

Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services

Long-term Social Welfare Planning

Purpose

The Social Welfare Advisory Committee (SWAC) conducted a study on long-term social welfare planning in Hong Kong and submitted a report entitled “Long-term Social Welfare Planning in Hong Kong” (the Report) to the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB) on 4 July 2011. This paper aims to brief Members on the Administration’s response to the Report.

Background

2. LWB commissioned SWAC to conduct a study on the long-term development and planning of social welfare in Hong Kong to ensure that social welfare policies and services in Hong Kong could provide timely and effective response to the changing welfare needs of society. In preparing this Report, SWAC has carefully considered the views collected during the consultation period and analysed the information and data pertinent to the demographic structure and change, social development and provision of welfare services in Hong Kong, so as to make recommendations to the Administration on the long-term welfare planning from a macro and holistic perspective. SWAC suggests several guiding principles which will provide a directional basis for social welfare planning and future welfare service development in Hong Kong. SWAC also recommends the formulation of a series of strategic directions having regard to the prevailing social circumstances and development, so as to establish a framework for the overall long-term social welfare planning in Hong Kong. By improving the existing planning arrangements, the enhanced mechanism proposed by SWAC will ensure consultation and planning for the future development and delivery of welfare services. The mechanism aims to collect views at three levels (namely, district, central, and advisory committees). The key recommendations of SWAC are at **Annex 1**.

The Administration's response to the Report

3. LWB attaches great importance to the Report. In the Report, SWAC recommends the adoption of a series of guiding principles and strategic directions (i.e. items (1) and (2) in the Annex 1) which will provide a directional basis and framework for the social welfare service development and long-term welfare planning in Hong Kong. LWB agrees that these guiding principles and strategic directions, besides being generally applicable to the overall social welfare planning from a macro perspective, may also be applied at the level of individual welfare service areas. We have been proactively implementing SWAC's recommendations during the process of welfare planning having regard to the actual circumstances.

4. We understand that some expect the study to cover the development and planning of individual welfare service areas. However, SWAC's study on long-term social welfare planning has looked into the subject from a macro perspective, instead of scrutinising the details of individual service areas and resource allocation. Also, some expect the Administration to resume a planning mechanism similar to the "Five-Year plan". In view of the rapidly changing social and economic environment in Hong Kong and the increasing complexity of social problems, the planning cycle should keep pace with development. We are of the view that the "Five-Year plan" mechanism lacked flexibility in terms of target-setting for, and monitoring of, service provision. It was unable to respond to our welfare needs in a timely manner and was discontinued in 1999. A more flexible approach to social welfare planning has been adopted by the Administration, such that timely and practicable responses to the latest social circumstances and welfare needs can be made according to available resources. An information paper at [Annex 2](#) presents the major initiatives of various social welfare policies and services of LWB since 2007, which reflects that the Administration has been targeting at Hong Kong's long-term development by examining carefully the service demand of society and implementing in a timely manner a variety of initiatives on a continuous or pilot basis.

5. Regarding the recommendation for improving the planning mechanism as set out in SWAC's Report (i.e. item (3) in the Annex 1), it can allow for full and interactive participation of the welfare sector and other stakeholders in in-depth discussion of social welfare issues, including individual service items, as well as facilitating communication and liaison between the sector and the Administration. We see greater flexibility, interactivity, dynamism and transparency in the enhanced

mechanism which enables the Administration to consult and plan for the future focus and priorities of welfare services in response to the latest social circumstances on an ongoing and regular (i.e. annual) basis. LWB agrees with and has accepted the mechanism. LWB has put it to trial run starting from this year, and will keep it under review for further improvements where appropriate. We must emphasise that under the planning mechanism recommended by SWAC, specific services and initiatives as well as their priorities are not short-term in nature or to be implemented for one year only. Rather, the services and initiatives are designed for long-term implementation on an ongoing basis that usually involve recurrent provision and resources.

Way forward

6. LWB agrees with and has accepted the various recommendations as set out in SWAC's Report. We hope that the welfare sector and relevant stakeholders can make reference to these recommendations when they plan and provide welfare services, and that they will participate actively in the above planning mechanism in future. As part of the planning process, the working meetings between the Social Welfare Department (SWD) and the Hong Kong Council of Social Service with its member organisations in June will continue to be held to facilitate discussion and exchanges on the priorities of welfare services for the coming year (the meeting of this year will be held on 19 June). We look forward to maintaining close collaboration with various stakeholders in facilitating the sustainable development of welfare policies and services in Hong Kong for building a caring society.

7. The Administration has all along been investing heavily in the development and provision of social welfare services, with sustained growth in expenditure. To facilitate the public, welfare sector and stakeholders to better understand the relevant circumstances, the Administration has prepared an information paper, namely "Hong Kong Social Welfare Service Expenditure" (**Annex 3**), for reference.

