

# SWD launches public education programme to enhance understanding of dementia

The Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, said today (December 15) that in face of the ageing population, the number of people with dementia will be on the rise. The Government, in addition to providing proper care and support to demented people, will enhance public understanding of dementia through public education activities.

Speaking at the "Dementia Friends" Information Session organised by the Social Welfare Department (SWD), Dr Law said the department has launched the Dementia Friendly Community Campaign, a three-year public education programme, since September this year. The campaign aims to encourage members of the public to take action to learn more about dementia and show care to demented people and their families, with a view to building a dementia friendly community.

Among the activities under the campaign, the SWD has commissioned the Hong Kong Alzheimer's Disease Association (HKADA) to assist in organising a number of "Dementia Friends" Information Sessions territory-wide and at district level. Through talks under public education and discussions, the information session allows participants to learn more about dementia and encourages them to register as internationally recognised "Dementia Friends", so that they will be able to share with others their knowledge on dementia and motivate more people to register as "Dementia Friends" in the community.

The Director of Social Welfare, Ms Carol Yip, said that the SWD has set a target to train 10 000 Dementia Friends within 3 years. She encouraged the public to register as "Dementia Friends" and wear the tailor-made orange wristband to show their acceptance and support for people with dementia and their families.

The Chairman of the HKADA, Dr David Dai, and the Executive Director of the association, Ms Maggie Lee, shared with professionals and representatives of social welfare organisations the philosophy and key messages of "Dementia Friends" at the information session today. The key messages include:

- dementia is not a natural part of ageing;
- dementia is caused by diseases of the brain leading to gradual loss of intellectual function;
- dementia is not just about loss of memory;
- it is possible to live well with dementia; and
- it is important to understand dementia from the perspective of people with dementia.

In addition to the information sessions, the three-year public education

programme also features a set of television and radio Announcements in the Public Interest, a thematic webpage, and a television docudrama series jointly produced by the SWD and Radio Television Hong Kong to be broadcast in January. For more information of the campaign, please visit [www.swd.gov.hk/dementiacampaign](http://www.swd.gov.hk/dementiacampaign).

More than 200 guests attended the information session today. They included representatives of the Labour and Welfare Bureau and the SWD, members of welfare-related advisory or steering committees, and representatives of elderly service organisations and property management companies. They also registered as "Dementia Friends" at the information session today to show their support.