

Elderly Commission
Minutes of the 81st Meeting

Conference Room 6, G/F, Central Government Offices,
2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong
2:30 p.m., 23 September 2014 (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

Mrs CHAN LUI Ling-yee, Lilian

Dr CHEUNG Moon-wah

Dr CHONG Ming-lin, Alice, MH

Prof FUNG Yuk-kuen, Sylvia, BBS

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-foung, Jackson, MH

Mrs WONG WONG Yu-sum, Doris

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 Daisy DAI

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

Chief Manager (Primary and
Community Services), Hospital
Authority

In attendance:

Mr CHEN Yee, Donald, JP	Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Mrs CHAN NG Ting-ting	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
Ms CHEUNG Jick-man, Lilian	Chief Social Work Officer, Social Welfare Department
Mr TSE Shu-to, Sebastian	Chief Social Work Officer, Social Welfare Department
Miss YIP Hau-yu, Hannah	Chief Social Work Officer, Social Welfare Department
Ms NG Lai-sheung, Ruby	Senior Social Work Officer, Social Welfare Department
Ms CHU Wing-yin, Diana	Senior Social Work Officer, Social Welfare Department
Ms POON Hau-yuk	Senior Social Work Officer, Social Welfare Department
Ms YU Siu-ngan, Tammy	Senior Social Work Officer, Social Welfare Department
Ms LUI Siu-ying, Micy	Senior Social Work Officer, Social Welfare Department
Ms CHEN Pi-ling	Senior Social Work Officer, Social Welfare Department
Dr MAW Kit-chee, Christina	Senior Executive Manager (Elderly and Community Care), Hospital Authority
Mr TO Yick-ting, Justin	Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Miss WONG Kwan-yee, Jenny	Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Miss TSANG Tik-yee, Florence	Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Ms AU Fung-yee, Belinda	Chief Executive Officer, Labour and Welfare Bureau
Miss HO Wing-wa, Vitinie	Executive Officer, Labour and Welfare Bureau

Absent with apologies:

Ms CHAN Man-ki, Maggie, MH	
Miss CHAN Man-yee, Grace	
Dr CHENG Kam-chung, BBS, MH, JP	
Miss CHANG Lai-chu, Stella	Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare

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 80th 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 September and 19 September 2014 respectively, the minutes were confirmed.

Agenda item 2: Matters arising

Paragraphs 5 to 15 of the minutes of the 80th meeting

4. The progress made by the Commission in formulating the Elderly Services Programme Plan (Programme Plan) and exploring the feasibility of introducing the Residential Care Service Voucher Scheme for the Elderly (RCS Voucher Scheme) would be reported under Agenda item 4.

Agenda item 3: Elderly Services Suggestions and Priorities for 2015-16

(Discussion Paper No. EC/D/02-14)

5. The Chairman said that the Social Welfare Advisory Committee (SWAC) submitted a report entitled Long-term Social Welfare Planning in Hong Kong to the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB) in July 2011. The report suggested, among other things, that regular consultation and planning for the future development and delivery of welfare services should be conducted every year at the district, central and advisory committee levels. As such, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) would collect views from districts annually

through its respective District Social Welfare Officers, while the Hong Kong Council of Social Service would assist in consolidating the views of various stakeholders on elderly services at the welfare organisation level.

6. Mr Donald CHEN, Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare, said that the comments made by welfare organisations and stakeholders on the Elderly Services Suggestions and Priorities for 2015-16 were set out in the Discussion Paper No. EC/D/02-14, which had been distributed for Members' reference before the meeting. Miss Annie TAM Kam-lan, Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare, then invited Members to express their views on the welfare issues and suggestions for 2015-16 which would provide a useful reference for the Government in preparing the Policy Address for the coming year.

