

**For discussion on  
8 July 2024**

## **Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services**

### **Direction and development of ageing in place**

#### **Purpose**

This paper sets out the Government's policy direction and measures to encourage elderly persons to age in place.

#### **Background**

2. "Ageing in place as the core, institutional care as back-up" is the Government's policy direction for elderly services. To facilitate elderly persons' enjoyment of their golden years in a familiar environment, the Government has been providing them with suitable community care and support services to elderly persons according to their various needs to age in place.

#### **Providing Community Care Services to Frail Elderly Persons**

3. The Social Welfare Department (SWD)'s Standardised Care Need Assessment Mechanism for Elderly Services (SCNAMES) and Central Waiting List for Subsidised Long Term Care Services provide one-stop assessment and registration for handling applications, waitlisting and allocation of subsidised long-term care services for the elderly. Frail elderly persons assessed by the SCNAMES as in need of community care services or residential care services are eligible to apply for subsidised community care services.

4. The SWD provides subventions to non-profit making organisations to provide "centre-based" or "home-based" care services for eligible frail elderly. For "centre-based" services, a total of 100 Day Care Centres/Units for the Elderly (DEs/DCUs) in the territory provide various services to frail elderly persons, including personal care, nursing care, rehabilitation exercises, meal service, day respite, etc., serving about 9 000

elderly persons in 2023-24. For “home-based” services, 92 Integrated Home Care Services teams and Enhanced Home and Community Care Services teams, in addition to the aforementioned care, nursing, rehabilitation services, etc., also provide environment risk assessment and home modification suggestions, home respite service, household cleaning service, etc., serving about 18 100 elderly persons in 2023-24.

5. Eligible frail elderly persons passing the SCNAMES may also choose to receive subsidised community care services through the Community Care Service Voucher (CCSV) Scheme for the Elderly. The CCSV Scheme allows elderly persons to freely choose Recognised Service Providers (RSPs), service items or combinations, and service quantity according to their needs under the mode of “money-follows-the-users”. Elderly persons may choose “home-based” services, “centre-based” services or “mixed mode” services as combined from those two services.

6. The CCSV Scheme adopts the “affordable user pays more” co-payment principle, comprising six co-payment levels determined with reference to the incomes of the elderly persons and their family members residing together. Elderly persons’ co-payment levels range from 5% to 40% of the voucher value of CCSVs. The less an elderly person can afford, the less he/she needs to pay. The Government pays for the remaining portion of the voucher value. This co-payment arrangement is conducive to maintaining the long-term financial sustainability of the CCSV Scheme.

7. CCSV recognised service items encompass elderly persons’ general care and nursing needs, including residential respite, speech therapy, nursing care, etc. Currently, eligible frail elderly persons can receive subsidised community care services using CCSVs without waiting. In 2023-24, a total of about 11 000 elderly persons received services using CCSVs. In 2024-25, the Government increases the number of CCSVs by 1 000 to a total of 11 000, and will further increase the number to 12 000 in 2025-26, benefiting more eligible frail elderly persons.

### **Providing Home Support Services to Elderly Persons with Mild Impairment**

8. The SWD implements the Integrated Home Care Services (Ordinary Cases) (IHCS(OC)) and Home Care and Support Services for Elderly Persons with Mild Impairment (HSMI) to provide “home-based”

support services to elderly persons with mild impairment. In 2023-24, the aforesaid programmes served about 27 000 elderly persons. The SWD plans to optimise the use of existing resources by integrating the two abovementioned programmes into the Home Support Services (HSS). The main target group of the HSS is elderly persons aged 60 or above who have been assessed to be at the state of mild impairment or requiring higher level of care under a simplified standard assessment tool (interRAI™ Check-up)<sup>1</sup>. Upon service integration, in addition to providing services including personal care, basic health care, household cleaning, escort, meal service, etc., the HSS will also formulate individual care plans and conduct regular case reviews according to service users' individual needs. In addition, the HSS will also strengthen the support for carers of the elderly, including providing home respite service and carer training. All existing IHCS(OC) and HSMI users will be transitioned to the HSS, with service items and fees remaining unchanged.

9. The HSS will make more effective use of the existing resources, focus on caring for elderly persons with mild impairment or worse through the use of a simplified standard assessment tool and formulation of individual care plans, and strengthen the support for carers of the elderly.

