

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

**11 February 2015 (Wednesday) at 10:30 a.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	
Dr Roy CHUNG Chi-ping	
Mr David FONG Man-hung	
Mr Laurence HO Hoi-ming	
Mr IP Wai-ming	
Ms Christina Maisenne LEE	
Mr Hansen LEE Hong-kong	
Mr Laurence LI Lu-jen	
Dr Annissa LUI Wai-ling	
Mr Joseph MAN Hung-yee	
Prof Steven NGAI Sek-yum	
Mr Jovy SUEN Leung-kwong	
Ms Theresa TAO Chee-ying	
Dr Sandra TSANG Kit-man	
Mr Michael WONG Yick-kam	
Dr Loretta YAM Yin-chun	
Mr Charles YANG Chuen-liang	
Ms Sania YAU Sau-wai	
Mr Kelvin MA	(Secretary)

In Attendance

Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB)

Miss Annie TAM	Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare (PSLW)
Ms Doris CHEUNG	Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)1 (DS(W)1)
Mr Donald CHEN	Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)2 (DS(W)2)

Ms Joyce TAM Commissioner for Rehabilitation (C for R)

Miss SHEA Wing-man Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)1 (PAS(W)1)

Social Welfare Department (SWD)

Ms Carol YIP Director of Social Welfare (DSW)

Miss Cecilla LI Assistant Director (Elderly) (AD(E))
– *For Item 2*

Absent with apologies

Mr Edmond LEE Man-bun
Mr Daryl NG Win-kong

Discussion Item 1: Briefing on the welfare-related initiatives in the 2015 Policy Address (SWAC Paper No. 01/2015)

Members were briefed on the initiatives of the Labour and Welfare Bureau covered in the 2015 Policy Address and Policy Agenda. Members asked the following questions/offered the following comments –

- (a) The demand for Physiotherapists (PTs) and Occupational Therapists (OTs) would exceed the supply in five to ten years. It was important to consider ways to increase the supply of PTs and OTs and to retain them in the welfare sector;
- (b) More targeted training should be offered to retain women in the labour market. Some new arrival women who were unable to gain recognition for their past academic qualifications or work experience and had little connection in Hong Kong were in a disadvantaged position in seeking employment;

- (c) Regarding the follow-up on the Law Reform Commission Report on Child Custody and Access (the LRC Report), the successful implementation of the proposed parental responsibility model would hinge on the adequacy of manpower resources and the mindset of parents;
- (d) More support should be provided for persons with disabilities (PWDs) residing in public rental housing estates. Barrier-free facilities should be made available in kindergartens to cater for the needs of children with disabilities. The pilot scheme on living allowance for carers of elderly persons from low income families under the Community Care Fund should be extended to carers of PWDs. Also, more should be done to promote employment of PWDs;
- (e) To promote youth employment, career guidance should be incorporated into the curriculum of service learning of secondary schools or post-secondary institutions. Travel subsidy for young people entering the workforce might also be worth considering;
- (f) The Government should devote more resources to the promotion of doing exercise and protection of the elderly's health, in particular their mobility, with the involvement of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department and the Hospital Authority. Elder Academies might be a platform for promoting health knowledge to the elderly;
- (g) The Government should consider buying more places in private residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) and extend the Improvement Programme of Elderly Centres to other service units. A higher quality requirement of private RCHEs should be set by the Government. As the shortage of labour in RCHEs might be attributable to the pay level, importation of labour might not be effective in addressing the root of the problem;
- (h) The Government had put in place a range of measures in support of an ageing society. These existing measures, with the collaboration of different bureaux/departments, should be considered holistically to support the elderly; and

- (i) More secondary schools should be encouraged to establish Elder Academies to deepen students' understanding of the needs of the elderly and the nature of care services. A clear career path should be demonstrated and more fringe benefits should be provided to motivate young people to pursue a career in care services.

2. The Government gave the following response –

- (a) SWD appreciated the demand for PTs and OTs in the welfare sector and the need for retention of such professionals. The Lump Sum Grant Subvention System had been enhanced by allowing non-governmental organisations (NGOs) greater flexibility in using the Provident Fund reserve and by increasing provision to, among others, assist NGOs in recruiting and retaining paramedical staff more effectively or in hiring paramedical services;
- (b) Women employment was a complex issue and needed to be viewed holistically. Apart from increasing the provision of additional aided long full-day child care places and subsidised places of extended hours service in those districts where demand was pressing, it would be necessary to plan in medium and long term. The Government would experiment a pilot scheme whereby grandparents would receive child minding training and commission a consultancy study to advise on the long-term development of child care services;
- (c) The Government would further encourage women participation in social affairs by raising the benchmark for appointing women to Government advisory and statutory bodies from 30% to 35%, starting from 2015-16. As regards gender mainstreaming, all government bureaux and departments would be required to take this factor into account in the course of policy formulation from 1 April 2015 onwards;
- (d) For the follow-up on the LRC Report, the Government was preparing a draft bill for consultation with the public. The operational and technical details would be examined during the public consultation. SWAC would be invited to assist in the public education work;

- (e) Youth employment was a complicated issue. The Government would launch different initiatives while continuing to listen to views from stakeholders and the community at large;
- (f) The effectiveness of the scheme on living allowance for carers of elderly persons, together with overseas experience, would shed light on whether, and if so, how similar assistance should be provided to carers of PWDs. On PWD employment, the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee had been working on various fronts to promote social recognition of the abilities of PWDs; and
- (g) The Elderly Commission was pressing ahead with the formulation of the Elderly Services Programme Plan. The Planning Department would be consulted in exploring the feasibility for setting planning parameters for elderly services as appropriate. Regarding the service standards of RCHEs in the private sector, the consultation on the Voucher Scheme on Residential Care Services for the Elderly, which would have the effect of incentivising operators of private RCHEs to improve the quality of their services, had commenced on 11 February.

Discussion Item 2: Navigation Scheme for Young Persons in Care Services
(SWAC Paper No. 02/2015)

3. Members were invited to provide comments on the paper on “Navigation Scheme for Young Persons in Care Services”. Members asked the following questions/offered the following comments –

- (a) A career ladder, in particular the prospect beyond the two-year Scheme, should be made clear to young people; and
- (b) Care work undertaken by the trainees in the first year was in the highest demand in the welfare sector. It was imperative to consider how the shortage of care workers in general could be alleviated in the long run.