

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)681/15-16

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seen by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/HS/1/12

Subcommittee on Poverty

**Minutes of the thirty-fifth meeting
held on Tuesday, 22 December 2015, at 2:30 pm
in Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex**

Members present : Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung (Chairman)
Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, SBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, GBS, JP
Hon CHAN Kin-por, BBS, JP
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC
Hon Charles Peter MOK, JP
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen
Hon CHAN Yuen-han, SBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, BBS, MH, JP
Hon KWOK Wai-keung

Members absent : Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, SBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
Hon WONG Yuk-man
Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming, JP
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki
Hon TANG Ka-piu, JP

**Public Officers : Item II
attending**

Mr Stephen SUI, JP
Under Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Ms Eugenia CHUNG
Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare
(Poverty)

Mr Esmond LEE, JP
Head, Working Family and Student Financial Assistance
Agency

Ms Teresa CHEUNG
Principal Executive Officer (Working Family Allowance
Office)
Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency

**Attendance by : Item II
invitation**

Session One

Catholic Workers Centre

Ms Abbas Sairah
Assistant Program Worker

A.I.M. Group

Ms Shaheen Shabana
Group Member

Love China Hong Kong Alliance of Youth Cultural
Societies

Miss Jenny CHAN
Founding Vice Chairman

Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of
Hong Kong

Ms CHEUNG Fan-lan
Deputy Spokesperson

太子學童關注組

Ms LI Xiang-zhen

學童發展關注組

Ms YANG Jianya

爭取低收入家庭保障聯席

Mr LEE Kwok-kuen
Community Organiser

北區基層工友組

Miss CHAN Sin-ki

Kwun Tong Methodist Social Service

Miss NG Shan-yiu
Social Worker

同根社

Mr WONG Kai-hing
Community Organiser

希望・連線街坊小組

Ms TSANG Ling

關注基層住屋聯席

Mr LAI Kin-kei
Community Organiser

Mr HO Chi-chung

天姿作圍

Miss FAN Pui-ying
Community Organiser

關注學童發展權利聯席

Miss HO Yu-ying
Community Organiser

青年關學聯

Miss LO Lok-sum

特殊學習需要權益聯會 - Sen 權益會

Mr HO Cheuk-hin
Community Organiser

SEN 社會希望會

Miss FUNG Wai
組長

葵涌劏房住客聯盟

Mr NG Kwan-lim
Member

葵涌低收入人士權益關注組

Mr TIN Ka-shun
Member

葵涌基層權益關注組

Miss LEUNG Wing-ting

葵涌低收入居民關注平台

Mr Minhas Rashad

葵涌不適切居所住客聯盟

Mr LEUNG Kee-kin

葵涌低收入政策關注平台

Miss YIU Tung-mui
Member

Session Two

Mr WONG Kwai-sang

Catholic Diocese of HK Diocesan Pastoral Centre for
Workers (Kowloon)

