

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

**29 October 2015 (Thursday) at 3:00 p.m.
Conference Room 6, G/F, Central Government Offices**

Present

Mr Vincent LO Wing-sang	(Chairman)
Ms Anna May CHAN Mei-lan	
Dr Crystal CHENG Lai-ling	
Mr Laurence HO Hoi-ming	
Mr IP Wai-ming	
Ms Christina Maisenne LEE	
Mr Hansen LEE Hong-kong	
Dr Annissa LUI Wai-ling	
Mr Joseph MAN Hung-yee	
Mr Daryl NG Win-kong	
Prof Steven NGAI Sek-yum	
Mr Jovy SUEN Leung-kwong	
Ms Theresa TAO Chee-ying	
Dr Sandra TSANG Kit-man	
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)
Ms Doris CHEUNG	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)

Absent with apologies

Dr Roy CHUNG Chi-ping

Mr David FONG Man-hung

Mr Edmond LEE Man-bun

Mr Laurence LI Lu-jen

Mr Michael WONG Yick-kam

Dr Loretta YAM Yin-chun

Mr Charles YANG Chuen-liang

**Discussion Item 1: 2016-17 Welfare Services Suggestions and Priorities
(SWAC Paper No. 06/2015)**

Members were invited to provide comments on the paper on “2016-17 Welfare Services Suggestions and Priorities”. Members asked the following questions/offered the following comments –

- (a) The method for computing the subventions under the Lump Sum Grant Subvention System (LSGSS) were devised back in 2000 and could not reflect the changes in circumstances over time. Although additional recurrent expenditure was allocated in 2014-15 for enhancements to the LSGSS, it was still inadequate;
- (b) Whether there would be measures to expedite the delivery of service places under the Special Scheme on Privately Owned Sites for Welfare Uses (Special Scheme) and whether there would be further funding injections into the Lotteries Fund for the Special Scheme;
- (c) Whether the Master in Physiotherapy/Master in Occupational Therapy programmes of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University were sufficient to meet the needs of the welfare sector, and whether there would be any synergy between the Navigation Scheme for Young Persons in Care Services (Navigation Scheme) and the Enrolled Nurse stream;

- (d) Under the current mechanism, it was practicable to import labour if there was a genuine need, whereas over-reliance on labour importation should be avoided;
- (e) The effectiveness of the “voucher mode” in providing residential and community care services would hinge on the knowledge of the service users;
- (f) The service needs arising from ageing of persons with intellectual disabilities should be addressed and more incentives should be provided to encourage persons with disabilities (PWDs) to seek employment;
- (g) The Government should put in place a policy for the early identification of and provision of support for children with special educational needs;
- (h) Youth employment would require the coordination of education and community support. More resources should be devoted to vocational training to equip young people with work-related skills;
- (i) The Government could consider formulating a charter to prompt more companies and organisations to implement family-friendly measures in the workplace;
- (j) Whether Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) was sustainable with an increasing proportion of elderly persons among the recipients;
- (k) The corporations under the Caring Company Scheme should be encouraged to employ people who were receiving CSSA; and
- (l) Whether the short-term food assistance service was coordinated with other Government initiatives to help the people in need.

2. The Government gave the following response –

- (a) It was estimated that the projects of the Special Scheme would take 5 to 10 years or more to complete, depending on the site conditions and the need to seek planning permissions and/or

lease modifications etc.;

- (b) In view of the rapidly ageing population, the Elderly Commission was preparing the Elderly Services Programme Plan, in consultation with stakeholders and other interested parties;
- (c) On manpower shortage, the Food and Health Bureau was conducting a Strategic Review on Healthcare Manpower Planning and Professional Development. The Government understood that labour importation could only cope with the short-term demand. In view of the positive response to the “first-hire-then-train” pilot scheme on care services in the elderly sector, SWD had introduced the Navigation Scheme and extended it to the rehabilitation sector. Consideration was being given to creating a career ladder for those participants within the welfare sector;
- (d) The community’s views on the first phase of the Pilot Scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly were varied. More flexibility would be built into the second phase of the Scheme to better suit the requirements of the elders;
- (e) A working group under the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee (RAC) was preparing a report on the ageing of persons with intellectual disabilities, and would submit it to RAC for deliberation in due course;
- (f) The Government would continue to proactively assist PWDs in getting prepared for employment and taking up productive jobs in society on the basis of their abilities;
- (g) The Government was taking forward the Pilot Scheme on On-site Pre-school Rehabilitation Services in kindergartens or kindergarten-cum-child care centres. About 3 000 places would be provided under the Pilot Scheme starting from November 2015;
- (h) LWB would discuss with the Labour Department ways to facilitate youth employment and the possibility of leveraging on the existing outreaching services. The Navigation Scheme was not the sole solution to attract young people to join the care service. SWD had been in discussion with relevant parties on the incorporation of various job types of

the welfare sector into the Qualifications Framework;

- (i) The Government had been monitoring the CSSA statistics. A downward trend in recent years showed that people in Hong Kong were generally willing to take up employment if the economic situation was favourable;
- (j) The Government would soon launch the Low-income Working Family Allowance Scheme, which aimed at encouraging self-reliance through employment and easing inter-generational poverty. There was also a pilot incentive scheme under the Community Care Fund to further encourage able-bodied CSSA recipients to secure employment and ultimately leave the CSSA safety net; and
- (k) The short-term food assistance service was mainly operated by NGOs which would help identify problems and offer assistance, in addition to provision of food, by referring needy people to appropriate service units. The Integrated Family Service Centres were the first point of contact in most cases.

SWAC Secretariat
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