

立法會
Legislative Council

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Subcommittee on Poverty

**Minutes of the third meeting
held on Tuesday, 22 January 2013, at 10:45 am
in Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex**

Members present : Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, SBS, JP (Chairman)
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung (Deputy Chairman)
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC
Hon CHAN Kin-por, BBS, JP
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, JP
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming
Hon Charles Peter MOK
Hon CHAN Yuen-han, SBS, JP
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki
Hon KWOK Wai-keung
Hon TANG Ka-piu

Members absent : Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, SBS, JP
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yee, GBS, JP
Hon WONG Yuk-man
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, BBS, MH, JP

Member attending : Hon WU Chi-wai, MH

Public Officers attending : Item I

Miss Annie TAM, JP
Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Ms Jane LEE
Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare
(Poverty)

Miss Cecilla LI
Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Elderly)

Ms LUNG Siu-kit
Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Social Security)

Ms Candy LAU
Principal Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs
(Community Care Fund)

Ms Vivian CHEUNG
Principal Assistant Secretary for Food and Health
(Health) Special Duties 1

Mrs Alice LO
Chief Housing Manager (Applications)
Housing Department

Mr LUI Kwong-fai
Chief Manager / Management (Support Services) 2
Housing Department

Clerk in attendance : Mr Colin CHUI
Chief Council Secretary (2) 4

Staff in attendance : Ms Catherina YU
Senior Council Secretary (2) 4

Miss Maggie CHIU
Legislative Assistant (2) 4

Action

I. Elderly in Poverty

[IN08/12-13 and LC Paper No. CB(2)495/12-13(01)]

The Subcommittee deliberated (index of proceedings attached at **Annex**).

2. The Subcommittee passed the following motion moved by Dr Fernando CHEUNG –

"鑒於本港老人貧窮問題嚴重，本小組委員會要求政府立即取消綜援制度的"衰仔紙"，讓貧窮老人以個人為單位申領綜援，並且改革強積金，全面檢討養老制度，為全港市民制訂退休保障，以消滅老人貧窮。"

(Translation)

"That, given that the problem of elderly poverty in Hong Kong is serious, this Subcommittee requests the Government to expeditiously scrap the requirement of "bad son statement" under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ("CSSA") system, so as to allow elderly persons to apply for CSSA on an individual basis; as well as reform the Mandatory Provident Fund system, conduct an overhaul of the system of providing care for the elderly and provide retirement protection for all people in Hong Kong, thereby eliminating elderly poverty."

3. The Subcommittee requested the Administration to provide –

- (a) information on the additional manpower allocated to District Elderly Community Centres and Neighbourhood Elderly Centres;
- (b) the surveys conducted/to be conducted by the Administration (for example the Central Policy Unit), if any, to identify comprehensively the needs of the elderly, and if not, whether such studies would be conducted in future;

Action

- (c) sample of the questionnaire on evaluating the effectiveness of the Pilot Scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly and the service targets set by service providers participated in the Pilot Scheme; and
- (d) the reasons for setting the residence requirement for old age allowance and old age living allowance at 60 days.

II. Proposed work plan of the Subcommittee

[LC Paper No. CB(2)495/12-13(02)]

- 4. Members noted the proposed discussion items for future meetings and the Chairman's suggestion of overseas duty visit to study the experience on poverty alleviation.
- 5. Members noted that the next meeting of the Subcommittee would be held on Thursday, 28 February 2013 at 4:30 pm.

III. Any other business

- 6. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:54 pm.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
15 March 2013

**Proceedings of the third meeting of the
Subcommittee on Poverty
on Tuesday, 22 January 2013, at 10:45 am
in Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex**

