

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

**12 August 2015 (Wednesday) at 9:30 a.m.
Conference Room 4, 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 Edmond LEE Man-bun
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)

Mrs Elina CHAN Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)2 (DS(W)2) (Ag)
– *For Item 3*

Mr Kenneth CHENG Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)1 (PAS(W)1)

Mr Steve TSE Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Special Duties) (PAS(SD))
– *For Item 3*

Social Welfare Department (SWD)

Ms Carol YIP Director of Social Welfare (DSW)

Mr LAM Ka-tai Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Services) (DD(S))

Ms PANG Kit-ling Assistant Director (Elderly) (AD(E))
– *For Item 3*

Mrs Sarah CHOY WONG Assistant Director (Family & Child
Lai-chun Welfare) (AD(FCW)) (Ag)
– *For Items 1 and 2*

Absent with apologies

Mr Daryl NG Win-kong

Discussion Item 1: Proposed pilot project on child care training for grandparents

Members were briefed on the framework of the proposed pilot project on child care training for grandparents (the proposed project). Members asked the following questions/offered the following comments –

- (a) The proposed project should include some elements on fostering intergenerational relationships and enhancing parenting. An evaluation should be built in to explore the way forward upon the completion of the proposed project. It would also be useful to provide support for specific target groups in addition to child care training;

- (b) The proposed project could impart to grandparents modern and scientific techniques in child care, thereby alleviating the concern of some parents. It would also help promote active ageing and intergenerational harmony;
- (c) Some non-government organisations (NGOs) could help provide venues for child care training purpose and District Elderly Community Centres (DECCs) could be involved. The proposed project should also be coordinated with the existing training offered in Integrated Family Service Centres;
- (d) Relevant stakeholders should be engaged in designing the courses and family relationship/harmonisation should be one of the key components. “Grandparenting” should be seen as an extension of the support network for parents and should not be regarded as a replacement of the responsibility of parents;
- (e) Conflict management should be a theme to be incorporated into the proposed project to help reconcile different views in a family on child care techniques. The different characteristics of male and female grandparents should also be duly taken into account when implementing the proposed project; and
- (f) The proposed project had the support of Members.

2. The Government gave the following response –

- (a) As Hong Kong was a predominantly Chinese society, family support including, among others, grandparenting could be promoted. The proposed project could also help promote active ageing;
- (b) The proposed project would commence around Q2 2016 in view of the lead time required for seeking funding from the Lotteries Fund, inviting proposals from NGOs, and mapping out training and programme details of the proposed project;
- (c) The courses under the proposed project would be adapted from the relevant Employees Retraining Board courses with suitable modifications to help those grandparents who wished to better equip themselves with grandparenting techniques. It would target at grandparents or grandparents-to-be. SWD would devise clear output and outcome indicators for

evaluation purposes ;

- (d) On intergenerational relationships, course providers would be required to run self-support groups which would serve as a platform for the participants to interact with each other and exchange views, as well as programmes and activities which would involve their family members. SWD was aware of the diverse backgrounds of grandparents, and course providers would take them into account when running the courses; and
- (e) SWD would enlist the help of NGOs including those which were also operating DECCs in identifying grandparents who would like to pursue the training. NGOs participating in the pilot scheme could try out slightly different models to serve grandparents of their choices such as those from grassroots families, middle class, ethnic minorities, etc.

Discussion Item 2: Proposed consultancy study on child care services (SWAC Paper No. 04/2015)

3. Members were briefed on the SWAC Paper No. 04/2015. Members asked the following questions/offered the following comments –

- (a) The support for children with special education needs should be examined under the proposed study. The provision of child care services should cater for the specific needs in different times and of different demographic segments instead of just being population-based. In reviewing the effectiveness of extended service hours of Child Care Centres (CCCs), SWD should take into account such factors as charges, locations and procedures involved in addition to the service utilisation rates;
- (b) The proposed study should examine the philosophy underpinning child care services and the priority accorded by society to the new generation. It was crucial to set specific deliverables for the proposed study and to examine both the demand and quality aspects of child care services;
- (c) Reference should be made to the findings of the study commissioned by the Committee on Free Kindergarten (KG)

Education to avoid duplication of efforts. It should also take into account innovative/good practices and models in other countries;

- (d) The proposed study provided a good chance to examine a host of social matters as a whole, such as family-based development, sustainability of the labour force and promotion of the overall birth rate. Interfaces between child care services and rehabilitation services should be considered;
- (e) The society should invest in the advancement of the new generation, and welfare and support services should not be confined to the underprivileged but also different strata of society; and
- (f) Members supported the proposed study. It would be a challenging exercise, given the complexity of the subjects involved and the different expectations of the stakeholders.

4. The Government gave the following response –

- (a) In striking a balance between the scope of study and the time that it could afford, LWB and SWD considered it more practical to start with a clear focus which would be to review the existing services and to plan forward;
- (b) The proposed study would review the objectives and target user groups of child care services. Child care services for children aged below 3, especially those aged below 2, were in acute demand and therefore would be the focus of the proposed study. Other services for children aged from 3 to 6 would also be examined; and
- (c) As for the issue of children with special education needs, SWD was conducting a pilot project to provide on-site pre-school rehabilitation services for such children studying in KGs or KG-cum-CCCs. Account would be taken of the pilot project and the study conducted by the Committee on Free KG Education.

**Discussion Item 3: Monitoring of residential care homes for the elderly
(SWAC Paper No. 05/2015)**

5. Members were briefed on the SWAC Paper No. 05/2015. Members asked the following questions/offered the following comments –

- (a) The Government should consider providing incentives/resources to encourage private residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) to improve their equipment and facilities. Planning standards should be set for various welfare facilities and that market-based pricing should be adopted for elderly services to improve their quality;
- (b) Carer or family support groups should be formed and care managers should be assigned to each service recipient. It was also necessary to monitor the use of the allowances granted to the elders or their carers;
- (c) An audit team should be established to conduct checks on the RCHEs more frequently and make known any wrongdoings found. SWD could also arrange for secret customers to evaluate the performance of the RCHEs. Punitive measures, e.g. deploying inspectors with enforcement power, could be considered;
- (d) Monetary incentives, training for RCHE management staff and education on the values of Hong Kong for new arrival workers would be conducive to the betterment of RCHE services; and
- (e) In the long run, the Government should continue with its efforts to identify premises for welfare uses and inject new blood into the care services.

6. The Government gave the following response –

- (a) Upholding the dignity of elderly persons was of the essence. An established mechanism was in place for monitoring the staffing and supplements of RCHEs;
- (b) SWD would continue to explore how to enhance the monitoring mechanism under the existing legislative

framework as far as possible. SWD would also give thought to any monitoring role that carers could play; and

- (c) SWD would continue to pursue short, medium and long term measures to enhance the inspection and licensing system for monitoring RCHEs.

SWAC Secretariat
December 2015