

(Translation)

**Elderly Commission
Minutes of the 112th Meeting**

Date: 20 September 2023 (Wednesday)

Time: 11:00 a.m.

Venue: Conference Room 3, G/F, Central Government Offices,
2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong,

Present:

Chairman

Dr LI Kwok-tung, Donald, SBS, JP

Members

Prof BAI Xue

Dr CHAN Chi-kau, Johnnie Casire, SBS,
JP

Ms CHAN Man-yee, Grace

Prof LAI Wing-leung, Daniel

Prof LAM Chiu-wa, Linda

Mr LAU Tat-chuen

Dr LEE Shun-wah, Jenny

Mr LIT Hoo-yin, Horace

Mr MA Heng, Theodore

Ms MAN Wei-yin, Queenie

Mr SIU King-wai, Kyrus

Mr SU Yau-on, Albert, MH, JP

Ms WONG Chor-kei, Macy, MH

Ms LAU Yim, Alice, JP

Permanent Secretary for Labour and
Welfare

Dr LEE Ha-yun, Libby, JP

Under Secretary for Health

Miss LEE Pui-sze, Charmaine, JP

Director of Social Welfare

Dr HO Lei-ming, Raymond

Assistant Director of Health (Elderly
Health)

Ms AU Mo-ching, Katherine

Chief Manager/Management (Support
Services 2), Housing Department

Dr CHING Wai-kuen

Director (Strategy and Planning),
Hospital Authority

In attendance:

Mr CHONG Wing-wun

Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare
(Welfare) 2

Ms LAW Lai-tan, Linda

Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour
and Welfare (Welfare) 3

Ms YAN Lai-ming, Jenny

Assistant Director of Social Welfare
(Elderly)

Ms SIU Kin-heung, Mabel

Acting Assistant Director of Social
Welfare (Rehabilitation and Medical
Social Services)

Mr LOW Chen-yang

Head of Community Services Division,
Tung Wah Group of Hospitals

Ms SHAM Ching-yin, Letty

Acting Supervisor of Hotline for Carer
Support Service, Tung Wah Group of
Hospitals

Ms HO Koon-ling, Rosanna

Chief Executive Officer (Welfare) 4,
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Absent with apologies

Ms IP Shun-hing, BBS, MH, JP

Dr LUK Ka-hay, James

Ms YU Chui-yee, BBS, MH

Secretary

Ms CHAN Ah-wing, Ivy

Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour
and Welfare (Welfare) 4

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Dr LI Kwok-tung, Donald, the Chairman, welcomed all Members to the meeting, in particular new Members who were attending for the first time, including Ms CHAN Man-ye, Grace, Dr LEE Shun-wah, Jenny, Ms MAN Wei-yin, Queenie and Mr SU Yau-on, Albert.

2. The Chairman reminded Members that they must declare potential conflicts, if any, between their interests and matters under discussion. Mr SU Yau-on, Albert declared that the organisation he was serving would operate the Designated Hotline for Carer Support (Carer Hotline) to be discussed under agenda item 4.

Agenda item 1: Confirmation of the Minutes of the 111th Meeting

3. Members did not propose any amendments to the Chinese and English versions of the draft minutes issued by the Secretariat on 29 August 2023. The minutes were confirmed.

Agenda item 2: Matters Arising

4. There were no matters arising from the 111th meeting.

Agenda item 3: Expansion of the Residential Care Services Scheme in Guangdong

5. Ms YAN Lai-ming, Jenny, Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Elderly), briefed Members on the expansion of the Residential Care Services Scheme in Guangdong (the Scheme).

