

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

**6 November 2018 (Tuesday) at 10:00 a.m.  
Conference Room 4, G/F, Central Government Offices**

**Present**

Mr Vincent LO Wing-sang (Chairman)  
Ms Sylvia CHAN May-kuen  
Dr Gary Cheng Faat-ting  
Dr Crystal CHENG Lai-ling  
Mr CHUGH, Manohar Thakurdas  
Mr Laurence HO Hoi-ming  
Ms Christina Maisenne LEE  
Mr Armstrong LEE Hon-cheung  
Ms Anthea LO Wing-sze  
Dr Annissa LUI Wai-ling  
Dr Gary NG Ka-wing  
Prof Steven NGAI Sek-yum  
Ms Cindy PUN Siu-fung  
Dr Janice TSANG Wing-hang  
Ms Amarantha YIP Yun-wan

**In Attendance**

**Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB)**

Ms CHANG King-yiu	Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Miss Leonia TAI	Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)1
Mr Johann WONG (For discussion items 1 only)	Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)2
Mr David LEUNG (For discussion items 1 only)	Commissioner for Rehabilitation
Ms Vivian KO	Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)1

Ms Rebecca CHEUNG      Assistant Secretary (Welfare)1C  
(Secretary to SWAC)

Mr Thor KWAN              Executive Officer (Welfare)1

Social Welfare Department (SWD)

Ms Carol YIP              Director of Social Welfare

Transport Department (For discussion item 2 only)

Ms Alice Tam              Chief Transport Officer/ Fare Scheme

Asia Consulting Group Limited (For discussion item 2 only)

Mr SY Choi                  Director  
Mr Edmond Choi          Principal Consultant

**Absent with apologies**

Dr Roy CHUNG Chi-ping  
Mr IP Wai-ming  
Mr Anthony KWAN Wai-ming  
Mr Laurence LI Lu-jen  
Mr Daryl NG Win-kong  
Dr Loretta YAM Yin-chun

## **Discussion Item 1: Briefing on the Welfare-related Initiatives in the Chief Executive's 2018 Policy Address**

Members were invited to provide comments on the paper on the welfare-related initiatives in the Chief Executive's 2018 Policy Address. Members raised the following questions/offered the following comments –

- (a) There was a need to conduct long-term welfare planning having regard to the increasing amount of government expenditure on social welfare and aging population. For services on same areas which were under the purview of different Government bureaux/departments, cross-bureaux effort should be stepped-up for better long term manpower planning for healthcare personnel for the welfare sector, such integration of services might help pooling resources together for better service delivery.
- (b) Consideration might be given to review pay structures for frontline staff in the welfare sector and the effectiveness of the Navigation Scheme for Young Persons in Care Services (Navigation Scheme). More innovative measures might be devised with a view to encouraging employment of retired elderly persons and women.
- (c) The development of elderly apartments under the Special Scheme on Privately Owned Sites for Welfare Uses (Special Sites Scheme) could encourage non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to maximise the development potential of sites owned by them. There was a need to explore the feasibility of purchasing premises for the operation and provision of elderly and rehabilitation services.
- (d) The Government should step up measures concerning the provision of employment services for ethnic minority (EM) job seekers.
- (e) After school care services for children aged three to six should be provided at schools.
- (f) Consideration might be given to strengthen the support for single-parent divorced/separated families.

- (g) Consideration might be given to address the demand for support services for persons with disabilities and their carers during the formulation of a new Hong Kong Rehabilitation Programme Plan.
- (h) On support to carers, consideration might be given to integrate the use of technology and to formulate a carer-based policy so as to strengthen the support given to carers.
- (i) Emphasis should be put on further enhancement of the quality of welfare services, and the appropriate use and sharing of data owned by different stakeholders might help enhance the service quality.
- (j) Whether further funding injection would be made to the Social Welfare Development Fund.
- (k) The mode of operation and division of labour of the five Cyber Youth Support Teams considering the “borderless” nature of cyber youth problems.
- (l) The progress of the Special Sites Scheme and whether the procedures could be further streamlined.
- (m) The details concerning the five specialised co-parenting support centres to be set up from 2019-20 onwards.

2. The Government gave the following response –

- (a) The Government was very concerned about the manpower situation of the social welfare sector, and had implemented measures to enhance the supply of front-line care staff and improve their work prospects. On the overall manpower resources, the Government attached great importance to enhancing and optimising human capital to cater for the evolving development needs of Hong Kong. The Human Resources Planning Commission, under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary for Administration, was set up to consolidate resources and efforts of the Government and various sectors to examine, review, and co-ordinate policies and measures on human resources in a holistic manner.

The Advisory Committee on Social Work Training and Manpower Planning would also advise the Government on all matters relating to the education and training of social workers, including the planning of manpower to meet welfare service needs.

- (b) Concerning the manpower and pay structures of subvented services, the review on the enhancement of the Lump Sum Grant Subvention System would cover, among the review areas, a review of staffing establishment and subvention benchmarks as well as pay structures, staff turnover rate and vacancies, etc. Matters concerning the Social Welfare Development Fund would also be covered.
- (c) Regarding the Navigation Scheme, as of end September 2018, a total of 1 018 trainees were recruited. The Government would continue to provide a total of 1 200 training places under the Navigation Scheme, and would enhance the existing scheme with a view to attracting more young people to enroll and further encouraging them to join the elderly and rehabilitation care services.
- (d) The SWD and the Government Property Agency were exploring the feasibility of purchase of premises for the operation and provision of elderly, rehabilitation, child care and other services to address the shortage of premises.
- (e) On encouraging employers to hire the elderly, etc., enhanced measures had been launched by the Labour Department, including the Employment Programme for the Elderly and Middle-aged. The Labour Department would also strengthen its employment services for EM job seekers.
- (f) The SWD would commission NGOs to set up three designated outreaching teams, which would hire EMs, to proactively reach out to EMs and connect those in need to mainstream welfare services by outreaching method. The designated outreaching teams would also provide case counselling, groups and activities for EMs, so as to meet their social and welfare needs. Besides, to strengthen the support for EMs with disabilities or special needs, the Government would set up specialised EM units in

parents/relatives resource centres for persons with disabilities to step up community support for EM families.

