

**Minutes of the
Social Welfare Advisory Committee (SWAC) Meeting**

**1 November 2016 (Tuesday) at 3:00 p.m.
Conference Room 2, G/F, Central Government Offices**

Present

Mr Vincent LO Wing-sang	(Chairman)
Ms Anna May CHAN Mei-lan	
Dr Crystal CHENG Lai-ling	
Mr David FONG Man-hung	
Mr Hansen LEE Hong-kong	
Mr Edmond LEE Man-bun	
Mr Laurence LI Lu-jen	
Ms Anthea LO Wing-sze	
Dr Annissa LUI Wai-ling	
Mr Joseph MAN Hung-yee	
Mr Daryl NG Win-kong	
Ms Theresa TAO Chee-ying	
Dr Janice TSANG Wing-hang	
Dr Loretta YAM Yin-chun	
Mr Kelvin MA	(Secretary)

In Attendance

Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB)

Miss Annie TAM	Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare (PSLW)
Miss Leonia TAI	Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)1 (DS(W)1)
Mr David LEUNG	Commissioner for Rehabilitation (C for R)
Mr Kenneth CHENG	Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)1 (PAS(W)1)

Social Welfare Department (SWD)

Ms Carol YIP

Director of Social Welfare (DSW)

Absent with apologies

Dr Roy CHUNG Chi-ping

Mr Laurence HO Hoi-ming

Mr IP Wai-ming

Ms Christina Maisenne LEE

Prof Steven NGAI Sek-yum

Ms Cindy PUN Siu-fung

Mr Charles YANG Chuen-liang

Ms Sania YAU Sau-wai

Discussion Item 1: 2017-18 Welfare Services Suggestions and Priorities

Members were invited to provide comments on the paper on 2017-18 welfare services suggestions and priorities. Members asked the following questions/offered the following comments –

- (a) It would be useful to set out in quantitative terms the demand for service places and the targets to meet such demand for better understanding of the effectiveness of various measures;
- (b) While recognising the resistance of the labour sector to importation of labour, consideration should be given to relaxing the restriction for those jobs which were perceived as less desired and short in labour supply;
- (c) The Bridge of Rehabilitation Company incident had revealed the problem of manpower shortage in the welfare sector;
- (d) The manpower demand in the welfare sector would become more acute as the projects under the Special Scheme on Privately Owned Sites for Welfare Uses came into operation;
- (e) Importation of labour would be conducive to the sustainable growth of Hong Kong, without which more welfare issues would emerge;

- (f) Information technology support should be provided to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to ease the manpower needs of the welfare sector;
- (g) Messages on the efforts made by the Government and the welfare sector to enhance their quality should be tactfully articulated to the public;
- (h) Young people who were yet to have clear career aspirations or prospects could be encouraged to apply for vacancies of the much needed job types in the welfare sector;
- (i) The Government should create additional ranks on the care service and the Enrolled Nurse scales, and strengthen publicity so that young people could feel that these jobs were respectable ones;
- (j) To promote the concept of “exercise for all” and reduce the long-term demand for residential care services, middle-aged people should be given free access to sports facilities;
- (k) A pilot scheme on specific services for elderly people suffering from severe dementia should be introduced in view of their unique characteristics;
- (l) Footbridges with elevators should warrant funding support as they effectively improved the accessibility of the elderly and persons with disabilities. Information about these facilities should be disseminated online to facilitate users to plan their routes;
- (m) Better coordination was required to ensure universal accessibility in the public housing estates, especially when Link and different Government departments were involved in the management of different parts thereof;
- (n) As mentally handicapped persons with autism typically showed unique emotional reactions and required intensive care, more day time support should be provided to their carers;

- (o) LWB could consider taking up the policy of social work service at primary schools currently under the Education Bureau (EDB). Service users would enjoy more timely and thorough follow-up actions if all school social work services could be put under SWD;
- (p) The Light Home Scheme implemented by Light Be had proved to be effective in helping the disadvantaged, particularly single mothers, live a new life and develop ability to satisfy their housing needs upon expiry of the maximum lease period of three years; and
- (q) The feasibility to set a limit to the duration of receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) should be explored as some recipients intentionally presented themselves as unemployable.

2. The Government gave the following response –

- (a) The Government would continue to explore ways to meet the manpower shortage in the welfare sector, including nurturing new blood;
- (b) Under the Pilot Scheme on On-site Pre-school Rehabilitation Services, NGOs, by sharing their professional staff, could use the resources thereby freed up to hire assistants;
- (c) The Elderly Services Programme Plan (ESPP) would shed light on the demand for land and manpower for the provision of elderly services;
- (d) The Government would consider formulating a Rehabilitation Programme Plan after the completion of ESPP. This would provide a platform for the stakeholders and interested parties to comprehensively review a full range of rehabilitation services;
- (e) SWD had been constantly examining the merits of different possibilities regarding school social work. An observation was that using the school as the focal point might have the benefit of more comprehensive assessment of a student's needs; and

- (f) CSSA was the ultimate safety net to support the fundamental needs of those lacking means of subsistence. It was available to all eligible applicants who were in need.

SWAC Secretariat
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