6. After the briefing, the Chairman and Members expressed views and raised questions as follows:

- (a) as the Scheme was currently inapplicable to elderly persons in need of regular follow-up for psychiatric illnesses (other than dementia), whether elderly persons could join the Scheme if they only returned to Hong Kong for psychiatric consultation biannually, received long-term psychiatric

follow-up on the Mainland, or suffered from dementia comorbid with other psychiatric illnesses;

- (b) the reasons for the significant difference in the number of elderly admitted to the two residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) on the Mainland under the Scheme, namely the Hong Kong Jockey Club Shenzhen Society for Rehabilitation Yee Hong Heights and the Hong Kong Jockey Club Helping Hand Zhaoqing Home for the Elderly;
- (c) whether the Social Welfare Department (SWD) would require new participating RCHEs under the Scheme to admit a certain number of Hong Kong elderly residents before considering purchase of their residential care places;
- (d) as more and more RCHEs located in the Mainland cities of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) would participate in the Scheme following its expansion, whether the Government would consider preparing a register of the Mainland RCHEs concerned, so that Hong Kong elderly persons and their families could be well informed of the list of RCHEs for which government subsidy might be applicable; and
- (e) Members were concerned about the service scope and content of the agreement with the Mainland RCHEs under the Scheme, including the healthcare package and support for the elderly, whether elderly residents with deteriorating health conditions had to move out and return to Hong Kong for medical treatment, arrangements for dying in place, trial stay for elderly applicants and accommodation arrangements for their visiting families, arrangements for the public rental housing (PRH) tenancy of admitted elderly persons, the taking out of Mainland medical insurance by Hong Kong elderly persons, etc. In addition, the SWD should also step up its monitoring of the operation of RCHEs under the Scheme.

7. In response to Members' views and questions, Dr LEE Ha-yun, Libby, Under Secretary for Health, Ms YAN Lai-ming, Jenny and Ms AU Mo-ching, Katherine, Chief Manager/Management (Support Services 2), the Housing Department, gave consolidated replies as follows:

- (a) as subsidised healthcare services were currently less accessible to Hong Kong elderly persons residing on the Mainland, they would usually choose to return to Hong Kong for medical treatment. Given that it was relatively difficult for the Mainland RCHEs to attend to elderly residents in need of intensive treatment and assess their medical needs, those requiring regular follow-up for psychiatric illnesses (other than dementia) or renal dialysis treatment were not suitable to join the Scheme at present. The SWD would timely review the Scheme arrangements in the light of future development;
- (b) the difference in the number of Hong Kong elderly persons admitted to the two Mainland RCHEs (in Shenzhen and Zhaoqing respectively) was mainly due to their locations. The Shenzhen RCHE was closer to Hong Kong and allowed for more convenient visits by the elderly's family members and easier return to Hong Kong for healthcare services by the elderly;
- (c) purchasing care services from the Mainland RCHEs under the Scheme was different from buying places from Hong Kong RCHEs in that advance purchase of places was not required for the former. Instead, the SWD would pay to the RCHE concerned home fees based on the actual number of Hong Kong elderly residents. The Scheme aimed to provide elderly persons with more choices in Mainland RCHEs. The SWD did not set a minimum admission requirement for participating RCHEs;
- (d) the SWD had expanded the eligibility for operators under the Scheme. All non-governmental organisations and private organisations with experience and satisfactory track record in providing subsidised residential care services in Hong Kong could apply to register their RCHEs in the Mainland GBA cities as recognised service providers under the Scheme. Once assessed as eligible by the Standardised Care Need Assessment for Elderly Services, elderly beneficiaries could choose to reside in a participating RCHE on the Mainland with full subsidy from the Government for the home fees. The Government would step up publicity of the Scheme to facilitate public understanding of its modus operandi, so as to avoid misunderstanding by the elderly that the government subsidy was applicable to all Mainland RCHEs;

