

Elderly Commission
Minutes of the 82nd Meeting

Conference Room 2, G/F, Central Government Offices,
2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong
2:30 p.m., 30 January 2015 (Friday)

Present:

Chairman

Prof CHAN Cheung-ming, Alfred, BBS, JP

Vice-chairman

Dr LAM Ching-choi, BBS, JP

Members

Dr CHAN Hon-wai, Felix, JP
Mrs CHAN LUI Ling-yee, Lilian
Ms CHAN Man-ki, Maggie, MH
Miss CHAN Man-yee, Grace
Dr CHENG Kam-chung, BBS, MH, JP
Dr CHEUNG Moon-wah
Dr CHONG Ming-lin, Alice, MH
Prof FUNG Yuk-kuen, Sylvia, BBS
Mr MA Kam-wah, Timothy, JP
Mr SHIE Wai-hung, Henry
Dr TUNG Sau-ying
Mr WONG Fan-foung, Jackson, MH
Mr YAU How-boa, Stephen, SBS, MH, JP
Miss TAM Kam-lan, Annie, JP

Mr YUEN Ming-fai, Richard, JP

Ms Carol YIP, JP
Mr HSU Kam-lung, Virgil

Dr LI Mun-pik, Teresa
Dr LO Su-vui

Permanent Secretary for Labour and
Welfare
Permanent Secretary for Food and
Health (Health)
Director of Social Welfare
Chief Housing Manager/Management,
Housing Department
Assistant Director of Health
Director (Strategy and Planning),
Hospital Authority Head Office

In attendance:

Mr CHEN Yee, Donald, JP

Mrs CHAN NG Ting-ting

Deputy Secretary for Labour and
Welfare
Principal Assistant Secretary for
Labour and Welfare

Mr TSE Ling-chun, Steve	Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Miss LI Yuen-wah, Cecilla	Assistant Director of Social Welfare
Miss YIP Hau-yu, Hannah	Chief Social Work Officer, Social Welfare Department
Ms CHU Wing-yin, Diana	Chief Social Work Officer, Social Welfare Department
Dr CHAN Ching-nin, Clive	Senior Medical and Health Officer, Department of Health
Mr LIT Hoo-yin, Horace	Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Mr TO Yick-ting, Justin	Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Miss WONG Kwan-ye, Jenny	Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Mr CHU Chi-ho, Marco	Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Ms AU Fung-ye, Belinda	Chief Executive Officer, Labour and Welfare Bureau
Miss HO Wing-wa, Vitinie	Executive Officer, Labour and Welfare Bureau

Absent with apologies:

Mr MA Ching-hang, Patrick, BBS, JP
Mrs WONG WONG Yu-sum, Doris

Secretary

Miss CHANG Lai-chu, Stella	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 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 81st meeting

3. After the Secretariat had issued the Chinese and English versions of the draft minutes on 22 December 2014, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) proposed an

amendment to paragraph 7(n) of the English version of the draft minutes. Members endorsed the proposed amendment and confirmed the minutes with no further amendment.

Agenda item 2: Matters arising

Paragraph 10 of the minutes of the 81st meeting

4. As regards the proposal of inviting the Hong Kong Housing Society (HKHS) to brief Members on the ongoing implementation of the Age-in-Place Scheme in its 20 housing estates, Dr CHEUNG Moon-wah said that the HKHS would give Members a briefing at the Commission's meeting scheduled for March 2015.

Agenda item 3: Briefing on relevant initiatives in the 2015 Policy Address

5. Miss Annie TAM Kam-lan, Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare, briefed Members on the initiatives related to elderly services of the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB) in the 2015 Policy Address with a PowerPoint presentation (at Annex – Chinese version only).

6. Regarding the medical services for the elderly, Mr Richard YUEN Ming-fai, Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Health), pointed out that medical-social collaboration was the way forward for the development of elderly services in Hong Kong. This should enhance the quality of elderly services while addressing the needs of elderly persons (including those with dementia) and their carers for medical services.

