



Towngas launches “Sending Warmth to Thousands with Smart Technology” programme, donates 10,000 sets of Smart Controllers and Smart Meters

(17 January 2023) In light of the population ageing problem in Hong Kong, Towngas, in collaboration with several other social welfare organisations, launched the “Sending Warmth to Thousands with Smart Technology” programme to support the elderly. The programme provides free installation of **Smart Controllers** and **Smart Meters** for 10,000 Hong Kong households in need, allowing the elderly and their families to monitor the status of their cooking appliances remotely, and turn off the appliances in an emergency with a mobile app, making them particularly handy for the elderly with mild cognitive impairment and their carers.

Towngas has developed its own Smart Controllers and Smart Gas Meters, incorporating the Internet of Things (IoT) technology. The Smart Controller can be connected to a user’s existing cooking appliance, allowing the users to monitor the appliance’s status through their mobile phones and turn it off remotely anytime and anywhere, fitting the needs of the elderly for “ageing in place”.

The Smart Controller can be connected to eight mobile phones simultaneously. Besides connecting to the elderly’s phone, carers can also monitor the appliance through their mobile devices. In case an elderly forgets to turn off the appliance when they leave home, the Smart Controller will send an alert to the connected devices, so that other users can turn off the appliance remotely even if they do not live in the same place, or even if they are overseas. On the other hand, the Smart Meter is equipped with an automatic meter reading function, eliminating the need for seniors to read their own meters. When the meter detects abnormal usage or leakage, it will automatically cut off the gas supply to further ensure home safety.

To enhance the safety of the elderly at home and reduce the burden on carers, Towngas, together with social welfare organisations like the Hong Kong Council of Social Service, the Hong Kong Housing Society, the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Welfare Council, and the Kwun Tong Methodist Social Service, has launched the “Sending Warmth to Thousands with Smart Technology” donation programme. Through social welfare organisations that provide services for individuals with cognitive impairment, 10,000 sets of Smart Controllers and Smart Meters were donated to families in need, with free on-site installation.

The first phase of the programme was launched last October. Mr Daniel Fung Man-kit, the Head of Strategy & Innovation and Commercial – Hong Kong Utility of Towngas, said, “As at the end of December last year, we have received over 100 referrals from social welfare organisations for the installation of Smart Controllers

and Smart Meters in just two months. We hope to help these families to create ‘smart kitchens’ that are both safer and more convenient for the users, using technology to realise ‘ageing in place’.”

Mr Chua Hoi-wai, the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Council of Social Service, remarked, “This cross-sectoral collaboration between the welfare sector and Towngas is an example of good practice, combining the wisdom of the business sector and the strengths of the welfare sector in providing local service for the greater good of the community. Not only can people with cognitive impairment and the elderly live in a safer home environment and reduce the stress of live-in and non-live-in carers, but it can also promote public education and enable more people in the community to access and make use of gerontechnology.”

Mr Chan, 74, who lives with his wife of 72 years and takes care of each other, has had two unsettling experiences in the past when they forgot to turn off the stove, resulting in the loss of water boilers. Since then, he has been afraid of forgetting to turn off the appliance whenever he goes out, and one time he even took a taxi home just to be sure. Mr Chan said, “With the Smart Controller and Smart Meter installed, we can see if the appliance has been turned off anytime and anywhere. Even if we forget to turn it off, we can use the phone to do so remotely. Moreover, our son’s phone is also connected to the smart system, so we can finally go out without anxiety.”

Mr Wong, another smart appliance user, also found the installation made life easier, as he no longer has to bend down to check the meter reading. Moreover, he feels much more reassured in cooking. “There was one time I tried to cook sweet potatoes, but forgot to turn off the stove and the whole pot burnt. After that instance, I dared not leave the kitchen every time the stove was turned on, and felt compelled to stay and keep an eye on the cooking. Now with the Smart Controller, I can monitor the appliance status anywhere in the flat with my mobile phone, so I don’t have to get to the kitchen as often. The system is so easy to use that even at the age of 80, I could learn it in no time, so I would recommend it to other fellow elderly.”

As the new phase of the programme began, Towngas has invited more social welfare organisations to participate, in the hope that more families will benefit from the programme.

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Press photos:

Photo 1:



Mr Daniel Fung Man-kit (2nd from left), Head of Strategy & Innovation and Commercial – Hong Kong Utility of Towngas; Mr Chua Hoi-wai (centre), Chief Executive of Hong Kong Council of Social Service; Dr Carmen Ng Ka-man (1st from left), General Manager (Elderly Services) of Hong Kong Housing Society; Ms Wong Chui-yan (2nd from right), Assistant Director of Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Welfare Council; and Ms Winnie Chan Wan-ling (1st from right), Assistant General Secretary of Kwun Tong Methodist Social Service, at the press conference of the “Sending Warmth to Thousands with Smart Technology” donation programme.

Photo 2:



Mr Daniel Fung Man-kit, Head of Strategy & Innovation and Commercial – Hong Kong Utility of Towngas, explains the features of the Smart Controller and Smart Meter and how they can help the elderly age in place.

Photo 3:



The beneficiaries, Mr Chan (left), Mrs Chan (centre) and Mr Wong (right), share that they can enjoy cooking with greater peace of mind after installing the Smart Controllers and Smart Meters.

Photo 4:



Mr Chan, the elderly beneficiary, demonstrates how to use the Smart Controller mobile app on the spot.

Photo 5:



At the press conference, Dr Carmen Ng Ka-man (2nd from left), General Manager (Elderly Services) of Hong Kong Housing Society; Ms Wong Chui-yan (2nd from right), Assistant Director of Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Welfare Council; and Ms Winnie Chan Wan-ling (1st from right), Assistant General Secretary of Kwun Tong Methodist Social Service, participate in the panel discussion on the benefits of technology for ageing in place and its current development of Hong Kong, with Ms Jessica Tam Wing-sai (1st from left), Business Director of Hong Kong Council of Social Service, serving as the moderator of the discussion.

Photo 6:



With the Smart Controller connected to the appliance, users can monitor the appliance status from their mobile devices and turn off the stove remotely anytime, anywhere.

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