

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)137/13-14
(These minutes have been
seen by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/WS

Panel on Welfare Services

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 10 June 2013, at 8:30 am
in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex

Members present : Hon CHAN Yuen-han, SBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, SBS, JP
Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC
Dr Hon LEUNG Ka-lau
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen
Hon CHAN Han-pan
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, BBS, MH, JP
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH
Hon TANG Ka-piu

Members absent : Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming
Hon Alice MAK Mei-kuen, JP

Members attending : Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, JP
Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN Ka-lok

**Public Officers : Item III
attending**

Mr Matthew CHEUNG, GBS, JP
Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Mr CHOW Wing-hang
Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare
(Welfare) 4
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Mr FUNG Pak-yan
Acting Director of Social Welfare
Social Welfare Department

Mr LAU Kwai-chiu
Chief Social Security Officer (Social Security) 6
Social Welfare Department

Item IV

Mrs Anna MAK
Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Services)
Social Welfare Department

Mr FUNG Man-chung
Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Family and Child
Welfare)
Social Welfare Department

Item V

Mr Stephen SUI
Commissioner for Rehabilitation
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Mrs Anna MAK
Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Services)
Social Welfare Department

Mr LAM Ka-tai
Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Rehabilitation and
Medical Social Services)
Social Welfare Department

Dr Florence LEE
Senior Medical and Health Officer (Child Assessment
Service)
Department of Health

Attendance by : Item IV
invitation

Right to Concern Single Association

Ms Irene CHAN
Community Organizer

Society for Community Organization

Mr NG Wai-tung
Community Organizer

Civic Party

Mr Leo IP
District Developer

8 representatives for street sleepers

Item V

Hong Kong Joint Council for People with
Disabilities/Hong Kong Council of Social Service

Ms Agatha TANG
Officer (Rehabilitation Services)

Heep Hong Parents' Association

Ms Cat LEE
President

The Parents' Association of Pre-school Handicapped
Children

Ms YAM LAW Kan-wah
Executive Committee Member

Hong Kong Christian Service

Ms Ida YIP Wing-sze
Coordinator

Ms CHOW Ming-yan

Hong Kong Christian Service Chih Ai Parents'
Association

Ms Louise HO Wing-sheung
Vice Chairman

Ms PANG Sze-yau

明愛康復服務學前服務家長諮詢委員會

Ms Elsa CHAN Fung-lan

Ms LAI Siu-mui

Hong Kong Integrated Education Concern Association

Ms Josephine CHEUNG
The Convenor of Policy Research Group

The Spastics Association of Hong Kong

Ms Karin LAI
Head of Services

Ms NG Chong-fai

Society for the Welfare of the Autistic Persons

Miss Gloria WU Hoi-hei
Acting Centre-in-charge

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

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

Miss Karen LAI
Council Secretary (2) 4

Ms Judy TING
Council Secretary (2) 6

Miss Maggie CHIU
Legislative Assistant (2) 4

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I. Information paper(s) issued since the last meeting

Members noted that no paper had been issued since the last meeting.

II. Items for discussion at the next meeting

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1275/12-13(01) and (02)]

2. Members agreed to discuss, at the next meeting scheduled for 8 July 2013, the following items –

- (a) Review of Disability Allowance; and
- (b) Medium and long-term social welfare planning.

3. The Chairman said that, as advised by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare ("SLW"), the study on retirement protection in Hong Kong conducted by Professor Nelson Chow was in progress and the Administration would revert to the Panel about the study as soon as practicable. Members agreed that the item regarding the Community Investment and Inclusion Fund ("CIIF"), which was referred to the Panel by the Public Accounts Committee ("PAC"), should be removed from the list of outstanding items for discussion, as the Administration had advised that it had taken actions to follow up all the PAC's recommendations on the Fund.

III. Guangdong Scheme

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1275/12-13(03) and (04)]

4. SLW said that the Administration aimed to launch the Guangdong

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Scheme ("GD Scheme") not later than November 2013 to allow eligible Hong Kong ("HK") elderly people who chose to reside in Guangdong ("GD") to continue to receive the Old Age Allowance ("OAA") without requiring them to return to HK. The one-year-continuous-residence ("OYCR") requirement would be waived under a special one-off arrangement for elderly applicants who had settled in GD. It was assumed that about 30 000 elderly people would join the GD Scheme, with a funding estimation of \$395 million per annum. SLW then elaborated on the key features of and implementation plan for the Scheme which were detailed in the Administration's paper.

Discussion

Application arrangements

5. Noting that the Social Welfare Department ("SWD") would set up a new designated Social Security Field Unit ("SSFU") in Sheung Shui to centrally handle all applications for the GD Scheme, Mr TANG Ka-piu and Mr LEUNG Che-cheung asked about the arrangements for elderly applicants who were not able to apply in person in the designated SSFU in Sheung Shui due to health reasons. Mr TANG further asked about what documents should be provided by the applicants to prove that they were unfit to travel to HK. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen suggested that in view of the huge number of target recipients, the Administration should consider, apart from the SSFU in Sheung Shui, setting up designated SSFUs in HK Island and Kowloon.

6. SLW said that the GD Scheme aimed to provide convenience for OAA recipients' residing in GD. An appointed agent, the International Social Service Hong Kong Branch ("ISS HK Branch"), would conduct home visits to those elderly people who were unfit to travel to Hong Kong due to health reasons. In such cases, the elderly people concerned should first submit their applications with documentary proof that they were physically unfit to travel. Enquiries could be made through the designated hotline, webpage and SSFU in Sheung Shui. Acting Director of Social Welfare ("Ag DSW") supplemented that the elderly applicants should submit medical proof provided by local public hospitals or clinics in GD.

7. As regards whether the designated SSFU in Sheung Shui could cope with the applications for the GD Scheme, SLW replied that publicity and preparation for the Scheme would start a month or two before the launching date, and prospective elderly applicants would be encouraged to send applications first by post before the launching date. SWD would

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arrange interviews with individual applicants by appointments and the allowance would be provided to eligible elderly people with retrospective effect from the launching date of the GD Scheme or the date of application, whichever was later. In addition, those applicants in HK (i.e. not resided in GD before application) could apply for the GD Scheme at SSFUs in different locations of the territory.