7. Dr LO Su-vui, Director (Strategy and Planning) of the Hospital Authority (HA) Head Office, supplemented that the HA would launch an array of elderly-related measures in 2015. For example, a total of some 250 beds would be added to HA hospitals (about 190 in New Territories East and New Territories West, 36 in Kowloon and 21 on Hong Kong Island) to cope with the rising number of elderly admissions. Moreover, some 50 000 additional quotas of consultation would be provided at the general out-patient clinics with the elderly as the target patients. In disease management, the HA would strengthen its services for cardiac diseases, stroke management and respiratory disease in its hospitals to meet the needs of the elderly. As for community care services, the day hospital places for elderly patients provided in Yan Chai Hospital would be increased from 20 to 40. In addition, the Community Geriatric Assessment Teams (CGATs) would

strengthen the support for elderly residents in residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) suffering from terminal illnesses in collaboration with RCHEs. For instance, a pilot project was carried out in the Shatin Hospital to strengthen the cooperation with RCHEs and the training of staff of RCHEs, thereby enhancing the care for residents facing terminal illnesses. Moreover, with the consent of the elderly residents or their family members, the CGAT could refer elderly residents in RCHEs to the hospital for direct admission when necessary. This would allow the elderly to be admitted without going through the A&E Department and receive better treatment. In the light of the effectiveness of the pilot project, the HA would extend the service to other HA clusters in phases.

8. After the briefing, the Chairman and Members made the following suggestions and comments on the relevant initiatives:

Elderly Services

Overall direction

- (a) It was pleased to note that the Government had implemented a number of new services and initiatives related to elderly services as announced in the Policy Addresses of the past two years, including the introduction of the Pilot Scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly and the provision of additional service places for elderly persons through the Special Scheme on Privately Owned Sites for Welfare Uses. The Government's efforts to enhance existing elderly services and measures, such as further extending the Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme to cover green minibuses were also welcomed.

Active ageing

- (b) Training courses for carers of elderly persons should be provided in the Elder Academies to encourage enrollment of the younger and healthier retirees, thereby promoting a sense of worthiness among these persons and enhancing their self-reliance.
- (c) Given that more than 70% of the elderly population was still healthy and active, the Government should step up publicity to promote the message of active ageing. Moreover, efforts should be made to strengthen the traditional roles and functions

of family with a view to encouraging people to take care of their elderly at home despite their work commitments.

Residential care services for the elderly

- (d) It was pleased to note that the Government would substantially increase various care service places for the elderly in the coming few years. It was recognized that the additional day care service places would not only help reduce elderly persons' waiting time for subsidised RCHEs, but also fulfil the policy objective of "ageing in place".
- (e) The policy of "ageing in place as the core, institutional care as back-up" was further taken forward with the implementation of the Pilot Scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly. In parallel, following the introduction of a voucher scheme on residential care services for the elderly (RCS Voucher), it was hoped that the Government would encourage EA2 homes under the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme (EBPS) to further improve the quality of their services.
- (f) The transparency of residential care services should be enhanced, for instance, by setting up a telephone hotline for the elderly and their carers to enquire about RCHEs related information.

Manpower resources

- (g) At present, many sectors were facing manpower shortage. It was suggested to review the need for revisiting the manpower structure of care workers in the elderly service sector, taking account of the actual situation of the labour market.
- (h) The Navigation Scheme for Young Persons in Care Services (Navigation Scheme) could attract young people to join the elderly service sector. By providing on-the-job training for the young entrants, the Navigation Scheme would help alleviate the shortage of frontline care workers.
- (i) Elderly service providers should work together to provide graduates of the Navigation Scheme with job opportunities and encourage them to pursue career development in the sector.

