SWD invites eligible elderly persons to apply for fifth batch of vouchers under Pilot Scheme on Residential Care Service Voucher for the Elderly

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) today (January 31) invited eligible elderly persons to apply for the fifth batch of vouchers under the Pilot Scheme on Residential Care Service Voucher (RCSV) for the Elderly.

A spokesman for the SWD said that elderly persons who have been assessed as moderately impaired under the SWD's Standardised Care Need Assessment Mechanism for Elderly Services and waitlisted for care-and-attention (C&A) places under the Central Waiting List (CWL) for Subsidised Long Term Care Services for the Elderly with application dates on or before the end of August 2018 (not including those who are RCSV holders, those who have utilised RCSVs, those whose status on the CWL is "inactive" or those who are offered subsidised placement) are eligible to apply for the fifth batch of RCSVs. Letters will be sent to the elderly persons concerned to invite them to join the Pilot Scheme. The closing date for applications is February 28. Successful applicants will be issued with RCSVs from the end of March onwards.

The spokesman said, "Adopting the 'money-following-the-user' principle, the Scheme provides an additional choice for elderly persons in need of residential care service by allowing them to choose the residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs), from among the eligible RCHEs under the Pilot Scheme, that suit their needs, the Pilot Scheme has been implemented in three phases which were launched in March 2017, September 2017 and September 2018."

To date, there are a total of 103 RCHEs participating as Recognised Service Providers (RSPs) in different phases offering beds which accept RCSV holders. The RSPs include subvented homes, contract homes and self-financing homes providing non-subsidised residential care places for the elderly as well as private RCHEs which meet the requirements. Such requirements include meeting the space standard and staffing requirements of EA1 homes under the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme (EBPS). The SWD now invites eligible RCHEs to apply for participating in the third phase of the Pilot Scheme as RSPs. It is expected that the numbers of RSPs and residential care places available for RCSV holders would increase gradually.

Under the principle of "users pay in accordance with affordability", the Scheme adopts a sliding scale of co-payment at eight levels (Level 0 to Level 7). Elderly persons will be assessed on an individual basis in the means test in which both income and assets are taken into account in determining the co-payment level. The percentages of payment by elderly users range from 0 per cent at the lowest to 75 per cent at the highest. The current voucher value

under the Pilot Scheme is $13,287 per month. The RSP has to provide a "standard service package" under the voucher value for RCSV holders. The scope of the package is comparable to that of subsidised C&A places under the EBPS. Apart from choosing places at voucher value in RSPs, the Pilot Scheme also allows RCSV holders to make top-up payments to purchase enhanced or value-added services.

The spokesman added that the Residential Care Service Voucher Office of the SWD would provide support for RCSV holders, such as regular visits and assistance in switching RSPs when necessary.

For elderly persons who have received invitation letters or for eligible elderly persons as mentioned above, if they or their carers/family members have enquiries about the application for RCSV, they may contact the above-mentioned office at 3107 3280 or 3107 3290. The telephone lines will be operating from 9.30am to 1pm and from 2.30pm to 5pm on Mondays to Fridays, except for public holidays.

For details of the Pilot Scheme and the list of RSPs, citizens may visit the SWD website (www.swd.gov.hk). Citizens may also browse the SWD Elderly Information Website (elderlyinfo.swd.gov.hk) to get more details such as manpower and facilities about each of the RSPs.