

For discussion  
on 21 January 2013

## **Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services**

### **2013 Policy Address**

#### **Policy Initiatives of the Labour and Welfare Bureau**

#### **Introduction**

The Chief Executive delivered his 2013 Policy Address on 16 January 2013. This paper sets out the new and on-going welfare initiatives of the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB) and Social Welfare Department (SWD).

#### **Vision**

In the area of social welfare, we encourage self-reliance, building harmonious families, supporting the underprivileged and facilitating social development. We believe that social welfare policies and measures should provide the basic needs for all in our community as well as support and care for the underprivileged. Moreover, we should focus on personal development and unleash the potential of young people so that they can become self-reliant. We should also focus on strengthening the role of family as the cradle for personal growth, as harmonious and supportive relationships can help families withstand adversity. Through implementing sustainable and effective social welfare policies and measures, we aim at improving the quality of individuals, promoting inclusivity among different social groups, as well as garnering their collective strength for furthering social development.

2. Poverty alleviation and elderly care are the priorities of the current term Government. Over the past ten years or so, there has been considerable economic growth and Hong Kong is an affluent society as a whole. On the other hand, there are still many from the low-income working class who may not benefit and have to live a hand-to-mouth existence. The poor elderly and disadvantaged groups are also having a difficult livelihood. We must enhance our poverty alleviation work. At the same time, we should take into account the current economic and social development circumstances when formulating social welfare policies. Our aim is to help underprivileged people capable of working by offering them opportunities to become self-reliant and improve their

livelihood. Public resources should be devoted to those who cannot provide for themselves.

## **New initiatives**

### ***Complementing the Work of Commission on Poverty***

3. The Government has re-instated the Commission on Poverty (CoP) and will take forward poverty alleviation work at three levels. The Chief Executive will chair the annual Poverty Summit to set directions and reinforce the over-arching strategies. The Chief Secretary will chair the CoP to coordinate specific measures. The six task force underpinning CoP will focus on specific areas.

4. The focus of the CoP is to develop poverty alleviation policies. These include reviewing the effectiveness of existing poverty alleviation policies, formulating new policies to prevent and alleviate both poverty and social exclusion, as well as promoting upward social mobility. LWB and other relevant policy bureaux will complement the work of the CoP.

5. The CoP held its first meeting in December last year. It has identified the setting of a poverty line in the light of the actual situation of Hong Kong as one of its priorities. The poverty line serves three functions: quantifying the poverty-stricken population for a focused analysis of the situation of various groups living below the poverty line; investigating closely into the causes of poverty and serving as a guiding reference for policy formulation so that our poverty alleviation efforts can be more effective; and assessing the effectiveness of our poverty alleviation policies against changes in the size of the poverty-stricken population.

### ***Social Security and Retirement Protection***

6. The Social Security and Retirement Protection Task Force under the CoP will focus on policy matters related to the social security and retirement protection system.

7. In addition, LWB is undertaking the preparatory work for the establishment of an inter-departmental working group to study the proposal to allow people with loss of one limb to apply for Disability Allowance (DA) and related issues. The working group will report to and seek steer from the Task Force on Social Security and Retirement

Protection.

### ***Strengthening Elderly Care Services***

8. Promoting “ageing in place as the core, institutional care as back-up” is the policy objective of elderly care services. To this end, we will strengthen the community care services (CCS) and residential care services (RCS) by implementing the following initiatives.

#### *Strengthen conventional subsidised CCS*

9. To strengthen conventional subsidised CCS, we will continue to increase the provision of day care places and extend the service hours of the new day care centres and units for the elderly.

#### *Increase subsidised residential care places*

10. While most of the elderly prefer ageing in the community, some frail ones will need institutional care. We will continue to strengthen RCS by increasing the provision of subsidised residential care places. In the long run, we will continue to identify sites for constructing new residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs). We will explore the feasibility of incorporating RCHE facilities into redevelopment projects, and convert vacant buildings into RCHEs. From now to 2014-15, SWD will provide over 1 700 new subsidised places. We have also earmarked sites in 11 development projects for constructing new contract homes.

