

Central & Western District Age-friendly City Action Plan 2017 – 2020

1. Introduction

1.1 District and Project Background

The Central and Western District is a relatively old district in Hong Kong with more than 15% residents aged 65 years or older. Over the years it has made significant progress toward building an age-friendly district. The Working Group on Elderly Service under the Central and Western District Council visits elderly service providers in the district, exchanges ideas on elderly services and welfare with elderly citizens and organized activities with local elderly services providers. The Working Group also advises the government on elderly services and welfare policies, particularly on age-friendly policies, as well as services and welfare for the elderly people in the district. Also, since 2008, the district has two resident groups, namely the Central and Western District Age-friendly Work Group (中西區長者友善工作小組) and the Central and Western District Community Concern Group (中西區社區關注組), to advocate for the district's age-friendliness. Both groups have received funding from the District Council to support their activities. With representatives and members from elderly centres in the District, together the two groups have more than a hundred active members throughout the district. Over the years, they have organized many forums and discussions, met with key stakeholders and published reports to promote the district's age-friendliness. Through these activities, they have built a firm foundation for making the district more age-friendly.

The Jockey Club Age-friendly City Project aims to move Hong Kong towards becoming an age-friendly city. Based on findings of a baseline assessment in phase 1 of the project, this document outlines the overall strategy and the proposed priority areas for further improvement for the Central and Western District to make the district more age-friendly.

1.2 Baseline Assessment

A baseline assessment was completed for the Central and Western District in February 2016. Its objective was to understand the needs of the district in preparing itself to become more age-friendly. The baseline assessment consisted of a quantitative (questionnaire survey) study and a qualitative (focus group) study. All participants were recruited from four communities within the district: Kennedy Town; Sai Wan, Shek Tong Tsui, and Sai Ying Pan; Mid-Levels; and Central and Sheung Wan.

According to the questionnaire survey, participants perceived the district to be age-friendly in general, particularly in terms of social participation, but least in terms of housing. The sense of community is strong particularly in terms of sense of membership. The older the resident, the stronger the sense of community and perceived age-friendliness. Kennedy Town residents reported the highest level of perceived age-friendliness and sense of community compared with those living in the other three sub-district communities.

Participants of the focus groups drew attention to (1) physical environment issues: public space inaccessibility due to slopes and stairs, and high cost of housing; (2) social and cultural environmental issues: reduced social participation due to a lack of accessible gathering places; and (3) communication and services issues: the importance of elderly centre as a source of information, general availability of social and health services, and areas of improvement mainly to improve service accessibility.

Results from this baseline assessment suggested solid groundwork with reasonably good sense of community and perceived age-friendliness in the district.

2. Overall Strategy

Future actions for making the district more age-friendly should build on the existing infrastructure and network, including the district's good general sense of community and perceived age-friendliness. They should leverage on the sense of membership and emotional connectedness in the district, strengthen the sense of influence and need fulfilment, and include older adults in the implementation of the Action Plan to be compiled by the DC in consideration of the proposed priority areas for further improvement.

In addition, the DC will use the Working Group on Elderly Services as a platform to connect all elderly service units in the district, to comprehensively implement age-friendly works in the district and to provide funding to co-organize a number of activities targeted at developing the district as an age-friendly community.

3. Proposed Action Plan

Based on the findings of the baseline assessment, it is proposed that further improvement should focus around three themes, including “Physical Environment”, “Social and Cultural Environment”, and “Communication, Community and Health Services”, covering all eight domains of the World Health Organization’s age-friendly city framework. The theme of “Physical Environment” includes recommendations related to both hardware and software improvements, whereas the other two themes include recommendations mainly related to software improvements. The findings of the baseline assessment conducted by the University of Hong Kong indicated that the Central and Western District reported a high degree of age-friendliness, with the domain of social participation attaining the highest score. This not only demonstrates the elderly services provided in the district are good, but also recognition of the continual efforts of the District Council and government departments. In light of the findings of the baseline assessment and the views of the stakeholders and elderly, the action plan will focus on pursuing continuous improvement in infrastructure accessibility; and planning to meet future demand of the society, such as the use of technology, e.g. smart phone, to provide information to the elderly.

