

圣安德烈自闭症中心总裁赵崇德： 设小型照护设施对自闭症患者更宜居

成人之家往往是当家长不能照顾孩子时做的“最后选择”。圣安德烈自闭症中心希望，接下来社区能有更多元的看护与住宿模式以满足不同患者的需求，并通过政府资助鼓励更多业者提供服务。

胡洁梅 报道
ohm@sph.com.sg

首所专为自闭症者而建的圣安德烈成人之家投入运作已有两年，目前有超过20人。负责经营的社会服务机构指出，设施虽未住满，但确保居民有舒适的居住环境，有足够人手与经费来维持良好服务是关键，因此接收居民前得谨慎评估。

位于盛港的圣安德烈成人之家由社会及家庭发展部和圣安德烈自闭症中心共同设立，并由圣安德烈自闭症中心经营，六年前宣布成立时预定的居民人数是200名。

成人之家往往是当家长不能照顾孩子时做的“最后选择”。圣安德烈自闭症中心希望，接下来社区能有更多元的看护与住宿模式以满足不同患者的需求，并通过政府资助鼓励更多业者提供服务。

今年3月公布的自闭症社群总体规划蓝图的其中一项建议是，为自闭成人规划更多且更长期的住宿设施。目前，圣安德烈成人之家是唯一专为自闭成人而设的这类住宿。另一所是位于三巴旺的德教太和观残障人士之家，近约两成名额保留给自闭症者。部分自闭症者也居住在其他残障人士之家等设施。

圣安德烈自闭症中心总裁赵崇德接受《联合早报》访问时，畅谈成人之家的进展与挑战。他指出，院方正与当局商讨应照顾的人数。他认为，自闭症者须有足够的私人空间，比起一座

座的巨型疗养院，在不同地点设立小规模成人之家会更宜居，而更多的政府资助能鼓励社服机构提供服务。

特需者照护服务成本高 资助不足业者难维持素质

儿子有自闭症与智力障碍的赵崇德反映，自闭症者的情况各不相同，照护需求高的不太可能工作，社会得正视他们未来的起居安排。

“就如公共医疗是必要服务，人们能以高津贴享有护理，这些特需者所需的照护服务也应该被视为必要服务，获得相应的拨款。这类服务的成本高，资助不足的话，业者将难以维持高素质服务。”

据了解，成人之家获政府资助不到经费的一半。受惠者按支付能力调查获得津贴，扣除津贴，每月支付的收费平均900多元。收费接下来或调整。圣安德烈自闭症中心也获得刘氏基金会的支持，为低收入家庭提供额外津贴。

成人之家的住宿每层楼有20多个房间，近20间是单人房，其余可住两人或三人，并设有活动与休息区，让居民活动、学习生活技能等。院内设有日间活动中心，约40名自闭症者使用服务。

确保有足够且高素质的人手是另一挑战。成人之家在接收受惠者时得考虑这点。它有约30名职员，包括职能治疗师、看护人员等。申请通过新协立(SG Enable)提呈，再由成人之家评估。



经工作人员的引导，圣安德烈成人之家的居民在活动区参与音乐活动。(圣安德烈自闭症中心提供，摄于高警成解封第二阶段前)

机构会优先考虑面对种种难题的家庭，像是一些父母有健康问题，或者家长独自抚养孩子还得工作。住进成人之家后，家人仍可接孩子回家住几天，他们一般选在周末。

赵崇德说：“成人之家的成功不在于入住人数，而是确保居民的生活品质。也不是所有自闭症者需要全天候看护，我希望未来有更多住宿选择，让特需者继续在社区里过着有尊严的生活。”

柯美玉(55岁，保安人员)几年前患癌，前夫的健康也出问

题，只好安排儿子住进一家残障人士之家，无奈“问题多多”。儿子入住后曾失踪，还发生意外受伤。

家长：提早安排儿子起居 成人之家是最安全环境

她去年把将满21岁的儿子转到圣安德烈成人之家，对这家专照顾自闭症者的机构更放心。她庆幸儿子能适应那里的环境，每周有几天会接儿子回家。

她说：“我总得先做安排，万一哪一天我不在儿子身边，至

成人之家的成功不在于入住人数，而是确保居民的生活品质。也不是所有自闭症者需要全天候看护。我希望未来有更多住宿选择，让特需者继续在社区里过着有尊严的生活。

——圣安德烈自闭症中心总裁赵崇德

少他的起居有着落。成人之家对儿子来说是最安全的环境。”符斌杰(64岁，自雇者)安排儿子到圣安德烈自闭症中心的其中一家日间活动中心。他认为，多数自闭症者的家长需要的是优质且可负担的日间活动中心。但成人之家也是重要的设施，尤其当父母逐渐年老。本地已发展出更宜居的养老设施，他期待未来也有适合自闭症者的设施，让家长安心。社会及家庭发展部日前宣布，将投入更多资源提升照料成年残障者的日间活动中心和照护院护理素质。

Source: Lianhe Zaobao news clipping

Build small-scale care facilities more conducive for ASD to live in, says SAAC CEO Bernard Chew (ZB, 19 May P6)

Adult disability homes often tend to be the “last choice” made by parents who are unable to care for their child. St. Andrew’s Autism Centre (SAAC) hopes that there will be more varied care and residential models to satisfy the different needs of autistic adults on the spectrum, and that more operators would be encouraged to provide such services with the provision of government funding.