- (j) It was mentioned in the 2015 Policy Address that the construction industry had to import skilled workers in a timely manner. The Government should also consider putting forward similar measures in respect of care workers in the elderly service sector, such as introducing a special scheme to facilitate the importation of care workers for the elderly by welfare organisations to meet urgent needs. This could help alleviate the persistent shortage of frontline manpower in the sector due to high turnover rate. It was suggested that the Government should first obtain relevant data on the projected demand for manpower in the sector, which could form an empirical basis for discussion with the Labour Advisory Board (LAB) on the need to import care workers to alleviate the manpower shortage.
- (k) The professional image of RCHE workers should be reshaped to do away with the negative image in the past. Positive elements such as job vitality and team work could be instilled to attract more young newcomers.
- (l) Based on the experience of the Navigation Scheme, the Government might put in place a care worker training programme specifically designed for women (including new arrival women).
- (m) In planning or constructing RCHEs or elderly service facilities, the Government might consider setting up child care facilities within the same premises. This would unleash women labour force and encourage more women to work for the RCHEs in their neighbourhood.
- (n) Jointly organised by SWD and HA, the Enrolled Nurse Training Programme for Welfare Sector was effective in alleviating the shortage of nurses in the elderly service sector. Welfare organisations also found it easier to recruit enrolled nurses. It was hoped that the training programme would continue to be implemented.
- (o) In view of the demand for paramedical staff such as physiotherapists and occupational therapists in the welfare sector, it was hoped that SWD would continue to encourage more graduates of the master programmes in physiotherapy and occupational therapy to join the elderly service sector through the sponsorship programme.

Pilot Scheme on Carer Allowance for the Elderly

- (p) The Pilot Scheme on Carer Allowance for the Elderly implemented by the Community Care Fund was effective in helping grassroot carers of elderly persons in the community.

Employment assistance for older persons

- (q) It was pleased to note that the Employment Programme for the Middle-aged would be extended to part-time jobs to provide more employment opportunities for older persons.
- (r) Before promoting employment of older persons, the Government should understand their expectation in terms of salary level and job nature. The Government should also take account of the concerns of employers about employing older persons such as safety, continuity, and the difficulties involved in fostering an elderly-friendly workplace and acquiring labour insurance. In addition, the Government should give employers hiring older persons more flexibility in insurance coverage and arrangements relating to the Mandatory Provident Fund Scheme.

Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme

- (s) Elderly persons generally welcomed the Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme which made them feel being respected. It was pleased to note that the Government would further extend the Scheme to green minibuses in phases this year.
- (t) In the new round of publicity for the Scheme, the Government should consider emphasising that the Scheme was funded by the Government instead of by the public transport operators, for example, through displaying posters on minibuses.
- (u) It was considered that the Scheme had greatly enhanced the mobility of elderly people. The Government should commission a consultancy study to assess the benefits to society brought about by the Scheme. The scope of the study might cover such areas as the economic and social benefits resulting from the enhanced mobility of elderly people, and the positive impact on the mental and physical health of elderly people, thereby ascertaining the achievements of the Scheme.

Retirement age

- (v) As pointed out in the paper released by the Steering Committee on Population Policy in January 2015, the labour force of Hong Kong would start to shrink in 2018. In response to the challenges posed by an ageing population, the Government planned to extend the service period of civil servants from 2015. As there was no statutory retirement age in Hong Kong, the Government should issue the related guidelines to subvented agencies (including schools and welfare organisations) to enable them to draw up their manpower plan early.

- (w) Given the longer life expectancy of Hong Kong people, many people aged 60 were still healthy, active and fit to work. However, most employees working in the private and welfare sectors required staff to retire when they reached the age of 60, making them to form a part of the elderly dependent population. The Government should, apart from extending the retirement age of civil servants, encourage the private and welfare sectors to follow suit. There was no pension scheme in the private and welfare sectors, and many elderly-related welfare measures (including the Old Age Living Allowance and Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme) targeted at people aged 65 or above. Moreover, employees were only allowed to withdraw their contributions to the Mandatory Provident Fund when they reached the age of 65. Extension of the retirement age to 65 was therefore suggested to help employees bridge the five-year gap from 60 upon retirement to 65, and alleviate the manpower shortage in the coming ten years.