8. Noting that HK elderly people who resided in GD should satisfy the requirement of residing in GD continuously for one year immediately before submitting an application for the Scheme, Mr TANG Ka-piu asked about the documentary proof that the applicants had to provide for meeting the requirement.

9. Ag DSW responded that in the first year of implementing the GD Scheme, a special one-off arrangement would be in place to allow HK elderly people who had already resided in GD, and had satisfied all other eligibility criteria, to benefit from the Scheme without the need to satisfy the OYCR rule in HK. In such cases, the applicants would be required to declare that they had resided in GD continuously for at least one year immediately before the date of application (with a grace period of 56 days) and provide documentary address proof of their residence in GD.

The appointed agent and review of applicants' eligibility

10. Supporting the GD Scheme, Mr POON Siu-ping enquired about the terms of service agreement for appointing ISS HK Branch as the agent for the Scheme, in particular the necessity of setting up an office on the Mainland.

11. Ag DSW replied that the ISS HK Branch was experienced in providing social services on the Mainland. Its services included a cross-boundary student services centre in Lo Wu, an integrated family service centre in Guangzhou, and a service project for would-be Hong Kong new arrivals in Futian, Shenzhen. It had also been the agent appointed for the Portable Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme ("Portable CSSA Scheme") in GD and Fujian. Though the service agreement had no requirement of an office physically set up on the Mainland, the ISS HK Branch had service centres in Shenzhen and Guangzhou. The Administration might require the agent to set up a designated office for the Scheme when such a need arose. In response to an enquiry by Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung on the appointed agent's track record in social services, SLW said that the Administration would provide detailed information of the ISS HK Branch including its membership and

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past social services for members' reference after the meeting.

12. As regards Mr POON Siu-ping's enquiry about the review of participants' eligibility, SLW said that the appointed agent would be responsible for conducting annual case review for participants of the GD Scheme, including spot checks by means of home visits of at least 20% of the cases and postal reviews for all the remaining cases. Under such an arrangement, home visits would be conducted at least once for all cases within five years.

Publicity

13. Noting that nearly half of the 90 000 elders staying on the Mainland had not applied for OAA, Dr Fernando CHEUNG considered that the Administration should step up its publicity work on the GD Scheme, in particular the special one-off arrangement of waiving OYCR requirement before application, to ensure that the related message could be disseminated to eligible elderly people in GD. The Deputy Chairman said that as many elderly people did not have a wide social network, the Administration should launch large-scale publicity campaign with support from the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office ("HKETO") in GD, e.g. placing advertisements in all newspapers in the GD Province and making announcements through radio broadcast. Dr Priscilla LEUNG said that the Administration should seek assistance from HKETO to ensure that its publicity on the GD Scheme could be disseminated to prospective elderly applicants.

14. SLW replied that the Administration would publicize the GD Scheme to target beneficiaries in both HK and GD. SWD would set up a webpage and designated enquiry hotline for the GD Scheme to answer public enquiries. Publicity would be done through broadcasting relevant Announcements in the Public Interest on cross-boundary coaches.

Support for elderly opted for retirement on the Mainland

15. Mr TANG Ka-piu was concerned about the number of HK elderly people who opted for retirement on the Mainland and whether they could have a financially stable retirement life there eventually. Specifically, he enquired about the number of elderly people participating in the Portable CSSA Scheme, and the number of HK elderly people who were unable to maintain subsistence living on the Mainland and referred by the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions ("HKFTU") to SWD for assistance last year.

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16. SLW replied that the Portable CSSA Scheme was introduced in 1997 to enable elderly CSSA recipients to continue to receive the assistance, if they chose to retire permanently in GD, and had been extended to Fujian since 2005. The number of elderly people receiving the assistance reached the highest in 2005 with a total of 3 200 participants and had been dropping since then. Currently the number of participants in GD and Fujian were 2 110 and 179 respectively. The Administration would keep in view the number of participants and make appropriate adjustments if necessary. Ag DSW supplemented that the Administration would check if it had kept the statistics on referrals from HKFTU to SWD and, if so, provide the requisite information after the meeting.

17. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung wondered whether the GD Scheme would be a preferred choice for HK elderly people given that elderly people residing in HK could be entitled to the provision of healthcare and elderly services by the HK Government. He considered that elderly people would not prefer retiring on the Mainland if the HK Government would provide them with a monthly living allowance of \$3,000 for meeting their needs arising from old age.

18. SLW stressed that the GD Scheme did not aim at encouraging elderly people to move to GD. Instead, it aimed to facilitate and support elderly people if they chose to live in GD, either for elderly people who settled in GD some years ago or OAA recipients who opted for moving to GD due to personal reasons. To provide more convenience for the former, there would be a special one-off arrangement of waiving the OYCR requirement in HK for such applicants in the first year of implementing the GD Scheme.

19. While welcoming the GD Scheme for providing convenience for elderly people who opted for retirement in GD, Dr Priscilla LEUNG held the view that the Administration should relax the 60-day residence requirement for OAA recipients in HK. In view of the growing ageing population, she suggested that the Administration should explore the feasibility of developing "retirement villages" on the Mainland with holistic planning on healthcare services and related facilities.

20. SLW responded that the Administration was mindful of members' views on relaxing the residence requirement. He stressed that the GD Scheme would provide much convenience for elderly people residing in GD to receive OAA at the same time. The Administration would study the feasibility of developing "retirement villages" on the Mainland in

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drawing up HK's long-term population policy. Drawing reference from the drop in the number of participants of the Portable CSSA Scheme, the Administration noted that the provision of healthcare services was a major concern when HK elderly people decided to stay in HK or move to the Mainland for retirement. It would take into full consideration healthcare needs of the elderly in studying the feasibility of "retirement villages" on the Mainland.

Extending the coverage of GD Scheme to OALA

21. Dr Fernando CHEUNG was of the view that the monthly allowance under OAA was not adequate for elderly people to live on the Mainland in view of the soaring price of daily commodities. He asked if the Administration had considered extending the GD Scheme to Old Age Living Allowance ("OALA"). Mr LEUNG Che-chueng said that the existing coverage of the GD Scheme was too restricted as it could not cater for the wishes of HK elderly people receiving OALA for retirement in GD. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen strongly requested the Administration to allow elderly people who chose to reside in GD to receive OALA therein, in view of the depreciation of HK dollars to Renminbi.