At the 4th meeting of the Working Group on Elderly Service of the Central and Western District held on 11 November 2016, the Age-friendly Action Plan of the district was discussed in detail. Contents of the Action Plan are set out in the following table:

<i>Proposed Improvements</i>	<i>Views Expressed by Working Group Members at the Meeting</i>
1) Outdoor Spaces and Buildings	
1. Adding handrails along outdoor stairs and slopes to enhance accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continuous implementation of the projects related to “improvement works to enhance accessibility”, including those other than adding handrails along outdoor stairs and slopes• Continue to invite elderly ambassadors to propose locations where accessibility should be enhanced
2. Building more outdoor escalators and elevators, and providing better maintenance of existing outdoor escalators and	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continuous implementation of the lift projects under the “Universal Accessibility Programme” to provide barrier-free access• Maintenance and repair works has been scheduled to carry out at specific time; suggest

elevators	employing information technology to strengthen communication and notify local residents
3. Improving the transport arrangements for access to outdoor spaces and parks in the district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With emphasis on community facilities frequented by the elderly
4. Adding fitness equipment for the elderly in parks and ensuring timely maintenance of existing equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach the elderly how to use the facilities in parks • Continue to add covers, drinking fountains and clocks etc. in parks
5. Expanding the Central and Western District Promenade to enhance accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition to expanding the Central and Western District Promenade, accessibility of the promenade should also be enhanced
6. Improving street hygiene and reducing street obstructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The District Council will arrange joint visits with the ambassadors to streets frequented by the elderly
7. Regular pavement maintenance and adding covers to walkways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of ramp at the part of pavement that leads to the zebra crossing to facilitate wheelchair users • Submit paper to the Traffic and Transport Committee to request for adding covers to walkways • Continue to install resting chairs at appropriate places along walkways
8. Improving public toilet hygiene and facilities, and signage showing the way to public toilet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to add handrails and emergency alarm lights in public toilets
2) Transportation	
1. Adding crossing facilities, traffic lights, and reviewing/improving road safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study the feasibility of suitably extending the duration of the green signal of pedestrian traffic lights
2. Stepping up publicity, education and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite the elderly traffic ambassadors to assist in road safety publicity and education work

enforcement to reduce jaywalking and red light jumping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install closed-circuit televisions at traffic black spots, including black spots of driving in an opposite direction of the traffic
3. Improving particular design features of trams; increasing the frequency of certain bus and minibus routes; and improving particular design features of MTR stations, platforms, and signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Traffic and Transport Committee has been following up the service frequency of bus and minibus
4. Adding public transportation options to increase the accessibility of venues to which the elderly need to visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relocation of Eye Specialist Out-patient Department from Queen Mary Hospital to Grantham Hospital causes inconvenience to the elderly. District Council members has followed up the issue at the Traffic and Transport Committee and requested for provision of bus route running from the Central and Western district to Grantham Hospital • Recommend to/seek resources from the Government or public transport operators for arranging light buses to transport the elderly in and out of less accessible locations in the district
3) Housing	
1. Increasing guidance to the needy elderly in the district for handling renovation requests and providing adequate monetary compensation to enable satisfactory same-district relocation in the future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needy elderly should include tenants and owners affected by redevelopment • Suggest the Urban Renewal Authority to provide information and technology support to the elderly in relation to repair, maintenance and home modification
4) Social Participation	
1. Developing well-located indoor gathering hubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure more community facilities, for example, the Department has earlier made available part

