

(Translation)

Restricted

**Elderly Commission
Minutes of the 51st Meeting**

Room 2005, 20/F, Murray Building, Garden Road, Central
9:30 a.m., 17 October 2007 (Wednesday)

Present:

Chairman

Dr the Honourable LEONG Che-hung, GBS, JP

Vice-Chairman

Prof CHAN Cheung-ming, Alfred, BBS, JP

Members

Dr LUM Shun-sui, Susie

Mr CHAN Iu-seng, Star, BBS, JP

Dr LAM Ching-choi, JP

Prof Jean WOO

Mr CHAN Han-pan

Mr CHAN Chi-yuk, Kenneth

Rev LAU Wai-ling, Dorothy, BBS, JP

Dr YAM Yin-chun, Loretta, BBS

Dr WONG Yee-him, John

Ms Sandra LEE, JP

Permanent Secretary for Health

Mr Stephen FISHER, JP

Director of Social Welfare

Mr LAU Kai-hung, JP

Representative of Secretary for Housing, Planning
and Lands/Director of Housing

Dr CHAN Wai-man, JP

Representative of Director of Health

Dr Daisy DAI

Representative of Chief Executive of Hospital
Authority

In Attendance:

Mr CHEUNG Kin-chung, Matthew, GBS, JP	Secretary for Labour and Welfare	
Mr TANG Kwok-wai, Paul, JP	Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare	
Mr LIU King-leung, Tony	Chief Manager/Management, Housing Department	} In Attendance for Agenda Item 4
Mrs LO CHAN May-yee , Alice	Chief Housing Manager, Housing Department	
Ms CHEUNG Siu-hing, Sheila	Executive Producer, Radio Television Hong Kong	} In attendance for Agenda Item: Any Other Business
Ms YUEN Chui-ha	Executive Producer, Radio Television Hong Kong	
Mr Tom CHAN	Programme Director, Radio Television Hong Kong	
Ms YIP Man-kuen, Carol, JP	Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare	
Mr FUNG Kin-yip, Eugene	Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare	
Mrs Kathy NG	Assistant Director (Elderly) Social Welfare Department	
Mrs YUK KWOK Lai-sum, Kitty	Chief Social Work Officer Social Welfare Department	
Mr LAM Ka-tai	Chief Social Work Officer Social Welfare Department	
Mrs Senna SMITH	Executive Manager Social Welfare Department	
Ms MAK Suk-kwan, Lorensa	Chief Social Work Officer (Acting) Social Welfare Department	
Ms. TANG Lai-fan	Senior Social Work Officer Social Welfare Department	
Mrs KWOK LI Mung-yee, Helen	Senior Social Work Officer Social Welfare Department	
Ms LEUNG Mei-wah	Senior Social Work Officer Social Welfare Department	
Miss CHEUNG Yun-ping, Mary	Senior Social Work Officer Social Welfare Department	

Mr YAM Mun-ho	Senior Social Work Officer Social Welfare Department
Ms. KWAN Shuk-yee, Nancy	Senior Social Work Officer Social Welfare Department
Dr NG Ping-sum, Sammy	Senior Medical and Health Officer Department of Health
Dr David HO	Senior Medical and Health Officer Department of Health
Ms LOW Looi-looi	Senior Research Scientist Food and Health Bureau
Miss CHAN Nga-sze, Joyce	Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Mr. CHIN Cheuk-hong, Ian	Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Ms CHEUNG Chung-sze, Joyce	Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Miss MOK Tik-shan, Elizabeth	Chief Executive Officer Labour and Welfare Bureau
Ms POON Ming-soo, Bonita	Executive Officer Labour and Welfare Bureau

Absent with Apologies:

Ms WONG Yiu-ming, Anita
 Prof CHIU Fung-kum, Helen
 Mr MA Chan-hang, Leo
 Secretary for Education

Secretary

Mr D C CHEUNG
 Principal Assistant Secretary for
 Labour and Welfare

The Chairman welcomed Mr Matthew CHEUNG, Secretary for Labour and Welfare, and Mr Stephen Fisher, Director of Social Welfare, to the meeting of the Elderly Commission (EC).

He especially extended his thanks to Dr York CHOW, the former Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food, for his contributions to the EC over the years. He also welcomed Ms Sandra LEE and Mr Paul TANG, who attended the meeting in their respective capacity as Permanent Secretary for Food and Health and Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare.