Retirement protection

- (x) The Commission was suggested to discuss the issue of retirement protection and convey its views and suggestions to the Commission on Poverty (CoP) for reference.

Healthcare

Overall direction

- (a) The Government should continue to explore the feasibility of integrating elderly services centres with day care centres for the elderly and setting up Integrated Elderly Services Centres on a pilot basis, with a view to providing one-stop, multi-disciplinary healthcare and social services for the elderly at community level.

Healthcare manpower resources

- (b) At present, many public hospitals were facing shortage of healthcare personnel. With the policy of “ageing in place” and the increase of residential care places for elderly persons, it was expected that the demand for healthcare personnel in the community would continue to rise. The Government should therefore explore the possibility of adopting a new mode of delivering healthcare services, such as encouraging the collaboration between private doctors and the public sectors in developing referral protocols and shared-care programmes, so as to alleviate the shortage of healthcare manpower in public hospitals.
- (c) It was hoped that the Government would continue to strengthen the outreach services of CGATs to meet the need arising from the increased new residential care places for the elderly.

Dementia

- (d) It was considered that the 2015 Policy Address had not put forward new initiatives on care services for dementia patients and support for their carers.

9 In response to the suggestions and comments made by Members, Miss TAM, Mr YUEN and Ms Carol YIP, Director of Social Welfare, replied as follows:

Elderly Services

Active ageing

- (a) The Government had been fully committed to promoting active ageing, and a number of related initiatives were put forward in the 2015 Policy Address. Moreover, the Government had attached great importance to the traditional roles and functions of family, and was considering launching a campaign on child care by grandparents. This would unleash the human capital of grandparents and foster inter-generational harmony by strengthening the bonding between the young and the old. The Chief Executive also highlighted the importance of mutual support among family members in the section related to retirement protection in the 2015 Policy Address.
- (b) To promote the message of active ageing, SWD had launched the Opportunities

for the Elderly Project (OEP) since 1998 for the purpose of promoting a sense of worthiness among the elderly and a spirit of caring for the elderly through funding the activities organised by social service agencies, district organisations, educational agencies, etc. To make better use of resources, the Advisory Committee of the OEP set up by SWD and the Working Group on Active Ageing (WGAA) under the Commission both supported in principle the merge of the OEP and the Neighbourhood Active Ageing Project (NAAP).

Residential care services for the elderly

- (c) It was hoped that the Elderly Services Programme Plan (ESPP) being formulated by the Commission and the feasibility study on introducing the RCS Voucher would provide some insights into the development of residential care services for the elderly and assist the Government in drawing up measures to encourage RCHEs (including EA2 EBPS homes) to enhance their services.
- (d) SWD had implemented a scheme to encourage EA2 EBPS homes to upgrade their quality and standard of services to the level of EA1 EBPS homes. SWD would continue to provide the necessary resources in this respect.

Manpower resources

- (e) The Government had been keeping in view the shortage of care workers in the elderly service sector. In the long run, various measures would be taken to train and encourage more local care workers to join the sector. Such measures would include the provision of on-the-job training for young people, assistance for retirees in re-entering the job market and enhancement of community child care services to unleash the women workforce. As short-term measures, the training programmes of care workers for the elderly service sector would be strengthened to alleviate the manpower shortage. As regards the proposed importation of carers for the elderly by welfare organisations to meet urgent needs, the sector could first project the manpower need and provide relevant findings to LAB. On the other hand, the ESPP being formulated by the Commission was expected to provide more concrete data regarding the manpower demand in the sector for the medium to long-term, which would also serve as indicators for the need for and duration of importation of care workers.
- (f) It was hoped that the elderly service sector would provide more job opportunities

for graduates of the Navigation Scheme to encourage them to pursue career development in the sector. The Government would continue to work with the sector to explore ways to provide serving care workers with better career prospects and enhance their professional image.