7. The Chairman and Members gave the following views in respect of the Discussion Paper and issues relating to elderly services:

Home care services

- (a) The Government's policy on elderly care should focus on services and initiatives which could facilitate "ageing in place", in particular home care services. In addition, the elderly care service sector should be encouraged to work with various stakeholders to explore ways to integrate home care services with community support services so as to provide more comprehensive care support to the elderly to age in place. This would also allow the sector greater flexibility in service delivery.
- (b) Given that many carers of the elderly (including foreign domestic helpers) lacked the skills and training in looking after the elderly people, support services for these carers should be strengthened, for example, by setting up a hotline for carers of the elderly and providing them with home-based carer training.
- (c) The Community Care Fund introduced the Pilot Scheme on Living Allowance for Carers of the Elderly Persons from Low Income Families in June 2014 but there are quite a number of eligibility criteria. For instance, the applicants had to come from low-income families, they were not allowed to receive Comprehensive Social Security Assistance or Old Age Living Allowance at the same time etc. It was suggested that the Administration should review the effectiveness of the Scheme in a timely manner, and make necessary adjustments in the light of the review findings to better address the needs of the elderly people ageing in place as well as their carers.

- (d) While enhancing home care services, the Government should keep the residential care service sector informed of the future development of/policy on home care services so that the service providers could be prepared accordingly.
- (e) With an ageing population, education and publicity efforts should be stepped up to promote that people, even after getting married, should still assume the responsibility of looking after their elderly parents, instead of relying solely on the community or home care services provided by the Government or welfare organisations. Otherwise, the public system would be overloaded.

Community Support Services

- (f) Some welfare organisations and stakeholders suggested examining the needs for and development of community care services in districts with a higher proportion of the ethnic minorities, thereby encouraging ethnic minority carers to help their elderly family members age in place. It is suggested that the Government could collaborate with welfare organisations serving ethnic minorities to promote community support services for the elderly and take account of the cultural characteristics of the ethnic minorities such as their family values and religious beliefs when providing the services.
- (g) Additional resources should be allocated to District Elderly Community Centres (DECCs) for hiring additional staff to provide community support services for the elderly. For instance, community resources centres could be set up to assist the elderly in searching for the required services. On the other hand, training in self-care abilities should also be provided for the elderly to strengthen their self-confidence and promote mutual support among the elderly people.
- (h) In formulating the long-term planning for elderly services, the community care services and residential care services should tie in with each other to avoid wastage of resources.

Elderly service facilities and manpower planning

- (i) The Government had allocated a lot of resources to increase the supply of subsidised residential care places and explored the feasibility of introducing the residential care services (RCS) voucher with a view to enhancing the service quality of private residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs). These efforts were recognised.

- (j) Given the challenge posed by an ageing population, the Government should capture data on the community's demand for residential care services in the coming 10 or 20 years, so that a long-term plan for elderly services could be formulated. Moreover, the Government should review the division of labour and the roles played by various types of RCHEs (including private, contract, subsidised and care-and-attention RCHEs) in the supply of care services for the elderly.
- (k) The elderly residential care service sector had been keeping in view the changes in the community's demand for elderly services. The sector would support the Government's relevant policy by continuing to enhance its service quality. While there was still room for improvement in terms of space and manpower when compared with subsidised places, the standard of current services provided by the RCHEs participating in the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme was fairly high.
- (l) It was pleased to note that the current Government would increase about 5 000 subsidised residential care places (including 3 000 RCS vouchers) within this term, hoping that LWB or SWD would reveal the arrangements for the remaining 2 000 subsidised places so that the sector could make the necessary preparations.
- (m) The Administration could consider increasing the number of residential care places at nursing care level through participating in the projects under the Special Scheme on Privately Owned Sites for Welfare Uses.

Embracing opportunities in an ageing society for promoting an age-friendly community in Hong Kong

- (n) Some welfare organisations and stakeholders suggested the Government to provide an additional funding of HK\$32 million for the employment of one additional Assistant Social Work Officer and one additional Welfare Worker in each DECC to assist in the building and development of an age-friendly community and the promotion of active ageing in Hong Kong. In this regard, the Government had set aside an additional funding of about \$160 million in 2014-15 for upgrading 51 Social Centres for the Elderly to Neighbourhood Elderly Centres, and enabling all subvented elderly centres to increase their manpower as well as programme expenses to strengthen the support for the elderly living in the community.
- (o) Some welfare organisations and stakeholders proposed allocating an additional funding of HK\$5 million to all 18 districts as dedicated fund for the implementation of age-friendly community projects or provision of district facilities so as to

integrate the age-friendly concept into the community. Some Members considered that the proposed amount of HK\$5 million (i.e. about HK\$280,000 for each district) was too little and would limit the development of the age-friendly work.

