

## LCQ22: Special child care centres

Following is a question by the Hon Lillian Kwok and a written reply by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun, in the Legislative Council today (March 19):

Question:

The special child care centres (SCCCs) under the Social Welfare Department provide whole day training and care for children with moderate to severe disabilities to facilitate their growth and development, helping them prepare for articulation to primary education. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether it has compiled statistics on the number of children receiving services provided by SCCC in various districts in the past five years (with a breakdown by type of disability), as well as their average waiting time for such services;
- (2) whether it has compiled statistics on the respective numbers and percentages of children receiving services provided by SCCC who have successfully articulated to mainstream schools and special schools; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (3) whether SCCC will provide follow-up services to the children mentioned in (2); if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (4) whether it will regularly assess and review the teaching plans of SCCC, so as to ensure that children receiving such services can adapt to social development and better articulate to primary education; if so, of the details?

Reply:

President,

In response to Hon Lillian Kwok's question, our reply is as follows.

(1) and (2) As of the end of January 2025, there are 50 Special Child Care Centres (SCCCs), including six Residential Special Child Care Centres, across the territory providing full-day training and care for children aged two to six with moderate to severe disabilities. Children assessed to have the following developmental problems may register for SCCC service waitlist through the Central Referral System for Rehabilitation Services (CRSRehab):

- (i) moderately or severely mentally handicapped;
- (ii) moderately or severely physically handicapped;
- (iii) deaf or with severe to profound hearing impairment;
- (iv) blind or with severe visual impairment; or

(v) severe behavioural/emotional problems, hyperactive disposition or autistic disorder.

CRSRehab allows parents to register their children under the age of two in advance for the service waitlist. However, service allocation will only be provided once the child reaches the age of two and when a service vacancy becomes available.

To ensure children with special needs receive training and support as early as possible, they may, while waitlisted for SCCC service, concurrently apply for and receive services at Early Education and Training Centres (EETCs) or On-site Pre-school Rehabilitation Services (OPRS) as transitional service, pending SCCC service placement. The multi-disciplinary service teams of OPRS also provide support to teachers and child care workers at kindergartens or kindergarten-cum-child care centres participating in OPRS.

Children on the SCCC waiting list who are not receiving the aforementioned transitional services may apply for a training subsidy under the Training Subsidy Programme for Children on the Waiting List of Subvented Pre-school Rehabilitation Services, without being subject to any means test. They may utilise the subsidy to acquire self-financing pre-school rehabilitation services run by recognised service providers to receive training as early as possible.

The numbers of service users for SCCCs and the average waiting time, broken down by the eleven administrative districts of the Social Welfare Department (SWD) in the past five years, are tabulated below:

District	Number of service users				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25 (as at December 31, 2024)
Central/Western/ Southern & Islands	213	231	235	227	233
Eastern/Wan Chai	187	187	193	216	212
Kwun Tong	210	198	223	230	209
Wong Tai Sin/ Sai Kung	265	278	284	299	300
Kowloon City/ Yau Tsim Mong	189	177	198	240	239
Sham Shui Po	136	138	131	148	168
Sha Tin	183	178	184	211	190
Tai Po/North	217	223	226	223	231
Yuen Long	182	201	200	210	226

Tsuen Wan/ Kwai Tsing	219	237	203	227	229
Tuen Mun	112	105	121	161	194
Total	2 113	2 153	2 198	2 392	2 431

Average waiting time (in months) (Note 1 and 2)				
2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
17.5	19.9	20.2	19.3	19.2

Note 1: As the average waiting time is compiled on a financial-year basis covering April 1 of a year to March 31 of the next year, the figure for 2024-25 is not available.

Note 2: The figure includes the waiting time of children before they reach the age of two, but does not include the waiting time of pre-school rehabilitation service users who are receiving EETCs or OPRS as transitional service, or users who are waiting for a change of service type/choice of centre.

The SWD does not maintain data on the number of SCCC service users categorised by type of disability, nor does it have information on the number of SCCC service users admitted to mainstream or special schools.

(3) and (4) Each child with special needs undergoes periodic developmental assessments upon admission to and during their training at SCCC. The results of these assessments are used to design individualised training programmes that set learning goals tailored to each child. This approach aims to help children with special needs develop their abilities to the fullest extent and build a strong foundation for their future education and development. To enhance the effectiveness of transition from pre-school to primary education, a collaborative mechanism has been established among the Education Bureau (EDB), the SWD, the Department of Health, and the Hospital Authority. This mechanism allows primary schools to gain an early understanding of the special needs of incoming students when they promote from pre-school centres/kindergartens to primary schools, so as to assist them in successful integration into primary school life. With parental consent, pre-school rehabilitation service units subvented by the SWD prepare progress reports for students promoting to Primary One. These reports are transferred to the recipient schools via the Special Education Management Information System (SEMIS) of the EDB before the commencement of the new school year.