

## SLW visits Eastern District (with photos)

The Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, today (March 22) visited Eastern District, where he took a closer look at elderly services and met with District Council members. The Under Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Caspar Tsui, also joined the visit.

Dr Law first went to the Eastern District Council to exchange views with the Chairman, Mr Wong Kin-pan, and members on labour and welfare issues as well as matters of local concern.

Accompanied by the District Officer (Eastern), Mr Simon Chan, he visited the Hong Kong Society for the Aged Chai Wan District Elderly Community Centre. Dr Law pointed out that the Government had regularised the Dementia Community Support Scheme, which provides support for elderly persons with mild or moderate dementia and their carers in the community, since February and would expand it to cover all 41 District Elderly Community Centres (DECCs) in Hong Kong in May. The Government has also increased the number of social workers in all neighbourhood elderly centres and allocated more resources to day care centres/units for the elderly and home care services teams across the territory to increase manpower, with a view to facilitating early detection of elderly persons suspected of suffering from dementia and enhancing care and support for demented elderly persons and their carers.

In addition, the 2019-20 Budget set out a four-year pilot scheme to provide Wi-Fi service at welfare service units with an allocation of about \$205 million through the Lotteries Fund, covering about 1 350 service units subvented by the Social Welfare Department, including DECCs. Dr Law said that this would facilitate elderly persons patronising the centre, particularly those living alone and elderly doubletons, to communicate with their children, relatives and friends locally and abroad via free Wi-Fi. The pilot scheme would also facilitate welfare organisations to use digital equipment to provide more efficient services.

Dr Law then proceeded to a restaurant in Quarry Bay under the social enterprise, Gingko House, and had a tea gathering with its elderly staff. Apart from hiring elderly persons to work in its restaurants and grocery, Gingko House also provides elderly persons with opportunities in activities such as voluntary work, organic farming and band performances. He said that the Government has been assisting elderly job seekers to secure employment, which could also promote active and healthy ageing as well as their sense of worth.