- (p) The Government should actively promote inter-generational harmony to enhance the understanding between young people and the elderly. This would not only give the elderly social recognition and care, but also help young people better understand elderly people, thereby achieving harmony in the community and families.

Medical-welfare collaboration

- (q) At present, only about 80% of RCHEs were covered by the outreach services provided by the Community Geriatric Assessment Teams (CGATs) under the Hospital Authority. The services of the CGATs are suggested to be further extended to reduce the need and time required for RCHE staff and family members to accompany the elderly to attend follow-up consultations in hospitals. Further, when planning for large RCHEs in the future, consideration should be given to reserving space for the provision of services by outreach medical teams, family doctors and physiotherapists, etc.
- (r) Medical-welfare collaboration should be further enhanced to benefit elderly persons with dementia and their carers. Upon discharge from hospitals, these elderly persons with dementia would need to take medications and receive memory training and health assessments on a regular basis. A wide variety of memory training and health assessment services were currently provided by DECCs for these elderly with dementia. The doctors found it difficult to follow up during the elderly's consultations in hospitals. As such, relevant services might need to be reviewed in the long run.
- (s) The Integrated Discharge Support Programme for Elderly Patients was a good example of medical-welfare collaboration. In the case of Hong Kong West, of the 1 200 elderly persons participating in the programme, 97% continued to age in place six months after being discharged from hospitals and were able to maintain their mobility and cognitive ability. As a result, the need for attending the accident and emergency departments and staying in hospitals was effectively reduced. It was hoped that the Government would continue to take forward the programme and extend it from the medicine specialty to the specialties of orthopaedics and traumatology and surgery, thereby meeting the different needs of

the elderly.

Others

- (t) It was pointed out that the welfare organisations and stakeholders did not put much attention to housing issues in their comments on the Elderly Services Suggestions and Priorities for 2015-16. With ageing in place turning into a trend, housing policy and elderly services would be closely connected. The Commission could consider inviting representatives of the Transport and Housing Bureau to attend future meetings when the policy on ageing in place was on the agenda.
- (u) Information on healthy life management, mental health and self-care skills should be disseminated to the elderly through various preventive publicity and education activities during the process of upgrading the elderly services.
- (v) At present, social workers engaging in elderly services did not have adequate training in elderly counselling. The standards of counselling relating to elderly services should be enhanced so that counselling services for the elderly and their carers, including psychological and emotional support and counselling for carers of elderly with dementia, could be provided in a more professional and comprehensive manner.

8. The Chairman concluded that Members had noted the Elderly Services Suggestions and Priorities for 2015-16 put forward by the SWAC. Members also shared the views that the Government should continue to allocate additional resources for implementing various pilot projects on elderly services, and enhance the long-term care services for the elderly under the policy objective of “ageing in place as the core, institutional care as back-up”.

9. In response to the comments made by Members, Ms Carol YIP, Director of Social Welfare, said that the SWD would deploy and bid for resources as appropriate for introducing various elderly services and projects at district level to address the needs of the community.

10. Dr CHEUNG Moon-wah said that the Hong Kong Housing Society (HKHS) was currently implementing the Age-in-Place Scheme in its 20 housing estates. Given Members’ concerns about housing for the elderly and ageing in place, representatives of the HKHS could be invited to brief Members on the Scheme at the next meeting. The Chairman indicated that the Secretariat would discuss the arrangements with the HKHS in due course.