#### *Redeveloping the Wong Chuk Hang Hospital*

11. The site of the Wong Chuk Hang Hospital has the potential for being developed into a new residential care home that provides infirmary and nursing care for frail but medically stable elders, as well as additional residential care places. We will join hands with the Food and Health Bureau and the Hospital Authority (HA) to work out the details of the project.

#### *Offering diversified choices*

12. We will review the implementation of and the elderly people’s feedback on the Pilot Scheme on CCS Voucher for the Elderly, and explore the feasibility of adopting this voucher subsidy mode for RCS. We will conduct a review some time after the implementation of the “Old Age Living Allowance (OALA)” and the “Guangdong (GD) Scheme”.

The latter Scheme is so designed that Hong Kong elderly people living in GD will be eligible for the Old Age Allowance. Based on the findings of the review, we will explore the feasibility of allowing elderly people who choose to settle on the Mainland after retirement to receive the OALA in GD.

### ***Enhancing Rehabilitation Services for Persons with Disabilities***

#### ***Promoting and implementing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (the Convention)***

13. It has all along been the development direction of our rehabilitation policy to help persons with disabilities develop their potential and build a barrier-free environment with a view to enabling them to participate in full and enjoy equal opportunities both in their social life and personal growth. These objectives are consistent with the spirit and core values enshrined in the Convention. Promotion and implementation of the Convention is an ongoing initiative. It is also the direction of continued development of rehabilitation services in Hong Kong.

14. All government bureaux and departments are fully aware that in formulating policies and implementing programmes, they need to take into account the provisions under the Convention. For policies and measures which may bring about significant impact on persons with disabilities, bureaux and departments are required to suitably consult the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee, persons with disabilities and other stakeholders to ensure that these policies and measures can adequately cater for the needs of persons with disabilities, thereby facilitating their full integration into society.

15. The Commissioner for Rehabilitation (C for R) is responsible to the Secretary for Labour and Welfare for the formulation of the overall rehabilitation policy for persons with disabilities, and for co-ordinating and facilitating all government departments, public organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the development and provision of rehabilitation services. Following the application of the Convention to Hong Kong, C for R has henceforth taken up the role as the focal point within the HKSAR Government for matters relating to the implementation of the Convention. To enhance co-ordination among various policy bureaux and departments in implementing the Convention, we will review the C for R's ranking, duties and responsibilities, as well as the establishment and manpower of his team.

*Enhancing the day and residential care services for persons with disabilities*

16. To meet the keen demand for day training and residential care services for persons with disabilities, we will continue to provide more service places, and identify suitable sites and premises as early as possible to increase the supply. In this regard, SWD is now actively studying the feasibility of redeveloping the former sites of Siu Lam Hospital in Tuen Mun and Kai Nang Sheltered Workshop and Hostel in Kwun Tong into integrated rehabilitation services centres. Subject to the findings of the technical feasibility study, these two projects can provide a total of about 2 000 places of day training and residential care services for persons with disabilities, which can help relieve the shortage of such places.

17. We are mindful of the need of the service users of residential care homes and day training centres for persons with disabilities for a higher level of care and support owing to ageing. We will increase the manpower for residential care homes and day training centres for persons with disabilities to enhance the care and support for ageing service users.

*Strengthening the community support for persons with severe disabilities*

18. We understand that persons with severe physical and/ or intellectual disabilities require a higher level of care and support. We are also mindful of the immense pressure faced by their family members and carers. To strengthen the support for this most vulnerable group, we launched a three-year pilot scheme in March 2011 to provide persons with severe disabilities who are living in the community and are on the waiting lists for subvented residential care services with a package of home-based care services.

19. To relieve the stress of their family members and carers, and assist persons with severe disabilities to continue to live in the community, thereby facilitating their full integration into the community, we will regularise the service in March 2014, i.e. following the completion of the three-year pilot scheme, and extend it to all the districts in Hong Kong. We will also extend the coverage of service targets to include persons with severe disabilities who are not on the waiting list for residential care home services.

20. Furthermore, the Community Care Fund (CCF) currently provides a Special Care Subsidy to persons with severe disabilities from

low-income families. The CCF plans to introduce a new programme to subsidise persons with severe physical disabilities to rent respiratory support medical equipment. Meanwhile, SWD and HA are studying the feasibility of introducing a case management-oriented service programme to support persons with severe physical disabilities who are in need of constant nursing care and are not receiving the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme. This programme is designed to enable them to live in the community by relieving their financial burden in terms of medical equipment, consumables and care services.