22. SLW responded that the Administration was open-minded on members' suggestion of extending the GD Scheme to OALA. He stressed that the Administration would be prudent in considering the scope of the GD Scheme as the allowance, be it OAA or OALA, was non-contributory. It would consider the feasibility of extending the Scheme to OALA in the review of the Scheme one year after its launch.

23. The Deputy Chairman wondered why the Administration should wait for one year to review the feasibility of extending the GD Scheme to OALA and enquired about the issues involved.

24. SLW replied that the GD Scheme shared largely the same eligibility criteria as OAA in HK, which was a non-contributory and largely non-means-tested allowance for elderly people to meet their special needs arising from old age. On the other hand, OALA, launched in April 2013, was a means-tested allowance for elderly people who were in need of financial support. More complicated vetting procedures were therefore required for OALA applicants. SLW reiterated the Administration's open-mindedness about extending the GD Scheme to OALA, and said that it would take some time to draw experience from the implementation of the two schemes.

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25. Noting the Administration's open-mindedness about extending the coverage of the GD Scheme to OALA, Mr TANG Ka-piu wondered whether it had any plan to reimburse the OALA payments to eligible recipients with retrospective effect. He also asked whether the Administration had any plan to write to those HK elderly people who had moved to the Mainland, explaining the details of the GD Scheme; and any arrangements for those elderly applicants who were public rental housing ("PRH") tenants in HK when they moved to GD.

26. Ag DSW said that as the Administration did not have information on HK elderly people staying on the Mainland, it would be difficult for the Administration to write to them on the GD Scheme. Hence, dissemination of information on the GD Scheme would be done through publicity in both HK and GD. As regards the arrangement on PRH, SLW replied that elderly people in HK who were PRH tenants and opted for the GD Scheme would be given a grace period of three months during which they could return to live in their original PRH flats if they withdrew from the GD Scheme and returned to HK.

Relaxing the OYCR requirement for OAA applicants in HK

27. Whilst in support of the special one-off arrangement to waive the OYCR in HK for elderly applicants of the GD Scheme, Dr Fernando CHEUNG said that the same arrangement should apply to OAA applicants in HK on the ground that it was unfair to impose a residence requirement on applicants for OAA who were HK permanent residents.

28. SLW responded that at this stage, the Administration had no plan to remove the OYCR requirement for OAA applicants in HK. The rationale was to ensure that the allowance was only granted to people who had a genuine and long-term connection to HK. He emphasized that the special one-off arrangement for the GD Scheme would be made only in the first year of implementing the Scheme with a view to providing convenience to elders who moved to GD some time ago.

29. In summing up the discussion, the Chairman urged the Administration to expeditiously explore the feasibility of allowing eligible HK elders to receive OALA in GD. She also supported the suggestion of waiving the OYCR requirement for HK elderly people applying for OAA in HK, given that HK residents should be entitled to benefit from the special one-off arrangement under the GD Scheme.

30. SLW reiterated that it would take time for the Administration to

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explore the feasibility of extending the GD Scheme to OALA. As regards the OYCR requirement for OAA, the rationale was to ensure that the allowance was only granted to people who had a genuine and long-term connection to HK. The requirement also provided for a rational basis on which public resources were allocated. Ag DSW added that under the special one-off arrangement, though the OYCR requirement in HK was waived, elderly applicants would be required to reside in GD (instead of HK) continuously for one year (with a grace period of 56 days) immediately before submitting an application.

Motion

31. The Chairman put the following motion proposed by Dr Fernando CHEUNG to vote –

"本事務委員會認為，讓移居廣東的合資格長者領取高齡津貼的廣東計劃（即豁免申請連續居港一年的規定），應立即擴展至長者生活津貼，並擴展至屬香港永久性居民的居港長者。"

(Translation)

"That this Panel considers that the Guangdong ("GD") Scheme, which allows eligible elderly people who have moved to GD to receive Old Age Allowance without the need to satisfy the one-year-continuous-residence requirement, should immediately be extended to Old Age Living Allowance as well as those elderly people who are Hong Kong permanent residents living in Hong Kong."

32. Members present at the meeting voted for the motion unanimously. The Chairman declared that the motion was carried.

IV. Support for street sleepers who are not on Comprehensive Social Security Assistance

[LC Paper No.CB(2)1275/12-13(05) to (06), CB(2)1165/12-13(01) and CB(2)1293/12-13(01)]

33. At the invitation of the Chairman, Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Services) ("DDSW(S)") briefed Members on the latest support for street sleepers not on Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ("CSSA"). She also said that as at 30 April 2013, the number of registered street sleepers

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was 642, including 272 not on CSSA.

Oral presentation by deputations

34. A total of 11 deputations presented views on support for street sleepers who were not on CSSA. Their major concerns are summarized in **Appendix I**.

Discussion

Street sleepers affected by works under Ferry Street flyover

35. Dr Fernando CHEUNG expressed appreciation for the efforts of the Society for Community Organization ("SoCO") to regularly conduct study on street sleepers. As shown in the SoCO's 2012 study on street sleepers not on CSSA, about 60% to 70% of these street sleepers were employed. Their employment was, however, insecure and, as a result, did not bring in stable income for them to meet living expenses such as accommodation. Dr CHEUNG also expressed regret at the works commissioned by the Yau Tsim Mong District Council ("YTMDC") in the area under the Ferry Street flyover to evict street sleepers, in particular those of ethnic minority background. He was dissatisfied that the Administration had not raised objection to the works.

36. Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Family and Child Welfare) said that an Integrated Services Team for Street Sleeper ("IST") had been providing assistance to the 10 Nepalese street sleepers affected by the works to be carried in the area under the Ferry Street flyover. While three of these street sleepers had rented a private housing, one had returned to his original housing, one was offered accommodation by friends, and four were considering the accommodation and welfare services proposed by the IST. For the remaining street sleeper, IST had yet to contact him. IST undertook to follow up these cases to ensure that adequate assistance was provided for these street sleepers.