- (g) The Government was exploring the provision of such services for children aged three to six in suitable welfare facilities setting.
- (h) With regard to concerns about single-parent families, the Integrated Family Service Centres were concerned about the service needs of single-parent families and, through early identification and intervention, provided timely support to enhance their positive functioning.
- (i) Concerning the support for pre-school children with special needs and their parents, the Government would enhance social work services of Special Child Care Centres and Residential Special Child Care Centres, and strengthen care and nursing support for children with severe disabilities receiving residential care services. Besides, the SWD would provide psychological treatment for persons with special needs (especially children) and their parents to handle the emotional, behavioral and learning problems of these children, the stress and emotional disturbance of the parents, the familial problems arising from the caretaking of these children, and to fortify these children's competency in adjustment and parents' parenting skills.
- (j) Concerning views on enhancing support for persons with disabilities, the Government would set up new District Support Centres for Persons with Disabilities and Support Centres for Persons with Autism in order to enhance the service capacity and quality of these Centres. The Government would also increase the provision of home-based care services and strengthen transport support for home-based care services. Besides, speech therapy services for ageing service users and persons with severe disabilities would be enhanced. Separately, the Government would explore the feasibility of developing a new service mode and building up a vocational training pathway to better address the vocational training needs of

service users. In parallel, a new Hong Kong Rehabilitation Programme Plan would be formulated in order to set out the strategic directions and measures to address the service needs of persons with disabilities at different stages of life.

- (k) On the cyber youth support teams, starting from 1 December 2018, the SWD would subvent NGOs to set up five teams, which reached out to at-risk and hidden youth on the online platforms commonly used by young people. The teams provided advisory and counselling services with regard to their problems in social, emotion, personal growth and development areas as well as deviant behaviours relating to the use of the Internet. Where necessary, with the consent of the young people, the social workers would meet with them for in-depth discussions and provide suitable follow-up services, including referring them and their family members to relevant mainstream services.
- (l) With regard to the Special Sites Scheme, as at end August 2018, six projects had been completed or were expected to be completed in 2018-19. The remaining projects were at different planning stages and were expected to be completed in phases after 2018-19, subject to their technical feasibility. Seven information exchange sessions were conducted with the NGO applicants and the Hong Kong Council of Social Service. The SWD would maintain communications with NGOs with a view to pressing ahead with progress of the projects.
- (m) With regard to the specialised co-parenting support centre, five such centres to be operated by NGOs for five clusters over the territory would be set up from 2019-20 onwards.
- (n) To further facilitate Hong Kong elderly persons who chose to retire in Guangdong (GD) or Fujian (FJ), the Government would extend the Old Age Living Allowance to the GD Scheme and FJ Scheme to provide monthly allowance for eligible elderly persons.
- (o) On labour issues, the Government was determined to abolish the arrangement for “offsetting” severance payment (SP) and long service payment (LSP) with Mandatory Provident Fund

benefits for the purpose of enhancing employees' retirement protection. The abolition of the "offsetting" arrangement was announced in the 2018 Policy Address. Among others features, employers were required to set up a designated saving account under their own name and to save up in advance to prepare for potential SP/LSP expenses in future, and the Government will provide a two-tier subsidy to share employers' SP/LSP expenses.

- (p) Regarding importation of labour, the Government had, through a number of measures, been helping the subsidised care service sector to employ additional manpower. Given the increasing need for care services and the continued shortage in supply of the manpower required, the Government would review the practical circumstances and work out the possible way forward.

### **Discussion Item 2: Review of the Government Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme for the Elderly and Eligible Persons with Disabilities**

3. Members were invited to provide comments on the paper on the Review. Members raised the following questions/offered the following comments –

- (a) Consideration might be given to issue vouchers at a certain lump sum amount to eligible persons to help prevent abuse of the Scheme.
- (b) The Government might consider extending the eligibility of the Scheme to cover carers of elderly persons and persons with disabilities.
- (c) Consideration might be given to conduct surveys or focus group interviews in evaluating the effectiveness of the Scheme.
- (d) There was a need to project the long term financial implications of the Scheme and to study the impact of the trend of other new electronic payment systems on the Scheme.



- (e) The consultancy study might also consider the option of granting concession or discount to persons with disabilities for travelling on taxis.
- (f) Consideration might be given to charge a higher fare to eligible persons for travelling during peak persons to ease traffic congestion.

4. The Government gave the following response –

- (a) The Scheme had been implemented with an aim to help build a caring and inclusive society by encouraging the elderly and persons with disabilities to participate in community activities.
- (b) The scope of the consultancy study included, among others, evaluation of the effectiveness and financial sustainability of the Scheme, reimbursement mechanism, anti-abuse measures, effective measures for monitoring the Scheme, etc. Among others, the consultant would conduct projections of financial implications under different scenarios. The consultant would also study overseas experience.
- (c) In respect of any proposals to expand the scope and eligibility of the Scheme, etc., the Government had to consider the financial implications, as well as other relevant consideration, such as the need for monitoring requirements and formulation of robust anti-abuse measures, etc.

SWAC Secretariat  
April 2019