

Navigation Scheme for Young Persons in Care Services boosts social welfare care sector (with photos)

The Director of Social Welfare, Ms Carol Yip, gave her support to about 300 young persons who have joined the social welfare care services at the Award Presentation Ceremony for Young Persons Joining the Social Welfare Care Services held by the Social Welfare Department (SWD) today (May 17). She expressed her gratitude to the young persons for their contribution in the frontline of social welfare care services, adding that it has not only helped revitalise the sector, but also brought delight to elderly persons and rehabilitees.

She said that the social welfare care sector is expanding, with more diversified development opportunities, and is in need of more young persons with knowledge of professional nursing and technology applications.

Addressing the ceremony, Ms Yip said that in light of the manpower shortage and ageing workforce faced by the social welfare care sector, as well as the rising demand for long-term care services, the SWD launched the Navigation Scheme for Young Persons in Care Services in 2015 to encourage young persons to join elderly and rehabilitation care services. Under the scheme, which adopts a "first-hire-then-train" approach and offers on-the-job training opportunities, the Government also provides trainees with subsidies to pursue a two-year part-time course to progressively qualify as health workers and achieve multi-skill qualifications, with a view to better equipping them and improving the social welfare sector's professional competency and image.

Ms Yip said she was happy to see that the Navigation Scheme has gained support and recognition, noting that more than 1 000 trainees have been recruited so far, and that the service operators will provide an additional 200 training places in 2019-20.

Ms Yip thanked the social welfare agencies implementing the Navigation Scheme for providing full-time employment and professional training for the trainees. She also thanked the employers offering on-the-job training opportunities and mentors for their support and encouragement given to the trainees, and paid tribute to the trainees' parents for their care and understanding which have motivated their children to further develop their career in the sector.

As announced in the 2018 Policy Address, the Navigation Scheme will continue with enhancements, providing a total of 1 200 training places in five years starting from 2020-21, with a view to further encouraging young persons to join the elderly and rehabilitation care services.

Today's ceremony aimed to recognise young persons contributing to the

social welfare care sector and outstanding participants of the Navigation Scheme, with a view to encouraging them to pass on their love and care. It also aimed to encourage more young persons to join the social welfare care services. A total of 305 young persons were commended at the ceremony.

Mr Poon Kwan-kit, who has been a health worker in the social welfare care sector since graduating from the first round of the Navigation Scheme, was awarded with a certificate of appreciation. Mr Poon, who worked in a residential care home for the elderly and then joined a rehabilitation centre, said that it is very important to have more communication with ex-mentally ill persons and carefully observe any changes in their daily behaviour and mental condition, so that appropriate assistance can be rendered. He said that his work experience has motivated him to study hard in acquiring more knowledge of nursing, such as the efficacy and side effects of psychiatric medications, in order to upgrade his professional standard.

Mr Kwan Ho, a graduate of the second round of the Navigation Scheme, was presented with a certificate of appreciation – New Star. Mr Kwan has been a health worker in a residential care home for the elderly since completing the scheme. Apart from taking care of the daily routines of elderly residents, he is also responsible for the distribution of medicines and assisting new young colleagues in adapting to the work of the residential care home. Saying that the job is fulfilling and diversified in nature, he added that his deep emotional bonds with the elderly residents has also contributed to his determination to further his career in the sector. Given the developments in gerontechnology, he said he believed that young persons with a knowledge of technology applications would be very competitive in the social welfare care sector.

Also officiating at the ceremony were representatives from the non-governmental organisation operators of the Navigation Scheme and members of the Project Steering Committee of the Navigation Scheme.