Advice sought

8. Members are invited to note the Administration's response to SWAC's Report.

Labour and Welfare Bureau
June 2012

Key recommendations of SWAC in the Report

- (1) SWAC recommends the adoption of the following guiding principles, which will facilitate social welfare planning in Hong Kong and provide a directional basis for future welfare service development –
 - (i) To adopt an inclusive and people-centred approach;
 - (ii) To encourage active participation by service users;
 - (iii) To explore the feasibility of cost-sharing by the financially capable;
 - (iv) To establish a sustainable social welfare system;
 - (v) To strengthen preventive and developmental services; and
 - (vi) To ensure that policy and services are forward-looking and flexible.

- (2) SWAC recommends the formulation of the following strategic directions, having regard to the prevailing social circumstances and development, so as to establish a framework for the overall long-term social welfare planning in Hong Kong –
 - (i) To promote social investment;
 - (ii) To encourage multi-partite partnership and collaboration;
 - (iii) To develop and promote social enterprise;
 - (iv) To enhance capacity and network building;
 - (v) To drive service delivery by innovation;
 - (vi) To adopt a family and district-based approach; and
 - (vii) To conduct research-based planning and assessment.

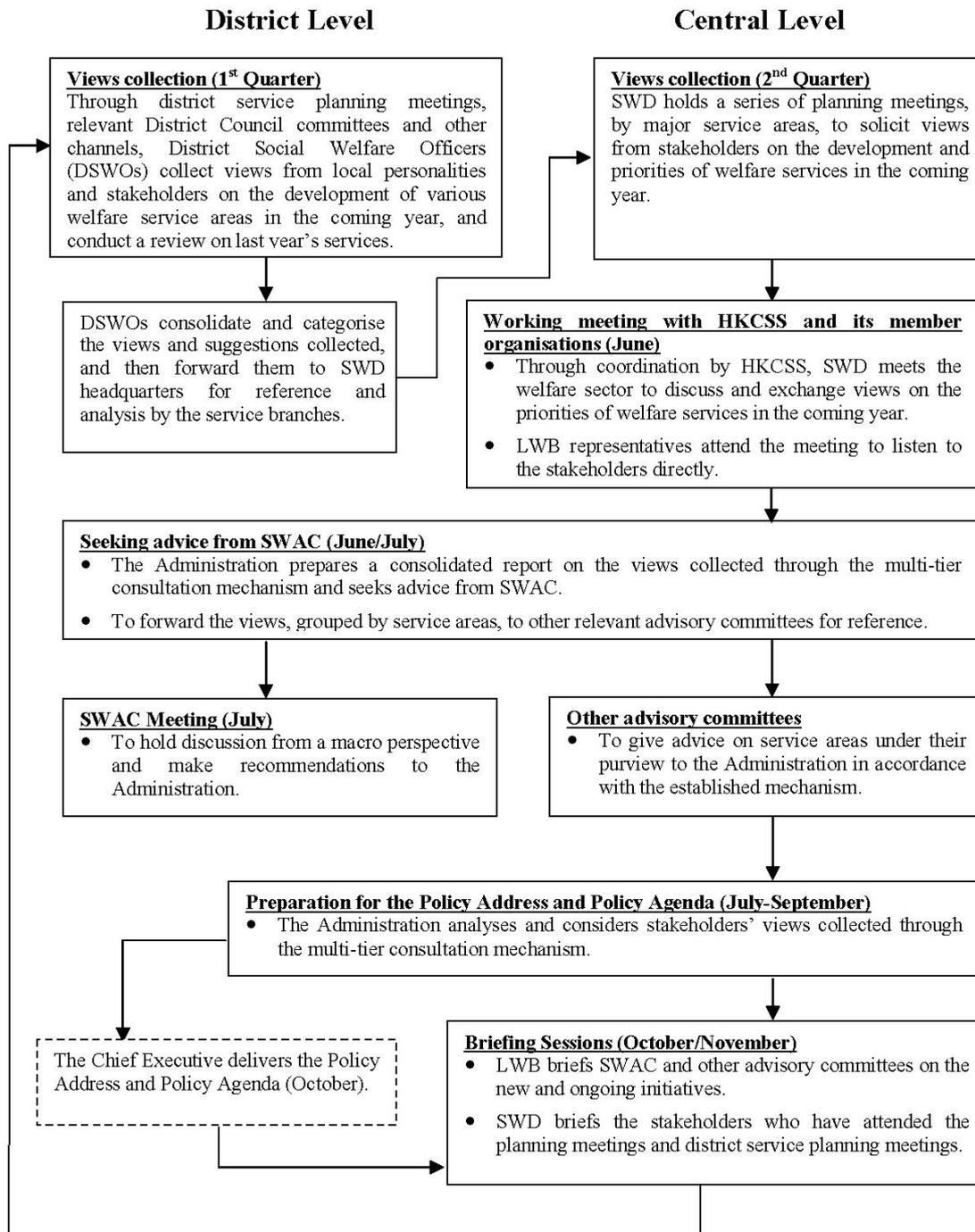
- (3) SWAC proposes to put in place a planning mechanism which dovetails with the delivery of the Policy Address by the Chief Executive in October. By improving the existing planning arrangements, the enhanced mechanism should allow for full and interactive participation of the welfare sector and other stakeholders, and ensure consultation and planning for the future development and delivery of welfare services on an ongoing and regular (i.e. annual) basis. The mechanism aims to collect views at three levels (namely, district, central, and advisory committees) –
 - (i) District level: SWAC proposes that in the first quarter of a calendar year, District Social Welfare Officers of SWD make use of district welfare planning meetings, relevant