37. On fencing off the area under the Ferry Street flyover to carry out works commissioned by YTMDC to evict street sleepers, Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung cautioned that other District Councils might follow suit. He also asked about the Administration's response to the matter and how individual Government departments ensured the provision of assistance for those street sleepers affected by the works. He further said that the Legislative Council ("LegCo") Member returned from the Functional Constituency of District Council (First) and the five LegCo Members

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returned from the Functional Constituency of District Council (Second) failed to discharge their duties in the matter.

38. DDSW(S) replied that a meeting had been held between several Government departments and the affected street sleepers in late May 2013 to better understand their needs. Yau Tsim Mong District Office had been coordinating the efforts of different Government departments to provide support to the affected street sleepers.

39. Dr Kenneth CHAN said that whilst not being a member of the Panel, he attended the meeting as a follow-up to the Duty Roster Member meeting which he attended on 13 May 2013. He questioned about the role played by SWD in the matter and why there was no accommodation provided for the affected street sleepers sooner.

40. DDSW(S) said that the provision of assistance to the street sleepers was a concerted effort of different Government departments. The Home Affairs Department took the lead to coordinate the work of various Government departments in the matter and SWD complemented it with appropriate social welfare services. An IST had been providing assistance to the affected street sleepers to find jobs and accommodation.

41. At the invitation of the Deputy Chairman, SoCO informed the meeting that YTMDC decided to carry out the works in the area under Ferry Street flyover in 2011; however, it was not until May 2013 that the Administration first met with the affected street sleepers.

42. Dr Fernando CHEUNG pointed out that the area under the Ferry Street flyover was more than an accommodation place to those Nepalese people who had been street sleeping there for some time. Sharing similar culture and ethnic background, these Nepalese people regarded the place as "downtown" where they converged and caught up on each other.

Support services for street sleepers

43. Dr Fernando CHEUNG considered it important for the Administration to increase the supply of public housing, improve the points system under the public housing scheme and review the rent allowance under the CSSA Scheme so as to help street sleepers live off street.

44. DDSW(S) said that there was a mechanism in place to review the rent allowance under CSSA. Moreover, the CSSA Scheme as a whole would be looked into by the Commission on Poverty. Dr Fernando

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CHEUNG, however, considered the review mechanism for the rent allowance under the CSSA Scheme ineffective as half of CSSA recipients entitled to rent allowance did not find the allowance adequate to meet the rental of private housing.

45. Mr Albert HO considered it unacceptable that the problem of street sleeping remained prevalent given that Hong Kong was a prosperous city. He said that as the right to shelter was one of the basic human rights, it was incumbent upon the Administration to ensure the provision of accommodation for street sleepers.

46. DDSW(S) responded that SWD provided short-term hostel placement for street sleepers. PRH was an option for street sleepers and they should apply for it as soon as possible.

47. Citing the finding of the SoCO's 2012 study that the main reason for street sleeping was unemployment, Mr POON Siu-ping raised the following questions: (a) how the Administration helped street sleepers solve the problem of not being able to provide prospective employers with prerequisite information such as address and telephone number; (b) how it safeguarded the entitlement to provident funds and labour rights of street sleepers who worked as casual labour; and (c) the numbers of successful and unsuccessful/refused applications of street sleepers for Compassionate Rehousing.

48. DDSW(S) responded that: (a) street sleepers could use the addresses of the three ISTs and borrow from ISTs second-hand mobile phones for finding jobs; (b) SWD was not able to provide information on provident funds and labour rights as the policy areas concerned did not fall within its purview; and (c) while there were 19 successful applications of street sleepers for Compassionate Rehousing in 2012, SWD did not have the records of unsuccessful/refused applications. DDSW(S) added that the assessment of applications of street sleepers for Compassionate Rehousing was conducted on a case-by-case basis, and only a few such applications had been received in the past. She further said that consideration had to be given to the prudent use of public resources in assessing such applications, as successful applications for PRH through Compassionate Rehousing would affect the chance of those applicants who were on the waiting list.

49. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung held the view that street sleeping related to working poverty and urban poverty. To tackle the problem of street sleeping, the Administration should implement rent control. He added

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that it was not workable for a street sleeper to use IST address as his correspondence address in finding jobs, as such an address would reveal the identity of the job applicant that he was a street sleeper receiving IST's assistance.

50. Dr Fernando CHEUNG raised concern about the operation of the seven hostels operated by non-governmental organizations on a self-financing basis with no government subvention. He could not see how those deprived street sleepers were able to pay for the fees charged by these hostels.

Formulation of policy to address street sleeping

51. The Deputy Chairman considered the existing piecemeal measures to tackle street sleeping ineffective. The Administration should instead formulate a holistic and comprehensive policy to address both the interests of street sleepers and the residents affected by street sleeping, since it was impossible to eradicate street sleeping in the community. Failing this, the problem of street sleeping would become acute and street sleepers would be more marginalized. He further suggested opening community centres to provide overnight accommodation for street sleepers.

52. DDSW(S) remarked that individual Government bureaux and departments played their specific roles to address the emergency needs of street sleepers and help them give up street sleeping and become self-reliant as far as possible.

53. The Chairman said that the Administration should face up to the problems encountered by the marginalized street sleepers. She stressed the importance of drawing up a policy to provide support for street sleepers, and requested SWD to convey the views of members and deputations to the relevant bureaux and departments. DDSW(S) undertook to do so.

54. Dr Fernando CHEUNG and Dr Kenneth CHAN also shared the view that there was a genuine need to formulate a street sleeping policy to provide support for street sleepers.

55. The Chairman and the Deputy Chairman raised concern about co-locating the new Shanghai Street refuse collection point and street sleepers' services units at the same site at Hau Cheung Street to facilitate the implementation of the Yau Ma Tei Theatre phase II project. It was considered that the co-location arrangement was a form of discrimination against street sleepers, and suggested that they should be reprovisioned to

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separate sites.

