

**INFORMAL/UNPAID CARERS. EMPLOYMENT,  
EDUCATION AND FAMILY CARERS INTEREST  
GROUP WEBINAR: 10 FEBRUARY 2025.**

# **Support for working carers in Japan; Care Leave Act and Related Policies**

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**GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON WORK-LIFE  
BALANCE FOR INFORMAL/UNPAID CARERS**

GOLTC GLOBAL EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND FAMILY CARERS INTEREST GROUP WEBINAR

**Date:** Mon 10 Feb 2025

**Time:** 10:00 - 11:00 GMT

**Link:** Register to join on Zoom



- **Introduction to the Interest Group** (Stecy Yghemonos, Eurocarers)
- **Presentation: Supporting carers in the workplace – a policy and practice perspective from the UK** (Katherine Wilson, Carers UK)
- **Presentation: Support for working carers in Japan** (Prof Shingou Ikeda, Japan Institute for Labor Policy and Training)
- **Discussion** (Dr Nicola Brimblecombe, Care Policy and Evaluation Centre, LSE)



GLOBAL OBSERVATORY  
LONG TERM CARE



**The Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training**

# Self-Introduction

**Major:** Sociology of Work and Human Resource Management

**Degree:** Ph.D. in Business Administration (Hosei University)

**Articles (in English):** “[Japan](#)” Hamblin, K., Heyes, J. and Fast, J(eds), [\*Combining Work and Care; Carer Leave and Related Employment Policies in International Context\*](#), pp.183-205.2024

“[What is the Challenge after Reforming the Long-term Care Leave System?](#)” Japan Labor Issues Vol.3, No.15, pp.18-23, 2019

“[Supporting working carers’ job continuation in Japan: prolonged care at home in the most aged society](#)” *International Journal of Care and Caring*, Vol.1, No.1, pp.63–82, 2017

**Commitment to Policy Making in Japan:** A Member of Working Group on the Child and Family Care Leave Act for the 2016 and 2024 amendment (Held in FY2014-2015, FY 2022-2023)

# How can we move beyond the dilemma between defamilialisation and familialisation?

Japan has traditionally been characterized as a **familialist** welfare state, which prioritizes intergenerational support, particularly between elderly parents and their adult children.

The government aims to achieve **defamilialization** of elderly care through the Long-term Care Insurance system since 2000.

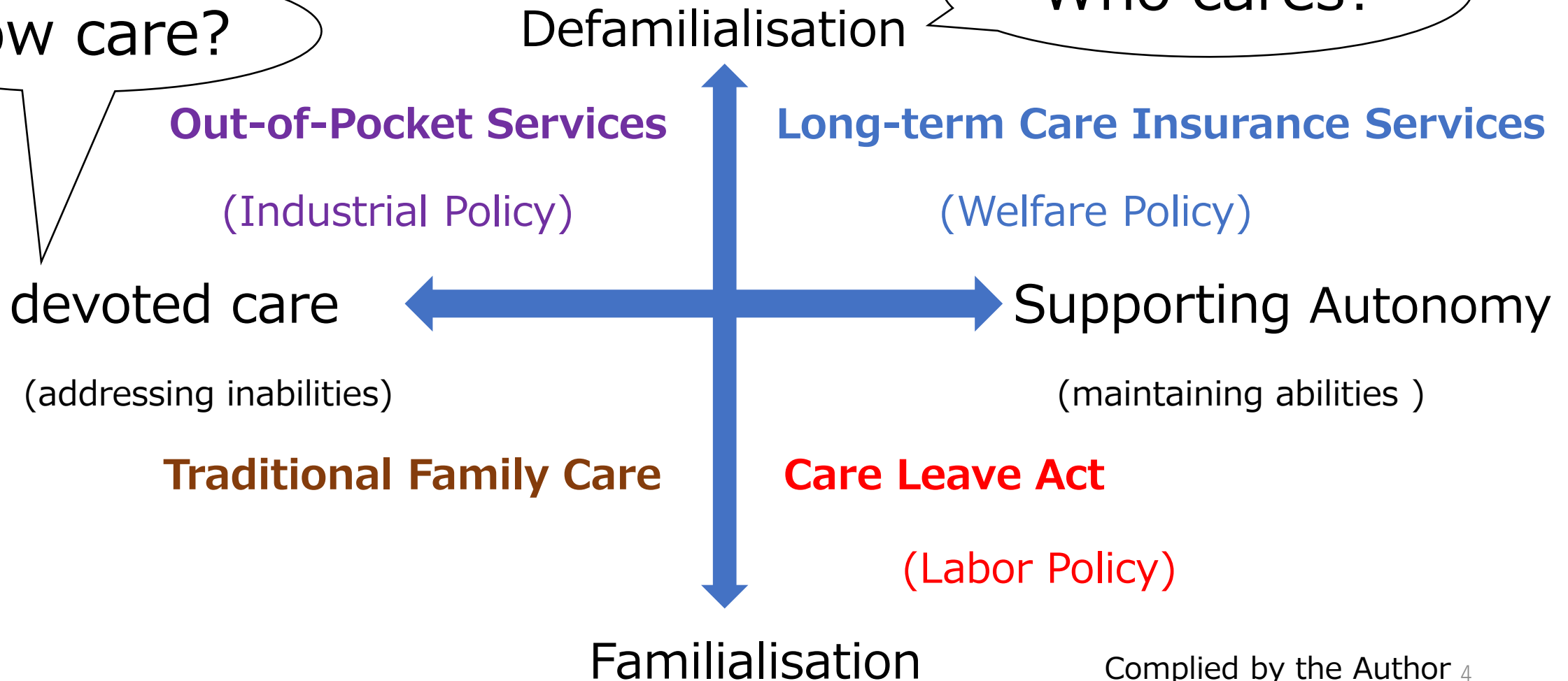
However, it is argued that elderly care is being **refamilialized** in the context of insufficient care services due to severe financial constraints on the insurance system against the rapidly increasing number of care recipients.