District Council/ committee meetings and other suitable channels to solicit views of local personalities and stakeholders regarding the services delivered in the preceding year as well as the development of welfare service areas in the coming year, including the overall development direction for individual services, service provision at the district level, etc.;

- (ii) Central level: SWAC proposes that in the second quarter of the year, the SWD Headquarters should hold a series of planning meetings to examine the views collected at the district level, establish the direction for the development of each major service area, and invite comments from stakeholders regarding the development and priorities of welfare services for the coming year with a view to forging a consensus among all parties; and
- (iii) Advisory committees: LWB and SWD should prepare a consolidated report on the views collected through the multi-tier consultation and seek advice from SWAC. At the same time, the views grouped by service areas should be forwarded to the relevant advisory committees for reference.

There will be interface and co-ordination among various levels and the overall policy and service planning will be covered. The welfare sector and stakeholders will be able to make timely and practicable suggestions in response to the latest social circumstances and welfare needs, such that the aspirations of the community can be addressed more swiftly. Under this planning mechanism, they can also regularly review and examine how the existing social welfare initiatives and services can be enhanced, and make recommendations to improve the measures already implemented. The workflow is set out at **Appendix**.

Workflow of the Welfare Planning Mechanism proposed by SWAC



Major Initiatives of Various Social Welfare Policies and Services of Labour and Welfare Bureau

LWB and SWD are responsible for the formulation and implementation of social welfare policy in Hong Kong respectively. Social welfare services provided by the Administration are broadly divided into two major categories, namely direct financial assistance and welfare support services, covering social security, services for elders, family and child services, services for young people, rehabilitation and medical social services, services for offenders and women's interests.

2. The Administration has been striving to provide diversified welfare services on a holistic and integrated mode of service under the strategy of district-based and multipartite collaboration and a sustainable social security safety net to take care of the underprivileged and support the disadvantaged and the needy for the purpose of building a caring and cohesive society. The current social welfare policy and action agenda are set out by service areas as follows –

Social Security

3. Social security is a government responsibility. Assistance is provided mainly through non-contributory social security schemes, to help members of the community who are in need of financial or material assistance, as well as persons with severe disabilities and elders, meet basic and special needs. The system comprises the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme, the Social Security Allowance (SSA) Scheme (made up of Old Age Allowance (OAA) and Disability Allowance (DA)), the Criminal and Law Enforcement Injuries Compensation Scheme, the Traffic Accident Victims Assistance Scheme and Emergency Relief.

4. As at end-April 2012, there were 437 497 and 663 906 recipients under the CSSA and SSA Schemes respectively. Both Schemes have been improved from time to time. The enhancement initiatives introduced since 2007 include –

- In December 2007, raising the no-deduction limit of the CSSA monthly Disregarded Earnings (DE) from the first \$600 to the first \$800 of income, and relaxing the eligibility criterion for DE from being on CSSA for not less than three months to two months.

- In July 2008, providing a monthly Transport Supplement for all persons with severe disabilities aged between 12 and 64 who are recipients of CSSA or DA (the current rate being \$225).
- In January 2009, raising the monthly rates of Normal OAA and Higher OAA to \$1,000 across-the-board (the current rates being \$1,090).
- In February 2011, relaxing substantially the permissible limit of absence from Hong Kong for SSA recipients from 240 to 305 days; recipients only need to reside in Hong Kong for 60 days to receive a full-year payment of the allowance.
- In August 2011, increasing the standard rates for adult CSSA recipients aged below 60 who are either persons with disabilities or in ill-health to the same levels as those for elderly CSSA recipients in similar health conditions. The rates of the increase ranged from about 10% to 23%.
- In the 2011/12 school year, increasing the flat-rate grant for selected items of school-related expenses payable to all full-time students in primary and secondary schools who are on CSSA, by \$592 per student per year.
- In October 2011, extending the coverage of Community Living Supplement under the CSSA Scheme to include recipients who are either persons with disabilities at non-severe levels, persons in ill-health or elders, and who are not living in institutions; and doubling the amount of the monthly supplement from \$120 to \$250 concurrently (the current rate being \$265).
- In June 2012, introducing a monthly Residential Care Supplement for all CSSA recipients aged 60 or above who occupy non-subsidised residential care places, and all persons with disabilities and persons in ill-health who are on CSSA and occupy non-subsidised residential care places (the current rate being \$265).
- Making preparation for a new Guangdong (GD) Scheme under the SSA Scheme to provide full-year OAA for eligible Hong Kong elders who choose to reside in GD, without requiring them to come back to Hong Kong each year while they receive the