with high accessibility, especially along the tram line	of the space on the 2/F of the former Western Magistracy Building for provision of community facilities, including multi-purpose function room and conference room
2. Strengthening publicity efforts of the elderly centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some elderly centres have arrangements for provision of services to non-members. Elderly who are non-members can have free access to the facilities provided by the elderly centres. The elderly centres could strengthen publicity on relevant services
3. Increasing outreach services to hidden elderly to increase social participation of the singleton and hidden elderly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elderly centres point out that elderly living in private buildings are much harder to reach than those living in tenement houses. As such, the District Council can use its official position to contact the management offices of private buildings and request for permission to let the elderly centres to visit the singleton and hidden elderly
4. Strengthening social contact of the frail elderly and those elderly who do not go out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By communication and exchange of information, strengthen social contact of the elderly who seldom go out
5) Respect and Social Inclusion	
1. Further promoting the atmosphere of mutual respect and friendliness, such as the culture of offering priority seats on public transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starting from this year, more projects will be implemented. Activities targeting different age groups will be organised to promote age-friendliness and enhance its recognition in the community Strengthen publicity on social ethics education Change “priority seat” to “caring seat”
6) Civic Participation and Employment	
1. Creating flexible and meaningful volunteer service or job opportunities to older people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By communication and exchange of information, enable the elderly to make full use of their skills, e.g. act as post-natal carers and docents, in the district, so that they can contribute to the society and at the same time receive some allowance Engage the stakeholders to promote

	participation of the business sector and encourage social enterprises to employ the elderly
2. Age-friendly ambassadors and mutual support in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New special projects are implemented this year to strengthen training of elderly ambassadors
3. Mutual support in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand services similar to Personal Emergency Link as far as possible to provide round-the-clock emergency support and caring services to the elderly (St. James' Settlement Central and Western District Elderly Community Centre also provides such services)
7) Communication and Information	
1. Improving the reach and exchange of information outside of elderly centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New special projects are implemented this year to provide more service information to the elderly (including services and activities of the elderly centres), such as creating website for the elderly
2. Developing programmes for strengthening connectedness among district residents, for instance, exploring the use of digital devices for improving communication among older people in the district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teach the elderly how to use smart phone to enable easier access to information for the elderly
3. Suggesting the District Council to create an Age-friendly City website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-going initiative
4. Liaising with mutual aid committees and owners' committees to encourage the elderly to take part in activities organised for them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-going initiative
8) Community Support and Health Services	

1. Increasing promotion and outreach of community care services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-going initiative
2. Urging the Government to reduce wait time of health services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The District Council agrees that this is necessary and has reflected the same to the Government. Nevertheless, this initiative involves major policy issues and substantial resources. The Government will continue to improve relevant services.
3. Improving particular features of the telephone hotline system for making medical appointments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The District Council agrees that this is necessary and has reflected the same to the Government. Nevertheless, this initiative involves major policy issues and substantial resources. The Government will continue to improve relevant services.
4. Providing walk-in health appointments in hospitals and clinics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the General Outpatient Clinic Public-Private Partnership Programme, with a view to shorten waiting time for health appointments
5. Lowering the minimum age of eligibility for free dental services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum eligible age has been lowered from 80 to 75 now. The District Council will continue to fight for further lowering the eligible age

4.1 Roles and Responsibilities

The HKU team will provide professional support for the AFC project through February 2019 in the following ways to enable the district to compile and implement their Action Plan for the AFC Project. The HKU team will work in the capacity of the Professional Support Team (PST) to offer professional support to the DC and key district stakeholders, with funding support from HKJC.

4.2 Compilation, Implementation and Assessment

A. From April 1, 2016 to June 30, 2016, in the HKU team will:

- help identify the Committee and Subcommittee of the DC that will serve as the platform for taking charge of and liaising for the AFC project in the district;
- support the DC to understand the implications of the findings of the Baseline Assessment Report and the proposed priority areas for further improvement based on the findings;
- support the DC to compile an Action Plan for the AFC Project.

B. From July 1, 2016 to February 28, 2019, the HKU team will:

- provide support to facilitate the DC and key district stakeholders to apply for funding support from HKJC;
- provide support to the DC as they set priorities and complete their Action Plan for the AFC project;
- provide expert consultation to support the DC to implement their Action Plan;
- support the evaluation of the impact of the Actions completed by the DC and/or key district stakeholders;
- support the assessment of the readiness of the district to apply for membership in the WHO Global Network of AFC Cities and Communities;
- support the district to apply for membership in the WHO Global Network of AFC Cities and Communities, should the DC and key district stakeholders decide to do so.