

**Elderly Commission**  
**Minutes of the 74th Meeting**

Conference Room 4, G/F., Central Government Offices,  
2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong  
2:30 p.m., 12 March 2013 (Tuesday)

**Present:**

**Chairman**

Prof CHAN Cheung-ming, Alfred, BBS, JP

**Vice-chairman**

Dr LAM Ching-choi, BBS, JP

**Members**

Dr CHAN Hon-wai, Felix, JP

Ms CHAN Man-ki, Maggie, MH

Mrs CHAN LUI Ling-ye, Lilian

Dr CHENG Kam-chung, JP, MH

Dr CHEUNG Moon-wah

Dr CHONG Ming-lin, Alice

Prof FUNG Yuk-kuen, Sylvia

Mr MA Ching-hang, Patrick, BBS, JP

Mr MA Kam-wah, Timothy, JP

Mr SHIE Wai-hung, Henry

Dr TUNG Sau-ying

Mr WONG Fan-fung, Jackson, MH

Mrs WONG WONG Yu-sum, Doris

Mr WU Moon-hoi, Marco, SBS

Mr YAU How-boa, Stephen, BBS, JP, MH

Miss TAM Kam-lan, Annie, JP

Mr YUEN Ming-fai, Richard, JP

Mr NIP Tak-kuen, Patrick, JP

Mr LEE Kwok-wing, Albert, JP

Dr LEUNG Sze-lee, Shirley

Dr Daisy DAI

Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Permanent Secretary for Food & Health (Health)

Director of Social Welfare

Deputy Director of Housing

Assistant Director of Health

Chief Manager (Primary & Community Services),  
Hospital Authority

**In attendance:**

Mr CHEN Yee, Donald

Deputy Secretary for Labour & Welfare

Mrs CHAN NG Ting-ting, Elina

Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Miss LI Yuen-wah, Cecilla  
Miss LAU Sze-mun, Shirley  
Ms LEE Kai-ying, Iris  
Miss MOK Tik-shan, Elizabeth

Assistant Director of Social Welfare  
Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare  
Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare  
Chief Executive Officer  
Labour and Welfare Bureau  
Executive Officer  
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Miss HO Wing-wa, Vitinie

**Secretary**

Mr CHOW Wing-hang

Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare

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Prof Alfred CHAN Cheung-ming, the Chairman, welcomed Members to the meeting.

2. The Chairman reminded Members to make a declaration of interest when they had a potential conflict of interest with the matters to be discussed.

**Agenda item 1: Confirmation of the minutes of the 73rd meeting**

3. As Members had not proposed any amendments to the Chinese and English versions of the draft minutes issued by the Secretariat on 8 March 2013, the minutes were confirmed.

**Agenda item 2: Matters arising**

Paragraph 17 of the minutes of the 73rd meeting

4. The Chairman said that the arrangements for this Commission's study trip to New York of the United States would be reported under agenda item 4.

**Agenda item 3: Briefing on relevant initiatives in the 2013-14 Budget**

5. Mr Donald CHEN Yee, Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare, briefed Members on the initiatives relating to elderly welfare in the 2013-14 Budget with the aid of a powerpoint presentation.

6. Members generally welcomed the various initiatives for improving elderly care services as mentioned in the Budget. They raised the following questions and views:

#### Manpower Resources

- (a) What was the enrollment situation of the Enrolled Nurse Training Programme for the welfare sector? What measures were put in place to attract more young people to enroll?
- (b) With an ageing population, the number of frail elderly persons living in Residential Care Homes for the Elderly (RCHEs) as well as their needs for care services were increasing. It was suggested that on-going training be provided to the enrolled nurses with less experience with a view to enhancing their skills to meet the various care needs of the elderly persons.
- (c) It was suggested that a comprehensive review of the current situation of elderly services be conducted to identify the needs for human resources and caring skills in the elderly service sector so as to work out effective manpower training programmes.
- (d) It was also suggested that suitable support and care training be provided for informal carers (e.g. family members of the elderly persons).

#### Community Care Services

- (e) It was pleased to note that in view of government's allocation of additional resources to increase the provision of day care services and home-based care places for the elderly and the regularisation of the Integrated Discharge Support Programme for Elderly Patients, the waiting time for community care services had significantly reduced.
- (f) Given the mutual influence between the community and residential care services for the elderly persons, Members hoped that the Government would continue to strengthen community care services so that more elderly persons would be able to "age in place", thus delaying their need for institutionalisation.