Motion

56. Dr Fernando CHEUNG moved the following motion –

"本事務委員會認為，政府應以人道及友善的態度對待露宿者，而非予以歧視，甚至趕絕他們。對此，本事務委員會對於油尖旺區議會圍封渡船街天橋底以趕絕露宿者的工程表示遺憾，有關工程應立即停止。當局應立即協助該處的露宿者上樓，並為少數族裔提供聚會地方。此外，當局應立即檢討及增加綜援計劃下的租金津貼最高金額，並增加廉價單身人士宿舍及公屋供應，讓單身人士可於3年內上樓，長遠而言則應訂定露宿者政策。"

57. The Chairman said that the Administration should be condemned for not taking action sooner to offer support for those street sleepers affected by the works, and proposed that such condemnation should be reflected in the motion. She put the following motion which had incorporated her proposal (as underlined below) to vote –

"本事務委員會認為，政府應以人道及友善的態度對待露宿者，而非予以歧視，甚至趕絕他們。對此，本事務委員會予以強烈譴責。本事務委員會對於油尖旺區議會圍封渡船街天橋底以趕絕露宿者的工程表示遺憾，有關工程應立即停止。當局應立即協助該處的露宿者上樓，並為少數族裔提供聚會地方。此外，當局應立即檢討及增加綜援計劃下的租金津貼最高金額，並增加廉價單身人士宿舍及公屋供應，讓單身人士可於3年內上樓，長遠而言則應訂定露宿者政策。"

(Translation)

"That this Panel considers that the Government should adopt a humane and friendly attitude towards street sleepers instead of discriminating against them or even evicting them. This Panel expresses strong condemnation of such acts. This Panel expresses regret at the works commissioned by the Yau Tsim Mong District Council to evict all the street sleepers by fencing off the area under the Ferry Street flyover. The

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relevant works should be stopped immediately. The authorities should immediately help the street sleepers there move into PRH and provide a meeting place for ethnic minorities. In addition, the authorities should immediately review and raise the maximum level of rent allowance under the CSSA Scheme, as well as increase the number of low-cost singleton hostels and supply of public housing, with a view to enabling PRH allocation to single persons within three years. In the long run, a policy on street sleepers should be formulated."

58. All members present voted for the motion. The Chairman declared that the motion was carried.

V. Planning and inadequate provision of rehabilitation services for pre-school children

[LC Paper No.CB(2)1275/12-13(07) to (12) and CB(2)1293/12-13(01)]

59. At the invitation of the Deputy Chairman, Commissioner for Rehabilitation ("C for R") briefed members on the rehabilitation services for pre-school children provided by the Government. He also pointed out that the Community Care Fund ("CCF") had since December 2011 launched an assistance programme to provide training subsidy for pre-school children from low-income families who were in need of rehabilitation services. In view of the effectiveness of the programme and service demand, the then Steering Committee on CCF had endorsed the extension of the programme up to March 2014. SWD was considering incorporation of the programme into its regular subvented services and reviewing the operation mode of pre-school rehabilitation services.

Oral presentation by deputations

60. A total of 13 deputations presented views on the planning and inadequate provision of rehabilitation services for pre-school children. Their major concerns are summarized in **Appendix II**.

The Administration's response to deputations' views

61. C for R said that to increase the manpower of rehabilitation services, the student intake of Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Physiotherapy and Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Occupational Therapy programmes were

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raised from 70 to 110 and 46 to 90 places respectively. Furthermore, to alleviate the manpower shortage in the welfare sector, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University ("PolyU") introduced a two-year entry level Master in Occupational Therapy programme and a two-year entry level Master in Physiotherapy programme on a self-financing basis in January 2012. To encourage the graduates to join the welfare sector, SWD launched a training sponsorship scheme to provide full funding support for NGOs operating elderly and/or rehabilitation services to offer sponsorship to students who undertook to work in the welfare sector for at least two consecutive years immediately after graduation. SWD was discussing with PolyU for running a new round of such Master programmes after completion of the current round in January 2014. Moreover, the Enrolled Nurse Training Programmes for the welfare sector had been launched since 2006 providing a total of some 1 500 training places. SWD had earmarked \$160 million for a period of five years starting from 2013-2014 for organizing 10 more classes which would provide more than 1 200 training places to meet manpower demand in the welfare sector.

62. C for R also advised that the Food and Health Bureau had set up the Steering Committee on Strategic Review on Health Manpower Planning and Professional Development to formulate recommendations on, among others, ways to cope with anticipated demand for healthcare manpower. Furthermore, during the period from 2012-2013 to 2014-2015, SWD had earmarked \$344 million additional funding to subsidize non-governmental organizations ("NGOs") in recruiting paramedical staff or obtaining paramedical service to relieve the manpower shortage of NGOs. Besides, special child care workers had been offered two additional incremental pay points and annual training subsidies.

63. C for R further said that under the Committee on Free Kindergarten Education set up by the Education Bureau ("EDB"), the Sub-committee on Catering for Student Diversity would study issues relating to support for specific groups of kindergarten students, including children with special educational needs. Representatives of the Department of Health ("DH") and SWD were also members of the Sub-committee.

64. DDSW(S) said that there were other rehabilitation services available for children with disabilities while they waited for the services provided by subvented Special Child Care Centres ("SCCCs").

65. Senior Medical and Health Officer (Child Assessment Service) ("SMHO(CAS)) advised that DH had introduced, among others, workshops for parents to enhance their knowledge in common pre-school

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developmental and behavioural problems. On the two training methods for autistic children, viz. Applied Behaviour Analysis ("ABA") and Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication Handicapped Children ("TEACCH"), she said that although these methods were clinically proven to be effective, they might not be suitable for all autistic children as they had a wide spectrum of problems, including impairment in language development and social interaction. Rehabilitation centres usually adopted a combination of various training methods according to the individual needs of autistic children and the specific circumstances of the centres. DH would continue to review the latest evidence of different training methods and recommend those that were clinically proven to be effective.

Discussion

Inadequacy of pre-school rehabilitation services

66. Dr Fernando CHEUNG expressed dissatisfaction that there were no EDB representatives attending the meeting other than the representatives of SWD and DH. He said that the Administration had formed a wrong concept of rehabilitation services for pre-school children in that the provision of such services only fell within the purview of social welfare. The matter, in Dr CHEUNG's view, straddled different policy areas including education and should be dealt with by the collaboration between various Government departments.

67. Dr Fernando CHEUNG also said that the Administration was merely chanting slogans when it claimed that it strived to achieve early identification and assessment for children with developmental disorders through various measures. The fact was that the 1 200 additional pre-school rehabilitation places to be provided in the coming five year were hardly enough to meet the growing demand. Another worrying situation was the high turnover of staff in rehabilitation centres.