10. The SWD has consulted representatives of the social welfare sector as well as the Working Group on Elderly Services Programme Plan and Working Group on Ageing in Place under the Elderly Commission on the HSS proposal, with a target of implementing the proposal in 2024-25.

### **Supporting Elderly Discharged from Hospitals**

11. Funded by the Labour and Welfare Bureau and operated by the Hospital Authority (HA), the Integrated Discharge Support Programme for Elderly Patients (IDSP) provides transitional and integrated support services for discharged patients aged 60 or above who are at a higher risk of emergency re-admission, with a view to reducing their risk of re-admission.

12. Discharge Planning Teams set up by the public hospitals participating in the IDSP, comprising doctors, nurses, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, etc., formulate discharge plans for patients. In addition, the HA commissions community service providers to operate

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<sup>1</sup> Other than eligible elderly persons, the HSS's service target groups also include persons with disabilities and individuals and families with social needs.

Home Support Teams, which mainly comprise social workers and care workers. The two teams provide post-discharge support to patients, including referring patients in need to the HA's geriatric day hospitals to continue receiving nursing care and rehabilitation services, or providing transitional home support services through community service providers, including personal care, meal service, home modifications and cleaning, escort, etc. in order to support patients to better age in place. The IDSP also provides trainings to carers, covering areas such as nursing care, general and disease-specific personal care, etc., with a view to improving their skills and ability in caring for elderly persons, supporting carers of the elderly to provide continued care to elderly patients after leaving the IDSP. In 2023-24, the IDSP served about 39 000 elderly persons, of which about 11 000 elderly persons were referred to receive home support services.

13. The Government has expanded the IDSP since the third quarter of 2023, increasing the number of beneficiaries from about 33 000 to 45 000 per annum, with the number of referrals to receive home support services increased from about 9 000 to 11 000.

## **Providing Community Support Services to Ordinary Elderly Persons**

### Elderly respite services

14. To alleviate the caregiving pressure of carers of the elderly, allowing them to take short breaks or attend to personal matters, so as to encourage and assist elderly persons to age in place as far as possible, the SWD provides subsidies for elderly service units to offer day/residential respite services to elderly persons in need.

15. As at end March 2024, a total of 171 subvented residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) and nursing homes, contract homes and private RCHEs participating in the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme (EBPS) in the territory offered a total of 309 designated residential respite places and provided residential respite service using casually vacant subsidised places. In addition, a total of 57 subsidised DEs/DCUs in the territory provided 273 designated day respite places, and all DEs/DCUs would utilise casually vacant service places to provide day respite service.

16. The Chief Executive announced the expansion of respite service network in the 2023 Policy Address. Since December 2023, private RCHEs participating in the EBPS also provide day respite service. As at

end March 2024, taking into account the abovementioned DEs/DCUs, the service points of day respite service significantly increased to 192 with total service places increased to 543, which were situated in various districts across the territory, including densely populated developed areas with more elderly residents. Elderly persons in need can access government-subsidised day respite service provided by service units in the vicinity, without going through case referrals or passing a means test. From the fourth quarter of 2024 onwards, the SWD will invite RSPs under the CCSV Scheme to expand from providing “centre-based” day care services exclusively for CCSV holders to providing day respite service for any elderly persons in need.

### Elderly centres

17. There are 214 subvented elderly centres (i.e., 41 District Elderly Community Centres (DECCs) and 173 Neighbourhood Elderly Centres) throughout the territory which provide a wide range of support services to elderly persons and their carers at the district level, including counselling, outreaching, referrals, assistance in processing long-term care service applications, emotional support, social and recreational activities, meal service and carer trainings, etc. Since October 2023, elderly centres’ service scope has been expanded to retirement planning, promotion of gerontechnology, etc. As at end March 2024, subvented elderly centres had a total of about 280 000 members.

18. Through outreaching and networking, Support Teams for the Elderly (STEs) set up under the DECCs identify elderly persons with potential service needs, such as singleton elderly, hidden elderly, elderly suffering from poor health/living in unfavourable environment, elderly with financial difficulties, etc., and provide suitable assistances to them, including showing care through regular phone calls/home visits, providing simple personal assistance, emotional support, referrals, etc. The STEs promote senior volunteerism to encourage elderly persons to continue taking part in social affairs and to serve other needy elderly, cultivating a sense of worthiness.

## **Advice Sought**

19. Members are invited to note the content of this paper.

**Labour and Welfare Bureau  
Social Welfare Department  
Hospital Authority  
June 2024**