

27th Meeting of the Elderly Commission
Summary for Press Briefing

The Elderly Commission (EC) held its 27th meeting today (24 January 2002) with the following three items on the agenda:

(1) Initial Study on Cross-Boundary Housing for the Elderly

- The EC received a presentation from the Housing Bureau (HB) on ‘Initial Study on Cross-Boundary Housing for the Elderly’, which summarized information and findings of recent studies/surveys conducted by concerned Government departments/organizations (e.g. the thematic household survey 2001 by the Census and Statistics Department) on elders who have taken up residence in the Mainland or intend to live in the Mainland in future.
- The key findings and observations from the studies/surveys were as follows: -
 - (a) The elderly/soon-to-be old persons (about 17,000) already taken up residence in the Mainland constitutes about 1% of the groups.
 - (b) The soon-to-be old group showed more interest than the elderly group to relocate to the Mainland in the next 5-10 years.
 - (c) About 30% of the two groups who resided/intended to live in the Mainland had owned/rented properties there.
 - (d) Major reasons for residing in/intending to live in the Mainland include – lower living cost in the Mainland, better living environment in the Mainland, family reunion/having relatives in the Mainland, and having properties in the Mainland.
 - (e) Projected demand of elders for cross boundary housing is yet to be further assessed.
- The views of the EC would be taken into account in formulating the framework of HB’s future study on cross-boundary housing for the elders, which would cover: -
 - (a) cross-boundary housing demand of elders/soon-to-be old for different types of housing; and
 - (b) their migration pattern and relationship with the market trend of cross-boundary housing.

(2) Proposed Scheme to Encourage Provision of Residential Care Home for the Elderly Premises in New Private Developments

- The EC was consulted on a government proposal to grant gross floor area and premium concessions to encourage private developers to incorporate residential care homes for the elderly (RCHes) in their new private developments.
- Pursuant to the recommendation of a report by the EC on “Assessment on the

demand of the elderly for housing and residential care services and strategy to meet long term needs”, the Government has been exploring and pursuing a number of initiatives to secure suitable premises for use as RCHEs. The proposal is one of the ideas being developed.

- It is noted that the development of quality and affordable residential care homes for elderly in the private sector has so far been hindered by the shortage of quality premises. The Government hopes to encourage the provision of quality RCHEs in new private developments, thereby increasing the overall supply of purpose-built premises in the market that will be used for the operation of RCHEs.
- In return for the proposed concessions, the developer will have to pay for the cost of constructing the RCHE premises with basic provisions. These RCHE premises, once built, will become the properties of the developers but will remain for the exclusive use of RCHEs only. RCHEs under the proposed scheme would be operated on a commercial basis targeting at elders and their families who are prepared to pay market determined rates.
- There will be safeguards to ensure the premises built would be used for RCHE purpose within a reasonable timeframe and to prevent abuse.
- In addition to the EC, the Land and Building Advisory Committee and the relevant panels of the Legislative Council will also be consulted. The Government will in due course seek legislative amendments to implement the proposed scheme.

(3) Progress Report on Service Improvement Measures of Private Residential Care Homes for the Elderly

- The EC also received a progress report from the Social Welfare Department (SWD) on measures taken to help private RCHEs to improve their standards.
- The EC noted that all private RCHEs (over 500) have obtained licenses since March last year. The Government has introduced additional measures to further strengthen the regulation of these homes. They include:
 - (a) The Government is disseminating information on RCHEs through various channels to help elders and their families to make informed choices. Lists of all licensed private RCHEs, Bought Place Scheme (BPS) and Enhanced Bought Place Scheme (EBPS) homes and other useful information have been made available on SWD’s homepage. In addition, the Government has published a Directory of RCHEs which contains information on the various aspects of the RCHEs. Guidance Notes on tips in selecting suitable RCHEs and ways to adjust to group living in RCHEs are also provided.
 - (b) The Government has developed a multi-skilled training curriculum for care

staff in both community and residential care settings. A total of 400 training places will be provided in 2001-02 and another 1 760 places from 2002-03 to 2005-06. To enhance the first aid standard of RCHEs, over 1 000 training places will be provided from 2000-01 to 2002-03. Around 680 training places for health workers will also be provided in 2002-03.

- (c) The Government has issued a guidebook on Service Quality Standards to RCHEs in EBPS homes to assist them to further improve their service standards. The Government would research on quality assurance measures to help private RCHEs to further improve their standards above licensing requirements.
- (d) The Government has taken actions to step up prosecution against non-compliant RCHEs breaching licensing conditions.

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