

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

**24 February 2012 (Friday) at 2:30 p.m.
Conference Room 3, G/F, Central Government Offices**

Present

Professor CHAN Yuk-shee	(Chairman)
Mr Bunny CHAN Chung-bun	
Ms Maggie CHAN Mei-kit	
Ms Anna May CHAN Mei-lan	
Mr David FONG Man-hung	
Dr IP Yan-ming	
Ms LAM Shuk-yee	
Mr Christopher LAW Kin-chung	
Mr Hansen LEE Hong-kong	
Mr Edmond LEE Man-bun	
Dr LEUNG Wing-tai	
Mrs Agnes MAK TANG Pik-yee	
Mr Joseph MAN Hung-yee	
Mr Jovy SUEN Leung-kwong	
Mrs Teresa TSIEN WONG Bik-kwan	
Mr Ben WONG Chung-mat	
Mr Michael WONG Yick-kam	
Miss Helen KWAN	(Secretary)

In Attendance

Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB)

Mr Paul TANG	Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare (PSLW)
Ms Irene YOUNG	Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)2 (DS(W)2)
Ms Wendy LEUNG	Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)1 (PAS(W)1)
Mrs Angelina CHEUNG	Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)3 (PAS(W)3) – <i>For Item 1</i>

Mr Stephen SUI Commissioner for Rehabilitation (C for R)
– *For Item 1*

Mr Franco KWOK Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour
and Welfare (Poverty) (PAS(P))
– *For Item 2*

Social Welfare Department (SWD)

Mr Patrick NIP Director of Social Welfare (DSW)

Mr FUNG Pak-yan Deputy Director (Administration)
(DD(A))

Ms LUNG Siu-kit Assistant Director (Social Security)
(AD(SS))

Mr Denys CHAN Chief Social Security Officer (Social
Security) 4 (C(SS)4)

} *For Item 2*

Absent with apologies

Dr Dorothy CHAN YUEN Tak-fai

Dr LAM Ching-choi

Ms Theresa TAO Chee-ying

Dr Sandra TSANG Kit-man

Mr Charles YANG Chuen-liang

**Discussion Item 1: Briefing on the welfare-related initiatives in the
2012-13 Budget
[SWAC Paper No. 01/2012]**

Members were briefed on the welfare-related initiatives in the
2012-13 Budget.

2. Members asked the following questions/ offered the following
comments –

- (a) The Administration should make use of the retrofitting programme to upgrade the barrier-free access and facilities in subvented elderly homes and centres;
- (b) The Administration should provide more support to the family carers of demented elders, such as enhancing respite services to relieve their pressure. Public education programmes should also be organised to enhance the community's understanding of mental health problems, as a preventive measure to reduce social problems;
- (c) Community care services (CCS) voucher might introduce vicious competition among service operators and put small organisations in a disadvantaged position. The Administration should consider setting standard prices for various services in the first phase of the pilot scheme;
- (d) More resources were allocated to CCS and to supporting demented and infirm elders than to the provision of residential care services (RCS) places. The Administration should also consider upgrading private residential care places; and
- (e) More resources should be allocated to assist social workers in the aspect of information technology, such as helping them provide services and information through the internet.

3. The Administration gave the following response –

- (a) Under the existing building legislation, all newly constructed or substantially altered buildings were required by law to upgrade their barrier-free access and facilities to the latest design standards;
- (b) The Administration had been supporting carers through the provision of day and residential respite services at day care centres and residential care homes for the elderly respectively. With effect from 1 March 2012, casual vacancies in the bought places of private homes would also be used for respite purpose. In addition, training and educational programmes about elderly care had been provided for family carers through elderly centres all over the territory;

- (c) All CCS service providers were welcome to submit proposals for the pilot scheme as long as they could meet SWD's requirements. Small organisations might leverage on their expertise in special service areas and their flexibility in service provision. The CCS voucher scheme would encourage different types of service providers to join the market, with a view to promoting further development of CCS. SWD would closely monitor the service quality;
- (d) The limited supply of sites and manpower was the main constraint for RCS, and buying private places was a more flexible way to increase RCS provision. Instead of buying more EA2 places under the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme, SWD would encourage them to upgrade to EA1 level so as to enhance their service quality; and
- (e) Phase one of the Social Welfare Development Fund had provided funding for projects aiming at enhancing information technologies in non-governmental organisations.

Discussion Item 2: Employment assistance programmes under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme

- 4. Members were briefed on the employment assistance programmes under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme.
- 5. Members asked the following questions/ offered the following comments –
 - (a) Whether the Administration had analysed the reasons for the low employment rate of CSSA recipients who participated in the Integrated Employment Assistance Scheme;
 - (b) The Administration should collaborate with organisations providing training for the healthcare sector, such as the Hospital Authority, to run training courses for CSSA recipients so that they could find employment in the sector and help ease its manpower shortage;

- (c) The effectiveness of these employment assistance programmes could be better evaluated with the help of detailed statistics; and
- (d) Those CSSA recipients who were unable to find jobs because of psychiatric and emotional problems should be identified for special assistance.

6. The Administration gave the following response –

- (a) While the employment rate would be affected by the availability of jobs in the market, the fact that 45% of the recipients concerned were between the ages of 50 to 59 explained their difficulty in securing employment. SWD would continue to provide relevant market information and training to participants of the employment assistance programmes to assist them in securing employment;
- (b) The Administration would consider collaborating with healthcare organisations as it would benefit both the trainee and the healthcare sector;
- (c) Relevant statistics would be captured in SWD's Computerised Social Security System for analysis; and
- (d) Unemployed CSSA recipients who had mental or other personality problems would generally be exempted from the employment assistance programmes.

SWAC Secretariat
September 2012