- (e) the two existing participating Mainland RCHEs provided, in association with their neighbouring hospitals, healthcare support and related care services for elderly persons joining the Scheme. Based on past experience, elderly residents with greater healthcare needs might choose to return to Hong Kong for medical treatment, or receive self-paid medical treatment at the Mainland hospitals and remain on the Mainland for good;
- (f) regarding supporting services for the elderly, the SWD attached great importance to the quality of care services and manpower arrangements of RCHEs under the Scheme. In fact, these Mainland RCHEs had to meet national standards in terms of service quality, and some of them also complied with the standards set by the Hong Kong Association of Gerontology under the Residential Aged Care Accreditation Scheme;
- (g) as places in Mainland RCHEs was generally more readily available, RCHEs under the Scheme could usually offer trial stay for elderly applicants and make accommodation arrangements for visiting families. If elderly applicants were PRH tenants, the arrangements of their PRH units were as follows:
 - (i) elderly persons living alone as the principal tenant might apply for retaining their existing PRH units up to six months during the trial stay. If such elderly persons requested for extending the trial stay and the PRH's retaining period due to special reasons, the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) would examine the case having regard to the special circumstances and consider if discretion could be exercised to allow time for them to carefully consider whether they could adapt to the new environment in the Mainland RCHEs. Should they decided to settle on the Mainland, the HA would issue them a Letter of Assurance (LA) upon request in the course of flat recovery, as long as they voluntarily surrendered their PRH units without breaching the Tenancy Agreement. In case they chose to return to Hong Kong for good in the future, they would be allocated a suitable refurbished PRH unit if they fulfilled the prevailing eligibility criteria for PRH application and the conditions set out in the LA;
 - (ii) elderly persons living with their families in PRH units, be they the principal tenant or an authorised family member, could apply to the

HA for a Letter of Reinstatement upon deletion of their names from the tenancy for moving into the Mainland RCHEs. In case they returned to Hong Kong for good in the future, they could apply for reinstating their names into the tenancies of relevant PRH units as an authorised family member, provided that the tenancies were still in force; and

- (h) given the greater need of the elderly for healthcare services and the risk-sharing concept of medical insurance, the Mainland cities generally had reservations about Hong Kong elderly persons taking out local medical insurance.

8. The Chairman said that the Commission supported the Scheme in principle and opined that its development should be supported by a healthcare package. Separately, the SWD should keep in view whether new participating RCHEs under the Scheme met the expectations in terms of service provision.

Agenda item 4: Territory-wide Publicity Campaign on Carers and Designated Hotline for Carer Support

9. Ms YAN Lai-ming, Jenny and Mr LOW Chen-yang, Head of Community Services Division, Tung Wah Group of Hospitals, briefed Members on the Territory-wide Publicity Campaign on Carers (the Campaign) and the Carer Hotline respectively.

10. Ms YAN Lai-ming, Jenny said that Members had been invited to attend the Campaign's Kick-off Ceremony scheduled for 25 September 2023. She was thankful for Members' support. The Carer Hotline would commence operation on 26 September 2023.

11. The Chairman indicated the Commission's support for launching the Campaign and setting up the Carer Hotline.

Agenda item 5: Progress Reports by Working Groups and Committee

Working Groups on Elderly Services Programme Plan and Ageing in Place

12. Ms CHAN Ah-wing, Ivy, Secretary to the Commission, reported that the third joint meeting of the two working groups was scheduled for December 2023.

Committee on Elder Academy Development Foundation (EADF)

13. Ms CHAN Ah-wing, Ivy, reported that the Committee on EADF had received a total of 40 first round applications for the 2023-24 funding exercise. The Vetting Subcommittee would meet on 27 September this year to assess the applications.

14. To ensure the EADF's ongoing financial support for elder academies, the Secretariat would seek funding injection from the Government and continue to solicit external donations. So far, favourable responses had been received from several organisations and enterprises. The Secretariat planned to announce the donation details in the fourth quarter this year, and launch the publicity activities in the first quarter next year. The Secretariat would report the relevant arrangements to Members in due course.

【 Post-meeting note: It was announced in the 2023 Policy Address that the Government would inject an additional \$80 million into the EADF. In conjunction with generous donations and support from the community, the injection would encourage the elderly to pursue lifelong learning and integration into the community, as well as promote active ageing. The list of supporting organisations had been uploaded onto the Elder Academy Scheme's website (<https://www.elderacademy.org.hk/supporting-organizations/>). 】

Agenda item 6: Any Other Business

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

Time of Adjournment

16. The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 noon.

Date of Next Meeting

17. The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for 18 December 2023. The Secretariat would advise Members of the meeting details in due course.

November 2023