

**Minutes of the  
Social Welfare Advisory Committee (SWAC) Meeting  
held on 20 December 2024 at 3:00 p.m.  
in Conference Room 2, G/F, Central Government Offices**

**Present**

Dr KO Wing-man	(Chairman)
Ms HSU Siu-man	
Prof Patrick IP	
Dr Sanly KAM Shau-wan	
Mr Frederick LAI Wing-hoi	
Prof Petrus NG Yat-nam	
Mr Francis NGAI Wah-sing	
Dr PAN Pey-chyou	
Dr Chloe SUEN Yin-wah	
Miss SZE Lai-shan	
Dr Ricky SZETO Wing-fu	
Mr John WONG Chung	
Mr Barry WONG Man-sing	
Ms Wendy YUEN Miu-ling	

**In Attendance**

**Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB)**

Ms Alice LAU	Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Mr David LEUNG	Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 1
Mr CHONG Wing-wun	Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 2
Mr Fletch CHAN	Commissioner for Rehabilitation
Mr Tony YIP	Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 1

Miss Amy LAI                      Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare  
(Welfare) 1B  
(Secretary to SWAC)

Mr Adams WONG                  Executive Officer (Welfare) 1A

Miss Sharon LAM                Executive Officer (Welfare) 1B

Miss Clare KWOK                Executive Officer (Welfare) 1B (Des.)

Social Welfare Department (SWD)

Miss Charmaine LEE            Director of Social Welfare

**Absent with apologies**

Miss CHOW Tsz-ki

Ms Alice LAU Oi-size

Ms Anthea LEE Shuk-wai

Dr Wingco LO Kam-wing

Ms Rebecca TSAI Ching-yu

Prof Hector TSANG Wing-hong

Dr Rizwan ULLAH

Prof Frances WONG Kam-yuet

**Item 1:        Welfare-related Initiatives in the Chief Executive's 2024  
Policy Address  
(SWAC Paper No. 07/2024)**

2.        At the Chairman's invitation, the Government briefed Members on the paper. The Chairman then invited Members to offer comments.

3.        Noting that a wide variety of new measures covering different welfare aspects were introduced in the 2024 Policy Address, Members expressed great appreciation to the Government's effort, and raised the following suggestions / questions –

(a) Targeted Poverty Alleviation

*The Strive and Rise Programme*

- i. Taking into account the continuity of the Programme and long-term development of students, the Government should extend the time span of the programme. The Government might also consider providing more career-focused trainings to disadvantaged youth / youth with special education needs, along with providing more online resources to working youth.
- ii. Noting the difficulties in recruiting mentors for the Programme, the Government should consider recruiting university students and marshalling the resources of social centres when mentors were in shortage for running the Programme.

*Pilot Programme on Community Living Room (CLR)*

- iii. The Government should further bridge CLR with other social services and facilitate public-private partnership, developing CLR as a platform to offer occupants of subdivided units with employment opportunities, services referral and education support. In parallel, by public-private partnership, business sector could subsidise the purchase of furniture and household items.
- iv. The Government should expand the Programme to benefit more people in need.

*The School-based After-School Care Service Scheme*

- v. A Member enquired about the evaluation and assessment to measure the effectiveness of the Scheme and suggest the Government to consider providing more trainings to the volunteers of the Scheme.

(b) Care for the Elderly

- i. To attract the elderly to join the Residential Care Services Scheme in Guangdong (GDRCS Scheme), the Government should provide “revolving avenue” for the elderly who were unable to adapt to the environment of residential care homes (RCHes) in Guangdong to return to Hong Kong without

re-queueing on the Central Waiting List for Subsidised Long Term Care Services (CWL). The Government may also consider rendering more support to elderly ageing in place in the Greater Bay Area (GBA).

- ii. To motivate the elderly to subscribe to the GDRCS Scheme and for their better adaptation, the Government might cooperate with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in providing intermediary services between the elderly and their families in Hong Kong.
- iii. The Government should enhance confidence of the elderly in the healthcare and residential care services in GBA through proper monitoring of the participating RCHEs and by demonstrating their use of advanced technologies in various services.

(c) Children and Youth Services

- i. Currently, Children and Youth Centres, Integrated Children and Youth Services Centres and Community Support Service Scheme were delivering different forms of centre-based services. The Government should engage more centres to capitalise on their resources and strengthen the services.
- ii. The Government should provide more training, in particular, caring and continuous education, to child care workers / supervisors, parents and children and care teams.

(d) Support Carers

- i. The Government should increase the quotas of respite services and strengthen various types of subsidised community care and support services so as to better support carers of the elderly and persons with disabilities.
- ii. With respect to the “Scheme on Living Allowance for Carers of Elderly Persons from Low-income Families”, the Government should consider increasing the subsidies as well as expanding the scope of the scheme to carers who were also recipients of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance.

- iii. The Government should recruit more volunteers and provide them with more training, so as to provide more professional services and to reduce the burden on the caregivers of people with dementia as they incurred significant expenditures on care.

(e) Support Persons with Disabilities

- i. In terms of employment of persons with disabilities, the Government should enhance the cooperation with the business sector to encourage people with disabilities to integrate into the community.
- ii. In view that most workplaces were less user-friendly to the disabled, the Government should consider setting up a special programme to subsidise businesses to improve their working facilities and review such programme as appropriate.
- iii. The Government should set up a dedicated hotline for business sector interested in recruiting persons with disabilities to facilitate the accessibility of relevant information.
- iv. It is common to see persons with disabilities to encounter difficulties in resettlement. The Government should explore the possibility in engaging them to join new industries and providing them with targeted training, such as enhancing and renewing sheltered workshops, so as to provide a more sustainable and conducive training environment.
- v. Noting that newly established social enterprises and NGOs might lack experience in providing relevant rehabilitation services and striking a balance between maintaining basic profitability and service delivery, the Government should provide more assistance to these NGOs.

