

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

**17 May 2019 (Friday) at 10 a.m.  
Conference Room 4, G/F, Central Government Offices**

**Present**

Mr Lester Garson HUANG (Chairman)  
Dr BAI Xue  
Ms Sylvia CHAN May-kuen  
Dr Gary CHENG Faat-ting  
Miss Cheung Sze-wing  
Mr CHUGH, Manohar Thakurdas  
Mr HO Wing-cheong, Andy  
Mr IP Wai-ming  
Mr KWAN Wai-ming, Anthony  
Dr LAM James Joseph  
Mr Armstrong LEE Hon-Cheung  
Ms Anthea LO Wing-sze  
Ms Cindy PUN Siu-fung  
Ms WONG Ching-hung, Eva  
Mr WONG Kin-wai, Anthony  
Dr YAM Yin-chun, Loretta

**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	Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)2
Mr David LEUNG (For discussion item 1 only)	Commissioner for Rehabilitation

Mr Gordon Chong (For discussion item 2 only)	Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 4
Miss Heidi Ip (For discussion item 2 only)	Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 4B
Mr Edric Leung (For discussion item 3 only)	Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Special Duties)
Ms Rebecca CHEUNG	Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)1C (Secretary to SWAC)
Mr Thor KWAN	Executive Officer (Welfare) 1A

Social Welfare Department (SWD)

Ms Carol YIP	Director of Social Welfare
Ms Michelle LAM (For discussion item 2 only)	Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Social Security)

**Absent with apologies**

Dr LUI Wai-ling, Annissa  
 Dr NG Ka-wing, Gary  
 Mr Daryl NG Win-kong  
 Prof NGAI Sek-yum, Steven  
 Dr TSANG Wing-hang, Janice  
 Ms YIP Yun-wan, Amarantha

**Discussion Item 1: Initiatives under Labour and Welfare Bureau in the 2019-20 Budget**

Members were invited to provide comments on the paper on the initiatives under Labour and Welfare Bureau in the 2019-20 Budget. Members raised the following questions/offered the following comments –

- (a) Long-term manpower planning for social workers and measures on enhancing staff retention would be needed in view of the ongoing increasing welfare needs of the society.

- (b) The Government should put more emphasis on the prevention of social problems by way of providing more support services to the families. Promoting and better use of technology in the welfare sector could also address the problem of social work manpower shortage in the long run. Social work graduates should be trained on the application of new technology in the welfare sector.
- (c) The application of gerontechnology could improve the quality of life of users of elderly and rehabilitation service units as well as reducing the burden and pressure of care staff and carers, care workers also play an important role in maintaining quality services to the users.
- (d) Consideration might be given to promote the implementation of big data analytics platform to facilitate services planning and data sharing.
- (e) Consideration might be given to provide specialised training on different types of welfare services at tertiary institutions for meeting multifarious needs of the society.
- (f) On the initiative of purchasing premises for the provision of welfare facilities, an operation mechanism would need to be in place to safeguard the integrity of the purchase exercise. The Government could consider purchasing more premises in less-densely populated areas with a better chance of securing premises for accommodating suitable welfare facilities. Revitalised industrial buildings should also be considered.
- (g) On the working group to be set up for the purchase exercise, whether it would comprise professionals or independent personnel in the society for the working group to be set up for the purchase exercise.
- (h) Consideration might be given to formulate measures to retain more graduates of the Navigation Scheme for Young Persons in Care Services (Navigation Scheme) for joining the elderly and rehabilitation care services. The Government could run relevant apprenticeship programmes for the purpose of attracting young persons to join the care services.
- (i) The implementation of the Qualifications Framework (QF) in the care service sector should be further pursued for attracting more

young people to join the relevant services. Other measures on staff retention in the care service sector should also be explored.

- (j) Consideration might be given to review programme planning for child care, youth and family services, provide more support to secondary school social workers to relieve their work pressure and to review the roles and functions of District Elderly Community Centres so that suitable services could be provided to those active young-olds.
- (k) Consideration might be given to increase the level of subsidy for child care centres (CCCs) so as to alleviate parents' financial burden. Besides, more support services could be provided to families with newborn babies for relieving the pressure on those families, with a view to reducing child abuse cases.
- (l) More resources should be channelled to the provision of support services for parents of pre-school children with special needs.
- (m) To expand the target groups of Integrated Community Centre for Mental Wellness to teachers particularly those with mental health needs.
- (n) The scope of service of the pilot scheme on social work service for pre-primary institutions.

2. The Government gave the following response –

- (a) On the manpower situation of the social welfare sector, the Government was very concerned about this issue. The Advisory Committee on Social Work Training and Manpower Planning would advise the Government on all matters relating to the education and training of social workers in Hong Kong, including the planning of social work manpower to meet welfare service needs.
- (b) On the use of technology in the welfare sector, the Government earmarked \$1 billion for setting up a fund to subsidise elderly service units to trial use and procure technology products, so as to proactively promote gerontechnology for improving the quality of life of elderly persons and reduce the burden and pressure of carers and care staff. The initiative also covered rehabilitation service units.

