

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

**27 January 2016 (Wednesday) at 10:30 a.m.
Conference Room 2, 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 Laurence HO Hoi-ming	
Mr IP Wai-ming	
Mr Laurence LI Lu-jen	
Ms Anthea LO Wing-sze	
Dr Annissa LUI Wai-ling	
Mr Joseph MAN Hung-yee	
Mr Daryl NG Win-kong	
Ms Cindy PUN Siu-fung	
Dr Janice TSANG Wing-hang	
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)
Mr David LEUNG	Acting Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)1 / Commissioner for Rehabilitation (DS(W)1 (Ag) / C for R)
Mr Donald CHEN	Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)2 (DS(W)2)

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)

Absent with apologies

Mr David FONG Man-hung
Ms Christina Maisenne LEE
Mr Edmond LEE Man-bun
Mr Hansen LEE Hong-kong
Prof Steven NGAI Sek-yum
Ms Theresa TAO Chee-ying

**Discussion Item 1: Briefing on the welfare-related initiatives in the
2016 Policy Address
(SWAC Paper No. 01/2016)**

Members were briefed on the welfare-related initiatives in the 2016 Policy Address. Members asked the following questions/offered the following comments –

- (a) More time should be allowed for discussion on the issue of retirement protection in the community given its far-reaching impact on the ageing population in Hong Kong. This subject warranted a holistic examination and could not be isolated from tax considerations. The resource implications on retirement protection would be tremendous and the younger generation would not be able to afford it;
- (b) Whether the rules under the Special Scheme on Privately Owned Sites for Welfare Uses (Special Scheme) could be further relaxed to leave more room for non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to cope with the service needs prevailing at the time of project completion;
- (c) There should be more efforts to encourage women employment and empowerment;

- (d) Flexibility should be exercised in determining the planning ratio for elderly facilities and the proportion of subvented and self-financing services;
- (e) Incentives should be provided for the use of the services operated by private residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs). “Co-payment” mode could be considered for the operation of RCHEs so that the next generation of elderly persons could choose to pay extra for better services;
- (f) The effectiveness of living allowance for carers should be monitored and evaluated;
- (g) The Government could promote the concept of healthy ageing through District Councils (DCs) and NGOs with a view to achieving collaboration between the medical and welfare sectors;
- (h) The Hong Kong Council of Social Service was exploring the feasibility of meeting front-line care manpower needs with machines and using technologies / mobile applications to alleviate the burden of carers. The service quality of private RCHEs needed to be continuously improved to gain public confidence;
- (i) It was important to consider how to retain front-line care workers and paramedical professionals in the welfare sector. Clear career prospects had to be demonstrated to these parties, including the trainees under the Navigation Scheme for Young Persons in Care Services. A talent list for elderly-related industries should be drawn up to enhance the attractiveness of elderly care services typically perceived as less desirable at present;
- (j) Non-professional workers could be empowered to take care of elderly persons, persons with disabilities, patients and their family members;
- (k) Sufficient training should be provided for front-line care staff to enhance their empathy with the service users;

- (l) The implementation of 15-year free education would pose a challenge to the extended hours service of child care centres and therefore more support for these centres was required; and
- (m) The removal of the reference to “100% loss of earning capacity” in the Medical Assessment Form for the disability allowance could address the inconsistency in medical assessments in respect of a person’s conditions.

2. The Government gave the following response –

- (a) The Commission on Poverty was conducting a public consultation on retirement protection and a session would be arranged for SWAC to discuss the subject. SWAC members were also welcome to submit their comments in written form;
- (b) LWB/SWD would continue to exchange views with the applicant NGOs on issues of common interest via information exchange sessions of the Special Scheme;
- (c) Issues related to the planning of elderly services would be explored under the Elderly Services Programme Plan;
- (d) The “voucher” mode being tested was aimed to promote consumer choice on the part of the elderly persons and their family members and it also allowed “co-payment” and “top up payment” from those elderly persons who could afford to pay for part of the services;
- (e) The Government had commissioned an academic of the University of Hong Kong to conduct an evaluation on the effectiveness of living allowance for carers;
- (f) On age-friendly community, LWB/SWD would work out with the Elderly Commission the details of the funding support for DCs and provide sufficient flexibility;
- (g) A balance had to be struck between retaining front-line staff of care services and providing opportunities for career advancement. Consideration would be given to deploying non-professionals to help relieve the workload of

professional staff ;

- (h) SWD was planning to reorganise its Licensing Office of Residential Care Homes for the Elderly and Licensing Office of Residential Care Homes for Persons with Disabilities in 2016-17. SWD would step up inspection and prosecution of non-compliant RCHEs; set up a dedicated complaint handling team; review the licensing system, enforcement effectiveness and penalties for non-compliance; explore ways to achieve community-level monitoring; continue to strengthen the training for private RCHE managers and staff; and enhance the transparency of service information of RCHEs. Empathy with and respect for the elderly were of paramount importance; and
- (i) SWD would continue to keep in view the performance and training requirements of Health Workers and Personal Care Workers to maintain their service standard.

SWAC Secretariat
November 2016