*Promoting employment for persons with disabilities*

21. Employment is instrumental in facilitating integration of groups with special needs, including persons with disabilities, into the community. The Chief Executive urges all employers to give them more employment opportunities. The Government will set an example – we will work with the private sector and NGOs to further provide employment opportunities for them, unleashing their potential. We will foster a culture of social integration and build a caring society.

22. To promote the employment for persons with disabilities, thereby facilitating their self-reliance and integration into the community, we have all along provided employment support and vocational rehabilitation training for them so as to enhance their job skills and assist them in securing suitable employment commensurate with their abilities.

23. From 2013-14 onwards, we will increase the job attachment allowance and wage subsidy for job trial under the “On the Job Training Programme for People with Disabilities” and the “Sunnyway – On the Job Training Programme for Young People with Disabilities”. Meanwhile, we will continue to closely monitor the impact of the statutory minimum wage on the employment for persons with disabilities, and further enhance the employment support measures when necessary.

*Enhancing transport services for persons with disabilities*

24. To meet the special transport needs of persons with disabilities, the Government has all along been subsidising NGOs to provide point-to-point Rehabus service for persons with disabilities who have difficulties in using public transport. In 2013-14, the Government will further improve the Rehabus service. In addition, we are considering the technical arrangements for extending the Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme for the Elderly and Eligible Persons with Disabilities

(the Scheme) to eligible children with disabilities aged below 12. After implementing such extension, eligible persons with disabilities, irrespective of their age, could travel on the MTR, franchised buses and ferries at a concessionary fare of \$2 per trip.

### ***Support and Services for Youth***

25. We provide subventions for NGOs to offer young people a series of preventive, developmental and remedial welfare services with a view to cultivating a sense of responsibility among them so that they may contribute to society. Our service strategy is to provide timely support through cross-sectoral and inter-departmental collaboration as well as early identification of needy youth to guide them onto the right track. To better take care of the need of high-risk youth and tackle the growing problem of juvenile gangs, we have set up three youth outreaching teams, one each in Tseung Kwan O, Ma On Shan and Tung Chung in January 2013 so that we can reach out to more youths at risk and provide them with timely counselling, support and guidance.

26. To support youth employment during the economic downturn, the Government created 3 000 temporary work opportunities under NGOs for young people aged between 15 and 29 in 2008. Currently, about 2 600 young people are still employed in these temporary positions which are due to lapse in March this year. The Government has decided to extend the temporary work opportunities concerned for 12 months, which will incur an expenditure of some \$270 million. The extension will give LWB and NGOs concerned more time to help the young people concerned find suitable employment.

### ***Social Welfare Planning***

27. We understand that the social welfare sector is concerned about the planning of sites and manpower for welfare services. The Government attaches great importance to this. All departments concerned have been maintaining close communication to identify suitable sites for social welfare facilities. We will also explore the possibility of reserving land or premises in new development projects or redevelopment projects, where appropriate, for welfare facilities. LWB has been discussing with social welfare organisations on how to make better use of the land owned by NGOs. Through redevelopment or expansion, we hope to provide diversified subvented and self-financing facilities to meet the needs of welfare services. We will, throughout the process, proactively consider using the Lotteries Fund more flexibly and

work out ways to provide targeted assistance to landowners during the planning or development process.

28. On the other hand, we are aware of the social welfare sector's demand for allied health workers and frontline care staff and are particularly concerned about the manpower shortage in elderly services and rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities. To cope with the demand, we have allocated funding to increase the number of training places for nurses and allied health professionals (including physiotherapists, occupational therapists etc.) for the three years starting from 2012-13.

### **On-going initiatives**

#### ***Poverty Alleviation Measures under LWB***

##### *Continuing to implement and improve "Child Development Fund"*

29. The objective of the Child Development Fund (CDF) is to promote the longer-term development of children from a disadvantaged background, with a view to reducing intergenerational poverty. The CDF has rolled out three batches of projects, benefitting more than 4 400 children. With funding from the CDF and assistance from voluntary mentors, NGOs implement projects specially designed for the participating children. NGOs provide guidance for the children on how to draw up their personal development plans, and make good use of their savings, matching donations and the special financial incentive provided by the Government to implement the plans. Taking into account the implementation experience and the consultant's recommendations, we are considering how to enhance the projects.