Time marker	Speaker(s)	Subject(s)	Action required
000421 - 001110	Chairman Administration	Briefing by the Administration on its measures in preventing and tackling the problem of elderly in poverty.	
001111 - 001929	Mr TAM Yiu-chung Administration Chairman	<p>Mr TAM Yiu-chung's view that the Administration should strengthen the publicity on the application procedures for Old Age Living Allowance ("OALA"), provide assistance to elders in applying for OALA and inform the elders who were eligible for OALA as early as possible to ease their worries.</p> <p>The Administration's explanation on the publicity pertaining to OALA and the services provided to OALA applicants.</p> <p>In response to Mr TAM's enquiry on the reasons why the Guangdong ("GD") Scheme was not yet ready for implementation, the Administration explained that the GD Scheme would be implemented as scheduled.</p>	
001930 - 002512	Dr Fernando CHEUNG Chairman Administration	<p>Dr Fernando CHEUNG's view that the requirement for "bad son statement" (i.e. a statement made by the family members of the elderly persons on non-provision of financial support) under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ("CSSA") Scheme had made many needy elders unable to apply for CSSA.</p> <p>Dr CHEUNG's enquiry on when the Administration would take forward the Chief Executive ("CE")'s pledge in his manifesto about combining the elderly CSSA and Old Age Allowance ("OAA") schemes and allowing declaration of income and assets on a personal basis by the elderly.</p> <p>The Administration's response that the Commission on Poverty ("CoP")'s Social Security and Retirement Protection ("SSRP") Task Force would carefully consider views from different sectors on social security system and report the progress of their work to Members after they had been in operation for some time.</p>	

Time marker	Speaker(s)	Subject(s)	Action required
002513 - 003232	Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung Chairman Administration	<p>Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung's view that –</p> <p>(a) the Administration should revert to system adopted in the 1990s under which elderly could apply for CSSA on a personal basis and elderly CSSA applicants were not required to provide "bad son statement";</p> <p>(b) many elders who were in pressing need of financial assistance could not apply CSSA because their children refused to sign the "bad son statement". The Administration should remove the requirement for "bad son statement" without delay; and</p> <p>(c) the Administration should assist the singleton and "hidden" elderly to apply for CSSA.</p> <p>The Administration's response, to Mr LEUNG's enquiry on the assistance provided by the Administration to the elderly CSSA applicants who could not produce a "declaration form" signed by their children on their financial assistance to the elderly people, that these applicants could apply for CSSA on their own if they made a declaration stating that they were not financially supported by their children because of various reasons (such as the elders had a poor relationship with their children).</p> <p>At the request of Mr LEUNG, the Administration undertook to provide information on the additional manpower allocated to District Elderly Community Centres and Neighbourhood Elderly Centres.</p>	Admin (paragraph 3 of the minutes)
003233 - 003952	Mr TANG Ka-piu Chairman Administration	<p>Mr TANG Ka-piu's view that CoP should study measures to alleviate the financial burden of those aged between 60 and 64 who were low-income earners or were no longer in the workforce.</p> <p>The Administration's response that measures were in place to encourage employment of the aforesaid group and provision of further support to them would be considered when necessary.</p> <p>Mr TANG's request for an early implementation of the GD Scheme and a review of recipients' entitlement of a full-year payment of the allowance if they did not satisfy the 60-day residence requirement.</p> <p>The Administration's response that GD Scheme was scheduled for implementation in the second half of 2013. Preparatory work including the appointment of the agent in GD and upgrading the</p>	

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		computer system was underway. GD Scheme recipients would receive a full-year payment of the allowance if they satisfied the 60-day residence requirement in GD.	
003953 - 004701	Mr LEE Cheuk-yan Chairman Administration	<p>Members noted CoP's reply letter in which it declined to accede to the Subcommittee's request for a list of items to be discussed by CoP and its Task Forces and the discussion schedules of those items, which was tabled at the meeting.</p> <p>Mr LEE Cheuk-yan's expression of dissatisfaction about CoP's reply as the non-disclosure of CoP's discussions, its agenda and papers would hinder the Subcommittee's monitoring of CoP's work and hamper the public's discussion on issues relating to poverty alleviation.</p> <p>Mr LEE's concern that –</p> <p>(a) the measures adopted by the Administration were unable to solve the problems of elderly poverty as none of them provided the needy elderly who were non-CSSA recipients with the financial assistance comparable to the current level of CSSA; and</p> <p>(b) how the Administration would follow up CE's pledge of combining the elderly CSSA and OAA schemes and allowing declaration of income and assets on a personal basis by the elderly, as it was not covered by the CE's 2013 Policy Address.</p> <p>The Administration's response that –</p> <p>(a) different measures served different policy objectives. Some measures sought to provide financial assistance to the needy while some aimed to encourage the elderly to participate more in the community; and</p> <p>(b) CoP would set a poverty line within 2013. The poverty line would be used as a tool for quantifying the poverty population, gauging Hong Kong's poverty situation and assessing the effectiveness of poverty alleviation policies.</p>	
004702 - 005404	Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che Chairman Administration	Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che's view that most of the measures and policies for the elderly were remedial in nature. Given a longer life expectancy of the population, the Administration should formulate long-term policies on housing, healthcare, life-long learning and leisure to enable the elderly to live a happy retirement life.	

