

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

**15 September 2017 (Friday) 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
Mr CHUGH, Manohar Thakurdas
Mr Laurence HO Hoi-ming
Mr IP Wai-ming
Mr Anthony KWAN Wai-ming
Ms Christina Maisenne LEE
Mr Hansen LEE Hong-kong
Mr Laurence LI Lu-jen
Ms Anthea LO Wing-sze
Mr Daryl NG Win-kong
Prof Steven NGAI Sek-yum
Dr Janice TSANG Wing-hang
Ms Amarantha YIP Yun-wan
Mr Kelvin MA (Secretary)

In Attendance

Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB)

Ms CHANG King-yiu Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare (PSLW)
Miss Leonia TAI 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)
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)

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

University of Hong Kong

Dr CHAN Chee-hon Team Coordinator of the Consultancy
Study on the Long-term Development of
Child Care Services

Absent with apologies

Dr Crystal CHENG Lai-ling
Dr Roy CHUNG Chi-ping
Mr Edmond LEE Man-bun
Dr Annissa LUI Wai-ling
Ms Cindy PUN Siu-fung
Dr Loretta YAM Yin-chun
Ms Sania YAU Sau-wai

**Discussion Item 1: 2018-19 Welfare Services Suggestions and
Priorities**

Members were invited to provide comments on the paper on
the 2018-19 Welfare Services Suggestions and Priorities. Members
asked the following questions/offered the following comments –

- (a) The Government should devise a list setting out specific targets in responding to the needs of an ageing population and the timeline for achieving them;

- (b) A mechanism should be put in place to enable service applicants to check their positions in the queues from time to time;
- (c) Consideration should be given to lifting the means test such that all carers of elderly persons or persons with disabilities as recognised by the SWD could benefit from the living allowance for carers;
- (d) Reference could be made to the overseas experience of combining elderly homes and child care centres to create synergy of resources and interaction across generations;
- (e) Preventive and targeted measures could be introduced through Integrated Family Service Centres (IFSCs) to strengthen the support for divorced families and young persons;
- (f) Proper upbringing could cultivate good habits among children, which in turn could reduce the problems pertaining to children with special education needs (SEN);
- (g) End-of-life service for elderly persons should be enhanced. Life and death education should be promoted with the involvement of the Food and Health Bureau;
- (h) Families and students of different ages could be encouraged to take up volunteer work for residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs);
- (i) the Education Bureau, the SWD and the Department of Health should work together to help individuals resolve their emotional issues with a view to minimising the risk of suicide;
- (j) It should be mandatory for subvented NGOs receiving more than a certain amount of subvention to have at least one in-house Certified Public Accountant. There should be on-going training for the senior management of NGOs on corporate governance and financial management;

- (k) information technology (IT) and artificial intelligence (AI) would be a solution to the manpower shortage in the welfare sector, and that a central body, such as the Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS), could take the lead in designing a system on the use of IT and AI in the provision of different services;
- (l) The facilities in new public rental housing estates should be made more user-friendly to elderly persons and persons with disabilities;
- (m) The image of the care industry should be polished to recruit and retain new blood. The use of IT and higher salaries would be conducive to changing the common perception that jobs in the care industry were less favourable;
- (n) The Government should conduct objective assessment of the difficulties facing the subvented NGOs under the Lump Sum Grant Subvention System (LSGSS). A review on the LSGSS was expected;
- (o) The substandard quality of private RCHEs was attributable to their inadequate manning ratio. The Government should consider whether the LSGSS was still workable and whether RCHEs should be Government-run instead;
- (p) Allowances should be provided to facilitate elderly persons to age at home, and that family values should be advocated in schools;
- (q) The Government should provide more incentives for social service innovation with the participation of professionals from various sectors;
- (r) The Government should facilitate NGOs to train up volunteers to enhance community support, and medical resources should be allocated to day care centres for the elderly to better support elderly persons;
- (s) Each kindergarten should be assigned one social worker; and
- (t) Sign language support should be incorporated into the on-site pre-school rehabilitation service.