allowance. The aim is to launch the scheme as early as possible in the second half of 2013.

Elderly Care Services

5. “Ageing in place as the core, institutional care as back-up” is the fundamental principle of the Administration’s elderly care policy. “Ageing in place” is the wish of most elders. To help elders who have long-term care (LTC) needs age in place, the Administration has set up service centres/ units in the community to provide elders with day care services; and also commissioned service teams to provide them with home care services. Besides, the Administration is also committed to increasing the provision of subsidised residential care places and enhancing the service quality of residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs). The major initiatives for elderly care services and the enhanced initiatives for this year are as follows –

- Regarding subsidised community care services, the Administration will provide an additional 185 day care service places for the elderly in the three years starting from 2012-13, and increase Enhanced Home and Community Care Services places by 500 in the current financial year.
- The Chief Executive announced in the Policy Address last year that the Government would plan for a pilot scheme on community care service voucher for the elderly. Adopting the new funding mode of “money-follows-the-user”, the pilot scheme will enable elders to choose the service provider(s), type(s) of service and package which best suit their needs. As a result, service providers would have the incentive to enhance their service quality in response to the needs of users. We are mapping out the details of the pilot scheme. We expect to roll out the first phase in 2013.
- The Government has already set aside \$900 million under the Lotteries Fund to implement the Improvement Programme of Elderly Centres (IPEC) in phases starting from 2012-13. IPEC seeks to enhance the physical setting and facilities of some 250 elderly centres throughout the territory, with a view to providing a novel and modern ambiance to meet the needs of different elders. It also aims to attract more elders and their carers to use the service. Elderly centres may also purchase more sophisticated equipment and facilities (such as computers,

recreational and/ or fitness equipment, etc.), to encourage the elders to pursue lifelong learning and exercise more frequently, so as to promote “Active Ageing” and “Ageing in Place”.

- The Administration and the Hospital Authority (HA) jointly launched the Integrated Discharge Support Programme for Elderly Patients. Through collaboration of the medical and social sectors, the programme provides one-stop support services both for elderly patients who have just been discharged from hospitals and for their carers. The aim is to reduce the chance of unplanned hospital re-admission of the elders and enable them to continue to age in the community. As the response to the three-year pilot scheme is positive, the Administration has allocated additional resources since 2012 to regularise the service and extend it to all 18 districts. This would greatly increase the number of elders who could benefit from the programme.
- Since March 2011, SWD has implemented a three-year Pilot Scheme on Home Care Services for Frail Elders in six districts in Kowloon, to provide more comprehensive home care services for elders who are waiting for nursing home places. The Scheme has been extended to Eastern and Kwai Tsing Districts in March 2012.
- Various measures to help elders age in place, including the Home Environment Improvement Scheme for the Elderly and the District-based Scheme on Carer Training, have continued.
- As for residential care services, in view of the long waiting time for subsidised places, the Administration will strive to increase the supply. From now to 2014-15, more than 1 600 subsidised residential care places for the elderly will come into service. SWD has earmarked sites in ten development projects for the construction of new RCHEs.
- As regards improvement to the service quality of RCHEs, the Administration will upgrade over 600 EA2 places to higher-quality EA1 ones under the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme (EBPS) in 2012-13.
- The Administration has also earmarked additional recurrent funding of \$137 million, on top of the existing \$71 million, to increase the Dementia Supplement (DS) for subvented RCHEs,

RCHEs under EBPS, as well as day care centres/ units for the elderly (DE/ DCUs). In 2012-13, the DS in respect of each demented elder will be about \$40,000 for RCHEs and about \$24,000 for DE/ DCUs. DS enables these service units to employ additional professional staff (including occupational therapists, nurses, social workers, etc.) or purchase relevant professional services, so that they may enhance the training programmes and services for their demented service users, as well as the support for their carers.

