

Yuen Long District Council

Action Plan for

Enhancing the Age-friendliness of Yuen Long District

Background

In response to the global ageing population, the World Health Organization (the “WHO”) devised the concept of “Global Age-friendly Cities” in 2005 to encourage cities all around the world to develop a healthy and comfortable living environment with age-friendly facilities and provide sufficient community support and health care services which benefit the older people, family and society. In order to proactively tackle the challenges of an ageing population and promote the concept of an age-friendly city, the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust launched the Jockey Club Age-friendly City Project (“Project”) in 2015 in partnership with four gerontology research institutes of local universities, including CUHK Jockey Club Institute of Ageing, Sau Po Centre on Ageing of the University of Hong Kong, Asia-Pacific Institute of Ageing Studies of Lingnan University (“LU APIAS”), and Institute of Active Ageing of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. The four institutes have formed professional teams under this project to support eighteen districts in Hong Kong to adopt a bottom-up and district-based approach to develop age-friendly communities.

Under the Project, LU APIAS conducted a baseline assessment, which comprised questionnaire surveys, focus group interviews and field observation from May to September 2017 in order to provide relevant information to the Yuen Long District Council and other district stakeholders on the existing age-friendliness of Yuen Long District, Hong Kong (“District”). Senior residents in the District have also been recruited as ambassadors to spread the messages of age-friendly city. Training workshops and seminars have been arranged to equip them with necessary skills and knowledge to perform qualitative research by making assessment in the District with reference to the eight domains of the “Age-friendly City”. Meanwhile, residents have been encouraged to express their views regarding age-friendly facilities and measures in the community. LU APIAS has compiled the results of baseline assessment, including questionnaire surveys, focus groups and observations by the ambassadors, into a baseline assessment report. The report, together with this action plan for enhancing the age-friendliness of the District, will be submitted to WHO for joining its Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities.

Yuen Long District as a member of WHO Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities – Cycle of four stages

The following four stages recommended by WHO will be implemented in the District:-

<p>Stage 1: Planning (2017-2018)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch the Jockey Club Age-friendly City Project • Recruit and train older people to be age-friendly city ambassadors • Collect feedback and information from elderly participants • Develop and implement a 3-year district-wide action plan • Discuss baseline assessment findings and action plan through Working Group on Age-friendly Community in Yuen Long District (“the Working Group”) under Yuen Long District Council, and set concrete follow-up actions
<p>Stage 2: Implementation (2018-2020)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement action plan • Monitor the progress of taking forward the follow-up actions specified in the action plan • Establish appropriate mechanisms to involve older people • Submit best practice to WHO annually
<p>Stage 3: Progress Evaluation (2019-2020)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Council to review the action plan and draft a long-term action plan to continue the work of age-friendly city in the District
<p>Stage 4: Continual Improvement (2020 and beyond)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular meetings of the Working Group under Yuen Long District Council to review and discuss the age-friendly city development • Regular report to WHO

Age-friendly city in Yuen Long District

The *Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide* outlines the following eight domains of an age-friendly city:

- (1) Outdoor spaces and buildings
- (2) Transportation
- (3) Housing
- (4) Social participation
- (5) Respect and social inclusion
- (6) Civic participation and employment
- (7) Communication and information
- (8) Community support and health services

Under the Jockey Club Age-friendly City Project initiated and funded by the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust, a baseline assessment was conducted by LU APIAS from May to September 2017. A total of 546 residents were interviewed through questionnaire surveys and five focus groups were conducted. Comments on the progress of age-friendliness improvements and suggestions were collected. LU APIAS analysed the age-friendliness of the existing environment and services to the older people and gave recommendations for future improvements. A bottom-up participatory approach has been adopted to involve older people in the District to give their feedback and suggestions since they are the ultimate beneficiaries under the Project.

Under the Project, ambassadors attended a series of training workshops on the concept of age-friendly city and ways to assess the eight domains of age-friendly city which enabled them to conduct site investigations in the District. Results of questionnaire surveys, focus group interviews and observations by ambassadors have resulted in suggestions on enhancing the age-friendliness of the District, listed in accordance with the eight domains of age-friendly city. NGOs and government departments will be invited to provide updates on the action plan and follow-up actions taken, as the District continues to work towards becoming an age-friendly city.