- (g) The Government would adopt different measures to unleash the women workforce. For example, the Women's Commission would continue to adopt "Women's Employment" as the theme for its Funding Scheme for Women's Development in 2015. As regards the proposed inclusion of child care facilities in the construction plans of RCHEs, considering that the gross floor area approved by the Planning Department was based on the nature of the proposed welfare service facilities, the inclusion of child care facilities might correspondingly reduce the floor area usable by RCHEs. As such, setting up child care facilities on rental premises of private shopping centres near the RCHEs or on premises managed by the Housing Department or the HKHS should be a more viable option.
- (h) SWD would continue to run the Enrolled Nurse Training Programme for the Welfare Sector. A total of 920 training places would be provided in the coming years. SWD would also closely monitor the progress of this training programme.

Employment assistance for older persons

- (i) The Commission was suggested to invite representatives of the Labour Department to attend its meetings to collect Members' views on employment assistance measures for older persons.

Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme

- (j) The Government would review the implementation of the Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme in 2016, and having regard to the resources implications of the Scheme and the relevant Consumer Price Indices, devise new arrangements, including the concessionary fare levels under the Scheme.
- (k) The Government would conduct a comprehensive review on the Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme.

Retirement age

- (l) Members' views on extension of retirement age were appreciated. The Government would closely keep in view the situation in the private and welfare sectors after the retirement age of civil servants was extended, and would take follow-up actions as appropriate.

Retirement protection

- (m) Retirement protection was a very important social issue. In the coming few months, CoP would devise a framework and set out the details for a public consultation in the latter half of 2015. The Government looked forward to rational and pragmatic discussions with a view to arriving at a community consensus.

Healthcare

Healthcare manpower resources

- (a) Shortage of healthcare manpower was closely related to job nature. Many healthcare personnel, including nurses and radiotherapists, were reluctant to work in RCHEs for a long period of time. The elderly service sector should therefore draw on the experience of the Food and Health Bureau (FHB) in employing healthcare personnel on a part-time basis to provide dental check-up and crowning services. With such service arrangement, healthcare personnel would no longer be required to work in RCHEs for prolonged hours and would have more incentive to provide services for RCHEs.
- (b) As many healthcare personnel were reluctant to work in RCHEs, the elderly service sector should organise training programmes to attract tertiary graduates of diploma or certificate courses in the fields related to elderly services. The sector could then develop its own pool of healthcare and nursing workers to solve the long-standing manpower shortage in RCHEs.

Dementia

- (c) FHB, LWB and SWD would continue to maintain close communication in providing support services for elderly persons with dementia and their carers.

In 2014, SWD provided an additional funding of some \$22 million for 41 district elderly community centres to employ more social workers, with a view to enhancing the support for elderly persons with dementia and their carers. Moreover, there would be an additional 230 day care places and 1 500 places under the “Enhanced Home and Community Care Services” this year, and on-site training services for those carers in need would be provided.

Agenda item 4: Progress Reports by Working Groups and Committee

Working Group on Long Term Care Model - Feasibility Study on Introducing RCS Voucher

10. Dr LAM Ching-choi, the Vice-chairman, who was also the Chairman of the Working Group on Long Term Care Model (WGLTCM), said that since the Commission’s last meeting, the consultant team had, as part of the feasibility study, commenced two questionnaire surveys, completed a series of data collection and analysis, and interviewed members of the sector who were familiar with residential care services. At the WGLTCM’s 20th meeting held on 27 January 2015, the consultant team updated Members on the progress of the surveys and the preliminary findings and recommendations of the feasibility study. Members generally agreed to the findings and recommendations. The consultant team would hold public engagement sessions in mid-February 2015 to consult stakeholders (including interest groups, professional bodies, industry associations, non-governmental organisations, RCHE operators, etc.) on the proposed features of the pilot scheme. The consultant team would review its preliminary findings and recommendations in the light of the full results of the surveys and views gathered from the public engagement sessions before reporting to the WGLTCM.