6. Another focus of the elderly policy of the Administration is to promote a sense of worthiness among the elderly and “active ageing”. In this connection, the Administration has implemented the following initiatives –

- In early 2007, the Elder Academy Scheme was launched to encourage the elderly to pursue continuous learning. In the 2011/12 school year, a total of 113 elder academies are operating in primary schools, secondary schools and tertiary institutions all over the territory. The Administration also set up the Elder Academy Development Foundation in late 2009 to ensure that the Scheme would continue to develop.
- Since 2008, the Neighbourhood Active Ageing Project has been implemented to establish neighbourhood support networks for the elderly. A total of 75 district projects have been completed. A new phase of the NAAP commenced recently in April 2012. More than 60 district projects will be launched to promote harmonious family relationship and enhance neighbourhood support networks.
- In June 2010, “eElderly”, an internet portal, was set up specially for the elderly. With an elderly-friendly design, the portal provides one-stop information on elderly services and products, encourages the elderly to keep pace with the times and enriches their social life.
- SWD has continued to fund a variety of activities and support carers of elders under the Opportunities for the Elderly Project.

7. In addition, we are taking forward the Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme for the Elderly and Eligible Persons with Disabilities. The Scheme will enable elderly people aged 65 or above and CSSA recipients aged between 12 and 64 with 100% disabilities as well as recipients of Disability Allowance in the same age group to travel on the general Mass Transit Railway lines, franchised buses and ferries at any time at a concessionary fare of \$2 per trip. The aim is to encourage the elderly and eligible persons with disabilities to participate more in community activities, thus enriching social capital and developing a spirit of care and inclusiveness. Subject to funding approval and passage of the related subsidiary legislation, we will, according to the respective public transport operator's technical readiness, roll out the Scheme in a phased approach starting in around end-June 2012, so that the target beneficiaries can benefit from the Scheme as soon as possible.

Family and Child Welfare Services

8. To consolidate and reinforce the functions of families, the Administration provides various kinds of welfare services for the families in need so as to preserve and strengthen the family as a unit, to develop caring interpersonal relationships, to enable individuals and family members to prevent personal and family problems and deal with them when they arise, and to provide suitable services to meet needs that cannot be adequately met from within the family. There is an extensive network of 62 Integrated Family Service Centres (IFSCs) over the territory to provide a continuum of preventive, supportive and remedial services under the direction of "child-centred, family-focused and community-based". IFSCs in various districts provide a convenient and effective platform for the integration of single-parent families, new arrivals and ethnic minorities into the community. Subsequent to setting up an IFSC in Sham Shui Po District in December 2011, SWD will further set up three more IFSCs in Kowloon City and Yau Tsim Mong District, Kwun Tong District and Yuen Long District to further enhance its services. The total number of IFSCs in Hong Kong will rise to 65.

9. In parallel, to assist those families which are unable to take care of their children on a temporary or long-term basis on various grounds, and also to safeguard and foster the welfare of children, the Administration provides various kinds of day and residential child care services for needy families. The major enhanced initiatives are as follows –

- Since 2008, SWD has been implementing the Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project to provide more flexible day child care services for needy parents with children aged below six and to promote mutual help and care in the community at the same time. The Administration regularised and extended the service coverage to all 18 districts since October 2011. At present, at least 720 child care places are available over the territory. The service operators have the flexibility to provide additional home-based child care places on top of the minimum requirement set by SWD to meet the actual service demand.
- The Administration will also extend the Comprehensive Child Development Service to all 18 districts within 2012-13. The service makes use of Maternal and Child Health Centres and other service units as platforms to identify needy children and families who will be referred to the appropriate health and welfare service units to receive follow-up and support services. The service aims to identify and rectify at an early stage the developmental problems of children aged five and below so as to lay a solid foundation for their growth and avoid developmental problems in their future days lest they may affect their adolescence.

10. The Administration has adopted a zero tolerance approach for domestic violence. As domestic violence is attributable to complex social, family and personal factors, collaboration of various sectors is necessary in order to tackle domestic violence effectively. The Administration has been dealing with the problem through a three-pronged strategy, viz. the prevention of domestic violence, providing support to victims of domestic violence and provision of specialised services and crisis intervention. The Administration has also raised the public awareness of domestic violence and enhanced professional and supporting services through the promotion of inter-departmental and cross-sectoral collaboration. The major initiatives taken against domestic violence in recent years include –

- The evidence-based Batterer Intervention Programme developed in 2006-08 has become one of the regular counselling services of the Family and Child Protective Services Units (FCPSUs) of SWD. Under the Programme, SWD will further develop other appropriate counselling modes, such as batterer intervention programme for female abusers.

