

Message

Caring for the Elderly is one of the essential features of a compassionate and caring society. Last year, we have undertaken a number of pledges to provide a sense of security, a sense of belonging and a feeling of health and worthiness among our elderly. I am glad to report that we are making good progress towards achieving these targets.

In the coming years, we will continue to implement new initiatives to support our elderly. We are introducing the Mandatory Provident Fund Scheme to ensure that today's workforce will be provided for after retirement. Meanwhile, we will continue to make available financial assistance to those elderly with genuine need.

We note that the majority of elderly people wish to continue to live at home and be cared for by their families. Many families prefer to take care of their elderly at home provided that the assistance needed is available. We will provide the necessary incentives and support services to encourage and help families to care for their elderly, and to provide housing and care services for those in need.

We will continue to provide residential care services for those elderly, who for various reasons, cannot be taken care of at home. To give elderly people a choice, we will encourage a mixed economy of provision of residential care services. It is also our objective to encourage provision of services of a quality standard. We will assist and encourage residential care home operators to achieve this end.

1999 is the International Year of Older Persons. The main theme is “Towards a Society for All Ages”. We will take this opportunity to heighten the community’s awareness of our rapidly ageing society, to foster and entrench a sense of respect for the elderly and the responsibility of the family and community as a whole to the elderly. We will also encourage our elderly to participate in the community and to lead an active and meaningful life.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Fok'. The letters are stylized and connected, with a large 'K' and 'F'.

(Mrs Katherine Fok)
Secretary for Health and Welfare

Care for the Elderly

Our Policy Objective is to care for the elderly to ensure that they enjoy a sense of security, belonging, health and worthiness.

Our target in pursuing this Policy Objective is to improve the quality of life of the elderly.

Key Result Areas (KRAs)

To ensure that this Policy Objective can be achieved, we must deliver results in the following key areas, that is, we must –

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The following sections of this booklet explain the importance of these KRAs, describe the broad thrust of our efforts, and outline the indicators which we are using to assess progress. Each section lists the new key initiatives being taken to achieve our objectives and pinpoints the agency accountable for each initiative and the specific targets which we intend to meet.

I

Provide retirement protection and other financial help

For the elderly to feel secure, they must first be financially secure.

In Hong Kong, the family has always been the main source of financial support for the elderly. We will continue, through various fiscal and other means, to encourage the family to live with, and give support to their elderly members.

Other than addressing the needs of the current generation of elderly people, we are taking steps to ensure that future generations will be provided for in retirement. We are establishing the Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF) Scheme with a view to bringing it into operation in the year 2000.

In the meantime, we will continue to ensure that financial assistance is available to those elderly who are in need.

Indicators

Our indicators of progress in this area are –

- the proportion of elderly people enjoying retirement protection
- the proportion of elderly people having to rely on Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA)

Initiative	Target
To set up the MPF Scheme (MPF Office)*	To enable the MPF Scheme to be in operation in 2000

* the brackets denote the agency with lead responsibility for the initiative

II

Increase the supply of housing for the elderly

Safe and comfortable housing is essential to the well-being of the elderly. We will continue to give elderly people in need priority access to public housing, and ensure that there is an adequate supply of public rental flats, with suitable facilities and services for them.

Indicators

Our indicators of progress in this area are –

- the number of public housing flats provided to elderly people
- the number of families living with their elderly relatives

Initiatives

Targets

To provide public rental flats for allocation to the elderly people

(Housing Bureau (HB))

To provide 6 500 flats in 1999-2000

To provide more specially designed rental housing units with warden service to able-bodied elderly persons not living with their family

(HB)

To provide 1 200 units in 1999-2000

Initiatives	Targets
<p>To provide more elderly people living in inadequate private sector accommodation with easy access to information on public housing</p> <p><i>(HB)</i></p>	<p>To set up one additional Housing Information Centre in Hong Kong's Eastern District in 1999</p>
<p>To encourage the private sector to provide affordable flats to single elderly persons</p> <p><i>(HB/Health and Welfare Bureau)</i></p>	<p>To develop proposals in consultation with the Elderly Commission in 1999</p>
<p>To put in place and operate a specialised model for housing demand from the elderly</p> <p><i>(Planning Department (Plan D))</i></p>	<p>To develop a model and to produce projections within 1999</p>
<p>To conduct a new survey of housing aspirations covering elderly households</p> <p><i>(Plan D)</i></p>	<p>To complete the survey within 1999</p>



Enable the elderly to continue to live at home

It is very important to the elderly that they have a place to call home. In a compassionate and caring community, it is only right that families, where possible, reciprocate the love of their parents and care for them when they are old. It has been Government's policy to encourage families to continue to assume such a role.