##### *Continuing to implement "Short-term Food Assistance Service"*

30. The objective of the "Short-term Food Assistance Service" is to provide short-term food assistance for needy people who temporarily cannot cope with the basic food expenses. By the end of November 2012, the scheme had already served over 104 000 people. We will continue to implement the service.



## ***Social Security and Retirement Protection***

### *“Old Age Living Allowance” and “Guangdong Scheme”*

31. SWD is taking forward at full steam the preparations for the OALA with a view to implementing it in April 2013. We estimate that over 400 000 elderly people will benefit from the OALA. Meanwhile, SWD is making preparations for the GD Scheme under which eligible Hong Kong elderly persons who choose to reside in GD can receive full-year Old Age Allowance there without having to return to Hong Kong each year. We aim to launch the Scheme as soon as practicable within the second half of 2013.

### *Continuing to implement the integrated employment assistance service programmes under the CSSA Scheme*

32. To integrate and improve the employment assistance services under the CSSA Scheme for enhanced effectiveness and synergy, SWD has launched the “Integrated Employment Assistance Programme for Self-reliance” on 1 January 2013. Through the integrated programme, NGOs can provide employable CSSA recipients with multifarious and one-stop employment assistance services on a family basis and according to their individual needs so as to enhance their employability.

## ***Elderly Care Services***

### *Implement the Pilot Scheme on CCS Voucher for the Elderly*

33. SWD will roll out the First Phase of the Pilot Scheme on CCS Voucher for the Elderly (the pilot scheme) in September 2013. The pilot scheme will adopt a new funding mode, i.e. “money-follows-the-user” approach. Eligible elderly may choose the services that suit their individual needs with the use of service vouchers.

34. To encourage NGOs and social enterprises to participate in the pilot scheme as service providers, SWD will provide one-off seed money to eligible participating organisations to cover items such as vehicles for transporting the elderly to and from the service units, furniture and equipment for day and home care services.

*Implement the Improvement Programme of Elderly Centres (IPEC)*

35. The Government will continue to implement IPEC to enhance the physical setting and facilities of 237 elderly centres. The first renovated elderly centre under IPEC will serve the elderly with a new look in February 2013.

*Promoting a Sense of Worthiness Among the Elderly*

36. We will continue to promote a sense of worthiness among the elderly, enhance harmony across generations and encourage lifelong learning through the “Opportunities for the Elderly Project”, “Neighbourhood Active Ageing Project” and “Elder Academy Scheme”.

***Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme for the Elderly and Eligible Persons with Disabilities (the Scheme)***

37. To help build a caring and inclusive society by encouraging the elderly and persons with disabilities to participate more in community activities, we have already implemented Phases 1 and 2 of the Scheme on the MTR and four franchised bus companies in end-June and early-August last year respectively. This enables elderly people aged 65 or above and eligible persons with disabilities to travel on these transport modes any time at a concessionary fare of \$2 per trip. Our current priority is to launch Phase 3 of the Scheme on New Lantao Bus and ferries around March this year. In addition, as mentioned in paragraph 24 above, we are considering the technical arrangements for extending the Scheme to children with 100% disabilities aged below 12 receiving CSSA or DA.

***Rehabilitation Services***

*Enhancing the services of the Integrated Community Centres for Mental Wellness*

38. In 2010, SWD allocated about \$135 million to revamp the existing community mental health services and set up Integrated Community Centres for Mental Wellness in all 18 districts. One-stop community support services ranging from prevention to risk management are provided to discharged mental patients, persons with suspected mental health problems, their families and carers as well residents living in the serving district. In 2011-12 and 2012-13, the Government further allocated a total of about \$48 million, bringing the annual allocation to

over \$180 million. In 2013-14, we will continue to strengthen the manpower of these centres to dovetail with HA's "Case Management Programme" for patients with severe mental illness and provide service to more people in need.