2. The Government gave the following response –
- (a) The waiting lists for elderly and rehabilitation services were available online. There was also a Responsible Worker for each person queuing for long term care service, who could advise on the queue;
 - (b) Living allowances for carers were intended to be financial support for low-income carers. Means test was therefore necessary for ascertaining if a carer had low income;
 - (c) The SWD provided training services for children with SEN aged below 6 for early identification and intervention, whereas the EDB provided support for those above 6 under the policy of integrated education. The SWD would explore with the EDB / LWB a better interface and transition of services for children with SEN;
 - (d) The Government had been subventing NGOs to provide support services for persons with suicidal risks, and IFSCs run by the SWD or NGOs might refer them for clinical psychological services as appropriate;
 - (e) An independent review on the LSGSS conducted in 2008 concluding that the LSGSS was conducive to service enhancement leading to service user satisfaction, the principles of the LSGSS were sound and the system was worth retaining. A \$1 billion Social Welfare Development Fund had since been set up to support, among others, training for NGO personnel. A Best Practice Manual was produced in 2014. NGOs under the LSGSS were required to report on the progress of implementing the requirements in the Manual on a yearly basis. The SWD had also been taking measures to enhance the LSGSS;
 - (f) The Government had put in place various measures to monitor the operation of subvented NGOs;
 - (g) The Government was working on a review of the Residential Care Homes (Elderly Persons) Ordinance and Residential Care Homes (Persons with Disabilities) Ordinance as well as the relevant Codes of Practice. One of the directions was to require all home managers of private RCHEs to receive appropriate training;

- (h) Contract homes currently contained the element of end-of-life care, but it would be difficult to subsidise private RCHEs to provide end-of-life care given their profit-making nature;
- (i) The sector could have more discussion on sign language support for children with hearing impairment, with a view to coming up with timely and appropriate intervention strategies;
- (j) The Government had recently supported the Gerontech and Innovation Expo cum Summit, which was a platform for knowledge sharing. NGOs could also apply for grants from the Innovation and Technology Fund for Better Living under the Innovation and Technology Bureau for developing IT products. If NGOs needed funding for projects involving new technology, they could submit their proposals for consideration;
- (k) The Government had organised symposiums and workshops for subvented NGOs to learn more about and share experience on corporate governance, human resource management and financial management; and
- (l) The Government had been in liaison with the Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants in offering advice to subvented NGOs on corporate governance.

Discussion Item 2: Consultancy Study on the Long-term Development of Child Care Services

3. Members were invited to provide comments on the paper on the Consultancy Study on the Long-term Development of Child Care Services. Members asked the following questions/offered the following comments –

- (a) Whether the study would investigate the infrastructure aspect, e.g. reservation of land in public rental housing estates or in private developments for the provision of child care services and how potential service users could be identified;

- (b) Some parents chose to give up their jobs to take care of their children, thereby contributing to more severe manpower shortage. The study should explore how flexible employment could help release women's workforce;
- (c) The study could look into the availability of potential service providers in addition to the demand for child care services;
- (d) There was an acute demand for work-based child care centres. It would be useful to examine the impact of child care services on the employment of foreign domestic helpers; and
- (e) Whether it would be feasible to draw experience from Sweden and Japan where elderly service was co-located with child care service; and whether the study would cover the potential cross-boundary demand.

4. The Government and the consulting team gave the following response –

- (a) The consulting team had just completed the inception report focusing on the overall design of the study, and would collect stakeholders' views at a later stage. The study aimed at collating information for mapping out the long-term development of child care services in Hong Kong instead of providing a snapshot of the existing services. There should be room to look into countries worthy of reference;
- (b) The consulting team would mainly rely on the waiting lists for the subvented services to identify potential service users; and
- (c) The existing child care policy was that children below the age of 3 should better be taken care of in home settings, and day child care service was provided only to supplement home care. The consultancy study would provide relevant data and analysis for the Government to review the existing policy and positioning of day child care service.