

**Progress Report on the Motion on
“Legislating for the provision of baby-sitting rooms”
Moved by Hon LEE Wing Tat
As amended by Hon Mrs Selina CHOW and
Dr Hon Joseph LEE Kwok-long
At the Legislative Council Meeting on 12 December 2007**

Purpose

This report sets out the actions taken by the Administration to follow up on the captioned motion. The Motion carried by the Legislative Council is enclosed at Annex 1.

To safeguard women’s right to breastfeed

2. The Administration recognizes the benefits of breastfeeding and has all along adopted a policy that supports breastfeeding.

To study introducing or amending legislation to make the provision of baby-sitting rooms and breastfeeding facilities a mandatory requirement for various new and existing public and private premises

3. The Administration is committed to promoting the provision of more breastfeeding rooms in both public and private premises. We shall continue to study all options conducive to this end, weighing carefully factors such as feasibility, cost-effectiveness, and resources impact for the community as a whole. Further to the motion debate, the Food and Health Bureau has studied the feasibility of providing more breastfeeding facilities at government premises, especially those open to public use. The findings are set out below.

Increase in Existing facilities

4. The number of breastfeeding facilities in public premises have been on the increase. We reported at the motion debate that there were 98 baby-sitting rooms in government premises that are accessible to the public for breastfeeding purposes. The figure has increased to 103 as of February 2008.

More New Facilities to come

5. More new breastfeeding rooms will be provided in the years to come. At least 39 breastfeeding/baby-sitting rooms will be provided in renovated or new government premises by 2012. These include those at libraries, swimming pools, sports centres, community halls, shopping centres at Housing Authority and Urban Renewal Authority premises, the new Customs headquarters buildings, as well as the new Civil Aviation Department building etc.

6. Breastfeeding facilities will be included in the Tamar Development projects, while the provision of such will be included for the detailed design study stage of the West Kowloon Cultural District project. The Ocean Park will also include such facilities in its re-development phase. Government departments have also indicated readiness to consider including breastfeeding facilities in their new offices/centres open to the public if there is such a need and it is technically feasible.

7. For those departments/authorities having difficulty in adding breastfeeding facilities to their existing premises due to space or technical constraints, their staff would be happy to provide a private room for mothers wishing to breastfeed if necessary.

Formulation of a design guideline for baby-sitting rooms

8. The Architectural Services Department, Buildings Department, Government Property Agency, Housing Department and Department of Health have worked together to improve on the existing design guideline for baby-sitting rooms as promulgated by Architectural Services Department in 2004 in the “Universal Accessibility – Best Practices and Guidelines”. The new guidelines will be publicized among both the public and private sectors in the latter half of 2008. We believe that the promulgation of the new guidelines will encourage and facilitate the provision of baby-sitting rooms in both public and private premises.

To enhance public awareness of the breastfeeding culture and to step up efforts to promote breastfeeding

9. The Administration is committed to promoting the merits of breastfeeding and helping mothers to breastfeed. The Department of Health and Hospital Authority will continue to promote breastfeeding to pregnant ladies during antenatal classes, provide more training to doctors and nurses on breastfeeding techniques to help nursing mothers with breastfeeding problems, distribute educational guidebooks and pamphlets, and assist mothers through a dedicated telephone hotline.

10. The Department of Health will enhance publicity efforts and is exploring opportunities for collaboration with NGOs to conduct promotional activities aimed at enhancing acceptance of breastfeeding by the community as well as encouraging private developers / venue managers to provide more breastfeeding facilities. We believe that such concerted efforts will further encourage breastfeeding, and help the culture of breastfeeding take root.

Food and Health Bureau
March 2008

c.c. Department of Health (Attn. Dr Shirley Leung)
Hospital Authority (Attn. Ms Karen Choy)

Motion on

Legislating for the provision of baby-sitting rooms

Moved by Hon LEE Wing-tat

As amended by Hon Mrs Selina CHOW and Dr Hon Joseph LEE Kok-long

“That, as the number of breastfeeding women in Hong Kong is on the rise, but government and public sector buildings, large shopping centres and restaurants in Hong Kong at present generally do not provide baby-sitting rooms, thus causing great inconvenience to women who are breastfeeding, and resulting in some mothers having to breastfeed in toilets, which may affect the health of the babies, this Council urges the Government to face up to **and safeguard** women’s right to breastfeed, and to study introducing or amending legislation to make the provision of baby-sitting rooms and breastfeeding facilities a mandatory requirement for new and existing government and public sector buildings, workplaces, immigration control points, parks, cultural and leisure facilities, public bathing beaches with lifeguards, stations of the mass transit systems, large shopping centres, department stores and large restaurants, and to enhance public awareness of the breastfeeding culture, thereby arousing public concern and support for the provision of baby-sitting rooms, and to step up efforts to promote breastfeeding so that more people will know the benefits of breastfeeding, thereby encouraging more organizations, businesses and employers to additionally provide baby-sitting rooms and breastfeeding facilities, so as to enable more women to breastfeed after childbirth and safeguard babies’ right to be breastfed.”

Underlined **Hon Mrs Selina CHOW's amendment**

Bold **Dr Hon Joseph LEE Kok-long's amendment**