Social Welfare Planning in Hong Kong submitted to the Government in July 2011, the SWAC recommended that consultation and planning on future development and delivery of welfare services should be conducted on a regular basis every year at district, central and advisory committee (including the Elderly Commission) levels. In this connection, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) would collect views from districts annually through its District Social Welfare Officers, while the Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS) would assist in consolidating suggestions on elderly services made by various stakeholders at the welfare organisation level. The suggestions and comments made by welfare organisations and stakeholders on the issues and priorities of elderly services for 2020-21 were set out in Discussion Paper No. EC/D/01-19, which had been distributed for Members' reference before the meeting. Mr WONG briefed Members on the content of the discussion paper through a PowerPoint presentation and invited Members to express their views on the 2020-21 welfare services issues and suggestions for the Government's reference in formulating the Policy Address.

6. The Chairman and Members raised the following views and questions on the discussion paper and issues relating to elderly services:

### **Carer policy and support services**

- (a) The Commission agreed that carer support should be enhanced and suggested that the Government could collect carer-related statistics for an in-depth study and analysis to facilitate the formulation of a comprehensive policy on carer support. Resources should also be allocated for the development of relevant facilities and complementary services.

- (b) A Member wished to know the progress of the Government's evaluation of the Pilot Scheme on Living Allowance for Carers of Elderly Persons from Low Income Families.

#### Services provided by district elderly community centres and neighbourhood elderly centres

- (c) In view of the change in service scope of district elderly community centres and neighbourhood elderly centres, it was recommended that the Government should review their functions and roles as soon as possible to step up the promotion of active ageing, healthy ageing and retirement planning.
- (d) It was hoped that the Government would enhance the current Procedural Guidelines for Handling Elder Abuse Cases to facilitate front-line handling of suspected cases when providing counselling services.

#### Strengthening dementia care services and support

- (e) The Commission considered that the citizens' understanding and care towards dementia patients could be strengthened through public education, thereby facilitating identify and support dementia patients.
- (f) It was suggested to strengthen the support for dementia patients and their carers through primary healthcare services at the community level.

#### Retirement in the Mainland

- (g) A Member was of the opinion that the Government could capitalise on the opportunities brought by the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and introduce more measures to facilitate "cross-boundary elderly care", so that the elderly in Hong Kong who preferred to retire in the Mainland would be given an additional option.

#### Gerontechnology

- (h) In addition to improving the daily life of service users and relieving the burden and pressure on care staff and carers, some Members were of the view that the Government might examine how relevant data and information could be obtained and utilised to facilitate the formulation of policies on elderly services in the long run.

### End-of-Life care

- (i) Considering end-of-life care an indispensable part of elderly services, the Commission suggested that the Government should actively explore various models of end-of-life care to improve service quality.

### Planning of welfare services

- (j) The implementation of the Special Scheme on Privately Owned Sites for Welfare Uses (Special Sites Scheme) enabled applicant organisations to provide or increase on their own sites, through expansion, redevelopment or new development, welfare facilities considered by the Government as being in acute demand, including elderly service places. It was suggested that the Government should maintain liaison with participating non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and might consider adopting new building specifications or modes of design so that the new facilities provided could cater for the needs of the elderly persons in a more appropriate manner and dovetail with the application of technology.

### Manpower planning

- (k) The Commission suggested that the Government should further explore ways to facilitate the professional development of personnel providing care services in order to solve the long-term manpower shortages in the social welfare sector.

7. In response to the views and questions raised by Members, Ms Carol YIP, Director of Social Welfare, Mr WONG, Mr Chris FUNG Pan-chung, Principal Assistant Secretary for Food and Health (Health) and Mr TAN Tick-ye, Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Elderly), replied as follows:

### Carer policy and support services

- (a) The SWD had commissioned the Sau Po Centre on Ageing of the University of Hong Kong to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the Pilot Scheme on Living Allowance for Carers of Elderly Persons from Low Income Families and the Pilot Scheme on Living Allowance for Low-income Carers of Persons with Disabilities, in order to assist the Government to map out the way forward for both schemes. The Government would then review relevant matters such as the eligibility criteria and level of allowance, and whether the pilot schemes should

be regularised. The evaluation study was expected to be completed by the end of 2019.

#### Services provided by district elderly community centres and neighbourhood elderly centres

- (b) In response to the recommendation in the Elderly Services Programme Plan, the SWD was pressing ahead with reviewing the functions and roles of district elderly community centres and neighbourhood elderly centres. The SWD planned to look into the scope of services, manpower and premises of these centres in the course of the review.
- (c) The multi-disciplinary working group set up by the SWD was reviewing the Procedural Guidelines for Handling Elder Abuse Cases and seeking views from the sector. The tentative plan was to publish the revised guidelines in 2019.