Working Group on ESPP

11. The Chairman, who also chaired the Working Group on ESPP, said that the second meeting of the working group had been held on 25 September 2014, at which the work plan of the “Scoping Stage” and arrangements for the public engagement exercise were discussed. The public engagement exercise of the “Scoping Stage” was conducted from late October to November 2014. Representatives of LWB and the consultant team attended the meetings of the Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services held on 8 December 2014 and 20 January 2015, and listened to the views of the Panel Members and deputations on the formulation of ESPP. The consultant team was analysing the views gathered and would submit its report to the working group in due course for commencing

the second stage, i.e. the “Formulation Stage”.

WGAA

12. The Chairman invited Mr Timothy MA, Chairman of WGAA, to brief Members on the work progress. Mr MA said that the 2014-16 NAAP had drawn enthusiastic response. The Secretariat received a total of 136 applications from 114 elderly centres and WGAA examined all the 136 applications at its meeting on 9 October 2014. Of those applications, 60 were approved and 50 rejected, while the remaining 26 were approved after the applicants had submitted supplementary information in respect of the matters of concern. The 86 approved projects would be implemented during the period from November 2014 to March 2016.

13. Mr MA went on to say that a task force had been established under WGAA to follow up with the impact study of the NAAP. Details of the study would be worked out before June 2015. The task force was planning to organise a sharing session and invite representatives of participating organisations to share their experience. As the Committee on the Elder Academy Development Foundation (the EADF Committee) was also planning to hold a sharing session and invite representatives of organisations and bodies which had set up elder academies to share their experience in operating the academies, WGAA agreed at its meeting on 9 October 2014 to organise the sharing session jointly with the EADF Committee to achieve synergy. The proposed arrangement was endorsed by the task group under the EADF Committee at its meeting held on 17 October 2014 and a joint task force was formed to discuss details of the arrangements. The joint sharing session, now named the “Sharing Session on Elder Academy Scheme and Neighbourhood Active Ageing Project”, would be held at SWD’s Lady Trench Training Centre in Wan Chai on 18 April 2015. Officiating guests would include Miss Annie TAM Kam-lan, Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Prof Alfred CHAN Cheung-ming, Chairman of the Commission, and Dr LEONG Che-hung, Chairman of the EADF Committee. Mr MA invited Members to attend the sharing session and asked the interested Members to contact the Secretariat for details.

EADF Committee

14. Miss Stella CHANG, Secretary of the Commission, briefed Members on the work progress of the EADF Committee and the sub-committees under its purview. Miss CHANG said that the fifth meeting of the EADF Committee had been held on 5 November 2014. At the meeting, the Committee was informed of the latest work progress of the

three sub-committees, namely the Investment Sub-committee, Vetting Sub-committee and Sub-committee on Publicity and Development. The date for the EADF Committee's next meeting would be decided in due course.

15. As regards the vetting of funding applications, Miss CHANG said that the EADF had received a total of 31 applications in the second round of funding applications for 2014-15. The applications were vetted by the Vetting Sub-committee at its meeting held on 21 January 2015 and the recommendations would be submitted to the EADF Committee for consideration.

16. Miss CHANG continued to report that the Task Force set up under the Sub-committee on Publicity and Development to develop a "Protocol for setting up Elder Academies" had completed the drafting of the protocol. The Secretariat would consult the EADF Committee on the finalised draft and the budget for the design and printing of the protocol in due course. The Task Force hoped that the protocol could be distributed to the participants of the "Sharing Session on Elder Academy Scheme and Neighbourhood Active Ageing Project" to be held on 18 April 2015.

Agenda Item 5: Any other business

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

Time of adjournment

18. The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Date of next meeting

19. The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for 10 March 2015.

February 2015