Ms BUT Ngan-ping
Centre Supervisor

Young DAB

Mr NGAN Man-yu
Chairman

New People's Party

Mr Joey LEE Man-lung
Representative

低保聯土瓜灣街坊組

Miss Helen KWOK

Liberal Party Youth Committee

Ms June CHEUNG
Member

Miss HO Sze-wai

好L窮大聯盟

Mr LI Ting-fung

Promoters & Casual Workers Union

Miss NG Cheuk-ling
Organizer

Cleaning Workers Union

Mr CHAN Tsz-kit
Organizer

Hong Kong Women Workers Association

Miss LEUNG Wei-ching
Organizer

環保姨姨發展網絡

Ms LIN Yu-nog
Representative

Neighbourhood and Worker's Service Centre

Miss Yoyo CHAN
Organizer

Kwai Chung Estate Labour Rights Concern Group

Miss Vincci WONG
Organizer

Kwai Chung Standard Working Hour Concern Group

Miss LAI Choi-yin
Organizer

Tin Shui Wai Community Development Network

Mr CHAN Wai-lun
Organizing Officer

Tin Shui Wai Community Development Alliance

Mr Thomas KONG
Project Officer

The Lion Rock Institute

Miss Fiona WONG Tsz-kwan
Research Assistant

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

Staff in attendance : Miss Kay CHU
Council Secretary (2) 4

Miss Maggie CHIU
Legislative Assistant (2) 4

Ms Ada TANG
Clerical Assistant (2) 4

Action

I. Extension of period of work of the Subcommittee
[LC Paper No. CB(2)498/15-16(01)]

Members supported the proposed continuation of the Subcommittee's work for about 5.5 months until the end of the 2015-2016 session in mid-July 2016. Members noted that the proposal would be submitted to the House Committee for endorsement.

II. Implementation of the Low-income Working Family Allowance Scheme
[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)343/15-16(01), CB(2)487/15-16(01) to (02) and CB(2)515/15-16(01)]

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

III. Item(s) for discussion at the next meeting

3. Members noted that the Subcommittee would discuss the subject of "Community Care Fund" at the next meeting scheduled for Tuesday, 26 January 2016 at 4:30 pm.

Action

IV. Any other business

4. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 6:02 pm.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
15 January 2016

**Proceedings of the thirty-fifth meeting of the
Subcommittee on Poverty
on Tuesday, 22 December 2015 at 2:30 pm
in Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex**

Time marker	Speaker(s)	Subject(s)	Action required
<i>Agenda item I – Extension of period of work of the Subcommittee</i>			
000741 - 000952	Chairman Miss CHAN Yuen-han	Members supported the proposed continuation of the Subcommittee's work up to the end of the 2015-2016 session of the Legislative Council ("LegCo") in mid-July 2016, which would be submitted to the House Committee for endorsement. Miss CHAN Yuen-han expressed concern about the work of the Subcommittee on Retirement Protection under the Panel on Welfare Services in the 2015-2016 session.	
<i>Agenda item II – Implementation of the Low-income Working Family Allowance Scheme</i>			
<u>Session One</u>			
000953 - 001251	Chairman	Opening remarks	
001252 - 001528	Catholic Workers Centre	Presentation of views	
001529 - 001736	A.I.M. Group	Presentation of views	
001737 - 002105	Love China Hong Kong Alliance of Youth Cultural Societies	Presentation of views	
002106 - 002403	Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong	Presentation of views	
002404 - 002611	太子學童關注組	Presentation of views	
002612 - 003012	學童發展關注組	Presentation of views	
003013 - 003332	爭取低收入家庭保障聯席	Presentation of views	
003333 - 003620	北區基層工友組	Presentation of views	
003621 - 003933	Kwun Tong Methodist Social Service	Presentation of views	
003934 - 004249	同根社	Presentation of views	

Time marker	Speaker(s)	Subject(s)	Action required
004250 - 004417	希望・連線街坊小組	Presentation of views	
004418 - 004724	關注基層住屋聯席	Presentation of views	
004725 - 005039	Mr HO Chi-chung	Presentation of views	
005040 - 005305	天姿作圍	Presentation of views	
005306 - 005638	關注學童發展權利聯席	Presentation of views	
005639 - 005858	青年關學聯	Presentation of views	
005859 - 010141	特殊學習需要權益聯會 - Sen 權益會	Presentation of views	
010142 - 010400	SEN 社會希望會	Presentation of views	
010401 - 010722	葵涌劏房住客聯盟	Presentation of views	
010723 - 010955	葵涌低收入人士權益關注組	Presentation of views	
010956 - 011312	葵涌基層權益關注組	Presentation of views	
011313 - 011629	葵涌低收入居民關注平台	Presentation of views	
011630 - 011858	葵涌不適切居所住客聯盟	Presentation of views	
011859 - 012216	葵涌低收入政策關注平台	Presentation of views	
012217 - 013820	Chairman Admin	<p>In response to the major views and concerns of deputations, the Administration advised on the phased application arrangement and publicity as well as key parameters of the Low-income Working Family Allowance ("LIFA") Scheme which were set out in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(2)343/15-16(01)]. It further advised that –</p> <p><i>Working hour requirements</i></p> <p>(a) the working hour thresholds had been set at a reasonable level, hence the prospective LIFA applicants should generally be able to meet the two-tiered working hour requirements, which were set at 144 hours per month and 192 hours per month, to receive a Basic Allowance and a Higher</p>	