The government focuses on maintaining the **autonomous lives** of elderly individuals, while also encouraging the private sector to provide out-of-pocket services to meet the diverse needs of **devoted care**

# Four Types of Support systems on Work-Elderly-Care Reconciliation

How care?

Who cares?



# Three Policy Fields on Work-Elderly-Care Reconciliation in Japan

Policy Field	Labor Policy	Elderly Welfare Policy	Industrial Policy
Target	Employed Workers	Care-Needed Elder Person	Business Owner /Employers
Central Policy	Act on Child and Family Care Leave (Care Leave Act)	Long-term Care Insurance Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Guideline for Employers on Supporting Work-Care Reconciliation</li> <li>•Care-related Service Business Association</li> </ul>
Measures	Care Leave and Related Measures	Insured Care Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Encouraging Employers</li> <li>•Out-of-Pocket Services</li> </ul>
Commencement	1999	2000	2024
Ministry	Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare	Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare	Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry.

Legal Regulation on Work-Care Reconciliation

# Outline of Care Leave Act

## (The Act on Child and Family Care Leave)

### **Long-term Care Leave (unpaid\*)**

93 days per family member which can be split into up to three separate blocks

\*Allowance up to 67% of salary through employment insurance system

### **Short-term Care Leave(unpaid)**

5 days per year on an hourly basis

10 days if there are 2 or more such family members

### **Exemption from Overtime Work**

Employees can request by the end of care provision

### **Flexible Working Arrangement**

Employers are required to implement measures such as reducing scheduled working hours, flex-time, staggered working hours, or providing subsidies for care services, for a maximum of two occasions within a total period of three years. <sup>6</sup>

Enabling workers to commit to their work as much as possible rather than providing extensive care

# 2024 amendment of Care Leave Act

Employers are obligated to take the following measures:

1. When a worker facing caregiving responsibilities makes a request, individually inform and confirm their intentions regarding support systems for balancing work and caregiving.
2. Provide information about support systems for balancing work and caregiving at an early stage (e.g., at age 40) before facing caregiving responsibilities.
3. Establish a working environment, such as setting up training programs and consultation services.

# Supposition of Statutory Care Leave and Other Measures

## Long-term Care Leave

Handling temporary emergencies, such as the onset of cerebrovascular diseases or dementia, and preparing to balance work with caring responsibilities.

## Short-term Care Leave

To address routine care needs such as assisting with Long-term Care Insurance procedures and accompanying family members with significant care needs to medical appointments on an as-needed basis.