### *Building a barrier-free community*

39. We have been all along striving to build a barrier-free community, including prescribing design standards to ensure that suitable barrier-free access facilities are provided in buildings. To speed up the process of improving the accessibility of government premises, public housing and connecting road facilities, we have taken forward a comprehensive retrofitting programme at full steam to upgrade the barrier-free facilities for about 3 500 existing government premises and facilities, as well as about 240 public housing estates at a total cost of \$1.3 billion. The programme covered all government venues with frequent public interface. Retrofitting works for around 90% of these venues were completed as scheduled by end-June 2012. We will continue to press ahead with the remaining works with a view to completing them by end-June 2014 as scheduled. As for public walkways, the Government announced in August 2012 that a lift installation programme would be launched to provide a "universally accessible" environment in the community so as to facilitate the general public in using the public walkways.

### ***Strengthen Child Residential Services and Tackle Domestic Violence***

40. In order to help children and youngsters who cannot be adequately cared for by their families temporarily, the Government has been providing various types of free residential care services through NGOs. From 2012-13, we have increased in phases the number of places for residential child care services. We will also raise the foster care allowance, including the maintenance grant for foster children and incentive payment for foster parents.

41. The Government has adopted a zero tolerance approach for domestic violence and has been dealing with the problem through a three-pronged strategy, viz. prevention of domestic violence, providing support to victims of domestic violence and provision of specialised services and crisis intervention. The Government has also strived to raise the public awareness of domestic violence and enhanced professional and supporting services through the promotion of inter-departmental and cross-sectoral collaboration.

## *Development of Women*

42. Women play an important role in the development of Hong Kong. The proportion of women in the managerial and executive positions as well as professional occupations has grown by 6.5% and 7.7% respectively in the past ten years. In the public sector, the proportion of women in government advisory and statutory bodies has also increased from about 21% in 2002 to about 33% in 2012. The figures show the rising economic and social status of women.

43. The Women's Commission (WoC) has been working proactively to enhance women's capacities, conduct public education programmes and promote the interests and well-being of women. To encourage women to pursue lifelong learning, the Government will turn the Capacity Building Mileage Programme into a recurrent project. Courses conducted in English and Putonghua will be introduced for ethnic minority and new arrival women. WoC has also launched this year the "Funding Scheme for Women's Development" to support projects which can promote women's physical and psychological wellness. We will also consider ways to strengthen communication and collaboration with the women's groups and related bodies to promote women interests.

44. Other on-going initiatives under LWB are at Annex.

## *Conclusion*

45. The Government has invested vast resources in social welfare. The recurrent expenditure in this financial year (i.e. 2012-13) is estimated to \$44 billion, accounting for 16.7% of the recurrent expenditure of the Government as a whole. This demonstrates the Government's commitment to social welfare. However, we must not rely solely on the Government for the planning and provision of social welfare services. The key to success of various policies and measures lies in the close collaboration of the Government, the social welfare and business sectors and the community with a view to establishing cross-sectoral network and collaboration.

Social Welfare Department  
Labour and Welfare Bureau  
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## **On-going initiatives by the Labour and Welfare Bureau**

### **Social Security**

- Assistance is provided mainly through the non-contributory Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) and Social Security Allowance (SSA) Schemes (currently made up of Old Age Allowance (OAA) and Disability Allowance (DA)) to help members of the community who are in need of financial or material assistance, persons with severe disabilities and the elderly meet basic and special needs.
- The ongoing initiatives in respect of social security include implementing the CSSA Scheme which provides cash assistance for those in need on a means-tested basis; implementing the SSA Scheme which provides allowances for the severely disabled and the elderly; continuing to develop a new computer system to replace the existing Computerised Social Security System; and providing a wide range of training programmes for social security staff in investigation and verification techniques, customer service skills as well as management and legal knowledge.
- To supplement the living expenses of needy Hong Kong elderly persons aged 65 or above, the Government will introduce the “Old Age Living Allowance” under the SSA Scheme. Each eligible elderly person will receive a monthly allowance of \$2,200. The Social Welfare Department (SWD) is gearing up with the preparation work in full speed with the aim of rolling out the new allowance in April this year.