### Residential Care Services

- (g) What was the present level of demand for residential care places for the elderly persons?
- (h) Notwithstanding that the Government would allocate an additional recurrent funding of \$73 million to add some 600 subsidised residential care places for the elderly persons, the increase still fell short of the demand. It was suggested that the Government should allocate more resources to increase the purchase of EA1 places from private RCHEs under the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme so as to shorten the waiting time of the elderly persons for residential care places.
- (i) It was suggested that the Administration should consider arranging the elderly persons who were waiting for subsidised long term care services to reside in homes providing EA1 places first so that they could receive appropriate care services at an early opportunity.

### Community Care Fund (CCF) Elderly Dental Assistance (EDA) Programme

- (j) Members were pleased that the Financial Secretary proposed in the Budget an injection of \$15 billion into CCF for poverty alleviation. It was suggested that CCF should consider increasing its subsidy to EDA Programme so that crowning service would be included and more elderly persons could benefit from the Programme.
- (k) The utilisation rate had remained low since the launch of the EDA Programme in September 2012, with only around 400 elderly persons referred to the service. It was suggested that the Administration should step up publicity and streamline procedures so that more elderly persons could benefit from the service.

### Others

- (l) It was pleased that the Hong Kong Housing Society (HKHS) had introduced the “Ageing in Place” (AIP) Pilot Scheme in one of its ageing estates, namely, Cho Yiu Chuen in Kwai Chung. Under the Scheme, apart from improving estate facilities to create a barrier-free environment for the elderly residents, additional day care centres and home care services were also provided for the elderly

residents in collaboration with welfare organisations so that they could enjoy their twilight years in a familiar neighbourhood.

- (m) Would the Housing Department (HD) consider introducing initiatives similar to HKHS's AIP Scheme in its housing estates/ courts?

7. Mr Richard YUEN Ming-fai, Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Health), Mr Patrick NIP Tak-kuen, Director of Social Welfare, Miss Cecilla LI Yuen-wah, Assistant Director of Social Welfare, and Mr Albert LEE Kwok-wing, Deputy Director of Housing responded respectively as follows:

#### Manpower resources

- (a) The number of applications for enrollment exceeded the places available every time the Enrolled Nurse Training Programme for the Welfare Sector was launched. As the Programme was mainly designed for training enrolled nurses to serve in the welfare sector, priority would be accorded to applicants currently working in the welfare sector.
- (b) The Food and Health Bureau had set up a Steering Committee to conduct a strategic review on healthcare manpower planning and professional development in Hong Kong. The strategic review would assess the manpower needs in various healthcare professions and put forward recommendations on how to cope with the anticipated manpower demand, strengthen professional training and facilitate professional development, with a view to ensuring the healthy and sustainable development of the healthcare system in Hong Kong. On the other hand, the Education Bureau was working out a qualifications framework for the practitioners in the elderly care services sector with a view to providing them with career progression pathways in a bid to attract more young people to join the elderly care services sector.
- (c) The Social Welfare Department would review the manpower situation of the elderly care services sector (including enrolled nurses and health workers, etc) from time to time for formulating appropriate measures.

### Residential Care Services

- (d) At present, there were about 6 000 elderly persons waiting for subsidised nursing home places and about 22 000 elderly persons waiting for subsidised care-and-attention places.

### The CCF EDA Programme

- (e) The EDA Programme subsidised needy elderly persons with low income for dentures and other necessary dental services. CCF would explore how these services could be enhanced having regard to the progress of implementation and the experience gained.
- (f) At the initial stage of implementation, the elderly persons were not familiar with details of the Programme including the application procedures. Coupled with their reluctance in receiving dental treatment, the utilisation rate of the subsidy under the Programme had thus fallen short of expectation.

### Others

- (g) HD had in recent years allocated substantial resources for renovation works in various aged estates, including construction of additional barrier-free facilities such as lifts; free installation of suitable aluminium laundry racks for elderly households; provision of ramps at the flat entrance for elderly tenants who were wheelchair bound or even replacement of entrance doors to improve their accessibility, etc. However, it was a bit difficult for HD to identify suitable vacant premises in aged estates for provision of elderly services by non-government organisations. Nevertheless, HD would make every effort to cater to the demand in this respect.

### **Agenda item 4: Any other business**

#### Arrangements of study trip to New York

8. Mr CHOW Wing-hang, Secretary of this Commission, said that upon consultation with Members, the study trip to New York was scheduled for 21 to 27 July 2013. A total of 12 Members would participate in the trip. The Secretariat would compile relevant information on promoting “Age-friendly city” for Members’ reference in due course. Mr

CHOW also pointed out that the Steering Committee on Population Policy recommended to consider adopting the policy framework on active ageing raised by the World Health Organisation and providing a barrier-free living environment for the elderly persons. The Secretariat would collate the relevant background information on this subject for Members' reference when necessary.

