

(Translation)
Elderly Commission
Minutes of the 108th Meeting

Conference Room 3, G/F, Central Government Offices,
2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong
11 a.m., 24 August 2022 (Wednesday)

Present:

Chairman

Dr LI Kwok-tung, Donald, SBS, JP

Members

Dr BAI Xue

Dr CHAN Chi-kau, Johnnie Casire, SBS, JP

Ms CHAN Mei-kit, Maggie, MH

Ms CHAN Yee-ching, Tammy

Mr CHUA Hoi-wai, JP

Dr HUI Elsie

Prof LAI Wing-leung, Daniel

Prof LAM Chiu-wa, Linda

Mr LAU Tat-chuen

Ms LI Fai, Grace, MH

Mr LIT Hoo-yin, Horace

Dr LUK Ka-hay, James

Mr MA Heng, Theodore

Mr SIU King-wai, Kyrus

Ms WONG Chor-kei, Macy, MH

Ms YU Chui-yee, BBS, MH

Ms LAU Yim, Alice, JP

Miss LEE Pui-sze, Charmaine, JP

Mr FUNG Pan-chung, Chris

Dr LAM Chau-kuen, Yonnie

Mrs TANG FUNG Shuk-yin

Dr KWOK Hau-chung

Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Director of Social Welfare

Principal Assistant Secretary for Food and
Health (Health) 3

Assistant Director of Health (Elderly Health)

Assistant Director of Housing (Estate
Management) 1

Senior Manager (Elderly Care), Hospital
Authority

In attendance:

Mr SUN Yuk-han, Chris, JP	Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Ms KWOK Wai-ling, Polly, JP	Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 2
Ms CHAN Wing-man, Manda, JP	Commissioner for Rehabilitation
Ms LAW Lai-tan, Linda	Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 3
Mr TAN Tick-ye	Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Elderly)
Ms LEE Ngan-chau, Martina	Chief Executive Manager, Labour and Welfare Bureau
Mr LAU Shun-tak	Executive Officer (Welfare) 4, Labour and Welfare Bureau

Secretary

Ms CHAN Ah-wing, Ivy	Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 4
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Dr LI Kwok-tung, Donald, the Chairman, welcomed all attending Members. He also extended welcome to Prof LAI Wing-leung, Daniel and Miss LEE Pui-sze, Charmaine, Director of Social Welfare, who were attending for the first time.

2. In particular, the Chairman welcomed Mr SUN Yuk-han, Chris, Secretary for Labour and Welfare (SLW), to the meeting. The SLW said that, having previously worked with three former Chairmen of the Elderly Commission (EC), namely Dr LEONG Che-hung, Prof CHAN Cheung-ming, Alfred and Dr LAM Ching-choi, he was no stranger to the EC's work. The SLW expressed his heartfelt appreciation to all Members for participating in the EC's work and advising on elderly policies and services of Hong Kong amidst their busy schedules. He hoped that Members would continue to maintain close communication with the Government, and believed that various elderly initiatives would continue to produce fruitful results under the Chairman's leadership and with Members' participation. The Chairman thanked the SLW for taking the time to encourage Members and recognising the EC's efforts. (The SLW left the meeting at 11:05 a.m.)

3. The Chairman reminded Members to declare potential conflict between their own interests and the matters to be discussed.

Agenda item 1: Confirmation of the minutes of the 107th meeting

4. Members did not propose any amendments to the Chinese and English versions of the draft minutes of the 107th meeting issued by the Secretariat on 1 August 2022. The minutes were confirmed.

Agenda item 2: Matters arising

5. Paragraph 7(f) of the minutes of the 107th meeting stated that the Social Welfare Department (SWD) had forwarded the reports on ventilation assessment conducted for various types of residential care homes (RCHs) in 2021 to the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) for follow-up. Mr TAN Tick-yee, Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Elderly) reported that the SWD, together with the EMSD, had already completed the inspection of about 700 private and self-financing RCHs in Hong Kong this year. The SWD had been receiving reports from the EMSD and had provided the sector with improvement recommendations for follow-up. With regard to subvented RCHs, written reports on ventilation assessments conducted by qualified persons had been submitted to the EMSD for review. Subvented RCHs could make use of their lump sum grants or the special grant under the Lotteries Fund to improve their ventilation systems. The EMSD would offer technical advice and support to these RCHs taking into account their individual needs. In July 2022, the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust made available funds for all RCHs to apply for the acquisition of mobile negative pressure cabins and high-efficiency air filtration systems. More than 400 RCHs had submitted their applications and the delivery and installation of equipment were ongoing.

