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Paper No. CB(2)995/03-04(01)

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8 January 2004

本函檔號 Our Ref.: (2) in SWAB 30/6

來函檔號 Your Ref.:

Dr Joe Leung  
Team Leader  
The Consultant Team  
Department of Social Work and Social Administration  
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Pokfulam Road  
Hong Kong

Dear Mr Leung

**Provision of Social Work Staff in  
Integrated Family Service Centre**

With the review of family services in Hong Kong conducted by your team nearing completion, we have the following pertinent question about the captioned subject. We have also noticed that a new service delivery mode of integrated family service center ("IFSC"), which comprises three components, namely the family resource unit, the family support unit and the family counseling unit, is proposed.

As you are aware, the Administration adopts the qualification benchmark system to provide a fair and transparent framework within which pay relativities between grades are determined. This system consists of three basic elements:

***(a) Pay for the job***

The rate for a job is assessed on the basis of its collective job weight (including skills and experience required, complexity, intensity of effort, and responsibility that relate to the content of particular jobs), working conditions and other relevant factors.

***(b) Qualifications***

The level of qualification required for a job is the minimum level considered necessary for the competent performance of the job. This is determined largely by the collective “weight” carried by the job.

***(c) Broadbanding***

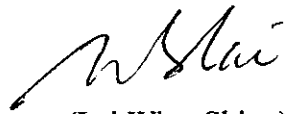
One common pay structure and common pay scale is generally applied to all grades whose job weights are, taken overall, broadly comparable and whose normal requirements for appointment (i.e. qualifications) are broadly similar. Such grades together form a qualification group. The common pay structure becomes the norm for the group.

Under the qualification benchmark system, each separate grade is assigned a job commensurate with the grade’s capability; job descriptions for various grades, especially in the same service setting, are worked out to delineate their different levels of responsibility, thereby explaining at what level a post is pitched. If the job weight of a grade has been increased to an extent that justifies the employment of staff with higher qualifications, it ought to be transferred to the relevant qualification group with a corresponding pay adjustment. This applies to the assistant social work officer (“ASWO”) grade and the social work assistant (“SWA”) grade working in the IFSCs, i.e. senior social work assistants (“SSWAs”) and SWAs, which come from the degree and related group and the higher diploma and diploma group respectively. In your review report, it is mentioned that “Based on the experience from the pilot projects (of IFSC), the allocation of staff between family counseling unit and family support unit can be flexible and dynamic, according to changing work demands and user requirements.” In this regard, I would like to remind you that it is necessary to post staff members in their element. Given their academic training, social workers at SWA grade are not supposed to be capable of doing ASWOs’ jobs. And to relegate ASWOs to the positions held by SSWAs/SWAs is not cost-effective.

At our recent meeting with the management of the Social Welfare Department, it was agreed that delineation of duties between ASWOs and SSWAs/SWAs was essential for the right posting of social workers. You may agree that the smooth operation of an organization counts, inter alia, on the internal relativities between various grade discharging the same nature of duty. To guarantee our service standard, the social workers (ASWOs, SSWAs/SWAs) must be accorded work within their capacity according to their respective job specifications. Therefore, I hope that you can closely work with the Social Welfare Department in formulating

the manning ratio of ASWOs and SSWAs/SWAs in IFSCs. If you need more information, please contact the undersigned at 9619 0666.

Yours sincerely



(Lai Wing Shing)

Chairman

c.c. Secretary for the Civil Service

Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food

Director of Social Welfare

Secretary General, Joint Secretariat for the Advisory Bodies on Civil Service and  
Conditions of Service

Chairman, Welfare Panel of the Legislative Council

Chairman, Social Welfare Advisory Committee