Agenda item 4: Progress Reports by Working Groups and Committee

Working Group on Long Term Care Model – Feasibility Study on Introducing a Voucher Scheme on Residential Care Service for the Elderly

11. Dr LAM Ching-choi, the Vice-chairman, who was also the chairman of the Working Group on Long Term Care Model (WGLTCM), said that the Secretariat had officially appointed the consultant team from the University of Hong Kong (HKU) to conduct a study on the feasibility of implementing an RCS Voucher Scheme. The WGLTCM met on 23 July and 26 August respectively in 2014. At the meeting held in July, the HKU consultant team briefed the WGLTCM on the work plan and modus operandi of the study. The draft questionnaire and questions for focus group discussions prepared by the consultant team were submitted to the WGLTCM at the meeting held in August. After the meeting, the questionnaire and questions for discussion were refined by the consultant team in the light of the comments made by the WGLTCM. The revised questions for discussion were circulated for members' reference on 12 September 2014.

Working Group on Elderly Services Programme Plan

12. The Chairman, who also chaired the Working Group on Elderly Services Programme Plan (WGESPP), said that the first meeting of the WGESPP had been held on 24 July 2014, at which the HKU consultant team from the HKU briefed members on the work plan and modus operandi of the consultancy study. The second meeting, originally scheduled for 16 September, was postponed to 25 September 2014 due to a typhoon. At this re-scheduled meeting, the WGESPP would deliberate on the work plan and discussion paper for the public engagement exercise of the "Scoping Stage", which would be conducted during the period from late October to November 2014. A press release would be issued after the meeting to announce details of the public engagement exercise.

Working Group on Active Ageing

13. The Chairman invited Mr Timothy MA, Chairman of the Working Group on Active Ageing (WGAA), to brief Members on the work progress. Mr MA said that funding applications for the 2014-16 Neighbourhood Active Ageing Project were closed on 31 July 2014. The Secretariat received 137 funding applications from 114 elderly centres. The WGAA would examine all the 137 applications at its meeting scheduled for 29 September 2014. The approved projects would be implemented during the period from October 2014 to March 2016.

(Post-meeting note : Affected by the Occupy Movement, the WGAA meeting originally scheduled for 29 September 2014 was postponed to 9 October 2014.)

Committee on the Elder Academy Development Foundation

14. Ms Belinda AU, Chief Executive Officer of the LWB, briefed Members on the work progress of the Committee on the Elder Academy Development Foundation (the Committee) and the sub-committees under its purview. Ms AU said that the fourth meeting of the Committee had been held on 16 July 2014. At the meeting, the Foundation 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 fifth meeting of the Committee was tentatively scheduled for 5 November 2014.

15. Ms AU reported that the Investment Sub-committee had informed the Trustee (i.e. Director of Social Welfare Incorporation) of the investment portfolio drawn up for the fund balance (a total of some \$64 million as at July 2014). Based on the investment strategy unanimously approved by the Committee, the investment portfolio comprised (1) investing 30% in the Tracker Fund progressively with roughly equal sums at bi-weekly intervals over a six-month period starting from August 2014; (2) placing 30% on fixed deposit in Renminbi over a six to twelve-month period; and (3) placing the remaining fund on fixed deposit in Hong Kong dollar over a three to six-month period. By adopting the above investment strategy, the Committee would be able to maintain an adequate level of liquidity for allocation on the one hand and enjoy a stable return on the other.

16. As regards the vetting of funding applications, Ms AU said that the Committee had unanimously approved the recommendations of the Vetting Sub-Committee for the first round of funding applications for 2014-15. Funding was allocated in early August 2014 to 63 approved applicants. Applicants of the remaining three applications were required to submit additional information to the Vetting Sub-committee for further consideration.

17. Ms AU then reported the work of the Sub-committee on Publicity and Development. She said that the Task Force on Protocol for the Establishment of Elder Academies under the Sub-committee had held its second meeting on 22 August 2014 to deliberate on the draft protocol on setting up elder academies. The meeting concluded that the draft protocol would require further finetuning. Moreover, the Task Force proposed to organise a sharing session tentatively in early 2015 to distribute the protocol to participating representatives of elder academies and to invite participants to share their experience in setting up and operating elder academies. The Task Force would discuss details of the arrangements in due course and submit its recommendations to the Committee for

consideration.

Agenda item 5: Any other business

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

Time of adjournment

19. The meeting was adjourned at 3:40 p.m.

Date of next meeting

20. The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for 30 January 2015.

October 2014