6. Paragraph 18 of the minutes of the 107th meeting stated that the EC should write to the Chairman of the Nursing Council of Hong Kong (NCHK) to express its support for examining the feasibility of adjusting the clinical practice requirements under the Enrolled Nurse (General) Training Programme. Ms KWOK Wai-ling, Polly, Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 2 said that Dr LAM Ching-choi, ex-Chairman of the EC, had written to the NCHK Chairman on 5 July 2022 to suggest that some clinical practice hours for Enrolled Nurses (General) could be spent in social welfare organisations so that more clinical placements could be offered, thereby increasing the training quota for and the supply of these nurses. A similar proposal was offered by Tung Wah College to the NCHK Chairman via its letter on 4 July 2022. The LWB had already explained the proposal to the Chairman of the NCHK's Education Committee. Representatives of the LWB would report to Members again when there were further developments. *[Post-meeting note: The requirement on clinical practice hours for Enrolled Nurses (General) was discussed by the NCHK's Education Committee on 26 August 2022 and then by the NCHK on 27 September 2022. The NCHK agreed to state clearly in the Core-Competencies for Enrolled Nurses (General) and a Reference Guide to the Syllabus of Subjects and Requirements for the Preparation of Enrolled Nurse (General) that trainees might spend up to 30% of their total hours of clinical practice in RCHs with a licence/certificate of exemption issued under the Residential Care Homes (Elderly Persons) Ordinance (Cap. 459) or the Residential Care Homes (Persons with Disabilities) Ordinance (Cap. 613). The reference guide would come into force once it had been updated by the NCHK and uploaded to its website.]*

Agenda item 3: Suggestions and Priorities on Elderly Services for 2023-24

(Information Paper No. EC/D/01/22)

7. With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Mr TAN Tick Yee, Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Elderly), briefed Members about suggestions and priorities on elderly services for 2023-24.

8. After the briefing, the Chairman and Members raised the following views and questions:

- (a) it was considered that top priority should be accorded to strengthening community care and support services for elderly persons, and that assistance could be rendered to elderly persons and their carers in need by forging more collaboration between community care and support service units and District Health Centres (DHCs) in the future;
- (b) by establishing partnership with district family doctors, DHCs could play a greater role at the district level for enhancing the quality of life of elderly persons ageing in place. It was necessary for service providers to strengthen their dissemination of information to ensure effective and timely access to service information by elderly persons and their carers;
- (c) it was suggested that District Elderly Community Centres (DECCs), Neighbourhood Elderly Centres (NECs) and home care services teams should liaise with neighbourhood networks and mobilise members of the community through outreaching services and community networks to proactively identify hidden and needy carers in the community and provide them with necessary support services, such as emotional support, training and referral to appropriate services;
- (d) it was hoped that under the Primary Healthcare Development Blueprint, to be announced shortly by the Health Bureau (HHB), a primary care delivery model based on medical-social collaboration could be built with policy support;
- (e) it was suggested that various information websites related to carer support services be integrated into a one-stop online information platform to facilitate needy elderly persons and their carers to seek assistance. The Government could consider providing additional resources to equip elderly persons with basic information technology knowledge so that they could make good use of online resources;
- (f) it was considered that assistance could be rendered to families with elderly persons in making forward planning so as to enhance psychological readiness of future carers and their ability to look after elderly persons;
- (g) the significant reduction in the average waiting time for subsidised home care service from about 11 months in late July 2017 to about six months in late June 2022 was appreciated. It was hoped that the Government would continue to provide additional resources to further reduce the waiting time;
- (h) the provision of a Dementia Supplement (DS) to subvented RCHEs and private RCHEs participating in the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme which take care of elderly persons with dementia was supported. Such provision enabled these homes to provide appropriate care and training for their demented residents. A Member opined that the current procedures for DS allocation were complicated, and hoped that the SWD would explore ways to streamline the DS approval mechanism and process as soon as possible;
- (i) the SWD's effort to provide adequate resources and timely guidelines for RCHs during the fifth wave of the epidemic was appreciated;

- (j) concerning about families of elderly singletons and doubletons in the community, it was suggested that additional resources be provided for enhancing support and helping them deal with problems associated with ageing in place, and that more resources be allocated to DECCs and NECs to enable these centres to cope with the increasing number of counselling cases in recent years; and
- (k) the Support for Carers Project was supported. It provided training for frontline property management personnel to help them identify and render assistance to needy elderly persons and their carers. Timely assistance could also be offered to needy elderly persons when necessary through collaboration with district service units. The Pilot Scheme on Training for Foreign Domestic Helpers in Elderly Care and the Pilot Scheme on Living Allowance for Carers of Elderly Persons from Low-income Families were also commended by the EC for their effectiveness. It was suggested that the project and schemes be continued.

9. In response to Members' views and questions, Mr TAN Tick-ye, Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Elderly) and Dr LAM Chau-kuen, Yonnie, Assistant Director of Health (Elderly Health), gave consolidated responses as follows:

- (a) starting from October 2021, the DHC, DECCs and NECs in Kwai Tsing had implemented mutual referral arrangements on a trial basis to help elderly persons in need receive healthcare or other services. The SWD was in discussion with the HHB on progressively extending such arrangements to other districts;
- (b) the SWD had been setting up day care centres for the elderly in new development areas during recent years to enhance community care services for the elderly. Frail elderly persons could use Community Care Service Vouchers to receive, without waiting, diversified home or day care services;
- (c) in support of medical-social collaboration, the Department of Health had been promoting close collaboration of its Visiting Health Teams with DECCs and NECs, and had also been co-operating with social welfare organisations through the Capacity Building for Carers in the Community – Home Assessment and Improvement programme to train volunteers in identifying high-risk elderly persons and assessing environmental risk factors during home visits, such that early improvement of their home environment could be made; and
- (d) thanks were extended to Dr CHAN Chi-kau, Johnnie Casire, for supporting the Support for Carers Project. Given the positive response and support received from various sectors of the community, the SWD extended the project to March 2023, while the Pilot Scheme on Training for Foreign Domestic Helpers in Elderly Care and the Pilot Scheme on Living Allowance for Carers of Elderly Persons from Low-income Families, launched with subsidies from the Lotteries Fund and the Community Care Fund respectively, would continue to operate until the end of September 2023. The SWD would review the effectiveness of the project and schemes and seek the required resources in due course, and consider whether they should be regularised.