### **Elderly Care Services**

- To continue to allocate additional resources to strengthen subsidised community and residential care services in order to provide elderly care services for needy elderly which suit their needs.
- The Government will continue to implement the Integrated Discharge Support Programme for the Elderly Patients (IDSP) to help elderly with long-term care needs to age in place. IDSP provides one-stop services to elderly patients and their carers. The number of elderly to be served each year is expected to be around

33 000. We will also continue to implement the three-year “Pilot Scheme on Home Care Services for Frail Elders”. The Pilot Scheme provides a more comprehensive home-based service to elderly waiting for subsidised Nursing Home places. The number of beneficiaries is about 550. As for carers support, we will continue to implement “District-based Scheme Carer Training” and provide respite service for the elderly, with a view to assisting carers in looking after their elders.

- To assist frail elders who need residential care services to receive appropriate and quality subsidised residential care services, the Government will continue to make every effort to enhance the service quality of residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) under the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme (EBPS). Under the Conversion Programme, the Government will continue to improve the quality of subsidised residential care places for the elderly in subvented RCHEs by upgrading residential care places without a continuum of care (COC) to long-term care places with COC. At present, 69 subvented RCHEs have already participated in the Conversion Programme.
- In addition, the Government will continue to provide the Dementia Supplement (DS) to subvented RCHEs, EBPS homes and day care centres/ units for the elderly (DEs/ DCUs) so that these service units can employ additional staff (including physiotherapists, nurses, social workers, etc.) or procure relevant professional services for this purpose, thereby strengthening the training programmes and services for demented service users, and the support to their carers.
- To alleviate the problem of nurses shortage in the welfare sector, SWD, in collaboration with the Hospital Authority, has been running a two-year full-time programme to train enrolled nurses for the welfare sector since 2006. Eleven classes have been organised so far and one more will be organised in February 2013. The 12 classes altogether will provide 1 470 training places. The trainees of the first four classes have graduated and about 90% of them have joined the welfare sector.
- We will continue to promote a sense of worthiness among the elderly and the concept of “active ageing” and encourage the elderly to pursue continuous learning through the Elder Academy Scheme. In the 2012/13 school year, a total of 110 elder academies are operating in primary schools, secondary schools and tertiary institutions all

over the territory. The Government also set up the Elder Academy Development Foundation by end-2009 to ensure that the Scheme would continue to develop.

- We will continue to establish neighbourhood support networks for the elderly through the Neighbourhood Active Ageing Project (NAAP). A total of 75 district projects have been completed. A new phase of the NAAP commenced in April 2012. More than 60 district projects will be launched to promote harmonious family relationship and enhance neighbourhood support networks.
- We will continue to provide one-stop information on elderly services and products, encourage the elderly to keep pace with the times and enriches their social life through the elderly-friendly internet portal, “eElderly”. SWD will continue to fund a variety of activities and support carers of the elderly under the Opportunities for the Elderly Project.

### **Family and Child Welfare Services**

- In order to prevent personal and family problems and provide early intervention, three new Integrated Family Service Centres (IFSCs) in Kowloon City & Yau Tsim Mong District, Kwun Tong District and Yuen Long District will be set up in early 2013, bringing the total number of IFSCs to 65. IFSCs in various districts provide a convenient and effective platform for the integration of single-parent families, new arrivals and ethnic minorities into the community.
- The Government regularised and extended the coverage of the Neighborhood Support Child Care Project to all 18 districts since October 2011. At present, at least 720 child care places are available over the territory. The service operators have the flexibility to provide additional home-based child care places on top of the minimum requirement set by SWD to meet the actual service demand.
- The Government has extended the Comprehensive Child Development Service to all 18 districts within 2012-13. The service aims to identify and rectify at an early stage the developmental problems of children aged five and below so as to lay a solid foundation and provide early intervention for problems that may affect their growth.

- To further enhance the residential child care services, starting from 2012-13, we have increased in phases the number of places for residential child care services (including places of foster care, small group homes and children's homes, boys'/ girls' homes, boys/ girls' hostels). We will also raise the foster care allowance, including the maintenance grant for foster children and incentive payment for foster parents.