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Areas for improvement	Follow-up actions
Domain 1: Outdoor Spaces and Buildings	
Environmental hygiene of rural area (e.g. disposal of industrial waste, weed, pest, dog faeces)	<input type="checkbox"/> To review the frequency of trash collection in busy locations or black spots <input type="checkbox"/> To strength patrol and law enforcement to prevent illegal disposal of waste <input type="checkbox"/> To enhance pest control work (e.g. conducting public education, increase of pest control teams and weeding out grasses regularly, etc.)
Domain 2: Transportation	
Age difference in satisfaction of transportation fare – Expensive cross-district transportation fares for residents under 65	<input type="checkbox"/> To review the existing public transport fare concession scheme. <input type="checkbox"/> To encourage public transport operators (e.g. bus companies) to provide more concessions (e.g. monthly pass for traveling across districts, transport allowance or concession scheme for aged under 65)
Domain 3: Housing	
Unaffordable private housing and maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/> To introduce measures to facilitate home ownership by young people and to shorten the waiting time for public rental housing <input type="checkbox"/> To implement initiatives of stabilizing the property market if necessary <input type="checkbox"/> To promote and provide information on existing home maintenance subsidy schemes to older people living in old buildings
Domain 4: Social participation	
Insufficient venues for activities and outreach services for the older people in rural area ● Older people, who have limited mobility and live in rural areas, find it difficult to obtain services.	<input type="checkbox"/> NGOs, including District Elderly Community Centres and Neighbourhood Elderly Centres, can enhance outreach and home-based services in rural areas in order to meet the needs of rural elderly. <input type="checkbox"/> To provide more resources to support the hidden elders in rural area. <input type="checkbox"/> NGOs can review the intake procedure of older people so that older people can obtain

Areas for improvement	Follow-up actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The quotas of participating in activities are limited due to insufficient activity venues. 	<p>services in a faster way.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> NGOs can develop more projects and organize more activities in the rural area by applying for funding (e.g. District Council funding). <input type="checkbox"/> To display the list of vacant school premises which are available to NGOs for short-term use (i.e. conducting activities).
<p>Domain 5: Respect and Social Inclusion</p>	
<p>Citizens have ample opportunities to voice their opinions, but the feedback from government departments and NGOs cannot live up to the expectations of the citizens</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> To continuously improve the quality of services. <input type="checkbox"/> To respond to residents in a timely manner with clear explanations about the limitations of improvement. <input type="checkbox"/> To regularly release the progress of follow-up actions and improvements made for time-consuming issues. <input type="checkbox"/> To provide more channels for receiving and responding to the opinions of residents. <input type="checkbox"/> To invite service users to form a working group to discuss their opinions (e.g. in the form of a joint committee for older people).
<p>Domain 6: Civic Participation and Employment</p>	
<p>Inflexible working hours and unfair pay to elderly workers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Elderly employment opportunities are not sufficient ● Limitations of elderly employment (job nature, work environment) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> To mobilize the public, private and non-profit sectors to promote elderly employment. <input type="checkbox"/> To advocate for flexible retirement age. <input type="checkbox"/> To enhance employment or career support service for older people (e.g. elderly job expo, employment briefings for elderly job seekers, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> To encourage employers to keep older-aged employees in employment and to assist the re-entry of older people into the labour market (e.g. provide training allowance to elderly employees, subsidize employers to explore more job nature suitable for older people, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> To enhance the public education in promoting the positive image as well as older people's abilities, experiences and skills (e.g. experience sharing sessions on employing older people) <input type="checkbox"/> To create an age-friendly working environment to meet older people's needs, e.g. flexible work schedule.

Areas for improvement	Follow-up actions
	<input type="checkbox"/> To explore more potential jobs which are suitable for older people <input type="checkbox"/> Provide training on information technology for older people
Domain 7: Communication and Information	
Complicated telephone appointment services (e.g. general out-patient clinic telephone appointment service)	<input type="checkbox"/> To give sufficient response time for elders to input data for the telephone booking service or to simplify data entry procedures to make the system more user-friendly for older people <input type="checkbox"/> To introduce other booking methods to meet the needs of those with hearing impairment. <input type="checkbox"/> To explore the possibility of increasing counter services or hotline services to assist individuals who encounter difficulties in using the general out-patient clinic telephone appointment service.
Domain 8: Community Support and Health Services	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Long waiting time of social and medical services ● Public demand for strengthening supervision on the quality and service charges of private homes for the aged 	<input type="checkbox"/> To review the waiting time of different government services (e.g. day care services, residential service and public hospital service) and to explore any feasible measures to shorten the waiting time. <input type="checkbox"/> To review the issue of shortage of nursing manpower and consider the related improvement measures. <input type="checkbox"/> To strengthen the community care and support services to facilitate ageing in place for older people (e.g. increase the amount of Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly). <input type="checkbox"/> To increase the number of places of residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) by increasing the number of purchased places from private homes for the aged under the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme or to continue to build new contract RCHEs. <input type="checkbox"/> To provide more carer support service. <input type="checkbox"/> To continuously implement quality assurance and improvement scheme within residential aged care services. <input type="checkbox"/> To review the effectiveness of Pilot Scheme on Residential Care Service Voucher for the Elderly on a regular basis.

Areas for improvement	Follow-up actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="846 156 2063 240">☐ To provide suitable housing environment and facilities for older people to achieve ageing in place. <li data-bbox="846 252 2063 336">☐ To extend services of Tin Shui Wai Hospital in phases to meet the service demand of Tin Shui Wai residents. <li data-bbox="846 347 2063 432">☐ To continue the Elderly Health Care Voucher Scheme so that elders can choose suitable private healthcare services. <li data-bbox="846 443 2063 528">☐ To continuously explore the possibility of implementing public-private partnership programmes

Reference: World Health Organization. (2007). *Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide*.