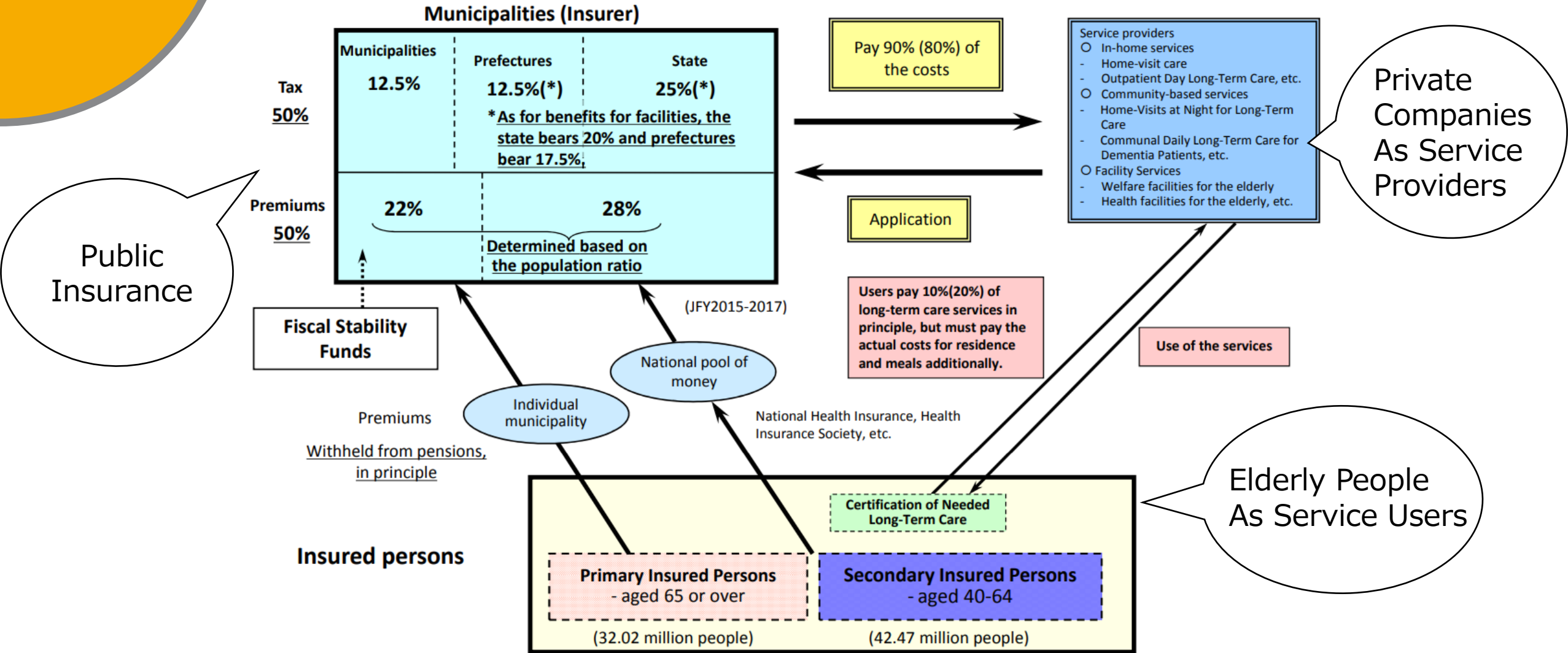
## Flexible Working Arrangement

Utilization for regularly addressing routine caregiving needs

<https://www.jil.go.jp/english/jli/documents/2019/015-04.pdf>

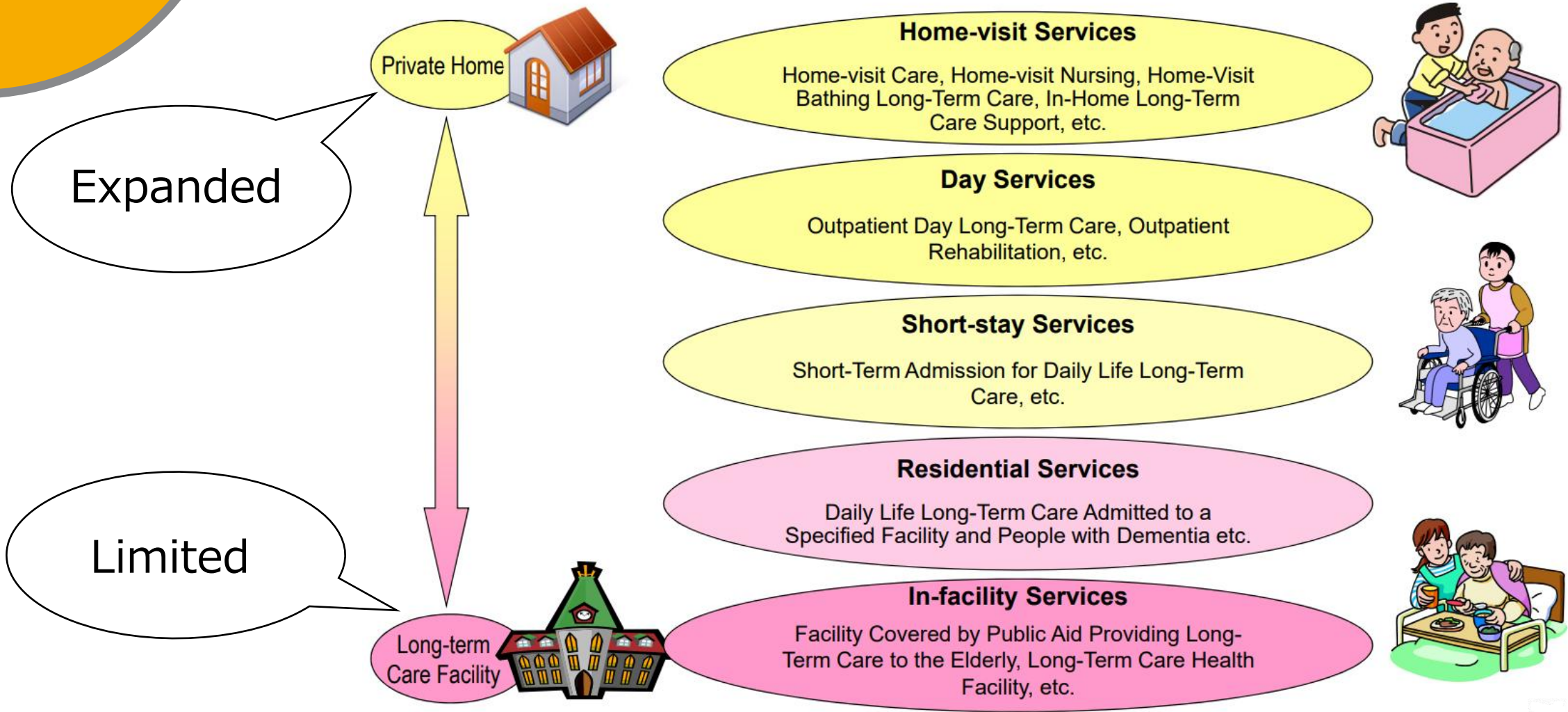


# Structure of Long-term Care Insurance System



Note: The figure for Primary Insured Persons is from the Report on Long-Term Care Insurance Operation (provisional) (April, 2009), Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare and that for Secondary Insured Person is the monthly average for JFY2008, calculated from medical insurers' reports used by the Social Insurance Medical Fee Payment Fund in order to determine the amount of long-term care expenses. Burden ratio for persons with income above certain level is 20:80, after Aug 2015.