### **Tackling Domestic Violence**

- The Victim Support Programme for Victims of Family Violence (VSP), which was launched in June 2010, has provided support services for about 1 300 victims of domestic violence and their family members. Through the VSP, the victims will be provided with information on the relevant legal proceedings and community resources. They will also be provided with emotional support and company in going through the judicial process.
- The Domestic Violence (Amendment) Bill 2009 (the DV Bill) was passed in December 2009. The Ordinance was renamed as the Domestic and Cohabitation Relationships Violence Ordinance (DCRVO) which came into effect on 1 January 2010. We will continue to monitor the implementation of the DCRVO. With the enactment of DCRVO, the anti-violence programme has been extended to same-sex cohabitants involved in violence cases since January 2010.
- Upon completion of the pilot project on batterer intervention programme (BIP) in 2008, SWD has continued to implement the BIP for suitable abusers mainly involved in spouse/ cohabitant battering and will further develop suitable treatment models. SWD has started providing BIP for women on a trial basis since 2010-11.
- SWD launched a pilot project to review cases of children who died of natural or non-natural causes in February 2008. SWD has accepted the recommendation of the review panel of the pilot project and set up a standing Child Fatality Review Panel in June 2011 to continue to review child death cases so as to prevent avoidable child deaths.
- SWD will continue to launch publicity campaign and public education initiatives to enhance public awareness of the problem of domestic violence and enhance the frontline professionals'



knowledge and skills in handling different types of domestic violence.

### **Services for Youth and Offenders**

- We will continue to provide diversified services for young people aged between 6 and 24 through 138 Integrated Children and Youth Services Centres. We will also continue to identify and provide service for youth at-risk through 19 District Youth Outreaching Social Work Teams.
- We will continue to implement the “One School Social Worker for Each Secondary School” policy implemented across the territory so that school social workers can identify the problems of high-risk students at an early stage and help them solve their problems through counselling, service referral as well as preventive and developmental activities. In the 2012/13 school year, the total number of school social workers is 568.
- SWD has commissioned three non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to each launch a three-year pilot cyber youth outreaching project starting from August 2011 to reach out to youths in need through the internet. The evaluative study of the project will be completed by the end of 2014.
- SWD will continue to provide treatment for offenders through probation service, the Community Service Orders Scheme, the Community Support Service Scheme and residential training and aftercare service provided in the Tuen Mun Children and Juvenile Home, and helps them re-integrate into the community and lead a law-abiding life. Through the community-based rehabilitation and residential services in tandem with a series of supervision and counselling schemes as well as academic, prevocational and social skill training, we strive to help offenders start afresh and rise to challenges in life.

### **Rehabilitation and Medical Social Services**

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (the Convention) has entered into force in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region since 31 August 2008. To promote the spirit and core values enshrined in the Convention, we have from 2009-10 onwards substantially increased the annual

allocation for public education activities from the previous amount of some \$2 million to about \$13 million, so as to put across the message of barrier-free and inclusiveness to the community at large.

- To meet the diverse needs of persons with disabilities in different stages of their lives, we will continue to provide additional places for pre-school, day and residential rehabilitation services, in accordance with the directions set out in the 2007 Hong Kong Rehabilitation Programme Plan.
- On pre-school rehabilitation services, the Community Care Fund has rolled out an assistance programme on “Training Subsidy for Children who are on the Waiting List of Subvented Pre-school Rehabilitation Services” in December 2011, providing training subsidy for children from low-income families who are in need of rehabilitation services. SWD is currently reviewing the delivery mode of pre-school rehabilitation services, including whether the assistance programme should be incorporated into its regular subvented services. In the meantime, the maximum period of subsidy provided to eligible children under the Fund is extended to 31 March 2014.
- We will continue to provide one-stop comprehensive and accessible services and support for persons with disabilities living in the community, their family members and carers through the 16 District Support Centres for persons with disabilities. Separately, SWD set up the Transitional Care and Support Centre for Tetraplegic Patients in 2008 on a pilot basis, providing transitional residential, day training and residential respite care services for tetraplegic patients. SWD will regularise this service starting from March 2013 to provide continuous services for persons in need and help relieve the pressure of their carers. It is expected that some 130 persons with disabilities will benefit each year.
- To create employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, SWD will continue to implement the “Enhancing Employment of People with Disabilities through Small Enterprise” Project (3E’s Project), under which seed money is granted to NGOs to set up small enterprises/businesses. As at December 2012, a total of 76 businesses have been set up under the 3E’s Project, creating over 580 employment opportunities tailor-made for persons with disabilities. In early 2012, the Government injected \$100 million into the 3E’s Project and enhanced support for the small enterprises

under the 3E's Project, including extension of the funding period from a maximum of two years to three years.

