

# Govt to run ElderShield scheme from 2021

It will take over from three private insurers, enabling smoother switch to CareShield Life

Rei Kurohi

The Government will run ElderShield from 2021 after reaching an agreement with Aviva, Great Eastern and NTUC Income, the private insurers currently administering the insurance scheme for people with severe disabilities.

In a statement yesterday, the Ministry of Health (MOH) said the Government will operate the scheme on a not-for-profit basis.

"In the event that the actual claims experience turns out better than expected, there will continue to be premium rebates for ElderShield policyholders."

With the change, MOH said ElderShield policyholders will be able to make the switch to CareShield Life more smoothly. The private insurers are currently

servicing 1.3 million policyholders. CareShield Life, a new compulsory government-run scheme, will be implemented from 2020 for everyone between the ages of 30 and 40. It is intended to replace the optional ElderShield scheme.

Existing cohorts born in 1979 or earlier with ElderShield have the option of switching to CareShield Life from 2021 as well, when the Government takes over running of the ElderShield scheme.

The ElderShield Review Committee, which had in January last year recommended the Government run the ElderShield scheme, welcomed the announcement.

The committee's chairman, Mr Chaly Mah, encouraged the three private insurers to work with the Government to ensure a smooth transfer.

"We had earlier noted in our report that there is value for all ElderShield and CareShield Life policyholders to be serviced by the same administrator to ensure consistency in policy administration," he said.

With the Government running the scheme, Mr Mah said that the improvements in claim processes that the committee recommended for CareShield Life can now also be implemented for ElderShield as well.

This includes a new assessment framework that takes cognitive impairments into account.

The improvements will benefit even those who choose not to switch to CareShield Life. They will continue to be covered under their current ElderShield policies.

The private insurers will continue to issue new ElderShield policies and serve existing policyholders until 2021.

More information will be made available to policyholders closer to the date of the transfer, MOH added.

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PREMIUM REBATES

In the event that the actual claims experience turns out better than expected, there will continue to be premium rebates for ElderShield policyholders.



MINISTRY OF HEALTH

# Operator of pet facility arrested amid AVA probe

Choo Yun Ting

The operator of pet boarding facility Platinum Dogs Club has been arrested by the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority of Singapore (AVA).

In a Facebook post yesterday, Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Home Affairs and National Development Sun Xueling said the operator is assisting with investigations into alleged animal welfare offences. She did not name the operator.

Ms Sun confirmed to The Straits Times that a 30-year-old woman was arrested on Sunday.

ST understands the woman is being held at Tanglin Police Division.

"The AVA is continuing investigations into the Platinum Dogs Club," said the MP for Pasir Ris-Punggol GRC. The authorities will take enforcement action on any animal welfare infringements, she added.

Several pet owners who boarded dogs with Platinum Dogs Club have also been reunited with their pets. AVA had taken the dogs into temporary custody to safeguard their welfare after a raid on the facility.

In her post, Ms Sun called for calm. "Let the authorities investigate the case thoroughly and fairly," she said.

The pet boarding house in Bukit Panjang was raided by the authorities on Dec 29 and 31 after complaints that pets in its care were mistreated. AVA later took temporary custody of animals found there.

On Jan 2, a group of dog owners gathered outside Platinum Dogs Club, demanding information on a missing shetland sheepdog.

A 40-year-old man in the group was taken to Ng Teng Fong General Hospital for outpatient treatment after being hit by a car that the operator of the facility was in. The group of 11 had remained in the car's path



A woman believed to be Platinum Dogs Club's owner at the facility last week. The authorities raided the place last month after complaints of pet mistreatment. ST FILE PHOTO

as it reversed, despite police advising them to give way for their safety.

In a joint statement with AVA on Jan 5, the authorities said that the group were assisting police with investigations.

Under the Animals and Birds Act, those who fail in their duty of care towards animals in the course of conducting an animal-related business face a maximum fine of \$40,000 and/or a jail term of two years if convicted.

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SEE FORUM B9

# O-level results out next Monday

Candidates who sat last year's GCE O-level examinations will get their results next Monday.

Students may collect their results from their respective schools at 2pm that day, while private candidates will be notified by post, the Ministry of Education (MOE) said in a statement yesterday.

The result slips of private candidates will be mailed next Monday to the address provided during the registration period.

Private candidates can also ob-

tain their results online using their SingPass account on the Singapore Examinations and Assessment Board website.

Students who wish to apply to the junior colleges, Millennia Institute, the polytechnics or the Institute of Technical Education (ITE) can do so through the Joint Admissions Exercise (JAE).

The JAE will open from 3pm next Monday to 4pm on Jan 18.

Applicants may refer to the JAE website for more details.

The MOE said the JAE posting results are due to be released on Jan 31.

The results can be accessed on the JAE website or through an SMS that will be sent to the applicant's mobile phone.

Those posted to the junior colleges and Millennia Institute will have to report to their posted institutions on Feb 1, while those posted to the polytechnics or the ITE will receive a letter on their enrolment details.

Ng Huiwen



Clockwise from far left: TMJC student Clement Choo giving an apple to teacher Yeo-Chen Zhiling as a sign of appreciation; the school's friendly football match; and students having breakfast yesterday. ST PHOTOS: ALPHONSUS CHERN

# Students to help shape school identity

FROM B1

Instead of jumping straight into lessons, the 850-strong cohort gathered in the canteen after assembly for a communal breakfast provided by the school, where they munched on pastries, cookies and fruit, washed down with chilled Milo.

English literature teacher Wee Liang Tong, who is also the school staff developer, said this was a tradition from Tampines JC.

"This is our way of showing care for the students. Even if it's not breakfast, we will do it through

some other ways throughout the year," Mr Wee, 44, added.

The school also watched a football match between the male students and staff, on TMJC's newly turf-pitched.

Qayyum, the school's student council president who also played in the match, said: "This made us see the teachers in a different light."

"They are always in the classroom but today, the game was something new for us to enjoy."

"Even students and teachers who were not playing were cheering on the sidelines."

For General Paper (GP) teacher Tan Ju Ling, 32, the day reminded her of her JC experience.

She was among the second batch to attend Meridian JC in 2004, when everything was relatively new.

She was an English literature student under Mr Wee then, and began teaching in Tampines JC after university.

"I looked forward to the merger because TMJC is not a new environment and so it's easy for me to assimilate. I had a lot of good memories in Meridian," she said.

The school will also be giving uni-

forms – one top, two bottoms and one set of physical education attire – free to each JC2 student.

The new uniforms were designed with input from students and staff.

Some sitting the A-level exams this year have to adapt to new tutors.

Student Jolin Teo, 17, who has a new form teacher and GP teacher, said: "We see it more as a fresh experience. I believe the new teachers can guide us well."

While the new batch of JC1 students will start school only next month, they will have a hand in shaping the college's new culture,

as the school song, mission, vision and values have yet to be decided.

The house system, which is used to group students during intra-college student activities, will also need to be revamped.

Ms Yoong said she would involve the new batch in making these decisions, as she wanted the school identity to be owned by all.

"I don't want to set rigid parameters because I want to open the offer to students to dream and create for themselves," she said.

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