68. Dr Fernando CHEUNG held the view that the provision of training subsidy under the assistance programme of CCF could not help parents obtain self-financing services operated by NGOs, given that the subsidy amount was too small and there was a general lack of rehabilitation services in private market. Furthermore, parents were subject to a means test before they became eligible for the training subsidy. In his view, needy children were entitled to receiving free rehabilitation services since education was a basic human right rather than a welfare benefit. To solve these pressing problems, Dr CHEUNG asked about the measures

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being planned by the Administration to help parents acquire rehabilitation services for their needy children.

69. C for R replied that in addition to identifying more suitable sites to build rehabilitation facilities, the Administration was also exploring with NGOs on how to make better use of the land owned by NGOs through re-development or in-situ expansion with a view to providing more pre-school rehabilitation places. He also said that among the some 7 000 children waiting for subvented pre-school rehabilitation places, more than half of them were waiting for places in Early Education and Training Centres. Parents of these needy children could make use of the training subsidy provided under the assistance programme of CCF to enable their children to receive self-financing services operated by NGOs.

70. Mr Albert HO opined that the earlier the identification and assessment were carried out for children with developmental disorders, the lesser the resources and efforts that would be required for looking after them in the long run. In his view, the Administration had failed to conduct long-term planning for and lacked commitment to the provision of rehabilitation services for pre-school children. Moreover, he stressed that safeguarding the right of children with special needs to education was important, and the Administration was well-equipped to provide education for these children given its substantial financial reserve.

71. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung said that the Administration could not solely rely on CCF to solve the problem of inadequate provision of rehabilitation services for pre-school children since CCF had been committed to financing a large number of service programmes for needy persons. In his view, the Administration should provide regular funding for the provision of rehabilitation services for pre-school children.

72. DDSW(S) advised that the total estimate for providing training subsidy for pre-school children from low-income families under the assistance programme of CCF amounted to \$68.14 million. Should SWD require more funds to meet the expenses of the assistance programme, it would seek CCF's endorsement for additional funding. DDSW(S) further said that SWD would work out the relevant details should it decide to regularize the assistance programme.

73. Dr Helena WONG expressed disappointment at the increase of the average waiting time for the services of SCCCs and Integrated Programme in Kindergarten-cum-Child Care Centres and the Administration's lack of policy to address the problem. In her view, the training subsidy provided

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under the assistance programme of CCF was not adequate to meet the needs of parents with disabled children. She further cautioned that the increase of "doubly non-permanent resident children" ("DNR children") in recent years would worsen the situation.

74. C for R said that with the enhanced awareness of pre-school developmental and behavioural problems amongst parents in recent years, there had been a steady increase in the number of applications for assessment and rehabilitation services. He further clarified that the provision of training subsidy under the assistance programme of CCF was found effective in helping parents to meet the rehabilitation needs of their children.

75. The Deputy Chairman shared the concern that the Administration had been slow in increasing the pre-school rehabilitation places to meet the growing demand. He also said that whilst there was a genuine need to increase such places, efforts should also be spent on improving the training for professional staff to enable them to deliver quality services. He further stressed the importance of collaboration between Government departments/bureaux, such as SWD and EDB, in providing rehabilitation services for disabled children. The 15-year free education, if introduced, would not cover the rehabilitation services for children aged zero to three, and it was incumbent upon SWD to continue providing rehabilitation services for children belonging to this age group. He also questioned about the Administration's preparation for the likely increase of new applications for rehabilitation services from "DNR children".

76. DDSW(S) assured members that SWD would continue its role in providing rehabilitation services for needy pre-school children. C for R undertook to convey members' views to the relevant Government departments/bureaux on the likely increase of applications for rehabilitation services to be brought about by needy "DNR children".

77. The Chairman expressed strong disappointment that the inadequacy of rehabilitation services for pre-school children remained a serious problem over the years. She shared the view that early identification and assessment helped enhance the rehabilitation progress of disabled children, especially those aged zero to six, and thus save medical costs in the long run. In this connection, the Administration should allocate additional resources for adequate provision of rehabilitation services for pre-school children.

78. C for R explained that a mechanism had been put in place under the

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Maternal and Child Health Centres of DH to identify pre-school children with developmental problems. Needy children and their family members would be referred to the appropriate health and welfare service units for follow-up. The Administration would continue to step up efforts in increasing pre-school rehabilitation places to meet the growing demand.

Manpower shortage in rehabilitation sector

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79. Noting that needy children had to wait more than a year before they were provided with pre-school rehabilitation services, Mr POON Siu-ping asked whether the Administration had any planned targets for shortening the waiting time. To better understand the problem of manpower shortage, Mr POON requested the Administration to provide written information on the numbers of staff required for working and staff shortfall in each category of the rehabilitation sector, as well as the lead time for training the relevant staff.

80. C for R reiterated that SWD was considering incorporation of the assistance programme under CCF into its regular subvented services, with a view to shortening the waiting list for pre-school service. Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Rehabilitation and Medical Social Services) added that SWD aimed to get the relevant proposal ready in the second half of 2013 for consultation with stakeholders, including parents.

81. Given that needy children had to wait for a long time for the assessment services provided by the multidisciplinary assessment team under the Child Assessment Service ("CAS") of DH, Dr LEUNG Ka-lau sought information on the weekly standard working hours of the professional staff of this assessment team and whether compensation would be offered to them when they had to work overtime.

82. SMHO(CAS) responded that while the standard working hours of the professional staff was 44 hours per week, some professional staff of CAS had already been working overtime to deal with administrative matters and clinical duties, though without extra pay for their overtime work.

83. Dr LEUNG Ka-lau suggested making structural change to the system by offering compensation to professional staff to work overtime to provide assessment services for those needy children who were on the waiting list. C for R undertook to reflect Dr LEUNG's view to DH for consideration.

[To allow sufficient time for discussion, the meeting was extended for 15 minutes beyond the appointed ending time.]

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Training methods for children with autism

84. At the Deputy Chairman's invitation, Ms Josephine CHEUNG of the Hong Kong Integrated Education Concern Association said that ABA and TEACCH, which applied intensive and continuous training mode, had been clinically proven effective for children with autism. Nonetheless, the Administration did not adopt these training methods in its subvented rehabilitation services.