2. The Chairman invited the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Matthew Cheung to say a few words. Mr Cheung remarked that elderly services were featured prominently in this year's Policy Address, and that the views of the EC had been appropriately reflected in the proposed new initiatives, which included a full range of services for the "hidden" elderly, carers of the elderly and elderly dischargees. As one of the new initiatives, the Government would earmark one-off funding of \$200 million to help elderly living in poor conditions and without family support improve their homes in the next five years. 40 000 elderly is expected to benefit from the initiative. In addition, the Government would, amongst others, strengthen training for carers of the elderly, provide additional subsidised residential care places for the elderly, upgrade some of the subsidised residential care places to provide infirmary care, and provide more subsidised day care places for frail elderly. All these pointed to the fact that the Policy Address had introduced a full range of initiatives on elderly services. The Chairman thanked Mr Cheung for briefing the meeting on the key initiatives relating to elderly services as outlined in the Policy Address.

[Mr Cheung left the meeting at this juncture.]

3. The Chairman reported to the Meeting that he, together with the Vice-Chairman and two others Members, participated in the Policy Address Consultation Session held in August, in which they put forward a number of proposed services/measures for the elderly to the Chief Secretary for Administration. These included one-stop support service for elderly dischargees, carer training at district level, enhanced support for singleton and hidden elders, a review of the eligibility criteria for subsidised elderly services, a review of the criteria and requirements for

buying places from private residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs), a review of the rates of the Old Age Allowance, as well as the promotion of elder learning.

Agenda Item 1: Confirmation of the Minutes of the 50th Meeting

4. The minutes of the last meeting were endorsed without amendments.

Agenda Item 2: Matters Arising

5. The Chairman invited Ms Carol YIP, Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare, to brief Members under Agenda Item 3 on the progress regarding the post-discharge support services for elderly discharges who had difficulties looking after themselves as mentioned in paragraph 3 of the last minutes.

Agenda Item 3: Briefing on the 2007-08 Policy Address

6. Ms Carol YIP, Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare, briefed Members on the vision of “Caring for the Elderly” put forth in the 2007-08 Policy Address, and the new and on-going initiatives for elderly services.

7. Ms Sandra LEE, Permanent Secretary for Health, then briefed Members on the details about health care voucher scheme for the elderly. She emphasised that the health care vouchers were not a substitute for public health care services which would continue to be provided for the public, but an additional choice for the elderly to seek health care services in the private sector. She said that through the 3-year pilot scheme, the Government aimed at promoting primary health care services and encouraging the development of a long-term relationship between the elderly and their family doctors. The health care voucher scheme would be launched through an electronic system. The Food and Health Bureau (FHB), in collaboration with the Department of Health and the Hospital Authority (HA), would meet with different health care organisations to discuss the implementation details of the pilot scheme.

8. Members welcomed the initiatives on elderly services outlined in the Policy Address and put forth the following views/questions:

Health care vouchers

- (a) Whether the elderly could use the health care vouchers at HA's clinics.
- (b) Whether the health care vouchers could be used as subsidies for the elderly to take out private medical insurance.
- (c) How to prevent private practitioners from raising their consultation fees upon the introduction of the health care vouchers scheme.
- (d) It was hoped that the concepts of "cost sharing" and "money follows patients" under the health care voucher scheme could serve to encourage shared responsibility on health care for the elderly.
- (e) Some inactive elderly might not know about the existence or the use of health care vouchers. Consideration could be given to locating the elderly in need through the aid of the database established for searching for hidden elders and the register for the health care vouchers, and encouraging them to use the vouchers.
- (f) TV API could be produced as a means to promote the pilot scheme of health care vouchers.

Care Staff in RCHEs

- (g) As nurses and other frontline workers in RCHEs had to take care of a large number of elderly with complicated and severe medical conditions, it was necessary for them to engage in continuous learning and enhance their knowledge and skills in order to meet

new challenges. Staff attachment and exchanges between hospitals and RCHEs could be considered as this would create opportunities for the hospital staff to experience the challenges of providing elderly care services in the RCHE setting whereas RCHE staff could be exposed to stricter standards for elderly care services in hospitals.