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		<p>Allowance respectively under the LIFA Scheme. A Child Allowance would also be provided for each eligible child in the LIFA family. Lower working hour thresholds were set for single-parent applicants;</p> <p>(b) LIFA applications should be made on a family (two persons or above) basis with a working member meeting the working hour requirements as applicant. In case a LIFA applicant failed to meet the working hour requirements in individual months, another eligible working family member could report his/her working hours for the months concerned. Nevertheless, the working hours of different family members could not be combined, or a higher threshold might need to be set if the working hours of all members of a household were combined;</p> <p>(c) if a LIFA applicant under special circumstances was not able to provide documentary proof showing hours worked and income, he/she might report the aforesaid information by providing a self-declared statement;</p> <p>(d) LIFA applicants who were taking up more than one job could report the working hours of all jobs for meeting LIFA's working hour requirements;</p> <p><i>Publicity</i></p> <p>(e) the Working Family Allowance Office ("WFAO") under the Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency organized in December 2015 a number of briefings on the LIFA Scheme for non-governmental organizations ("NGOs") in different districts, including NGOs serving the ethnic minorities ("EMs"). Briefings on how to fill in the LIFA application form would be organized from March 2016 onwards for NGOs and the local community in various districts;</p> <p>(f) WFAO would continue collaborating with the Support Service Centres for EMs which were commissioned by the Home Affairs Department to provide support services for EMs, and make use of various media channels and EM-related radio programmes to publicize LIFA to EMs;</p>	

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		<p><i>Interface with the Work Incentive Transport Subsidy ("WITS") Scheme</i></p> <p>(g) the Labour Department ("LD") had informed WITS recipients in writing of the interface between LIFA and WITS, which was also set out in the promotional leaflets of LIFA. In addition, both LD and WFAO had hotlines to answer enquiries from WITS recipients and offer them assistance. The needy could decide on applying for either scheme according to their needs;</p> <p><i>Review of the LIFA Scheme</i></p> <p>(h) an overall review of the LIFA Scheme would be conducted one year after its implementation;</p> <p><i>Other assistance for different needy groups</i></p> <p>(i) the LIFA Scheme was not intended to provide assistance to address all kinds of needs of the needy groups. LIFA households with children with disabilities would receive a Child Allowance, similar to able-bodied children, subject to their eligibility. This apart, the Administration would continue strengthening the provision of pre-school rehabilitation service and other support for children with disabilities. Moreover, the review on the eligibility criteria for the Disability Allowance, which offered financial assistance to help meet the special needs of persons with severe disabilities, would be completed shortly; and</p> <p>(j) the Pilot Scheme on Living Allowance for Carers of the Elderly Persons from Low Income Families ("Carer Allowance") launched by the Community Care Fund ("CCF") was under evaluation which included, inter alia, whether its scope should be extended to cover carers of persons with severe disabilities.</p>	
013821 - 014646	Chairman Miss CHAN Yuen-han Admin	Noting that the LIFA Scheme was expected to benefit about 200 000 needy families, Miss CHAN Yuen-han considered that WFAO might not be able to handle the influx of the LIFA applications. She shared deputations' views that the Administration should—	