- As a result of the amendments to the former Domestic Violence Ordinance in 2007 and 2009 respectively, the civil remedies provided under the amended Ordinance have been extended to spouses, former spouses and their children; homosexual or heterosexual cohabitants, and parties to former cohabitation relationships and their children; and immediate and extended family members.
- In 2009-10, an additional recurrent funding of \$24.5 million was provided to increase the manpower of the FCPSUs of SWD to assist in processing domestic violence cases, and enhance the operation of Multi-purpose Crisis Intervention and Support Centres, Family Crisis Support Centres, Suicide Crisis Intervention Centres and Refuge Centres for Women, with a view to providing timely support for victims of domestic violence and families in need.
- The Victim Support Programme for Victims of Family Violence run by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) was launched since June 2010 to strengthen support to victims of domestic violence (including those involved in judicial proceedings). The Programme provides them with information on necessary legal proceedings, community and public services, as well as emotional support with a view to alleviating their sense of helplessness and anxieties.
- The evaluation of the Pilot Project on Child Fatality Review was completed in 2011. A standing mechanism was set up in the same year under SWD to identify patterns and trends of child death cases for the formulation of preventive strategies and promotion of cross-sectoral collaboration so as to prevent avoidable child deaths.

Services for Young People

11. The Administration provides a holistic and integrated mode of service to cater for the ever changing welfare needs of young people. SWD provides subventions for NGOs to offer young people a series of preventive, developmental and remedial welfare services with a view to cultivating a sense of responsibility among them for contribution to society. Our service strategy is to provide timely support through cross-sectoral and inter-departmental collaboration as well as early identification of needy youth (e.g. at-risk youths) to lead them back to the

right track. The major initiatives for the services for young people are as follows –

- 138 Integrated Children and Youth Services Centres across the territory provide diversified services for young people aged between 6 and 24.
- 16 District Youth Outreaching Social Work Teams are responsible for identifying and providing service for high-risk youths. To reach out to more youths at risk, we will set up three more youth outreaching teams, one each in Tseung Kwan O, Ma On Shan and Tung Chung, in the second half of 2012-13. With the additional teams, we can counsel them and refer them to other mainstream services. This will incur additional annual funding estimated at \$12 million.
- Under the “One School Social Worker for Each Secondary School” policy implemented across the territory, school social workers will identify the problems of high-risk students at an early stage and help them solve their problems through counselling, service referral as well as preventive and developmental activities. In the 2011/12 school year, the total number of school social workers will increase from 482 to 578 to help anti-drug work.
- In view of the changing lifestyle and service needs of young people, SWD has commissioned three NGOs to each launch a three-year pilot cyber youth outreaching project starting from August 2011 with funding support from the Lotteries Fund. Under the projects, social workers will reach out to youths in need, particularly those identified as at-risk or hidden, through the internet for timely provision of support services. SWD has also commissioned the Hong Kong Jockey Club Centre for Suicide Research and Prevention of the University of Hong Kong to conduct an evaluative study to assess the feasibility, effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of the three pilot projects, and to make recommendations on the way forward. The study will be completed by the end of 2014.
- The Administration set up the \$300 million Child Development Fund (CDF) in 2008 to fund NGO projects which promote the longer-term personal development of children from a disadvantaged background, with a view to reducing

cross-generational poverty. So far, 40 projects have been rolled out in three batches, benefiting more than 4 400 children. Taking into account the experience of these projects, we will consider the long-term model of CDF for promoting child development in Hong Kong.

Rehabilitation and Medical Social Services

12. The overall objective of the rehabilitation policy in Hong Kong is to prevent disabilities; to help persons with disabilities develop their physical and mental capabilities and their ability to integrate into the community, as well as to build a barrier-free physical environment through a comprehensive range of effective measures. This is to ensure that persons with disabilities can participate in full and enjoy equal opportunities both in terms of their social life and personal growth. SWD has been striving to provide diversified rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities, including –

- In 2012-13 Budget, \$37.19 million is allocated for the provision of additional service places. Coupled with the recurrent allocation earmarked, a total of 627 residential places, 607 pre-school service places as well as 461 day training and vocational rehabilitation service places will come on stream in 2012-13.
- In recent years, SWD has been increasing the number of medical social workers from 349 in 2005-06 to 431 in 2012-13, a rise of 23.5%.
- SWD set up 16 District Support Centres for persons with disabilities to provide one-stop comprehensive and accessible services for persons with disabilities. Separately, the Lotteries Fund allocated \$163 million to SWD to launch a three-year pilot scheme in Kwun Tong, Tuen Mun, Wong Tai Sin and Kwai Tsing in March 2011 to provide home care services for persons with severe physical and intellectual disabilities who are waiting for subsidised residential care places.
- In 2008, SWD set up the Transitional Care and Support Centre for Tetraplegic Patients on a pilot basis, providing transitional residential, day training and residential respite care services for tetraplegic patients. As the services have proved to be effective, we will allocate an annual recurrent provision of \$10.09 million

starting from 2012-13 to regularise this service to provide continuous services for persons in need and help relieve the pressure of their carers.