- (h) With ageing population, it would be necessary to conduct a review on the specific roles and manpower ratios of all types of care staff in RCHEs, including the demarcation of duties between nurses and health care workers and particularly the feasibility of allowing health care workers to take up the duties that otherwise could only be performed by nurses at present, through the enhancement of training and qualification requirements of health care workers.

9. Regarding the questions on health care vouchers, Ms LEE replied as follows:

- (a) Health care vouchers were designed to serve as subsidies for the elderly to obtain primary health care services in the private sector, and could not be used for HA's subsidised services. If the elderly could not afford the medical fees of HA's clinics, they could apply for medical waivers.
- (b) To safeguard the interests of the elderly and promote a long-term relationship between them and their family doctors, health care vouchers had to be used directly on health care services provided by doctors or healthcare personnel. It should not be used to cover the administration cost of health maintenance organisations as that this could not benefit the elderly directly.
- (c) Since health care vouchers were introduced primarily to encourage the elderly to establish a long-term relationship with their family doctors, the vouchers could not be used to take out medical insurance.

10. The Chairman invited Mr Paul TANG, Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare, to brief Members on the progress of the establishment of the Family Council.

11. Mr Paul TANG said that the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) was now studying the details regarding the setting up of the Family Council to be chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration. The HAB would discuss with the EC, Women's Commission and Commission on Youth in due course on the future arrangements.

Agenda Item 4: Presentation by Housing Department on “Public Housing Allocation Policy for Strengthening the Family-based Support Network for the Elderly”

12. Mr LIU King-leung, Chief Manager/Management, Housing Department, briefed Members by way of a PowerPoint presentation, on the five latest enhanced public housing allocation policies put forward by the Housing Authority and the general arrangements made under the schemes for public housing tenants to apply for flat transfer, addition of household members and amalgamation of tenancies. These schemes aimed to encourage younger families to take care of their elderly parents and strengthen the family-based support network for the elderly in public housing estates in a move to facilitate “ageing in place” for the elderly.

13. Members proposed various questions/views and replies from Mr. LAU Kai Hung, Deputy Director of Housing, are as follows:

- (a) Whether new immigrants could apply for public rental housing through the “Addition Policy for Harmonious Families” upon their arrival in Hong Kong without having to meet the seven-year residence requirement.
- It was a long-standing practice that new immigrants could apply for public housing upon their arrival in Hong Kong but to be eligible for housing allocation, half of their family members must satisfy the seven years' residence rule. Nevertheless, under the

current additions policy and the new “Addition Policy for Harmonious Families”, applicants were only required to pass the Comprehensive Means Test and the Domestic Property Test for immediate addition to the tenancy of their elderly family members.

- (b) Under the new schemes, how many choices would be made available to the applicants for choosing a public housing unit.
- As for transfer applications under the new schemes, the Housing Authority would, subject to the availability of housing resources, arrange for the transfer of the applicants to the nearest estates with suitable flats to facilitate mutual care between the households of the elderly parents and their grown-up children. However, the Housing Authority would only make a one-off transfer arrangement due to limited housing resources.
- (c) In allocating public housing units to families with elderly members or arranging transfer for them, whether it was possible to provide these families with information on local facilities in their new neighbourhood, such as district elderly community centres, clinics at which health care vouchers could be used, and other supporting facilities.
- New tenants, when completing the intake formalities, would receive from the estate management staff an information folder containing details of the services available in the vicinity of the estate.
- (d) How could it be ensured that applicants under the “Addition Policy for Harmonious Families” and “Amalgamation of Tenancies for Harmonious Families” really had a genuine desire to live in harmony with their elderly family member(s). In cases

where the two generations could not live in harmony with each other, who would make the decision that there was a need for household splitting due to family discord?

- Applicants under the “Addition Policy for Harmonious Families” and “Amalgamation of Tenancies for Harmonious Families” were required to sign an undertaking that they would live in harmony with their elderly family member(s). That said, the undertaking was merely meant to serve a deterrent effect. Should there be a dispute between the grown-up children and their elderly parents, the Housing Department (HD) would arrange for reconciliation or work out a resolution to settle the dispute through home visits and concerted efforts with the Social Welfare Department (SWD). If harmony could not be restored, the younger family would be required to move out of the public housing unit on their own. The Housing Authority hoped these enhanced measures in public housing allocation could facilitate mutual support between the elderly parents and their grown-up children.
- (e) As reflected by some elderly who lived alone in public housing estates, the existing public housing units were not barrier-free in their design. Some elderly also felt that there was not enough communal space on each floor in public housing estates, and that they found it quite difficult to remember the access password to their housing estates.
- The Housing Authority would adopt barrier-free designs for new public housing estates. Universal interior designs would also be used to cater for the accommodation needs of the elderly.