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		<p>(a) make reference to the operation of CCF to provide an administration fee for NGOs to assist in the implementation of the LIFA Scheme; and</p> <p>(b) employ EMs to promote the LIFA Scheme to the EM community.</p> <p>The Administration thanked NGOs for giving views on the implementation of LIFA in the past few months and offering assistance in relation to the launch of the Scheme. WFAO staff would be well trained and prepared for the workload. In addition, with the phased intake of applications, the workload would be spread out. WFAO would also conduct another round of briefings on form-filling in various districts from March 2016 onwards.</p>	
014647 - 015322	Chairman	<p>The Chairman requested the Administration to respond to deputations' suggestions regarding the implementation details of the LIFA Scheme.</p> <p>The Administration advised that –</p> <p>(a) promotional leaflets of LIFA had been translated into six EM languages; and</p> <p>(b) apart from organizing briefings on how to fill in the application forms of the LIFA Scheme, WFAO would consider sending staff members to different districts to provide further assistance in form-filling if necessary.</p>	
<u>Session Two</u>			
015323 - 015643	Chairman Mr Wong Kwai-sang	Presentation of views	
015644 - 020008	Catholic Diocese of HK Diocesan Pastoral Centre for Workers (Kowloon)	Presentation of views	
020009 - 020239	Young DAB	Presentation of views	
020240 - 020517	New People's Party	Presentation of views	
020518 - 020830	低保聯土瓜灣街坊組	Presentation of views	
020831 - 021123	Liberal Party Youth Committee	Presentation of views	
021124 - 021443	Miss HO Sze-wai	Presentation of views	

Time marker	Speaker(s)	Subject(s)	Action required
021444 - 021806	好 L 窮大聯盟	Presentation of views	
021807 - 022155	Promoters & Casual Workers Union	Presentation of views	
022156 - 022516	Cleaning Workers Union	Presentation of views	
022517 - 022826	Hong Kong Women Workers Association	Presentation of views	
022827 - 023207	Neighbourhood and Worker's Service Centre	Presentation of views	
023208 - 023437	環保姨姨發展網絡	Presentation of views	
023438 - 023755	Kwai Chung Estate Labour Rights Concern Group	Presentation of views	
023756 - 024112	Kwai Chung Standard Working Hour Concern Group	Presentation of views	
024113 - 024446	Tin Shui Wai Community Development Network	Presentation of views [LC Paper No. CB(2)515/15-16(01)]	
024447 - 024800	Tin Shui Wai Community Development Alliance	Presentation of views	
024801 - 024950	The Lion Rock Institute	Presentation of views	
024951 - 030040	Chairman Admin	<p>In response to the major views and concerns of deputations, the Administration reiterated some of the points made earlier regarding the publicity and the working hour thresholds for the LIFA Scheme, interface between LIFA and WITS as well as support for carers of persons with severe disabilities. It added that –</p> <p>(a) the Administration intended to make the design of the application forms of LIFA simple and easy to understand. However, there was also a need to meet essential audit requirements. A balance had to be struck between the two;</p> <p>(b) it was not feasible to provide, at this stage, a single application form for the needy to apply for LIFA, WITS and other assistance as each scheme had its own eligibility criteria. That said, the Administration would make reference to the implementation of other assistance schemes with a view to streamlining the application procedures of LIFA. To help</p>	

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		<p>an applicant to submit subsequent applications, the Administration would consider providing the applicant with an application form with some information of the applicant's family pre-printed;</p> <p>(c) under special circumstances, a self-declared statement from applicants for reporting working hours and income would be accepted; and</p> <p>(d) to unleash women labour force, the Administration would conduct a consultancy study on the long-term development of child care services and continue increasing the provision of child care services.</p>	
030041 - 030725	Chairman Mr LEE Cheuk-yan Admin	<p>Mr LEE Cheuk-yan was of the view that -</p> <p>(a) the working hour threshold of 192 hours per month was too high, thereby hindering low-income part-time workers to apply for LIFA; and</p> <p>(b) some WITS recipients might decide to apply for LIFA only after they had applied for WITS for the same claim months. The Administration should consider providing them with the difference in the amount of WITS and LIFA within the claim periods of LIFA.</p> <p>The Administration reiterated –</p> <p>(a) that the working hour thresholds for LIFA were considered reasonable. An applicant who had worked 144 hours per month, i.e. around 33 hours per week, would meet the working hour requirement of LIFA. An applicant whose employment contract showed his/her weekly working hours could readily work out the monthly working hours by multiplying the weekly working hours by 4.4 weeks; and</p> <p>(b) its reply at (g) above and added that WITS disbursed could not be refunded to the Administration. That said, the Administration would examine the feasibility of strengthening the coordination between LIFA and WITS.</p>	