- Under the “Enhancing Employment of People with Disabilities through Small Enterprise” Project (3E’s Project) implemented by SWD, assistance is provided to NGOs to set up small enterprises/businesses to create employment opportunities for persons with disabilities through payment of grants as seed money. As at March 2012, a total sum of around \$46 million has been granted under the 3E’s Project to support NGOs to set up 70 businesses of various natures, which have created over 770 employment opportunities tailor-made for persons with disabilities. In order to create more job opportunities for persons with disabilities, we have injected \$100 million into the 3E’s Project, and enhanced support for the small enterprises under the 3E’s Project, including extension of the funding period from a maximum of two to three years.
- Starting from 2012-13, SWD will provide subsidies to employers of persons with disabilities for procuring assistive devices and carrying out workplace modification works, thereby enabling employees with disabilities to work more efficiently. SWD will also provide a \$500 mentorship award as financial incentive, thereby encouraging employers to render workplace guidance to employees with disabilities and help them adapt to new jobs.
- In 2010, SWD allocated \$135 million to revamp the existing community support services and set up Integrated Community Centres for Mental Wellness (ICCMWs) in all 18 districts. Community support services ranging from prevention to risk management are provided to discharged mental patients, persons with suspected mental health problems, their families and carers as well residents living in the serving district. In 2011-12 and 2012-13, we continue to allocate additional provisions of \$39.37 million and \$8.54 million respectively to enhance the manpower of ICCMWs in order to dovetail with the HA’s “Case Management Programme” which provide suitable support for persons with severe mental illness living in the community. In other words, the total amount of resources allocated for ICCMWs will be over \$180 million in 2012-13.

13. As for residential care service, the major initiatives and enhanced initiatives for recent years are as follows –

- The Administration has consistently been allocating resources to increase the provision of residential care places in recent years. At present, there are 11 725 subvented residential care places. In 2012-13, we will allocate \$28.5 million to provide 200 additional places. Coupled with the allocation for recurrent expenditure already earmarked, a total of 627 additional places will come on stream in 2012-13. We have also earmarked future development sites for the construction of about 746 new places for residential care services in the coming four years (2013-14 to 2016-17). We will also continue to step up the effort in identifying suitable sites to provide more residential care places for persons with disabilities.
- The statutory licensing scheme for residential care homes for persons with disabilities (“RCHDs”) came into operation following the commencement of the Residential Care Homes (Persons with Disabilities) Ordinance and the Residential Care Homes (Persons with Disabilities) Regulation on 18 November 2011.
- As a complementary measure, SWD has, since October 2010, launched the Pilot Bought Place Scheme for Private Residential Care Homes for Persons with Disabilities (“BPS”) which aims to encourage private RCHDs to upgrade their service standards, increase the supply of subsidised residential care places so as to shorten the service waiting time, and help the market develop more service options. Under the pilot BPS, which will last for four years, up to about 300 places (costing \$70 million) will be purchased by phases.
- Furthermore, we have allocated \$39 million to introduce the Financial Assistance Scheme, subsidising private RCHDs to carry out improvement works for their compliance with the licensing requirements in building and fire safety.

Services for Offenders

14. SWD provides treatment for offenders through a social work approach, including probation service, the Community Service Orders (CSO) Scheme, the Community Support Service Scheme and residential training and aftercare service provided in the Tuen Mun Children and Juvenile Home, and helps them re-integrate into the community and lead a law-abiding life. The Administration will continue the community-based rehabilitation and residential services in tandem with a series of supervision and counseling schemes as well as academic, prevocational and social skill training, with a view to helping offenders start afresh and rise to challenges in life.

Women's Interests

15. The Administration has been committed to promoting women's well-being and interests and working closely with the Women's Commission (WoC) through a three-pronged strategy, viz. the provision of an enabling environment, empowerment of women and public education, to actively promote the development of services for women in Hong Kong so that they can acquire the status, rights and opportunities to which they are entitled. The Administration assists WoC to implement many major tasks, including –

- In 2009, \$20 million was allocated to expand the Capacity Building Mileage Programme (CBMP) launched by WoC since 2004 and provide fee remission for women in financial need with a view to encouraging women to pursue continuous learning and self-development as well as equipping them with a positive mindset and an enhanced inner strength. Starting from 2012-13, CBMP becomes a recurrent project with an annual Government funding of around \$8 million. New courses in English and Mandarin will be offered by NGOs to cater to the needs of ethnic minority women and new arrival women from the Mainland.
- The Funding Scheme for Women's Development is launched in partnership with 18 District Councils from 2012-13. A total of \$2 million will be allocated to women's groups and NGOs in organising programmes conducive to women's development with a view to helping women create a healthy and delightful lifestyle and arousing public awareness of women's physical and mental development.