85. SMHO(CAS) responded that in addition to ABA and TEACCH, there were also other training methods available for autistic children. As ABA was very labour intensive, and given the great demand for pre-school rehabilitation services, the full ABA model was not commonly used. Most of the subvented rehabilitation services would adopt an integrated approach, using a mix of the various training models with respect to the needs of different children. Many subvented services were using TEACCH in their training programmes.

86. The Deputy Chairman said that since ABA and TEACCH had been found effective for autistic children, the Government should encourage provision of these training methods in the subvented rehabilitation services.

Motion

87. Dr Fernando CHEUNG moved and the Chairman put the following motion to vote -

"對於有特殊教育需要的幼兒，零至6歲是他們受訓及發展的"黃金期"。因此，及早識別和及早介入是必需的。可是，現時輪候評估往往要半年以上，而獲分配學前兒童康復服務名額，卻要等一年以上。目前服務名額只有6 000多個，輪候人數卻達7 000人，導致很多幼兒要等待至5歲後才獲得有限的服務，錯失"黃金期"。當局對此視若無睹，而且欠缺規劃，本事務委員會對此表示遺憾。本事務委員會促請當局大幅增加學前兒童康復服務名額，並成立跨部門機制，制訂學前兒童康復政策，就服務名額、專業及輔助人手、地方及設施，以及資源等作出長遠規劃。本事務委員會認為，教育是基本人權而非福利，有特殊教育需要的幼兒實在不應要輪候接受訓練及教育的機會。"

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(Translation)

"That as far as young children with special educational needs are concerned, the age from zero to six years is the "golden period" for their training and development. Early identification and early intervention are therefore essential. However, the current waiting time for assessment often exceeds half a year, and it takes more than one year for the allocation of a pre-school rehabilitation service place. There are currently only 6 000-plus service places, but the number of waitlistees has reached 7 000, rendering it necessary for young children to wait beyond the age of five only to receive limited services and thus missing the "golden period". This Panel expresses regret that the authorities have turned a blind eye to this situation and are lack of planning. This Panel urges the authorities to substantially increase pre-school rehabilitation service places, establish an inter-departmental mechanism for formulating a policy on rehabilitation of pre-school children, and making long-term planning on service places, manpower (for both professional and supporting staff), premises, facilities, resources and so on. This Panel considers education a basic human right rather than a welfare benefit. Children with special educational needs should not be required to wait for an opportunity to receive training and education."

88. All members present voted for the motion. The Chairman declared that the motion was carried.

VI. Any other business

89. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:44 pm.

Panel on Welfare Services

Meeting on Monday, 10 June 2013

Support for street sleepers who are not on Comprehensive Social Security Assistance

Summary of views and concerns expressed by deputations/individuals

No.	Name of deputation	Major views and concerns
1.	Right to Concern Single Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● According to the study conducted by the Society for Community Organization ("SoCO") in 2012 on street sleepers who were not on Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ("CSSA"), only 2.9% of the respondents indicated that street sleeping was their personal choice, while about 70% and 27.5% of the respondents attributed street sleeping to difficulty in finding jobs and high rental of private housing respectively. ● Job security was a major concern for street sleepers according to the SoCO's study. While 63% of the respondents were employed, 62% of them were casual workers who were not entitled to provident funds or protection given to holders of permanent posts. ● The monthly median income of the respondents, which was \$5,000, was insufficient to meet the high rental of private housing.
2.	Civil Party [LC Paper No.CB(2)1421/12-13(01)]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The services provided by the Integrated Services Team for Street Sleepers ("IST") were not fully utilized by street sleepers. As some street sleepers were not in a stable mental state and therefore were unable to clearly express themselves, IST services were out of reach for them. Others did not choose to receive such services due to their unwillingness to disclose their problems. ● Many street sleepers did not meet the eligibility criteria for CSSA as they did not have bank accounts and official documents to prove their residential address. ● The requirement that able-bodied CSSA applicants had sought employment without success for one month before being eligible for CSSA benefits should be waived for applicants who

No.	Name of deputation	Major views and concerns
		<p>were homeless street sleepers, so that they could make use of CSSA payments to meet accommodation expenses of private housing, reimbursement of which was to be based on actually incurred expenses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consideration should be given to opening under-utilized community centres in urban areas and refurbishing vacant schools to provide daytime shelter for street sleepers. The service of community canteens should be expanded to facilitate street sleepers to receive the service.
3.	8 representatives for street sleepers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● High rental of private housing was a major concern for these representatives of street sleepers. ● Rent allowance under the CSSA Scheme was inadequate for street sleepers on CSSA to meet the accommodation expenses of private housing. ● The living condition of sub-divided units was poor and undesirable. ● The supply of public housing units should be increased, and the points system under the public housing scheme should be improved to enable singletons to be eligible for public housing. ● The decision to fence off the area under the Ferry Street flyover affected those street sleepers who had been staying there for a period of time. ● It was incumbent upon the Administration to provide shelter and food for street sleepers and safeguard their rights. ● Street sleepers felt hopeless and did not see the possibility of getting stable job and accommodation.
4.	Society for Community Organization [LC Paper Nos.CB(2)1318/12-13(01)-(04)]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SoCO criticized the Yau Tsim Mong District Council for commissioning greening works in the area under the Ferry Street flyover to evict street sleepers. ● SoCO considered it unacceptable that seven Government departments, including the Home Affairs Department, did not raise objection to the works. ● SoCO pointed out that it was a policy of the Administration to provide interim housing as

No.	Name of deputation	Major views and concerns
		<p>temporary accommodation for persons affected by clearance operation of their housing, and questioned why the street sleepers affected by the greening works to be carried out in the area under the Ferry Street flyover were not provided with interim housing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SoCO also pointed out that before 2005 the Administration had provided accommodation for single persons in singleton hostels at a monthly rental of \$430.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
24 October 2013

Panel on Welfare Services

Meeting on Monday, 10 June 2013

Planning and inadequate provision of rehabilitation services for pre-school children

Summary of views and concerns expressed by deputations/individuals

No.	Name of deputation	Major views and concerns
1.	Hong Kong Joint Council for People with Disabilities/Hong Kong Council of Social Service [LC Paper No.CB(2)1275/12-13(09)]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● While striving to shorten the waiting time for pre-school rehabilitation services, the Administration should increase the manpower of professional staff, set up rehabilitation centres in every district and review the floor area of rehabilitation centres to provide more space for rehabilitation activities. ● It was necessary to provide support services for parents with disabled children as these parents were prone to emotional problems. ● Pre-school children with special needs should be provided with 15-year free education. ● It was important to enhance the co-ordination between Government departments, rehabilitation organizations and parent groups to provide timely assessment and training services for children with disabilities.
2.	Heep Hong Parents' Association [LC Paper No.CB(2)1421/12-13(03)]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Administration should provide early identification and assessment services for pre-school children with special needs. ● Individual Government departments should work closely to provide rehabilitation services for pre-school children and formulate the relevant policies. ● New mode of services should be adopted by extending pre-school rehabilitation services to all pre-school education institutions, so as to provide timely and appropriate services for needy children.