The Health and Welfare Bureau, in conjunction with the Housing Bureau, continues to keep under review public housing allocation policies to encourage eligible families to live with elderly members.

Families which care for their elderly members might require assistance, either continually or occasionally. A range of regular support and respite services is being provided and we will continue to improve their provision.

For elderly people living alone, we will provide home help, home care and other support services where necessary.

Indicator

Our indicator of progress in this area is the proportion of elderly living with or cared for by their family.

Initiatives	Targets
<p>To provide additional geriatric day places <i>(Health and Welfare Bureau)</i></p>	<p>To provide 80 places by 2002, on top of the 40 places that have already been provided in the past 12 months</p>
<p>To provide additional Day Care Centres <i>(Social Welfare Department (SWD))</i></p>	<p>To set up two centres in 1998-1999 and seven additional centres by 2001</p>
<p>To set up additional Multi-service Centres <i>(SWD)</i></p>	<p>To set up two centres in 1998-1999 and six additional centres by March 2001</p>
<p>To set up Support Teams for the Elderly in all existing and new Multi-service Centres <i>(SWD)</i></p>	<p>To establish 30 teams in existing Multi-service Centres in 1998-1999 and six additional teams in new centres to come on stream by March 2001</p>

Initiatives	Targets
<p>To give higher priority for public housing to households with elderly members</p> <p><i>(Housing Bureau)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Starting from late 1998, extend the Families with Elderly Persons Priority Scheme to non-nuclear families ● Starting from late 1998, to enhance the success rate of households who apply under the Special Scheme for Families with Elderly Persons by providing a steady and adequate supply of public rental housing flats of appropriate types ● To accord priority to households with elderly members in their applications for Home Ownership Scheme and Private Sector Participation Scheme flats and Home Purchase Loans starting from late 1998

Initiatives	Targets
<p>To establish additional Home Help Teams (SWD)</p>	<p>To establish 15 additional teams by 2000</p>
<p>To undertake a feasibility study of upgrading and re-engineering the current home help service (SWD)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To complete the study in 1999 ● To implement measures as from 1999 to enhance the quality and secure good value for money of the current home help service
<p>To launch pilot projects to introduce a new respite service in day care centres for the elderly (SWD)</p>	<p>To start providing respite service in a number of day care centres on a trial basis in 1999-2000</p>
<p>To review the existing respite service in residential care homes (SWD)</p>	<p>To complete the review and make recommendations in 1999</p>

IV

Increase the supply of residential care places in public and private sectors

Although we encourage the elderly to continue to live with their families, we recognise the need to provide sufficient residential care for those who cannot be adequately taken care of at home. As the elderly population is expected to increase rapidly in the coming years, the demand for residential care places will rise substantially.

It is our objective to encourage mixed service provision in residential care, with participation from subvented, private and self-financing care home operators. This will provide choices to the clients as well as encourage positive competition, which will, in turn, induce better service quality.

To better assess the need of the elderly population for residential care services, the Elderly Commission has completed an assessment of the demand for residential care services and has put forward a long-term strategy to address the demand. As part of the strategy to increase and improve the service, we will embark on a premises-led programme, which aims to provide suitable premises for operation as subvented, self-financing or private residential care homes. We will also explore the feasibility of further developing the potential of existing sites and premises.

Indicator

Our indicator of progress in this area is the number of residential care places provided in subvented, self-financing and licensed private care homes.

Initiatives	Targets
<p>To provide additional subsidised residential care places</p> <p><i>(Social Welfare Department (SWD))</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To provide additional residential subvented care places to elderly people in need <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – to provide 800 places in 1998-1999 – to add 2 500 places between 1999 and 2002 ● To increase the number of subsidised residential care places under an enhanced Bought Place Scheme (BPS) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – to fund 600 places in 1998-1999 – to fund 2 680 places between 1999 and 2001
<p>To provide suitable premises for operation of subvented, self-financing or private care homes</p> <p><i>(SWD)</i></p>	<p>To develop three Government sites to provide premises for 600 residential care places by 2002 and to undertake feasibility study at other sites with a view to providing 1 600 places from 2001 to 2005</p>

V

Improve the quality of residential care services

The private care homes are a major source of residential care places for the elderly. However, the standard of service in these homes varies, and many of them cannot obtain a licence. It is, therefore, important to encourage and help these homes to upgrade their service standards. Financial assistance and staff training are provided to assist them in achieving this end.

“Ageing in Place” remains the cornerstone of our policy. To this end, we are exploring the “Continuum of Care” concept in residential care home to enable the elderly to grow old in a familiar environment, obviating the need for them to be moved to other institutions upon deterioration of their health.