16. To give full play to women's abilities relies on a favourable environment where both genders can enjoy and benefit from the resources and opportunities available in society. Following the recommendations and with the assistance of WoC, the Government has been promoting gender mainstreaming in various policy areas on an incremental basis since 2002. The major tasks are as follows –

- In 2009, WoC amended the Gender Mainstreaming Checklist (the Checklist) designed in 2002 to assist government officials in incorporating, in a more systematic way, the gender perspectives into the policy formulation and programme development processes. Since its inception, the Checklist has been being applied to more than 40 policies or programmes.
- In 2003, the Government set up the “Gender Focal Points” (GFPs) network in all bureaux and departments in order to enhance the awareness and understanding of gender-related issues within the Administration.

Hong Kong Social Welfare Service Expenditure

The Administration has all along been investing heavily in the development and provision of social welfare services, with sustained growth in expenditure. Over the six financial years from 2007-08 to 2012-13, the recurrent expenditure for social welfare services rose from \$34 billion to \$44 billion, an increase of 29.4%, or more than double the actual recurrent expenditure of \$20 billion for 1997-98 financial year. The existing recurrent expenditure for various aspects of social welfare accounts for 16.7% of the total Government Recurrent Expenditure, ranking third among various policy areas.

2. The recurrent expenditures for social welfare programmes in the 1997-98 financial year and the latest six financial years are as follows –

Financial Year	1997-98 (Actual) (\$Billion)	2007-08 (Actual) (\$Billion)	2008-09 (Actual) (\$Billion)	2009-10 (Actual) (\$Billion)	2010-11 (Actual) (\$Billion)	2011-12 (Revised Estimate) (\$Billion)	2012-13 (Estimate) (\$Billion)	Increase (%) between 1997-98 and 2012-13 (\$Billion)
Recurrent Expenditure	20	34	38.5	39.4	37.6	40.4	44	24 (120%)

3. It is noteworthy that the recurrent expenditure on social services doubled over the past 15 years at a growth rate faster than those of the Gross Domestic Product and total Government Recurrent Expenditure. The figures are as follows –

Financial Year	1997-98 (Actual) (\$Billion)	2012-13 (Estimate) (\$Billion)	Increase (%) between 1997-98 and 2012-13 (\$Billion)
Recurrent Expenditure for Social Welfare Programmes	20	44	24 (120%)
Total Government Recurrent Expenditure	149.4	264.3	114.9 (77%)
Gross Domestic Product (based on calendar year)	1,365	1,957.1	592.1 (43%)

Breakdown of Social Welfare Service Expenditure

4. LWB and SWD are responsible for the formulation and implementation of social welfare policy in Hong Kong respectively. Social welfare services provided by the Government are broadly divided into two major categories, namely direct financial assistance and welfare support services, covering social security, services for elders, family and child welfare services, services for young people, rehabilitation and medical social services, services for offenders and women's interests. The breakdown of recurrent expenditure by social welfare services is as follows –

Social Welfare Services	Recurrent Expenditure (\$Billion) ⁽¹⁾							Increase (%) between 1997-98 and 2012-13 (\$Billion)
	1997-98 (Actual)	2007-08 (Actual)	2008-09 (Actual)	2009-10 (Actual)	2010-11 (Actual)	2011-12 (Revised Estimate)	2012-13 (Estimate)	
Social Security	14.35	24.81	28.19	28.72	26.61	28.43	30.27	15.92 (111%)
Services for Elders	1.67	3.3	3.67	3.81	3.94	4.37	5.03	3.36 (201%)
Family and Child Welfare Services	1	1.4	1.58	1.68	1.73	1.84	2.07	1.07 (107%)
Services for Young People	0.92	1.31	1.52	1.52	1.53	1.66	1.71	0.79 (86%)

⁽¹⁾ Excluding the additional commitments from Centre and relevant administrative expenditure of the Labour and Welfare Bureau, etc..

Social Welfare Services	Recurrent Expenditure (\$Billion) ⁽¹⁾							Increase (%) between 1997-98 and 2012-13 (\$Billion)
	1997-98 (Actual)	2007-08 (Actual)	2008-09 (Actual)	2009-10 (Actual)	2010-11 (Actual)	2011-12 (Revised Estimate)	2012-13 (Estimate)	
Rehabilitation and Medical Social Services	1.74	2.81	3.14	3.27	3.36	3.73	4.01	2.27 (130%)
Services for Offenders	0.26	0.28	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.31	0.32	0.06 (23%)
Women's Interests ⁽²⁾	N.A.	0.014	0.013	0.02	0.021	0.024	0.029	N.A.

⁽²⁾ The figure represents the recurrent expenditure to support Women's rights since the establishment of the Women's Commission in 2001.