- In the first quarter of 2013, SWD will launch a new scheme providing subsidy to employers of persons with disabilities for procurement of assistive devices and carrying out workplace modifications, in order to enable the employees with disabilities to discharge their duties at the workplace and enhance their work efficiency, as well as to encourage employers to employ more persons with disabilities. Employers of persons with disabilities are offered a one-off subsidy of up to \$ 20,000 for each employee with disabilities. It is expected that about 400 employees with disabilities will benefit from the scheme each year. Also, SWD launched an Incentive Scheme for Mentors of Employees with Disabilities in December 2012 to encourage employers to arrange for mentors for employees with disabilities to provide workplace support so as to facilitate their smooth adaptation to work. It is estimated that about 2 700 employees with disabilities will benefit each year.
- The statutory licensing scheme for residential care homes for persons with disabilities (RCHDs) came into operation following the commencement of the Residential Care Homes (Persons with Disabilities) Ordinance and the Residential Care Homes (Persons with Disabilities) Regulation on 18 November 2011. Before the expiry of the grace period in mid-2013, the Government will issue another commencement notice to bring Part 2 of the Ordinance into operation. Upon the operation of Part 2, a person who operates, keeps, manages or otherwise has control of a RCHD without a licence/ a Certificate of Exemption commits an offence.
- As a complementary measure, SWD has, since October 2010, launched the four-year Pilot Bought Place Scheme for Private Residential Care Homes for Persons with Disabilities (BPS), under which about 300 places will be purchased by phases. BPS aims to encourage private RCHDs to upgrade their service standards, increase the supply of subsidised residential care places so as to shorten the service waiting time, and help the market develop more service options.
- SWD has also allocated \$39 million to introduce the Financial Assistance Scheme for private RCHDs, subsidising eligible private RCHDs to carry out improvement works for compliance with the licensing requirements on building and fire safety. The maximum

grant allocated to each private RCHD is 60% of the total recognised cost of the improvement works.

### **Development of Women**

- The Women's Commission (WoC) has been working closely with the Home Affairs Bureau in promoting women's participation in advisory and statutory bodies (ASBs). Taking into account the advice of WoC, the Government had since 2004 set a gender benchmark of 25% as an initial working target for appointment to ASBs. On the further advice of WoC, the Government has increased the gender benchmark target for participation in ASBs from 25% to 30% with effect from June 2010. In addition to issuing letters to women's associations and professional institutions, WoC also held meetings with these organisations and invited them to encourage their female members to provide their curriculum vitae to the Central Personality Index maintained by the Government in order to further enhance women's participation in ASBs.
- In the past years, WoC launched several public education programmes to reduce gender prejudice and stereotype in society and raise public awareness of gender-related issues.
- To enhance mutual understanding and foster a close partnership, WoC regularly meets with local women's groups and relevant NGOs to exchange views on issues of concern to women. WoC organised its fourth large-scale conference on 19-20 December 2012 to provide a platform for participants to discuss and exchange views on issues related to the development of women, and to review Hong Kong's implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Around 500 people from Hong Kong, Mainland and overseas who are concerned about women's issues attended the conference.
- WoC has been meeting with various bureaux and departments to keep under review, in the light of women's needs, policies and services related to women. In the past year, key policies and programmes reviewed by WoC included primary health care service, child-care and after-school care services, regulation against stalking behaviours, control of obscene and indecent articles and women's participation in advisory and statutory bodies, etc..

- WoC has developed a Gender Mainstreaming Checklist (the Checklist) which comprises a series of simple questions to assist Government officers in applying gender mainstreaming in a more systematic way. To further promote the Checklist, the Secretary for Labour and Welfare issued a circular memorandum to all Directors of Bureaux and Heads of Departments in November 2012, appealing for their support and reminding them to apply the Checklist to various polices and programmes where appropriate.
- The Government has been providing gender-related training to civil servants to raise their awareness of gender-related issues and the concept of gender mainstreaming. A gender focal point network has also been set up in all policy bureaux and departments as the contact point on gender mainstreaming and to promote government officers' understanding of gender issues.