

Elderly Commission
Minutes of the 95th Meeting

Conference Room 4, G/F, Central Government Offices,
2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong
10:00 a.m., 24 July 2018 (Tuesday)

Present:

Chairman

Dr LAM Ching-choi, BBS, JP

Members

Ms CHAN Mei-kit, Maggie, MH

Ms CHAN Yee-ching, Tammy

Mr CHUA Hoi-wai

Mr LAM Hoi-cheung, Victor, JP

Prof LEE Tze-fan, Diana, JP

Ms LI Fai, Grace

Ms LO Dak-wai, Alexandra, JP

Dr PANG Fei-chau

Dr TSE Man-wah, Doris

Mr WONG Kit-loong

Mr WONG Tai-lun, Kenneth

Dr YEUNG Ka-ching

Mr WONG Chung-yan, Johann, JP

Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Mr FUNG Pan-chung, Chris

Principal Assistant Secretary for Food and Health (Health)

Mr TAN Tick-yee

Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Elderly)

Mr TSOI Wai-tong, Martin

Assistant Director of Housing (Estate Management) (1)

Dr LEE Siu-yin, Ruby, JP

Consultant Family Medicine (Elderly Health Service), Department of Health

Dr HA King-hang

Senior Manager (Elderly and Palliative Care), Hospital Authority

In attendance:

Miss CHANG Lai-chu, Stella

Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Ms FUNG Shuk-man, Wendy

Chief Social Work Officer, Social Welfare Department

Ms WOO Mei-hing, Patricia

Chief Social Work Officer, Social Welfare Department

Mr CHOW Cheung-pong	Senior Social Work Officer, Social Welfare Department
Ms HO Suk-fun	Senior Social Work Officer, Social Welfare Department
Ms TAM Chui-king, Winnie	Senior Social Work Officer, Social Welfare Department
Ms YEUNG Bik-fung, Sarah	Senior Social Work Officer, Social Welfare Department
Dr SO Shuk-kuen, Joanna	Senior Medical and Health Officer (Elderly Health Service), Department of Health
Miss LO Chung-man, Florence	Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Mr LEUNG Sing-lung, Edric	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

Absent with apologies:

Mr CHEUNG Leong
Ms CHUNG Wai-yee, Diana
Dr LOU Wei-qun, Vivian
Mrs SO CHAN Wai-hang, Susan, BBS

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

2. The Chairman invited Members to watch two Announcements in the Public Interest. One of them was produced for the promotion of the Elderly Services Programme Plan (ESPP) by the Labour and Welfare Bureau and the other, produced by the Social Welfare Department (SWD), aimed to promote a positive image of elderly persons to the public via TV broadcast.

Agenda item 1: Confirmation of the minutes of the 94th meeting

3. As Members had not proposed any amendments to the Chinese and English versions of the draft minutes issued by the Secretariat on 19 June 2018 and 13 July 2018 respectively, the minutes were confirmed.

Agenda item 2: Matters arising

4. There were no matters arising from the minutes of the 94th meeting.

Agenda item 3: 2019-20 Elderly Welfare Services Suggestions and Priorities

(Discussion Paper No. EC/D/01-18)

5. Mr Johann WONG Chung-yan, Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare, said that the Government had commissioned the Social Welfare Advisory Committee (SWAC) to conduct a study on the long-term planning for social welfare in Hong Kong in 2007 to ensure that local policies and services could provide timely and effective response to the changing welfare needs of society. The SWAC had submitted the Report on Long-term Social Welfare Planning in Hong Kong to the Government in July 2011. In the report, the SWAC suggested that consultation and planning for the future development and delivery of welfare services should be conducted on a regular basis every year at the district, central and advisory committee (including the Elderly Commission) levels. In this connection, the SWD would collect views from districts annually through its District Social Welfare Officers, while the Hong Kong Council of Social Service 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 2019-20 were set out in Discussion Paper No. EC/D/01-18, which had been distributed for Members' reference before the meeting. Mr WONG briefed Members on the content of the discussion paper and invited Members to express their views on the 2019-20 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 in respect of the discussion paper and issues relating to elderly services:

Carer policy and support services

- (a) The Commission was pleased to note that the Government would launch the Pilot Scheme on Living Allowance for Carers of Elderly Persons from Low Income Families Phase III in October 2018 with an increase in the amount of monthly allowance disbursed to carers of elderly persons. It was suggested that the Government could, when reviewing the scheme in the future, consider raising the monthly household income limits for applicants having regard to factors such as inflation and minimum wage, so as to benefit more families in need.
- (b) To establish a carer-focused policy and support services for carers, the Government might consider conducting an in-depth study on the situation and needs of carers to facilitate the formulation and planning of timely policy and services on the support for carers, with a view to enhancing the support for them comprehensively.