#### Strengthening dementia care services and support

- (d) The SWD was consulting stakeholders on updating the assessment tool adopted under the Standardised Care Need Assessment Mechanism for Elderly Services. The new tool would provide a more detailed assessment of the health conditions of elderly persons with a view to better demarcating the needs for community care services and residential care services. Care needs arising from cognitive impairment would also be taken into consideration.

#### Retirement in the Mainland

- (e) The Government had introduced in 2014 the Pilot Residential Care Services Scheme in Guangdong, under which places were purchased from two residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) operated by Hong Kong NGOs in Yantian, Shenzhen and Zhaoqing. The pilot scheme provided an additional option for elderly persons on the Central Waiting List for subsidised care-and-attention places in Hong Kong to consider living in these RCHEs if they wished. The Government announced in 2017 that the pilot scheme would be extended for three years and kept under review to map out the way forward.

#### Gerontechnology

- (f) The SWD launched the \$1 billion Innovation and Technology Fund for Application in Elderly and Rehabilitation Care in December 2018 to subsidise

eligible elderly and rehabilitation service units in the procurement, rental and trial use of technology products. Application for the first tranche of the fund had closed at the end of February 2019 and the response was very positive, with a total of 244 service units applying for the use of over 1 300 items. The multi-disciplinary expert group, set up by the HKCSS as commissioned by the SWD, would continue to provide professional advice on the feasibility, sustainability and usage penetration of various items under application.

- (g) The SWD was planning a review of the information technology strategy for the social welfare sector to map out the sector's future development direction of information technology application.

#### End-of-Life care

- (h) The Government had been committed to promoting the development of elderly healthcare services and strengthening palliative care services for persons facing terminal illnesses. To provide terminally ill patients with more options for treatment and care arrangements, the Government would consult the public on advance directives and end-of-life care services in the second half of 2019. The results of the consultation would be used to identify the way forward for advance directives and end-of-life care services.
- (i) All newly operated and existing contract RCHEs had, under new contracts, been providing end-of-life care services for elderly residents and their carers since 2015-16. Contract RCHEs could utilise the additional resources provided by the SWD and adopt a co-ordinated and multi-disciplinary approach to render professional and systematic holistic care to elderly residents suffering from life-threatening or chronic illnesses and approaching the end of life, as well as support to carers.

#### Planning of welfare services

- (j) In response to the great demand for different social services in the society, the Government had all along adopted a multi-pronged approach to increase the provision of welfare services which were in acute demand. Such efforts included enhancing the types of welfare on the list of facilities under Phase Two of the Special Sites Scheme to cover elderly services, rehabilitation services and child care services which were in great demand now and in the foreseeable future. On elderly services, the new services included Care and Attention Homes Providing Continuum of Care cum Day Care Units for the Elderly (DCU) and

Nursing Homes cum DCUs. Besides, the Government also supported NGOs' development of non-profit making elderly apartments, which would be included in projects under the Special Sites Scheme aiming at providing those much-needed welfare facilities as the core components, with a view to encouraging them to optimise the development potential of their sites, and providing suitable and affordable accommodation for elderly persons who could live independently and were living in sub-standard housing or living in/applying for public rental housing. Moreover, the Government encouraged welfare organisations to explore and consider the use of modular integration construction method in constructing welfare facilities to expedite their completion.

**Agenda item 4: Review of Ordinances and Codes of Practice for Residential Care Homes**

(Discussion Paper No. EC/D/02-19)

8. Ms Carol YIP, Director of Social Welfare, said that the Chief Executive had announced, in the Policy Addresses delivered in 2016, 2017 and 2018, various measures to strengthen the monitoring of RCHEs and Residential Care Homes for Persons with Disabilities (RCHDs) and enhance their service quality. To further refine the monitoring system of residential care homes (RCHs), the SWD had set up in June 2017 the Working Group on the Review of Ordinances and Codes of Practice for Residential Care Homes (Working Group), comprising member from nine sectors, to review the existing ordinances and codes of practice for RCHEs and RCHDs. The Working Group had convened a total of 19 meetings (including 12 Working Group meetings and seven focus group discussions) between June 2017 and May 2019 to examine areas for improvement and viable measures in depth, and had made 19 specific recommendations. Ms YIP pointed out that in order to increase transparency and keep members of the public informed of the work progress of the Working Group, the agendas, papers, minutes of meetings and report of the Working Group had been uploaded onto the SWD's website. Ms YIP also remarked that while there was no guarantee that the implementation of the Working Group's recommendations would prevent future non-compliance in RCHs, it was believed that it would effectively strengthen the monitoring of RCHs and enhance their service quality, thereby providing greater protection for residents.