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		<p>Mr CHEUNG's enquiry on the Steering Committee on Population Policy ("SCPP")'s views on the ageing population and whether the Administration, for example the Central Policy Unit ("CPU"), had conducted any studies to identify comprehensively the needs of the elderly; and if not, whether such studies would be conducted in future.</p> <p>The Administration's explanation on the various types of services provided to the elderly. Members noted that SCPP and the relevant bureaux would study measures to help the elderly enjoy their twilight years. The Administration would examine whether the existing policies and measures could complement the projected changes in population.</p> <p>At the request of Mr CHEUNG, the Administration undertook to provide information on the surveys conducted/to be conducted by the Administration to identify the needs of the elderly. The Administration also highlighted that SCPP had conducted studies on the trend of ageing population. It would also check whether it had the information about the CPU's studies.</p>	Admin (paragraph 3 of the minutes)
005405 - 010043	Mr WU Chi-wai Chairman Administration	<p>Mr WU Chi-wai's view that –</p> <p>(a) the 60-day residence requirement under the OAA Scheme should be lifted. Recipients should only be required to report to the Administration annually that they were alive in order to continue to receive the allowance; and</p> <p>(b) services and measures such as the Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme for the Elderly and Eligible Persons with Disabilities should be extended to cover those aged between 60 and 64.</p> <p>The Administration's response that –</p> <p>(a) different residence requirements applied to the GD Scheme and the OAA Scheme. An elderly could opt for the scheme which best suited his/her situation. There were technical difficulties in requiring OAA recipients to make an annual declaration as suggested by Mr WU; and</p> <p>(b) the Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme for the Elderly and Eligible Persons with Disabilities would undergo a review in 2016-2017.</p>	

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		In response to Mr Wu's enquiry about the reasons for discontinuing certain programmes under the Community Care Fund ("CCF"), the Administration stated that all CCF programmes would be subject to review.	
010044 - 010606	Mr CHAN Kin-por Chairman Administration	<p>Mr CHAN Kin-por's view that an elderly's declaration of non-provision of financial support by his children should not be labelled as "bad son statement" as it would discourage needy elderly to apply for CSSA. The Administration should enhance the publicity in this regard.</p> <p>The Administration's response to Mr CHAN's enquiry on the assistance provided to the elderly who scavenged for cartons.</p>	
010607 - 011421	Mr KWOK Wai-keung Chairman Administration	<p>Mr KWOK Wai-keung's view that –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the Administration should better amalgamate the existing welfare services for the elderly and provide one-stop service for them; and (b) given that more than 80% of the elderly aged 70 or above were receiving assistance or allowance, the Administration should adopt a retirement protection scheme under which the elderly could choose the services they wanted. <p>The Administration's response that –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the Social Welfare Department would help the elderly to receive the necessary assistance; (b) the Administration would reinforce and enhance the existing three-pillar model for retirement protection and CoP's SSRP Task Force would study retirement protection in depth; and (c) the new funding mode of "money-follows-the-user" under the Pilot Scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly ("the Pilot Scheme") would allow elderly to choose the services that suit their need with the service vouchers. <p>In response to Mr KWOK's enquiry about the requirements for OAA recipients who participated in the GD Scheme to vacate their public rental housing ("PRH") flats, the Administration explained that to allow time for the elderly to adjust to the living environment in GD, their PRH flats would be retained for three months after they joined the GD Scheme.</p>	