Strengthening dementia services

- (c) The Commission was pleased to note that the Government would regularise the Dementia Community Support Scheme and expand it to all the 41 district elderly community centres in the territory from February 2019 onwards. Taking note of the positive response to the scheme from service providers, elderly persons and their carers since its implementation, the Commission suggested extending the current six-month period of care services for cases under the scheme so that elderly persons with dementia and their carers could receive cross-sectoral and multi-disciplinary support services in a sustained manner.
- (d) In view of the shortage of targeted community support services for elderly persons with moderate and severe dementia, the Commission suggested that the Government should explore ways to strengthen the relevant services such as setting up day care centres for moderate and severe dementia, or providing additional resources for dementia under the Integrated Home Care Services (IHCS) (Ordinary Cases) in order to support persons with dementia of different degrees and their carers.

Enhancing day and residential respite services

- (e) A Member wished to know the effectiveness of the SWD's special measure of purchasing additional residential places from private residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) participating in the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme (EBPS) to meet the demand during the seasonal peak of influenza this year, and enquired whether the measure would be continued in the future.
- (f) To implement the policy of "ageing in place" and relieve the pressure on carers, it was necessary for the Government to make strenuous efforts to promote the development of day and residential respite services and allocate additional resources accordingly.

Allocating more resources to Integrated Home Care Services Teams

- (g) The Government was suggested to increase the service places for IHCS (Frail Cases) so that elderly persons currently receiving IHCS (Ordinary Cases) might choose to receive services from the same IHCS Team when their health conditions deteriorated, thereby safeguarding "continuum-of-care" in respect of service interface.
- (h) The SWD should explore how the existing IHCS and Enhanced Home and Community Care Services could be integrated so that elderly persons in need would be provided with more suitable community care and support services.

Residential care services

- (i) The Government might consider allowing elderly persons currently residing in contract RCHEs and waiting for subsidised places to directly convert from using non-subsidised places to using subsidised ones, in order to avoid double counting of places and reduce the number of registered persons on the Central Waiting List.
- (j) To facilitate the implementation of the Government's enhancement and improvement measures in all RCHEs (including contract RCHEs), the Commission suggested that the Government should examine ways to increase flexibility of the terms and conditions of service contracts so that contract RCHEs might still obtain resources for implementing the Government's enhancement measures under the specifications of the service contracts.

Long-term planning for welfare services

- (k) The Commission was pleased to note that the Government would reserve sites as far as possible for the provision of more elderly service facilities. A Member wished to know the details of the Government's estimated increase of around 3 300 residential care places for the elderly.
- (l) Service providers might consider developing a "sharing premises" mode of operation, under which elderly services might be provided in other service premises, such as Integrated Children and Youth Services Centres or Integrated Family Service Centres, in order to address the problem of land shortage.
- (m) The Government was suggested to allocate funding for subsidising modernisation works carried out in RCHEs, including improvement works on electricity supply, bathroom and toilet facilities, with a view to dovetailing with the application of technology and the upgrading of the overall quality of RCHEs. In promoting the application of technology, feelings of the elderly should also be attended to.
- (n) The Commission agreed with the recommendation in the ESPP that population-based planning ratios for elderly service facilities should be reinstated in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines, and opined that in implementing the recommendation, the Government should consider factors such as differences among districts.
- (o) The Commission hoped that easily accessible sites located in more pleasant surroundings in development projects could be earmarked for the construction of new elderly service facilities.
- (p) The Government might assist welfare organisations participating in the Special Scheme on Privately Owned Sites for Welfare Uses in addressing the problems of decanting and rehousing existing service users arising from the expansion or redevelopment of projects.

Manpower planning

- (q) It was hoped that the community could reach an early consensus on the issue of increasing imported labour so as to tackle the severe shortage of front-line care staff in the elderly service sector.