Time marker	Speaker(s)	Subject(s)	Action required
030726 - 031240	Chairman Miss CHAN Yuen-han Admin	<p>Miss CHAN Yuen-han requested the Administration to respond to –</p> <p>(a) deputations' suggestion of engaging NGOs in assisting in the implementation of the LIFA Scheme; and</p> <p>(b) a deputation's question on reasons for excluding singletons, who might be mainly elderly persons, as beneficiaries of the LIFA Scheme.</p> <p>The Administration advised that –</p> <p>(a) WFAO would gear itself up to cope with the workload. Furthermore, to provide assistance for applicants in local districts, WFAO would conduct outreaching programmes to brief the community on how to fill in the application form starting from March 2016 and provide necessary assistance at the district level; and</p> <p>(b) needy singletons could benefit from the statutory minimum wage and WITS. Stressing that the target beneficiaries of the LIFA Scheme were low-income working families, the Administration reiterated that a review of the LIFA Scheme would be conducted a year after its implementation.</p>	
031241 - 032023	Chairman Admin	<p>The Chairman concluded that the Administration should consider –</p> <p>(a) taking into account special needs of EMs in formulating the implementation details of the LIFA Scheme, translating LIFA-related promotional materials into at least six major EM languages, and hiring EMs to help the EM community apply for LIFA;</p> <p>(b) seeking stakeholders' views on the design of the application form and self-declared statement form of the LIFA Scheme;</p> <p>(c) improving interface between LIFA and the Carer Allowance given that the latter needed to be counted in family income but working hours of carers were not counted towards the working hour requirements of the LIFA Scheme; and</p>	

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		(d) allocating resources to engage NGOs to facilitate the implementation of the LIFA Scheme at the district level.	
032024 - 032139	Chairman Mr WONG Kwai-sang	The Chairman invited interested deputations to give further views on the implementation of the LIFA Scheme. Presentation of views	
032140 - 032244	Catholic Diocese of HK Diocesan Pastoral Centre for Workers (Kowloon)	Presentation of views	
032245 - 032339	Cleaning Workers Union	Presentation of views	
032340 - 032623	Promoters & Casual Workers Union	Presentation of views	
032624 - 032731	Tin Shui Wai Community Development Alliance	Presentation of views	
032732 - 033017	Chairman Admin	In response to deputations' views, the Administration advised that – (a) the Census and Statistics Department had been commissioned to conduct a survey on transport expenses in the third quarter of 2015. Subject to the availability of the data, the Administration aimed to report the outcome of the WITS review to the Panel on Manpower of LegCo in the first quarter of 2016; (b) due to time constraint, WFAO had no plan to seek stakeholders' views on the design of the LIFA application form. That said, briefings on how to fill in the form would be organized from March 2016 onwards, and the design of the form would be made as simple as practicable; (c) training would be provided for staff members of WFAO to facilitate the processing of LIFA applications; and (d) WFAO would call applicants direct for making simple clarifications to speed up the vetting process. If necessary, WFAO would issue letters to applicants to request for supplementary information and clarification.	
033018 - 033250	Chairman	The Chairman urged the Administration to consider views and suggestions of deputations	

Time marker	Speaker(s)	Subject(s)	Action required
		and members. The Chairman also noted with concern that the outcome of the review of the WITS Scheme could only be released by the first quarter of 2016.	
<i>Agenda item III – Item(s) for discussion at the next meeting</i>			
033251 - 033306	Chairman	Item for discussion at the next meeting	

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
15 January 2016