- (c) The Government had been increasing the number of subsidised Bachelor in Occupational Therapy and Bachelor in Physiotherapy places.
- (d) On the initiative of purchasing premises for the provision of welfare facilities, an operation mechanism with a robust system of checks and balances would be put in place. A steering committee would be set up to oversee the conduct of the premises purchase exercise and to make collective decisions on the purchase of premises. Sub-committees comprising representatives from the Government, including professional staff of property managers, valuation surveyors, architects, engineers etc. would also be set up to identify suitable premises, evaluate, make recommendations for and negotiate the purchases, etc. The involvement of government professional staff of relevant disciplines could ensure the proper use of public funds, and would safeguard the integrity of the purchase exercise which would be guarded by well-established policy and regulations. The mechanism would also facilitate timely purchase decisions in view of the fast moving market situation while ensuring the proper checks and balances of the procedures. On top of observing procedural propriety in the process of the whole purchase exercise, the Government would, in consultation with the ICAC for the whole process, put in place a system for declaration of interests for all public officers involved in this exercise as well as for any external parties engaged by the Government.
- (e) To encourage more young people to join the social welfare care sector, the Government would continue to implement the Navigation Scheme, providing a total of 1 200 additional training places in the coming years from 2020-21 under an enhanced scheme.
- (f) The implementation of the QF in the elderly care service sector would provide clearer progression pathways for a brighter future for practitioners. This could help attract more newcomers to join the relevant services.
- (g) The SWD would, for enhancing teenagers' mental health and stress resilience, implement the measure of "two school social workers for each school" in more than 460 secondary schools in Hong Kong from the 2019/20 school year, and increase supervisory manpower accordingly. Besides, as secondary school students had exhibited

different forms of complicated problems relating to their academic, emotional and mental health aspects in recent years, the SWD would review the output requirements of the relevant Funding and Service Agreements with a view to enabling school social workers to provide more intensive counselling and support to complicated cases.

- (h) With regard to the pilot scheme on social work service for pre-primary institutions, the Government launched a three-year pilot scheme in the 2018/19 school year for early identification of and providing assistance to pre-school children and their families with welfare needs. The pilot scheme would provide social work service in phases for about 150 000 pre-school children and their families in more than 700 subsidised/aided CCCs, kindergartens (KGs) and KG-cum-CCCs.

**Discussion Item 2: Review of measures to encourage employment under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme and related assistance schemes**

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

- (a) In view of the different circumstances of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme (CSSA) recipients, relevant support services should be provided with a view to encouraging them to join the workforce. The Government and non-government organisations might consider taking the lead to employ more CSSA recipients who were 65 or above.
- (b) Consideration might be given to offer incentives to the business sector so as to facilitate more able-bodied CSSA recipients to join the workforce.
- (c) Consideration might be given to invite those able-bodied CSSA recipients to take up jobs in those professions/sectors as appropriate. The Government might also consider providing incentives, such as tax incentive, to employers hiring those able-bodied CSSA recipients aged 60 to 64.
- (d) Consideration might be given to also review whether appropriate support measures could be put in place to facilitate non-able-bodied

CSSA recipients to join the workforce.

- (e) More support could be given to ethnic minorities CSSA recipients, such as Chinese language courses, so as to facilitate them in joining the workforce.
- (f) Consideration might be given to formulate measures to rid CSSA recipients of work disincentives and/or combat abusing CSSA payments.
- (g) The major types of jobs that the Working Family Allowance (WFA) Scheme recipients took up.

4. The Government gave the following response –

- (a) A review was conducted to encourage employment under the CSSA, including those able-bodied recipients aged 60 to 64, and would examine relevant pro-work components of the CSSA Scheme.
- (b) The Special Investigation Section of the SWD specialised in the prevention and investigation of CSSA fraud and abuse cases. Upon investigation, substantiated to be fraud cases would be referred to the Police for follow-up.
- (c) The major types of jobs that the WFA recipients took up include cleaners, security guards and general workers.

### **Discussion Item 3: Welfare Support for Hong Kong Elderly Persons residing in the Greater Bay Area**

5. Members were invited to provide comments on the paper. The Chairman and Members raised the following questions/offered the following comments –

- (a) Consideration might be given to provide a regular travelling subsidy to family members for their visits to the elderly persons residing in the two participating residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) under the Pilot Scheme.
- (b) There were a number of Hong Kong elderly persons who had chosen to retire on the Mainland, including the Greater Bay Area.

The Government could consider formulating further facilitating measures to support them.

- (c) The availability of medical support services for the elderly persons joining the Pilot Scheme or those retiring in Guangdong.

6. The Government gave the following response –

- (a) In respect of the Pilot Scheme, the Government announced in 2017 the extension of the Scheme for three years, and would continue to monitor its implementation with a view to determining the way forward.
- (b) The Pilot Scheme provided an additional option for the elderly persons waiting for subsidised care-and-attention places in Hong Kong to choose to reside in the two participating RCHEs. Elderly persons were offered full subsidy on the home accommodation fees. The Government also required the two participating RCHEs to provide medical support services.
- (c) On medical support services for the elderly persons retiring in Guangdong, eligible Hong Kong elders could use health care vouchers to pay for the fees of outpatient services provided by designated clinics/departments of the University of Hong Kong – Shenzhen Hospital.

SWAC Secretariat  
August 2019