- (r) The Commission was pleased to note that the SWD had continued to implement the training sponsorship scheme to provide funding support for non-governmental welfare organisations to offer full tuition fee sponsorship to students who had completed specified allied health programmes and were recruited by such organisations in order to encourage them to join the social welfare sector. It was suggested that the Government should consider further extending the coverage of the scheme to include contract RCHEs and RCHEs participating in EBPS.
- (s) The Government should review the effectiveness of the Navigation Scheme for Young Persons in Care Services, and consider relaxing the age restriction of the scheme, shortening the required training period under the “First-Hire-Then-Train” Scheme and enhancing on-the-job training so as to attract more people interested in joining the care service sector to receive the training, thereby improving the service quality.

Gerontechnology

- (t) The Commission suggested promoting the development of information technology systems applicable to RCHEs in order to improve its care services and management.

Social security

- (u) Noting that the Government would implement the new policy of raising the eligible age for elderly Comprehensive Social Security Assistance from 60 to 65, it was believed that a prior thorough consultation on the arrangement could facilitate the smooth implementation of the new policy.

Others

- (v) As the Government was providing elderly services through various pilot schemes, the Commission suggested that the Government might take further steps to integrate various services and streamline the procedures in order to improve the efficiency of services and reduce the administrative work of elderly service providers.

7. In response to the views and questions raised by Members, Mr WONG, Mr FUNG Pan-chung, Chris, 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 (CoA) of the University of Hong Kong to conduct a consolidated evaluation on the Pilot Scheme on Living Allowance for Carers of Elderly Persons from Low Income Families together with the Pilot Scheme on Living Allowance for Low-income Carers of Persons with Disabilities. The CoA would submit the evaluation report on the two pilot schemes in the third quarter of 2018. The Government would then conduct a detailed analysis based on the findings of the evaluation to formulate a long-term development plan and direction, including the eligibility criteria, the amount of allowance and whether the two pilot schemes should be regularised, etc.
- (b) To ensure that needy carers acquire the appropriate support, the Government would allocate more resources to all subvented elderly centres and home care services teams in the territory in 2018-19 to enhance outreaching services for supporting needy carers living in the community who are looking after frail elderly persons.

Strengthening dementia services

- (c) The 2017 Policy Address and Policy Agenda proposed a series of new initiatives to strengthen dementia care and support at the community level, which included allocating more resources to service units providing community care and support services to enhance the provision of dementia care service and related staff training.
- (d) The Food and Health Bureau (FHB) had commissioned the CoA to conduct a comprehensive evaluation on the Dementia Community Support Scheme and to put forward improvement recommendations on its service model. The evaluation report would be available by the end of 2018. The FHB would follow up on how the service model of the scheme could be further enhanced in the light of the evaluation findings.

Enhancing day and residential respite services

- (e) To meet the demand for beds in public hospitals during the seasonal peak of influenza, and to increase the supply of residential respite places for elderly

persons, the SWD purchased about 250 additional residential places from private RCHEs participating in the EBPS to provide residential respite service for elderly persons from February to September 2018. A satisfactory occupancy rate of about 44% was recorded in the first three months since the new measure was introduced. The SWD was actively considering the future arrangements.

- (f) At present, there were 170 designated day respite places and 50 designated residential respite places. Day care centres/units for the elderly (DEs/DCUs) and RCHEs could also make use of any casual day care and subsidised residential care vacancies to offer respite service. The SWD would continue to designate additional respite service places in newly established elderly service facilities. Under the Pilot Scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly, elderly persons might also use the monthly voucher values to purchase residential respite services if necessary.

Residential care services

- (g) When planning for new contract RCHEs, the SWD would adopt a ratio of 6:4 in providing subsidised and non-subsidised places as a general practice. While adopting this ratio as a general guideline for individual projects, the SWD would suitably take account of other relevant factors such as the socio-economic condition of the districts where the RCHEs were located and the availability of other non-subsidised residential care places in the vicinity of the RCHEs, etc. As a result, not all contract RCHEs provided subsidised and non-subsidised places in the ratio of 6:4. In addition, as RCHEs participating in the Pilot Scheme on Residential Care Service Voucher for the Elderly were required to provide non-subsidised places, the SWD had to ensure an appropriate proportion of non-subsidised places in contract RCHEs so that elderly persons might choose the residential care services according to their needs by using the vouchers.

Long-term planning for welfare services

- (h) As at end-June 2018, the SWD had earmarked sites in 30 development projects for the construction of new contract RCHEs and DEs/DCUs. It was estimated that about 3 300 residential care places for the elderly (including subsidised and non-subsidised places) and about 1 010 day care places for the elderly would be progressively provided starting from 2018-19.