#### Work progress of the Working Group on Active Ageing

9. Mr Timothy MA Kam-wah, Chairman of the Working Group on Active Ageing (WGAA), said that the views and suggestions collected during visits to the participating organisations of the Pilot Neighbourhood Active Ageing Projects on "Caring for Elders" and "Prevention of Elderly Suicide" had been incorporated into the review reports of the above two projects by the Secretariat. For the pilot project on "Caring for Elders", the participating organisations suggested that the works of different districts should be arranged in a flexible way, the flexibility of activities and training for volunteers should be enhanced, and the message of prevention of elder abuse should be actively promoted in primary and secondary schools. WGAA considered that the needs of the elderly persons could be addressed in a more comprehensive manner if professionals from different sectors such as healthcare professionals were engaged in the project. As regards the pilot project on "Prevention of Elderly Suicide", the participating organisations considered that the referral system should be enhanced. For example, case referral procedures could be simplified by standardising the basic information required to be provided by the elderly persons to different service providers. The participating organisations also suggested that the district network should be further enhanced and that continuous efforts be made to promote "Prevention of Elderly Suicide" in the community.

#### Work progress of the Committee on Elder Academy Development Foundation (the Foundation Committee)

10. Mr CHOW said that the Vetting Subcommittee under the Foundation Committee visited 10 defunct Elderly Academies (EAs) from January to February in 2013. Visits to some existing EAs were underway with a view to understanding their operational conditions and experiences. According to the views received during the visits, EAs in general hoped to offer more diversified courses so as to sustain the interest of the elderly persons in pursuing continuous learning. In this connection, the Foundation Committee would explore collaboration opportunities with tertiary institutions or elder learning agencies to develop new courses, train instructors for EAs, and work with the media to promote the EA courses (such as launching radio learning programmes, etc).

## “Carer Allowance”

11. The Chairman said that CCF was examining the feasibility of introducing a carer allowance for carers of elderly persons and hoped that this Commission would put forward its views on the proposal.

12. Members generally supported the introduction of a carer allowance for carers of elderly persons and raised the following questions and views:

- (a) The quality of living of many carers was degraded because they had to look after elderly persons on a long-term basis. It was suggested that apart from granting allowance to carers as a supplement to their living expenses, consideration could also be given to providing medical protection for carers or respite care services so as to relieve the pressures of the carers.
- (b) The allowance to carers was granted as a recognition of their efforts and contribution in taking care of elderly persons. This might help alleviate their pressures and reduce elderly abuse cases.
- (c) The assessment on the eligibility of carers for the allowance was a complicated issue which had to be handled with care. The allowance should also be designed to avoid abuses and double benefits. Moreover, given the shortage of manpower in the Hospital Authority (HA), the entire healthcare system might be affected if HA doctors were required to assess the extent of care received by the elderly persons in order to determine the carers’ eligibility for the allowance.
- (d) Filial piety is a traditional Chinese virtue. Therefore, supports for carers should not be provided in the form of financial compensation. Otherwise, it would go against the traditional values. It was suggested that carers should be provided with practical supports such as training on care skills, respite service for elderly persons, etc.
- (e) It was suggested that this Commission should set up a working group to study the related issues such as the criteria for allowance and the method of payment, the resources involved, the manpower and long-term financial commitments etc. The views and suggestions should then be submitted to CCF.



- (f) It was suggested that apart from granting cash allowance to carers, consideration be given to the provision of assistance in the form of service vouchers.
- (g) It was suggested that consideration be given to expand the scope of carer allowance, for example, to cover the neighbours offering assistance in caring for the elderly persons. In this way, human resources in the neighbourhood could be utilised to provide care services to the elderly persons in a more convenient and flexible manner.

13. The Chairman concluded that this Commission supported the introduction of "Carer Allowance" as proposed by CCF. He hoped that CCF's taskforce would give due regard to the views of this Commission when it drew up the implementation details of the scheme. Individual Members of this Commission would be pleased to take part in the formulation of the scheme.

#### Conference to mark the 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of HKHS

14. Members noted that HKHS would organise a large-scale conference to celebrate its 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre in Wanchai on 30 October 2013. This Commission was invited to share at the conference the experience and knowledge gained from its "Age-friendly City" study trip to New York of the United States.

#### Date of the next meeting

15. The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for 4 July 2013. [Post-meeting note: The next meeting was re-scheduled for 11 June 2013.]

#### Time of adjournment

16. The meeting was adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

March 2013