

CE visits elderly in various districts (with photos/video)

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, this afternoon (September 13) inspected a renovated building in Yau Ma Tei and visited an elderly couple living there. She then visited two residential care homes for the elderly in Kwai Chung and Shau Kei Wan respectively to extend her Mid-autumn festival greetings to the seniors.

Accompanied by the Director (Building Rehabilitation) of the Urban Renewal Authority, Mr Daniel Ho, Mrs Lam inspected a 16-storey 57-year-old building in Yau Mau Tei. Mrs Lam was briefed that renovation works were carried out on the outer wall of the building and in part of the common area through various government financial support schemes, particularly the "Operation Building Bright 2.0" proposed in the earlier Policy Address, providing a better living environment for residents. She also visited an elderly couple who have lived there for over 20 years to learn about their daily life as well as the support for them to maintain their building, and presented mooncakes and fruits to them to celebrate the Mid-autumn festival.

The Government has been helping property owners to repair and maintain old buildings in a timely manner through different schemes. The first round of applications for "Operation Building Bright 2.0" was closed at the end of last year. The initiative will help with the repair works for about 1 000 residential buildings of over 50 years old. There is also the Building Maintenance Grant Scheme for Elderly Owners launched in 2008, which has to date financed about 24 000 elderly home owners to carry out internal maintenance and repair works in their units and building safety enhancement works. As well, the Lift Modernisation Subsidy Scheme is open for application in two rounds, with the receipt of about 1 200 applications involving about 5 000 qualified lifts in the first round of applications that ended on August 1 this year.

"With the ageing of buildings in Hong Kong, enhancing building safety and the living environment are important livelihood concerns, and various initiatives rolled out by the Government over the years have generally been well received by home owners. The Government will continue to allocate resources and is proactively considering enhancing individual schemes to cater for the specific needs of the owners of old buildings," Mrs Lam said.

Later, Mrs Lam visited two residential care homes for the elderly located in Kwai Chung and Shau Kei Wan respectively to bring them mooncakes and cookies and share with them the festive joy.

The Government attaches great importance to elderly services, and strives to increase subsidised residential care places for the elderly through a multi-pronged approach, including allocating more resources to purchase an additional 5 000 EA1 places under the Enhanced Bought Place

Scheme (EBPS) in the next five years, the construction of new contract residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs), and continuing to implement the Pilot Scheme on the Residential Care Service Voucher for the Elderly. As well, the Government will incorporate land sale conditions for suitable land sale sites, requiring private developers to construct welfare facilities specified by the Government, including elderly service facilities, with the construction cost to be met by the Lotteries Fund.

Mrs Lam said that the Government would continue to increase the supply of residential care places for the elderly and enhance the overall service quality of RCHEs. The Working Group on the Review of Ordinances and Codes of Practice for Residential Care Homes set up by the Social Welfare Department and comprised of representatives from various sectors completed the review in May 2019, and submitted the final report to the Government with 19 recommendations for enhancing the regulatory regime of RCHEs and residential care homes for persons with disabilities. The implementation of the recommendations involved comprehensive legislative amendments. The Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB) is examining the recommendations in detail, seeking legal advice per the established procedures, and consulting the relevant committees, with plans to conduct further district engagements later this year. Upon finalisation of the legislative proposals, the LWB will submit an amendment bill to the Legislative Council for scrutiny.