No.	Name of deputation	Major views and concerns
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consideration should be given to providing \$3,000 for median income families and those under the median income level on a monthly basis to purchase self-financing services from non-governmental organizations ("NGOs").
3.	<p>The Parents' Association of Pre-school Handicapped Children [LC Paper No.CB(2)1318/12-13(05)]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Early training was critical to the developmental skills and intellectual ability of pre-school children with disabilities. ● In order not to miss the golden time of their disabled children, i.e. from birth to six years old, many parents purchased self-financing services at high costs, while their children waited for the subvented services. ● The implementation of the assistance programme provided by the Community Care Fund ("CCF") to offer training subsidy for pre-school children from low-income families gave rise to the increase of service fees charged by NGOs. ● Additional resources should be allocated for the increase of front-line staff in rehabilitation centres.
4.	<p>Hong Kong Christian Service [LC Paper No.CB(2)1275/12-13(10)]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Administration should ensure that pre-school children received assessment service within two months after they had applied for the service. ● The Administration should expeditiously increase pre-school rehabilitation places. ● To alleviate the pressure of parents in looking after their disabled children, the Administration should provide training and support for parents. ● More manpower resources should be provided for NGOs operating rehabilitation services for pre-school children with disabilities.
5.	<p>Ms CHOW Ming-yan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pre-school rehabilitation services were of paramount importance to the development of children with disabilities. ● As the turnover of staff in rehabilitation centres was high, it was necessary for the Administration to allocate more resources to these centres to enable them to maintain a stable

No.	Name of deputation	Major views and concerns
		<p>manpower.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Administration should ensure that assessment service was provided for children with disabilities on an ongoing basis.
6.	<p>Hong Kong Christian Service Chih Ai parents' Association [LC Paper No.CB(2)1318/12-13(06)]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It was recommended that under the Developmental Surveillance Scheme implemented at the Maternal and Child Health Centres ("MCHCs"), children should be continually assessed when they aged two, three and four to achieve early identification for children with developmental disorders. ● Consideration should be given to enhancing the quality of pre-school rehabilitation services by shortening the waiting time, providing support services for families, reviewing the supply of manpower and the floor area of rehabilitation centres. ● The Administration should promote the public's awareness and acceptance of children with special needs.
7.	<p>Ms PANG Sze-yau</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It was important to include pre-school children with disabilities in the provision of 15-year free education. ● An inter-departmental steering committee should be set up to co-ordinate the provision of support services for parents with disabled children. ● MCHCs should extend its identification service to cover every pre-school child. ● Additional manpower resources should be provided for rehabilitation centres to alleviate the workload of their staff.
8.	<p>明愛康復服務學前服務家長諮詢委員會 [LC Paper No.CB(2)1275/12-13(11)]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Early intervention and assessment services not only helped to provide timely treatment for needy children, but also minimized resources that would be required for rehabilitating these children in the future. ● The Administration should address the serious shortage of professional staff, such as speech therapists and occupational therapists.

No.	Name of deputation	Major views and concerns
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-school children with special needs were entitled to the right to education.
9.	Ms LAI Sui-mui [LC Paper No.CB(2)1275/12-13(12)]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The services provided by Special Child Care Centres ("SCCC") were important to the developmental skills of children with autism. • The turnover of staff teaching Integrated Programme in Kindergarten-cum-Child Care Centres ("IP in KG-cum-CCC") was high. • Teachers assigned to teach IP in KG-cum-CCC were not equipped with the knowledge to look after autistic children. • The Administration should improve the quality and monitor the teaching of IP in KG-cum-CCC.
10.	Hong Kong Integrated Education Concern Association [LC Paper No.CB(2)1421/12-13(02)]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To facilitate needy children receiving continuous rehabilitation services, the Administration should allow rehabilitation centres to provide services to children even when they are aged six and above. • It was necessary to strengthen the trainings for MCHC staff to enhance their skills in communicating with parents of children with special needs. • It was suggested that a central database should be set up and managed by bodies such as the Hospital Authority, with details of children with special needs such as records of assessment, rehabilitation and training, and that parents should be permitted to access such records. • Applied Behaviour Analysis and Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication Handicapped Children, which had been proved to be effective in training autistic children, should be widely adopted.
11.	The Spastics Association of Hong Kong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Administration should expedite the increase of pre-school rehabilitation places and the manpower planning to meet the growing demand for rehabilitation services. • While the Social Welfare Department was considering the incorporation of the assistance programme under CCF to provide training subsidy for pre-school children from low-income

No.	Name of deputation	Major views and concerns
		<p>families, it should also consider extending the assistance programme to cover all pre-school children with special needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It was necessary to strengthen the overall support services for parents, and review the support services provided under Parents/Relatives Resource Centre. ● Pre-school children with special needs were entitled to the right to education and should be included in the provision of 15-year free education. An inter-departmental working group should be set up to study the matter.
12.	Ms NG Chong-fai	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There was a genuine need for the Administration to increase pre-school rehabilitation places. ● Additional resources should be allocated for the provision of education services to pre-school children with special needs to enhance their overall development. ● It was important to increase the salary of pre-school teachers working in SCCC with a view to maintaining the workforce.
13.	Society for the Welfare of the Autistic Persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To alleviate the financial burden of parents, the Administration should provide cash assistance for parents to purchase rehabilitation services from private providers while these parents waited for subvented services for their needy children. ● Timely rehabilitation and training were crucial to the integration into the community of children with special needs.