

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

**23 November 2021 (Tuesday) at 10:00 a.m.
Conference Room 4, G/F, Central Government Offices**

Present

Mr Lester Garson HUANG (Chairman)
Ms Sylvia CHAN May-kuen
Dr Gary CHENG Faat-ting
Miss CHEUNG Sze-wing
Mr CHUGH, Manohar Thakurdas
Mr Andy HO Wing-cheong
Mr Anthony KWAN Wai-ming
Mr Frederick LAI Wing-hoi
Dr LAM James Joseph
Mr Armstrong LEE Hon-cheung
Ms Anthea LO Wing-sze
Dr Gary NG Ka-wing
Prof Petrus NG Yat-nam
Ms Cindy PUN Siu-fung
Dr Ricky SZETO Wing-fu
Dr Janice TSANG Wing-hang
Ms Eva WONG Ching-hung
Mr Anthony WONG Kin-wai
Ms Amarantha YIP Yun-wan

In Attendance

Labour and Welfare Bureau

Ms Alice LAU Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Mr David LEUNG Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 1

Ms Polly KWOK	Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 2
Ms Manda CHAN (For discussion item 2 only)	Commissioner for Rehabilitation
Mr Andrew TSANG	Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 1
Ms Linda LAW (For discussion item 1 only)	Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 3
Mr Michael LI	Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 1C (Secretary to SWAC)
Mr Adams WONG	Executive Officer (Welfare) 1A
Ms Jessica LI	Executive Officer (Welfare) 1B

Social Welfare Department

Mr Gordon LEUNG	Director of Social Welfare
Mr TAN Tick-ye (For discussion item 1 only)	Assistant Director (Elderly)

Absent with apologies

Dr BAI Xue
 Dr PAN Pey-chyou
 Prof Frances WONG Kam-yuet

Discussion Item 1: Follow-up Work on the Elderly Services Programme Plan

Members were invited to give comments on the paper. Members raised the following comments –

Availability of premises

- (a) The Government might consider utilising revitalised industrial buildings and vacant school premises to increase the supply of premises for the provision of elderly services.
- (b) The Government should integrate multiple welfare services in the form of a welfare complex, where possible, with a view to achieving economies of scale.
- (c) There was an enquiry on the progress of implementing the initiative of providing 5% of the total domestic gross floor area for welfare purposes in suitable public housing projects, as announced in the 2020 Policy Address.

Manpower situation

- (d) The Government might consider setting up a training school specifically for the care industry, or engaging relevant talents from the Greater Bay Area.
- (e) In addition to the existing initiatives, the Government might explore the provision of new and innovative roles for engaging young people and the “young old” to join the elderly services sector.

Use of technology

- (f) The Government might consider providing basic training to elderly persons in using technology products.
- (g) The wider adoption of technology in the care industry might facilitate the work of frontline staff, thereby attracting more people to join the industry.
- (h) There was an enquiry on the Government’s plan to incorporate the use of technology products in its provision of services.

Other views

- (i) Other government departments should play a role in addressing the issues of the ageing population, including the introduction of tax incentives and cultivation of the culture of care for the elderly

among the youth through education.

- (j) The Government might consider mobilising the “young old” to volunteer in serving elderly persons. On the other hand, the Government should also prepare the “young old” for retirement life by promoting financial planning among this age group.
- (k) Employers might facilitate their employees in taking care of their senior family members by implementing family-friendly policies.

2. The Government gave the following response –

- (a) The Government had been adopting a multi-pronged approach to identifying suitable sites or premises for provision of welfare facilities, such as converting vacant school premises for the provision of elderly and rehabilitation services facilities. As regards welfare complexes, SWD’s “Multi-welfare Services Complex” in Kwu Tung North would provide, among others, 1 750 residential care places for the elderly.
- (b) The initiative of providing 5% of the total domestic gross floor area for welfare purposes in public housing projects would apply to projects to be completed from 2026-27 onwards. The relevant bureaux and departments would take forward the initiative to provide more welfare premises for meeting medium to long-term needs of the community without compromising the progress of public housing developments.
- (c) The Government had implemented various measures to increase the manpower supply in the welfare sector. SWD funded a significant number of enrolled nurse training places. Trainees had to sign an undertaking to work in the welfare sector for two consecutive years upon graduation. The Department also rolled out enhancement measures for the Navigation Scheme for Young Persons in Care Services. The Government would continue to explore measures for enhancing the supply of manpower in the welfare sector.
- (d) On the use of technology in elderly services, the Government was consolidating the experience gained from the Innovation and Technology Fund for Application in Elderly and Rehabilitation Care thus far, with a view to considering how relevant technology products would be applied to the provision of elderly services in

future. In addition, the Government funded 1 000 time-limited jobs for subvented organisations to hire technology ambassadors to assist staff and users of the concerned service units in, for example, launching remote services and organising online trainings.

3. The Chairman highlighted the importance of positive ageing with dignity and empowerment of elderly persons, and invited the Government to consider Members' views.

Discussion Item 2: Welfare-related Initiatives in the Chief Executive's 2021 Policy Address

4. Members were invited to give comments on the paper. Members raised the following comments –

- (a) The Government should introduce pro-employment measures under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme, and should also put in place measures to prevent abuse of the Scheme.
- (b) Public education should be arranged to complement the proposed mandatory mechanism for reporting child abuse cases.
- (c) The Government should capitalise on the opportunities brought about by the Greater Bay Area development in enhancing welfare services for Hong Kong people.
- (d) The proposed incorporation of the planning ratios of rehabilitation services into the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines underlined the importance attached by the Government to rehabilitation services. When developing the Northern Metropolis, the demand for rehabilitation services should be taken into account.
- (e) There was an enquiry on measures to help the pre-school children on the waiting list for On-site Pre-school Rehabilitation Services (OPRS).

5. The Government gave the following response –

- (a) The Government had launched the Pilot Project on Tier 1 Support Services in Kindergartens/Kindergarten-cum-Child Care Centres

(KGs/KG-cum-CCCs) in the 2020/21 school year in about 80 KGs/KG-cum-CCCs participating in OPRS to provide early intervention services for children awaiting assessment by the Child Assessment Centres (CACs) of the Department of Health or assessed by CACs to have borderline developmental problems. Training subsidy was also available for children waitlisted for subvented rehabilitation services to acquire self-financing services.

- (b) Ageing population and changing family structure posed challenges to the provision of welfare services, whereas premises and manpower were the key constraints. To meet the challenge, the Government would foster inter-departmental coordination and cross-professional collaboration.

6. The Chairman observed that social welfare had been an important programme area on the Government's agenda, which accounted for a large portion of government recurrent expenditure. He encouraged Members to continue to offer their valuable advice to the Government.

SWAC Secretariat
December 2021