Others

- (i) The Government would review the implementation of various pilot schemes in a timely manner and conduct comprehensive long-term planning for the services in the light of the evaluation findings, which included considering the integration of various schemes and improvement in procedures in order to rationalise the mode of service delivery.

8. The Chairman concluded that the Commission had noted the SWAC's suggestions and priorities on elderly services issues for 2019-20 and offered its views on various aspects. On strengthening carer policy and support services, the Chairman suggested that the working groups under the Commission could serve as platforms for reviewing and further discussing various support services for carers currently provided by the Government.

Agenda Item 4: Progress Reports by Working Groups and Committee

Working Group on Elderly Services Programme Plan

9. The Chairman said that the Working Group on Elderly Services Programme Plan had just held a meeting on 11 July 2018. Members noted the latest updates on the implementation of various recommendations in the ESPP and considered the progress satisfactory. The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for January 2019.

Working Group on Ageing in Place

10. The Chairman said that the Working Group on Ageing in Place had held its first meeting on 10 May 2018. At the meeting, the Hong Kong Housing Society (HKHS) and the University of Hong Kong briefed Members on the details of the HKHS's Ageing-in-Place Scheme and Elderly Resources Centre, as well as the results of their longitudinal studies and social return on investment studies.

Committee on Elder Academy Development Foundation

11. Mr CHONG Kwok-wing, Gordon, Secretary to the Commission, reported that the Vetting Sub-committee of the Elder Academy Development Foundation had held a meeting on 9 July 2018 to consider the first round of funding applications for 2018-19. The

Secretariat would allocate funding to 30 successful applicants, including seven elder academies to be newly established in primary and secondary schools, in early September 2018. The deadline for the second round of funding applications for 2018-19 was 31 October 2018. The Secretariat would continue to step up publicity to encourage school sponsoring bodies to participate in the Elder Academy Scheme.

Agenda Item 5: Any other business

Land supply options

12. The Chairman said that the Task Force on Land Supply (Task Force) was conducting a five-month public engagement exercise, entitled “Land for Hong Kong: Our Home, Our Say!”, in which all sectors of society were invited to offer their views on the land supply options and other land supply-related issues. As land supply is related to the provision of RCHEs and elderly facilities, he hoped that Members would put forward some views on this subject.

13. Members opined that the overall shortage of land supply would have direct impact on both the quality and quantity of RCHEs and elderly facilities. In this connection, the community should comprehensively explore means to increase land supply. The Commission noted that both the public engagement document released by the Task Force and the Policy Address delivered in January 2017 mentioned that land lots on the periphery of country parks with relatively low ecological and public enjoyment value could be considered for the purpose of setting up non-profit-making RCHEs. The Commission was supportive of this option, and expressed the following views on the planning and use of land:

- (a) To increase land supply in the short term to meet the demand for RCHEs and elderly facilities, the Government might consider optimising the use of vacant school premises and industrial buildings.
- (b) In conducting town planning, the Government should take account of the demand and supply of RCHEs and elderly facilities in individual districts to cater for the needs of the relevant districts, balance the age and income distribution in individual areas to prevent the ageing of communities, and provide an adequate supply of manpower for RCHEs and elderly facilities.
- (c) On land use, the Government might also consider providing additional

recreational and sport facilities in the community along with more RCHEs and elderly facilities, thereby creating a living environment which would promote the physical and mental well-being of senior citizens.

- (d) The concept of “ageing in place” should not be restricted to enabling senior citizens to continue living in their homes. Rather, it was suggested that the model of “villages for senior citizens” could be considered so that frail elderly persons might live together in the same community to facilitate the provision of community care services.
- (e) It was suggested that some land could be allocated for building blocks of elderly housing comprised entirely of small flats. Incentives could be provided to elderly persons living in larger flats to move into such flats so that their original flats would be vacated. This might help resolve the housing problem in Hong Kong.

14. The Chairman thanked Members for their views, and asked the Secretariat to submit the views of the Commission on land supply options and relevant issues to the Task Force.

(Post-meeting note: The Secretariat issued a letter to the Task Force on 16 August 2018 to convey the views of the Commission on land supply options and relevant issues.)

Time of adjournment

15. The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

Date of next meeting

16. The date of the next meeting would be announced in due course.

(Post-meeting note: The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for 14 September 2018.)

August 2018