Indicators

Our indicators of progress in this area are –

- the number of licensed private care homes
- the number of subvented homes operating on a “Continuum of Care” model

Initiatives	Targets
<p>To improve manpower level and provide staff training for residential care homes</p> <p><i>(Health and Welfare Bureau/ Social Welfare Department (SWD))</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To monitor the supply of manpower in support of residential care services and to make recommendations in 1999 ● To revamp and implement a strengthened Health Worker Training Course in 1999
<p>To assist private care homes to upgrade their service standard and to monitor their performance</p> <p><i>(SWD)</i></p>	<p>To encourage private care homes to make better use of the Financial Assistance Scheme in 1999</p>
<p>To continue to explore the possibility of implementing the concept of “Continuum of Care”</p> <p><i>(SWD)</i></p>	<p>To devise a funding formula to implement the concept of “Continuum of Care” and to invite three residential care homes to pilot the concept and the funding formula in 1999</p>

VI

Encourage the elderly to lead an active life

To promote a sense of worthiness amongst the elderly, it is important that they should enjoy an active life. Through the Provisional Municipal Councils, government departments and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), we provide a variety of social, recreational, educational and developmental programmes.

It is also our policy to encourage the community to care for the elderly. We introduced the Senior Citizen Card Scheme in 1994, the main purpose of which is to arouse the community's respect for the elderly. We are continuing with our efforts to enlist support from corporate sponsors in providing more priority services, concessionary fares and discount rates to card holders.

To enable our senior citizens to continue to make a contribution to the community, the Social Welfare Department, in conjunction with NGOs, runs an Elderly Volunteer Programme to promote elderly volunteerism.

Indicators

Our indicators of progress in this area are –

- the level of elderly participation in volunteer programmes
- the effectiveness of the Senior Citizen Card Scheme, including the number of corporate sponsors participating in the Scheme and the utilisation rate

Initiatives	Targets
<p>To set up more social centres for the elderly <i>(Social Welfare Department (SWD))</i></p>	<p>To establish four additional social centres in 1998-1999</p>
<p>To involve Support Teams for the Elderly in Multi-service Centres to develop an Elderly Volunteer Programme <i>(SWD)</i></p>	<p>To engage 4 500 elderly persons as volunteers by 1999 and to reach a total of 5 400 by 2001</p>
<p>To explore a closer working relationship between social centres and relevant government departments with a view to streamlining the provision of recreational programmes for the elderly <i>(SWD)</i></p>	<p>The inter-departmental working group convened by SWD to come up with measures in 1999 to improve liaison</p>
<p>To celebrate the International Year of Older Persons (IYOP) 1999 <i>(Health and Welfare Bureau (HWB))</i></p>	<p>To launch five territory-wide and over 600 district events during 1999</p>

Initiatives	Targets
<p>To enhance public education on care and respect for the elderly (<i>HWB/SWD</i>)</p>	<p>To promote care and respect for the elderly through the publicity programme for IYOP 1999</p>
<p>To launch a three-year “Opportunities for the Elderly” project (<i>SWD</i>)</p>	<p>For a three-year period starting from January 1999, to provide grants for community organisations to plan and organise more service projects for elderly people in need</p>
<p>To review the Senior Citizen Card Scheme (<i>SWD</i>)</p>	<p>To consider recommendations of a consultancy study on improving operation of the Scheme in 1999</p>

VII

Adopt a structured approach to assess the care needs of the elderly and to provide services accordingly

It is important that resources are targeted to serve elderly who have genuine need for care services. To achieve this, we need to tighten our admission control to residential care homes to ensure that only those who need formal personal care on a full-time basis are admitted.

On the other hand, there are elderly people with special care needs for whom specific care services have to be provided. With a rapidly ageing population, demented elderly is a case in point. We should try to take into account their care needs when we are planning our service provision.

Indicators

Our indicators of progress in this area are –

- the proportion of elderly residents of subvented care homes who have genuine need for formal care
- the number of demented elderly people receiving enhanced/specific care service

Initiatives	Targets
<p>To strengthen admission control to residential care homes <i>(Social Welfare Department (SWD))</i></p>	<p>To review in 1999 the admission criteria and to improve the admission processes to subvented care homes to ensure that resources are used effectively for elderly with genuine care needs</p>
<p>To extend coverage of the Dementia Supplement in subvented residential care homes <i>(SWD)</i></p>	<p>To provide resources to care for a further 160 demented elderly in residential care homes in 2000-2001</p>
<p>To conduct pilot schemes in day care centres and residential care homes to provide service for the demented elderly <i>(SWD)</i></p>	<p>To conduct pilot schemes in selected centres and care homes in 1999-2000</p>
<p>To provide training to front-line staff to identify elderly with traits of dementia <i>(SWD)</i></p>	<p>To train 800 front-line workers in 1999-2000</p>