9. Ms Rosemary KWAN Yuen-yuk, Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Licensing and Regulation) (Acting), then briefed Members through a PowerPoint presentation on each of the 19 recommendations made by the Working Group, covering eight different aspects



including the classification of RCHs, statutory minimum staffing requirements for RCHs, statutory minimum area of floor space per resident in RCHs, requirements on licensees of RCHs, registration systems for home managers and health workers of RCHs, age of the residents, as well as offences and penalties.

10. After the briefing, the Chairman and Members put forward the following views and questions:

- (a) Would the implementation of all of the Working Group's recommendations be subject to legislative amendments?
- (b) A Member relayed the sector's concern about the impact of the enhanced statutory minimum staffing requirements and upward adjustment of manning ratio (particularly care workers and nurses) on RCHs in view of the current manpower shortage. To assist the sector in fulfilling the requirements of upward manpower adjustment, it was suggested that the Government should start exploring the feasibility of importation of labour.
- (c) The introduction of the requirement of renewal and continuous learning into the qualifications for registration of health workers for RCHs might indirectly affect the health care assistants/care-related support workers who were engaged in similar care-related duties in hospitals. It was recommended that the Government might include the healthcare sector when seeking views in further consultations.
- (d) It was agreed that the transitional arrangement would allow existing home operators reasonable time to implement the enhanced requirement of statutory minimum area of floor space per resident in RCHs. It was hoped that the Government could expedite the planning of residential care services during the eight-year grace period to increase the supply of residential places.
- (e) To meet the evolving service needs and enhance the service quality of RCHs, training and continuous learning programmes should be provided for various types of personnel working in RCHs.
- (f) The Commission was pleased to note that the SWD had adopted a multi-pronged approach in strengthening the monitoring of RCHs since the Licensing and Regulation Branch was established in May 2017. This, coupled with the joint efforts of the sector, had contributed to the enhancement of the overall service

quality of RCHs.

11. In response to the views and questions put forward by Members, Ms YIP, Mr WONG and Ms KWAN replied as follows:

- (a) Among the 19 recommendations of the Working Group, 14 required amendments of the Residential Care Homes (Elderly Persons) Ordinance, the Residential Care Homes (Elderly Persons) Regulation, the Residential Care Homes (Persons with Disabilities) Ordinance and the Residential Care Homes (Persons with Disabilities) Regulation before they could be implemented; two involved amendments to the Code of Practice for Residential Care Homes for the Elderly and the Code of Practice for Residential Care Homes for Persons with Disabilities and were expected to be implemented shortly; and the remaining three which concerned recommendations on, inter alia, maintaining the existing classification of RCHs and the current stipulation of the age of residents, did not involve amendments to the legislation and codes of practice.
- (b) To minimise the impact on existing RCH residents, the Government would put in place a transitional arrangement for upward adjustment of the statutory minimum area of floor space per resident, so as to allow RCHs to comply with the new requirement by reducing places in phases within an eight-year grace period. On another front, the Government would purchase an additional 1 000 EA1 places under the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme in each of the five years from 2019-20 to 2023-24 (i.e. 5 000 places in total) to increase the supply of subsidised residential care places for the elderly.
- (c) To alleviate the shortage of nurses in the welfare sector, the SWD had collaborated with the Hospital Authority (HA) from 2006 to 2016 to organise the two-year Enrolled Nurse (General)/Enrolled Nurse (Psychiatric) Training Programmes for the Welfare Sector. 14 training classes had been organised, providing about 1 800 training places in total. Over 90% of the trainees had joined the welfare sector after graduation. The SWD had also commissioned the Open University of Hong Kong to provide a total of 920 training places for four consecutive years from 2017-18. The training programmes were fully subsidised by the SWD, and the trainees were required to sign an undertaking to work in the welfare sector for two consecutive years after graduation.
- (d) The Government would continue with the operation of the Navigation Scheme for Young Persons in Care Services, aiming to provide 1 200 additional training places in the next few years. The scheme would also be enhanced with a view

to attracting more young people to the social welfare care sector.

