

SWD invites eligible elderly to apply for additional vouchers under Second Phase of Pilot Scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) today (August 31) started inviting eligible elderly persons to apply for an additional 1 000 vouchers under the Second Phase of the Pilot Scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly.

The SWD will send letters to eligible elderly persons to invite them to join the Scheme. Elderly persons eligible to apply for the vouchers must satisfy the following conditions: (1) having been assessed as moderately or severely impaired under the SWD's Standardised Care Need Assessment Mechanism for Elderly Services; (2) waitlisted for subsidised community care service (CCS) and/or residential care service (RCS) under the Central Waiting List for Subsidised Long Term Care Services for the Elderly with application dates no later than the end of March 2018; and (3) not receiving any kind of RCS or subsidised CCS.

An SWD spokesman said, "The Government's elderly policy direction accords priority to the provision of home care and community care, supplemented by residential care. Funding from the Lotteries Fund was allocated to launch the First Phase and Second Phase of the Scheme in September 2013 and October 2016 respectively, which allowed needy elderly persons to receive community care services under the 'money-following-the-user' funding approach. Government subsidy was provided directly for eligible elderly persons in the form of voucher so that they could choose the service packages which best suit their needs. To enhance community care and support services, the Government will issue an additional 1 000 vouchers from October 2018, making up a total of 6 000 vouchers."

The spokesman noted that the voucher value will be expanded to five different voucher values ranging from \$3,930 to \$9,390 with effect from October 2018 to suit individual needs and choice. Under the "affordable users pay" principle, the less an elderly person can afford, the more the Government will subsidise. The SWD will determine the co-payment level, one of the six categories ranging from 5 per cent to 40 per cent of the voucher service package values, for elderly persons based on their household income.

Currently, 125 Recognised Service Providers (RSPs) have joined the Second Phase of the Scheme, providing a total of about 2 300 day care places and about 3 300 home care places. Voucher holders may choose centre-based service and/or home-based service in accordance with their needs and, if necessary, may use residential respite service.

The SWD spokesman added that for details of the Scheme, the list of RSPs and information on the dates of application for subsidised long-term care services for eligible elderly persons issued with invitation letters, people may visit the SWD website (www.swd.gov.hk). They may also browse the SWD Elderly Information Website (elderlyinfo.swd.gov.hk) for details about the services of each RSP.

Eligible elderly persons or their carers/relatives who have enquiries on the application for the Second Phase of the Scheme or selection of RSPs or service packages may approach the SWD's Centralised Team of the Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly, or the responsible workers of the elderly persons, for assistance, the spokesman added. The telephone number of the Centralised Team, 3107 3013, will operate from Mondays to Fridays, 9.30am to 1pm and 2.30pm to 5pm, except on public holidays.