# Varieties of Long-term Care Insurance Services



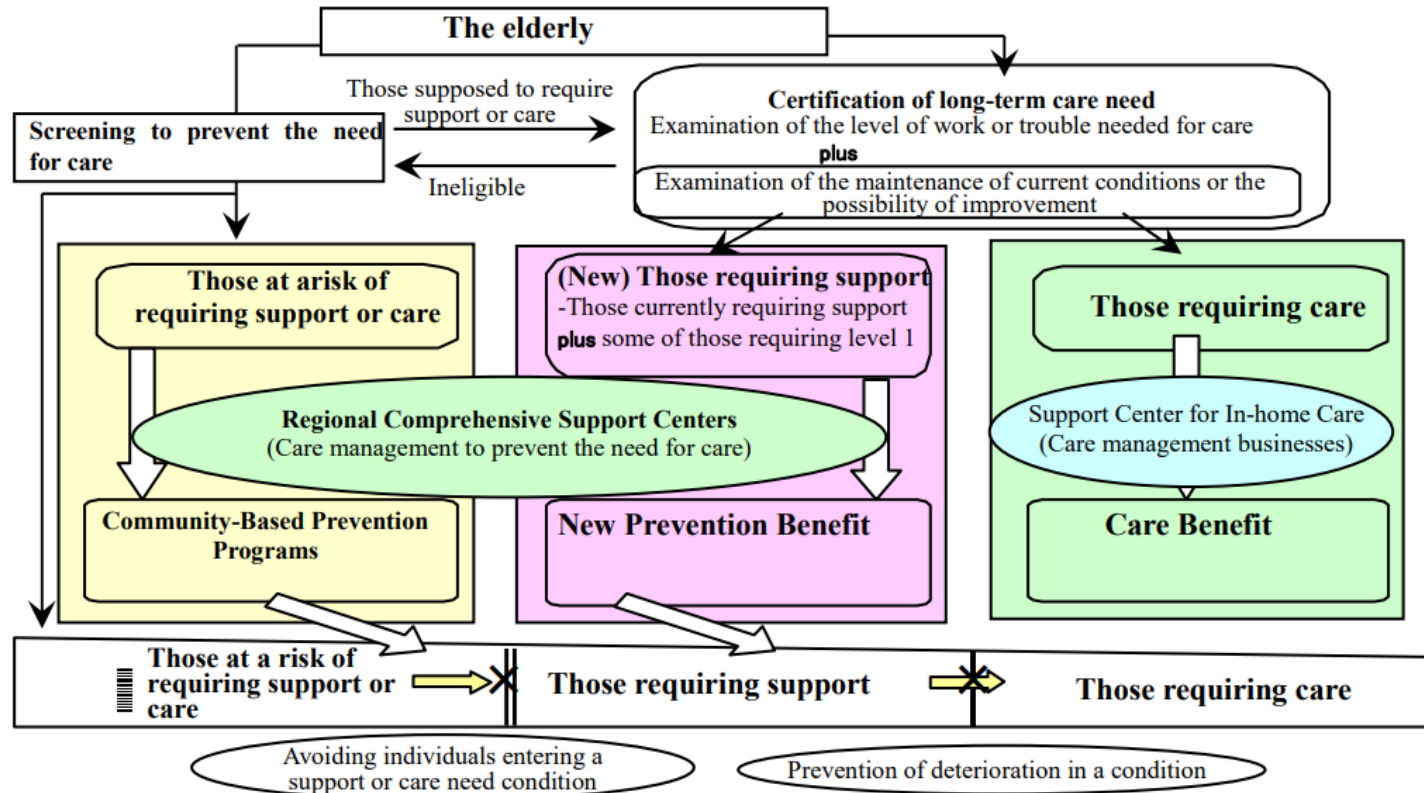
# Prevention-Oriented System

The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) of Japan has worked to improve long-term care insurance (LTCI) prevention services. The LTCI system includes preventive services to help people maintain their independence and avoid serious conditions.

## Establishment of Prevention-oriented System

The goal of the revision is to establish the system highlighting on “prevention of the need for care” so that people slightly requiring support or care would not assume a condition requiring support or care, or more severe, on the basis of their situations.

### • Shift to Prevention-oriented System



# Care-related Service Business Association (2024~)

## Purpose of Establishment

To ensure that the elderly can continue to live comfortably in familiar surroundings and to alleviate the burden on family carers, it is important to utilize public out-of-pocket care services that cater to diverse needs, in addition to long-term care insurance services.

However, there are numerous challenges in utilizing public out-of-pocket care services, such as the inadequate dissemination of information to users and the lack of visibility of reliable services.

To address these challenges and **promote the widespread use of public out-of-pocket care services**, it is necessary to establish cooperation among various stakeholders and jointly foster the growth of the industry. Thus, the establishment of this organization is proposed.

# Conclusion

## **Japanese Policies on Supporting Working Carers are Market-Based:**

- The care leave policy is fundamentally based on the labor market.
  - Long-term Care Insurance relies heavily on private service providers.
  - Out-of-pocket services are emerging as a new service industry.
- ⇒ Aren't they prioritizing business interests over the well-being of carers ? How can we provide the best support for working carers?
- ⇒ There's no carer-focused policy comparable to the UK's Carers Act.
- ※ NPOs like Carers Japan actively support working carers in local communities.
  - ※ Industrial relations can play a crucial role in advocating for the interests of working carers in the workplace.