Agenda item 4: Consultancy Study on Needs and Support Required of Carers of Elderly Persons and of Persons with Disabilities in Hong Kong

(Information Paper No. EC/D/02/22)

10. With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Ms CHAN Wing-man, Manda, Commissioner for Rehabilitation, briefed Members on the Report of Consultancy Study on Needs and Support Required of Carers of Elderly Persons and of Persons with Disabilities in Hong Kong (the Report).

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

- (a) it was considered essential to enable easy access to information by carers, and it was suggested that a one-stop carer-centric information platform be developed. Given the substantial demand for respite services, it was hoped that the platform could help carers make service bookings more easily;
- (b) it was considered necessary to develop a self-administered assessment tool for carers to assess their own mental and physical conditions and seek timely assistance;
- (c) as carers' stress partly stemmed from taking care of elderly persons or persons with disabilities who had medical needs in their family, it was suggested that visiting services by doctors, nurses or physiotherapists be considered so as to alleviate their stress;
- (d) it was suggested that the dependent parent allowance for carers at work be increased to reduce their financial burden and encourage elderly persons to age in place, and that training be provided to former carers who might then take part in outreaching care programme for other persons in need and in turn earn a living;
- (e) the Report was considered comprehensive. Noting the directions and frameworks recommended by the consultant for the Government to formulate policies on supporting carers, Members were concerned with how the Government would follow up on these recommendations and whether there were key follow-up actions;
- (f) it was suggested that human resources for supporting carers be developed through training, staffing requirements of RCHs be relaxed, and schools specialised in nurturing manpower for social welfare organisations be established; and
- (g) it was suggested that case managers be assigned to help carers grasp the latest information on the relevant services and resources.

12. In response to Members' views and questions, Ms Manda CHAN, Commissioner for Rehabilitation and Ms KWOK Wai-ling, Polly, Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 2, gave consolidated responses as follows:

- (a) the Report recommended that a one-stop information platform be established to consolidate information and services on carer support from various sources, with the aim of facilitating timely access to necessary information by carers. The LWB kept an open mind on whether the platform would be developed and operated by the Government, NGOs, social enterprises or corporations;

- (b) the LWB and SWD agreed in principle to the recommendations of the Report and would consider stakeholders' views and solicit resources to develop and implement carer support measures;
- (c) the LWB could reflect Members' suggestion on increasing the dependent parent allowance for carers at work to the relevant bureaux; *[Post-meeting note: The Secretariat of the Elderly Commission had conveyed the relevant suggestion to the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau and the Inland Revenue Department for consideration.]*
- (d) in addition to helping carers access information online, service providers could educate carers on specialized care skills through home visit services; and
- (e) the initial idea was for professionals to design a simple self-administered assessment tool to help carers understand their own psychological and physical conditions so that they could seek help in a timely manner.

13. Having consolidated Members' views, the Chairman concluded that the EC agreed to the recommendations of the Report and believed that the LWB would work out a plan to implement these recommendations in due course.

Agenda item 5: Progress reports by Working Groups and Committee

Working Group on Elderly Services Programme Plan and Working Group on Ageing in Place

14. Ms CHAN Ah-wing, Ivy, Secretary to the Commission, reported that the joint meeting of the two Working Groups was tentatively scheduled for 14 September 2022. Members would be advised of the agenda and other details of the meeting in due course. *[Post-meeting note: The joint meeting of the two Working Groups was held on 27 September 2022.]*

Committee on Elder Academy Development Foundation

15. Ms CHAN said that the last meeting of the Vetting Sub-committee was held on 8 August 2022. The Sub-committee agreed on the funding proposals to support 22 applications from the existing elder academies (EAs) and 5 applications for setting up new EAs, involving about \$2.3 million in total. In view of the financial situation of the Elder Academy Development Foundation (EADF), the Sub-committee had adopted a prudent approach in vetting funding applications from post-secondary institutions, and focused funding support on auditing-student programmes. The Sub-committee's funding proposals would be submitted to the Committee on EADF for approval in due course. *[Post-meeting note: the related funding proposals had been approved by the Committee on EADF.]*

16. The deadline for the next round of funding applications would be 31 October 2022.

Agenda item 6: Any other business

17. There was no other business for discussion at the meeting.

Time of adjournment

18. The meeting was adjourned at 12:45 p.m.

Date of next meeting

19. The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for 7 December 2022. Members would be advised of the details in due course.

October 2022