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011422 - 012217	Dr KWOK Ka-ki Chairman Administration	<p>Dr KWOK Ka-ki's view that –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) most of the existing measures were window dressing. The Administration lacked foresight in formulating measures to help the needy elderly, and; (b) it lacked co-ordination on healthcare services for the elderly and the elderly were not provided with adequate healthcare and dental services. Drug Formulary should not apply to elderly aged 65 or above; (c) the provision of community care service vouchers could not alleviate the demand for subsidized residential care services for the elderly; and (d) a universal retirement protection scheme should be introduced. <p>The Administration's response that CoP's SSRP Task Force would study retirement protection in depth in an open, pragmatic and prudent manner. It would consider all views objectively and work towards a consensus in the community on how retirement protection should be taken forward.</p>	
012218 - 013413	Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung Mr Alan LEONG Chairman Administration	<p>Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung's view that the value of the community care service vouchers was too low to cater for the long-term need of the elderly.</p> <p>Mr Alan LEONG's enquiry on the basis of applying the new funding mode of "money-follows-the-user" to other types of services, the types of services which would use such a funding mode and the implementation timetable for such services.</p> <p>The Administration responded that the participants' receptiveness of the Pilot Scheme, their quality of living, the activities of daily living, whether the services would facilitate them to age in the community safely and happily were some of the outcome indicators of the Pilot Scheme.</p> <p>At the request of Mr LEONG, the Administration undertook to provide, in September 2013, sample of the questionnaire on evaluating the effectiveness of the Pilot Scheme and the service targets set by service providers.</p>	Admin (paragraph 3 of the minutes)
013414 - 014117	Chairman Administration	Members' concurrence to the Chairman's suggestion that the Subcommittee should express regret to CoP in writing in respect of its refusal to provide the Subcommittee with its discussion items and schedules.	

Time marker	Speaker(s)	Subject(s)	Action required
		<p>(Post meeting note: the letter was sent to CoP on 29 January 2013.)</p> <p>The Chairman's view that the Administration should set a target time for admission to residential care homes for the elderly ("RCHEs") and disseminate the expected admission time to the waitlistees.</p> <p>The Chairman's call for the Administration to set aside a fixed number of PRH flats for residential care places.</p> <p>The Administration's response that –</p> <p>(a) the waiting time for RCHEs could be shortened if the elders who did not have urgent or genuine needs for residential care places would choose to age in place; and</p> <p>(b) in view of the shortage of land for public rental housing ("PRH") estates and the long waiting list, it would be difficult to set aside residential care places in all new estates. However, plans were already in place for residential care places to be provided in some PRH estates as appropriate.</p>	
014118 - 014718	Ms CHAN Yuen-han Chairman	Ms CHAN Yuen-han's view that the Administration should critically look into the problems of elderly in poverty and working poverty as well as study the provision of retirement protection for the community.	
014719 - 015124	Dr Fernando CHEUNG Chairman Mr KWOK Wai-keung Mr LEE Cheuk-yan Ms CHAN Yuen-han	<p>Extension of meeting time for fifteen minutes beyond the appointed ending time by the Chairman.</p> <p>Motion moved by Dr Fernando CHEUNG.</p> <p>Passage of the motion moved by Dr Fernando CHEUNG.</p>	
015125 - 015354	Mr LEE Cheuk-yan Chairman Administration	Mr LEE Cheuk-yan's call for the Administration to take forward CE's pledge of combining the elderly CSSA and OAA schemes and allowing declaration of income and assets on a personal basis by the elderly as soon as possible.	
015355 - 015619	Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che Chairman Administration	<p>Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che's call for the Administration to formulate policies for the elderly with a view to providing them with diversified retirement services.</p> <p>The Administration's response that appropriate follow-up actions had been taken having regard to its projection for elderly population.</p>	

Time marker	Speaker(s)	Subject(s)	Action required
		At the request of Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che, the Administration undertook to provide the reasons for setting the residence requirement for OAA and OALA at 60 days.	Admin (paragraph 3 of the minutes)
015620 - 015836	Mr KWOK Wai-keung Chairman Administration	Mr KWOK Wai-keung's view that elders joining the Portable CSSA Scheme and elders who participated in the GD Scheme should be allowed to retain their PRH flats for six months and one year respectively. The Administration's response that as the proposed relaxation would impact on housing resources, it had to be prudent in handling the matter.	
015837 - 020033	Mr TANG Ka-piu Chairman Administration	Mr TANG Ka-piu's enquiry on whether the Elderly Dental Assistance Programme would be expanded to cover more elderly. The Administration's response that it would review the programme in the second quarter of 2013 and examine the need for expanding the programme having regard to the outcome of the review.	
020034 - 020438	Chairman Administration	The Chairman's view that the Administration should strive to increase the supply of residential care places. To mitigate resistance to provision of residential care services from local community, the Administration should plan for such provision at the town planning stage. The Administration's reiteration that it would make its best efforts to identify suitable sites/premises, including private and public housing development projects as well as development projects of the Urban Renewal Authority, for residential care services.	
<i>Agenda item II – Proposed work plan of the Subcommittee</i>			
020439 - 021013	Chairman	Proposed discussion items for future meetings and overseas duty visit to study the experience of poverty alleviation.	