14. Upon the request of the Chairman, the HD would carry out a review next year and report to the EC on the effectiveness of the pilot schemes on enhanced public housing allocation.

15. The Chairman thanked Mr Lau for his unfailing support to the EC on housing matters.

Agenda Item 5 : Support to Carers

16. Mr Eugene FUNG, Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare, briefed the meeting on the progress of the two initiatives for the promotion of carer support, namely the Trial Scheme on Carer Training and the Carers' Recognition Ceremony to be held on the Senior Citizens' Day on 18 November 2007.

17. Members were of the view that district-based carer training courses would facilitate the development of "elderly carer" services and suggested that the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB) should assess the effectiveness of these courses. Mr FUNG responded that all the 11 District Elderly Community Centres (DECCs) participating in the Trial Scheme were required to submit their reports 12 months after the commencement of their scheme, which should include implementation details, the challenges encountered and the experiences learnt. In addition, SWD would organise forums for these 11 participating DECCs to share their experiences with the other DECCs.

18. A member hoped that the "elderly carer" service could ultimately be developed along the mode of social enterprises. It was noted that the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) had commissioned the University of Hong Kong (HKU) to conduct a study on social enterprises. It was hence suggested that LWB should explore the possibility of co-operating with HAB and HKU in the promotion of "elderly carer" service. In response, Ms Carol YIP, Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare, considered it necessary to first know more about possible suggestions from HAB.

Any Other Business

19. The Chairman remarked that the "Working Group on Active Ageing" and the "Working Group on Long-term Care Model" under the EC would continue to operate under the

incumbent chairmen of the two respective working groups. The EC's work priority in the coming year would be on residential care homes for the elderly.

20. The Chairman invited representatives of the Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) to update Members on the latest TV series of "Golden Age" and the new TV and radio APIs jointly produced by the RTHK, the LWB and the EC.

21. Ms Sheila CHEUNG, Executive Producer of RTHK, said that the latest series of "Golden Age" had been broadcast. In this series, how the elderly in various Asian regions achieved active ageing would be explored and the episode to be aired on 20 November would also touch upon informal carers and the Elder Academy in Hong Kong. As in previous series, Chinese and English subtitles would be provided in this series for broadcasting in both Chinese and English television channels, with programme highlights to be played on KMB's Roadshow. Mr CHEUNG Man-sun, Assistant Director (Public Affairs TV) of RTHK, would brief the media on the achievements of the "Golden Age" series - winning 16 awards so far and the latest one being the Silver Plaque Award (documentary category) from Chicago International Film and Television Festival in the press briefing to follow.

22. Mr. Tom CHAN, Programme Director of RTHK, and Ms YUEN Chui-ha, Executive Producer of RTHK, briefed members respectively on the contents of the TV and radio APIs, produced by the RTHK for the EC to showcase elderly's contributions to Hong Kong.

23. The Chairman then invited Mr D C CHEUNG, Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare, to report on the progress of the implementation of Elder Academies.

24. Mr CHEUNG said that 32 Elder Academies across the territory had registered with the Education Bureau and commenced operation successively. The scheme had also attracted generous support by philanthropists. The industrialist CHIANG Chen had made a donation of

\$200,000 to finance the operation of Elder Academies and Mr YIP from the jewellery industry had donated \$50,000 to support the Sheng Kung Hui Elder Academies. Besides, Elder Academies also received positive coverage in the media. The Working Group on Active Ageing would conduct a review of the scheme in conjunction with the Academies in late 2008 with a view to promoting elder learning in the context of active ageing in a sustainable manner. The Working Group would report the findings of the review to the EC in due course.

Date of Next Meeting

25. The next EC meeting would be held on 6 December 2007 (Thursday).

Time of Adjournment

26. The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

24 October 2007