It has been two years since St. Andrew’s Adult Home (Sengkang) [SAAH], the first residential home specially built for persons on the autism spectrum begun operations, currently housing more than 20 residents. As pointed out by St. Andrew’s Autism Centre (SAAC), the social service agency (SSA) operating the home, it is vital to balance resources such as manpower, funding and quality of service with a comfortable home environment for its residents. Hence, it is prudent to approach residents’ intake cautiously.

SAAH, located in Sengkang, is co-developed by the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) and SAAC, and managed by SAAC. Six years ago, it was announced that the adult home would be able to house up to 200 residents.

Adult disability homes often tend to be the “last choice” made by parents who are unable to care for their child. SAAC hopes that there will be more varied care and residential models to satisfy the different needs of autistic adults on the spectrum, and that more operators would be encouraged to provide such services with the provision of government funding.

One of the recommendations made in the Autism Enabling Plan announced this March was to plan for more longer-term residential facilities for adults with autism. Currently, SAAH is the sole residential facility specially built for and catering to autistic adults. At the other adult home, Thye Hua Kwan Home for Disabled @ Sembawang, approximately 20% of its intake provision is for autistic adults. At other residential facilities for the disabled, for example, there is also a certain percentage of autistic residents.

SAAC CEO Bernard Chew, shared during the interview with Lianhe Zaobao the journey and challenges of running an adult disability home. He also pointed out that the centre is currently reviewing the number of residents to be cared for at the home with the relevant authorities. He believes that persons on the spectrum should have adequate personal space. Instead of a single model of housing option such as nursing homes, he believes that it would be more conducive for autistic adults to reside in small-scale adult disability homes at different locations. More funding from the government would also encourage fellow operators to provide such needful services.

High costs in special needs care services, inadequate funding makes it hard for operators to maintain quality

As reflected by Bernard, who has a son with autism and intellectual disability, each autistic individual is different, and face personal sets of challenges. For high support needs individuals, the possibility of them being gainfully employed is low. As such, their future living arrangements lands on the shoulders of the society.

“Similar to how public healthcare is considered to be an essential service and how many of us get to enjoy highly subsidised healthcare, the care services that people with special needs require should also be viewed as an essential service and thus, receive the corresponding funding. Since the cost of providing such services is high, the service providers will not be able to continue providing high quality services if there is inadequate funding.”

It is understood that the government funding received by the home does not cover half of its operating costs. Beneficiaries undergo means-testing and will receive appropriate subsidies in accordance to their family situation. On the average, they pay \$900 for their monthly fees after subsidies, where costs may be adjusted in the near future. With the support from Lew Foundation, families of lower income at SAAC can enjoy additional subsidies for their monthly fees.

There are more than 20 rooms on each level of the SAAH building. There are almost 20 single rooms. The other rooms can each accommodate two or three people. Shared activity areas and living spaces are also allocated for the residents to participate in activities and learn daily living skills etc. A co-located Day Activity Centre is also available in the premises, with approximately 40 clients receiving its service.

Another challenge faced by the home while taking in new residents into its home, is to ensure that they have adequate yet highly-qualified manpower. They have approximately 30 staff, including occupational therapists and care staff etc. Applications will go through SG Enable, and then evaluated by the home.

Priority will be given to families facing various challenges, such as parents with health problems, or single parents who have to work while caring for their child alone. Parents can continue to bring their child home for a short stay upon their admission into the home. Generally, parents choose to bring their child back to stay over the weekend.

“The success of the adult home depends on the residents’ quality of life, rather than the number of residents who are living in the adult home. Additionally, not every individual with autism requires round-the-clock care. I hope that there will be more accommodation options in the future, so as to allow individuals with special needs to live dignified lives,” Bernard said.

Mdm Kwa (柯美玉), 55, who works as a security guard, developed cancer a few years ago. Her ex-husband’s health also encountered some health issues. So, they had no choice but to arrange for their son to be admitted into an adult disability home, feeling helpless with numerous problems. During his son’s stay at the home, he went missing and sustained injuries in an incident.

Make early arrangements for my son, adult disability homes are the safest environment, says parent

When her son turned 21, she transferred him to stay at SAAH, and felt more at ease with the adult home, as the residential facility specialised in caring for persons with autism. She was also glad and thankful that her son could adapt to the environment there. She would bring her son home for a few days on a weekly basis.

“I have to make prior arrangements no matter what. When I am no longer around, Should I no longer be around, at least his living arrangements would have been settled. For my son, the adult home is definitely the safest environment.”

Mr Foo (符斌杰), a 64-year-old father who is self-employed, arranged his son to attend one of the Day Activity Centres (DACs) run by SAAC. He feels that most parents of children with autism need high quality yet affordable DACs. But, as parents gradually grow older, an adult disability home would be an important facility. In Singapore, as more conducive elderly facilities are developed, he looks forward to seeing suitable facilities for persons with autism in the future, putting parents at ease.

MSF has recently announced that they will be investing more resources into enhancing the quality of care for persons with special needs in day activity centres and nursing facilities.