- (e) The SWD had launched a five-year scheme in phases from the first quarter of 2019 to fully subsidise home managers, health workers and care workers of all RCHEs and RCHDs in the territory to enrol in Qualifications Framework-based training courses. The entire scheme could benefit the staff of more than 1 000 RCHEs and RCHDs. The SWD also provided training subsidy for RCHs to maintain their operation through appropriate manpower deployment while their health and care workers were attending the courses.
- (f) The SWD had been collaborating with the Department of Health over the past years to organise training programmes for the staff of RCHEs with a view to enhancing their knowledge and skills in elderly care on an ongoing basis. Topics covered by the programmes included drug safety, infection control, fall prevention, dementia care, prevention of elder abuse, handling accidents and managing work stress.
- (g) As stipulated in the existing Residential Care Homes (Elderly Persons) Regulation and the Residential Care Homes (Persons with Disabilities) Regulation, health workers were required to register with the Director of Social Welfare for the purposes of employment at RCHEs and RCHDs. The Working Group recommended to further introduce the requirement of registration renewal and continuous learning for health workers under the two regulations, with the aim to enhance the service quality of RCHEs and RCHDs. In view of Members' opinions, the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB), together with the SWD and the Food and Health Bureau (FHB)/HA, would explain in detail that the improvement recommendations put forward by the Working Group should not make any impact on the qualifications required of health care assistants/care-related support workers currently working in hospitals.  
(Post-meeting note: The LWB had clarified with the SWD and the HA that while health workers working in RCHs and health care assistants/care-related support workers working in hospitals were both engaged in care-related duties, their qualifications and requirements were not exactly the same. One of the key differences between the two was that the former had to register with the SWD under relevant residential care home regulations upon completion of a training course approved by the SWD, while the latter were only required to complete a training course approved by the HA and registration was not required. Therefore, the Working Group's recommendation on amending the relevant residential care home regulations by introducing the requirement of registration renewal and continuous learning should not make any impact on the

qualifications required of health care assistants/care-related support workers working in hospitals. A Member was concerned, however, that in the course of amending the relevant residential care home regulations, stakeholders might question whether similar registration requirements should be introduced for health care assistants/care-related support workers working in hospitals. The LWB had initially relayed those opinions to the FHB for appropriate follow-up action.)

12. The Chairman extended gratitude to the Working Group for their great efforts and contributions in reviewing the ordinances and codes of practice for RCHEs and RCHDs, and considered the recommendations hard-earned outcome of a collaborative endeavour to balance the views of various stakeholders. The Commission generally supported the Working Group's recommendations, and noted that the Government would continue seeking views from different stakeholders on the recommendations and plan to conduct further consultation at the district level later this year. Upon finalisation of the proposed legislative amendments, the Government would draft and introduce the bills into the Legislative Council. On another front, the SWD also planned to issue the revised Code of Practice for Residential Care Homes for the Elderly and Code of Practice for Residential Care Homes for Persons with Disabilities later this year.

### **Agenda Item 5: Progress reports by Working Groups and Committee**

#### Working Group on Ageing in Place

13. The Chairman said that the Working Group on Ageing in Place had held its third meeting on 19 August 2019. Noting the implementation progress of the Pilot Scheme on Training for Foreign Domestic Helpers in Elderly Care, Members considered its outcome satisfactory and hoped that the scheme would be extended to cover more districts.

#### Committee on Elder Academy Development Foundation

14. Mr Gordon CHONG Kwok-wing, Secretary to the Commission, reported that the Vetting Sub-committee of the Elder Academy Development Foundation had held a meeting on 15 August 2019 to consider the first round of funding applications for 2019-20. In addition to the 20 primary and secondary schools which would set up new elder academies, the Chinese University of Hong Kong would become the most recent post-secondary institution to establish an elder academy following that round of applications. The second round of funding applications for 2019-20 would close on 31 October 2019. The Secretariat

would continue publicity efforts to encourage school sponsoring bodies to participate in the Elder Academy Scheme.

### **Agenda Item 6: Any other business**

#### **Letter from a concern group to the Commission regarding recent social incidents**

15. The Chairman said that a concern group had written to the Commission before the meeting regarding recent social incidents, including the impact of tear gas on individual RCHEs. In response, Ms Carol YIP, Director of Social Welfare, briefed the Commission on relevant measures taken by the SWD. Ms YIP said that the SWD had been closely monitoring the situation in various districts, and made every endeavour to remind RCHEs in relevant districts before a public event took place to implement contingency measures and pay attention to the health conditions of their service users. The SWD would also contact and inspect the institutions and service units concerned afterwards to get a picture of the conditions of service users, staff and facilities and the operation. It was understood that the operation of the RCHE concerned was in order and no service users were unwell because of the incident. The Commission hoped that relevant departments would continue to take appropriate measures to ensure normal delivery of elderly services.

#### **Time of adjournment**

16. The meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

#### **Date of next meeting**

17. The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for 15 November 2019.

November 2019