(f) Others

- i. To meet the changing demands, the Government should proactively review the current welfare planning so as to

design a more forward-looking and flexible planning social welfare mechanism.

- ii. Given NGOs may require suitable venues to provide welfare services, the Government should consider mobilising the education sector in providing welfare services by making full use of campuses as operational venues, and recruiting students as volunteers.
  - iii. Given that there were a number of welfare-related funding schemes, the Government should consider establishing a one-stop website to facilitate NGOs or interested parties to identify and apply for the suitable funding schemes.
  - iv. The Government should enhance the management capabilities of NGOs and their board members to ensure their proper management and economic sustainability.
  - v. The Government should explore ways to solve the mismatch in employment opportunities for youth. A network of employers engaging in the social welfare programmes / schemes should be formed.
  - vi. The Government should pay attention to the development of Ethnic Minorities with policy support.
  - vii. In view of the declining fertility rate in Asia, the Government should make reference to other Asian countries to formulate the most suitable population policies.
  - viii. To release the women workforce, the Government may consider providing pick-up and drop-off services for school children.
4. The Government representatives thanked Members' views, and made the following responses –
- (a) Targeted Poverty Alleviation
    - i. Questionnaires were collected from participating students and their parents of the School-based After-School Care Service

Scheme in the 2023/24 school year and will be collected from participants of the 2024/25 school year as well. A comprehensive evaluation of the Scheme will be conducted in the 2025/26 school year.

- ii. Apart from addressing the immediate needs of the target households, CLR's could also serve as a platform to provide community resources including referrals of families in need to appropriate community services.
- iii. There have been collaboration among programmes or schemes. For example, mentees and graduates of the Strive and Rise Programme were recruited to provide homework guidance for children at CLR, leveraging on all accessible resources.

(b) Care for the Elderly

- i. To encourage eligible elderly to join the GDRCS Scheme, a 6-month trial stay was offered. During the trial period, if the elderly withdrew from joining the GDRCS Scheme, his/her original position on the CWL would be resumed. For the elderly who resided in public housing before the trial stay, units would be rearranged if they remained eligible and the letter of assurance had been signed.
- ii. In response to the Member's concern about the management issues and quality control of RCHEs in Guangdong, RCHEs operated by Mainland organisations must be rated four stars or above on the "List of Star-rated Senior Care Organisations" and recommended by the relevant Mainland civil affairs departments in order to be considered for inclusion in the GDRCS Scheme. Prior vetting and regular inspection would be conducted to ensure that the quality of the RCHEs concerned was up to standard.

(c) Children and Youth Services

- i. To enhance the quantity and quality of home-based child carers (HCCs) of the Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project, the incentive payment for HCCs had been increased along with enhanced structural trainings.

- ii. Under the School-based After-School Care Service Scheme, NGO operators would provide both community centre services on weekends and long holidays and after-school care services on weekdays.

(d) Support Carers

- i. The Government had expanded the respite network and increased service places for elderly persons and persons with disabilities.
- ii. Considering that some carers had hesitations to send the elderly / disabled to respite places due to unfamiliarity, SWD was working closely with these family members to help them understand more about the respite services.
- iii. The dedicated hotline for carer support 182 183 also provided appropriate assistance to carers, including matching elderly persons / persons with disabilities in need of respite services and providing transport subsidy for carers with financial difficulties to assist them in escorting elderly persons / persons with disabilities in need to respite service units.

(e) Support Persons with Disabilities

- i. On upgrading the work environment to accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities, entrepreneurs employing the disabled would receive a time-limited cash assistance to upgrade their facilities. In parallel, mentors who helped the rehabilitated persons to familiarise with the workplace would receive fixed cash assistance.
- ii. The Government is currently reviewing the possibilities to encourage persons with disabilities to engage in new industries, such as art and woodwork industries, according to their talents and interests. The Shine Skills Centre of Vocational Training Council Group was also offering training courses in electronic marketing, photographing, and club management training designated for rehabilitated youth.

- iii. With regards to engaging business sector to offer more welfare services and opportunities for the rehabilitated persons, the Government will organise the Caring Employer Award Ceremony this year to encourage the sharing of good management practices.
- iv. On some Members' enquiry about the care teams which provide support to rehabilitated person, LWB had dedicated training and funds in this regard. The Home and Youth Affairs Bureau was reviewing relevant policies.

(f) Others

- i. The suggestion of setting up a one-stop website for various funding schemes under the purview of different Bureaux/ Departments would be referred to the Digital Policy Office for consideration.
- ii. Current social welfare policies provided incentives for self-reliance. For instances, the School-based After-School Care Service Scheme, the Employment Programme for the Elderly and Middle-aged, the Re-employment Allowance Pilot Scheme and tailor-made training for the unemployed middle-aged delivered by Employees Retraining Board promoted long-term employment of working parents, elderly and middle-aged through offering them allowances and equipping them with work-related skills.

5. The Chairman appreciated the Government for implementing a series of welfare-related measures and initiatives in addressing various needs of the community. He also thanked Members for their views and invited the Government to consider Members' comments.

**SWAC Secretariat**  
**January 2025**