

Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services

Long-term Social Welfare Planning

Purpose

This paper aims to brief Members on the progress in respect of the implementation of long-term social welfare planning.

Background

2. In view of the rapidly changing social and economic environment in Hong Kong and the increasing complexity of social problems, the planning cycle should keep pace with development. We are of the view that the “Five-Year plan” mechanism lacked flexibility in terms of target-setting for, and monitoring of, service provision. It was unable to respond to our welfare needs in a timely manner and was discontinued in 1999. The Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB) had commissioned the Social Welfare Advisory Committee (SWAC) to conduct a study on the long-term development and planning of social welfare in Hong Kong to ensure that social welfare policies and services in Hong Kong could provide timely and effective response to the changing welfare needs of society. SWAC submitted a report entitled “Long-term Social Welfare Planning in Hong Kong” (the Report) to LWB in July 2011 and put forward several guiding principles which would provide a basis for setting the direction for social welfare planning and future welfare service development in Hong Kong. SWAC recommended the formulation of a series of strategic directions having regard to the prevailing social circumstances and development, so as to establish a framework for the overall long-term social welfare planning in Hong Kong. By improving the existing planning arrangements, the enhanced mechanism proposed by SWAC should provide a fitting platform for consultation and planning for the future development and delivery of welfare services.

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

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

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

- (i) District level: SWAC proposes that in the first quarter of a calendar year, the District Social Welfare Officers of the Social Welfare Department (SWD) make use of district welfare planning meetings, relevant District Council/ committee meetings and other suitable channels to solicit views of local personalities and stakeholders regarding the services delivered in the preceding year as well as the development of welfare service areas in the coming year, including the overall direction for development of individual services, service provision at the district level, etc.;
- (ii) Central level: SWAC proposes that in the second quarter of the year, the SWD Headquarters should hold a series of planning meetings to examine the views collected at the district level, establish the direction for the development of each major service area, and invite comments from stakeholders regarding the development and priorities of welfare services for the coming year with a view to forging a consensus among all parties; and
- (iii) Advisory committees: LWB and SWD should prepare a consolidated report on the views collected through the multi-tier consultation and seek advice from SWAC. At the same time, the views should be collated by service areas for onward submission to the relevant advisory committees for reference.

There will be interface and co-ordination among various levels and the overall policy and service planning will be covered. The welfare sector and stakeholders will be able to make timely and practicable suggestions in response to the latest social circumstances and welfare needs, such that the aspirations of the community can be addressed more swiftly. Under this planning mechanism, they can also regularly review and examine how the existing social welfare initiatives and services can be enhanced, and make recommendations to improve the measures already implemented. The workflow is set out at **Annex 1**.

4. We consider that the enhanced mechanism can allow for full and interactive participation of the welfare sector and other stakeholders in in-depth discussion of social welfare issues, including individual service items, as well as facilitating communication and liaison. The enhanced mechanism enables the Administration to consult and plan for the future focus and priorities of welfare services in response to the latest social circumstances on an ongoing and regular (i.e. annual) basis and we see greater flexibility, interactivity, dynamism and transparency in the process. At the Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services meeting on 11 June 2012, LWB informed Members of its endorsement and acceptance of the enhanced mechanism. Such enhanced mechanism has been put into practice since 2012.

Current position

5. We have implemented the enhanced mechanism as proposed by SWAC and adopted a more flexible approach to social welfare planning such that timely and practicable responses to the latest social circumstances and welfare needs can be made with the welfare sector according to available resources. The services and initiatives are designed for long-term implementation on an ongoing basis that usually involve recurrent funding provision and resources. They are not to be implemented for one year only. The major initiatives of various social welfare policies and services of LWB are listed out in Annex 2, which shows that the Administration has been targeting at Hong Kong's long-term development by examining carefully the service demand of society and implementing in a timely manner a variety of initiatives on a continuous or pilot basis. We will continue to closely monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the enhanced mechanism.

Sites and manpower planning

6. The planning of sites for welfare services, which was featured in this year's Policy Address, is one of the major concerns of the welfare sector. To meet the current and future needs of welfare services, the Administration has been adopting a multi-pronged approach to identify suitable sites and facilitate provision of necessary manpower resources in a pragmatic and flexible manner. Apart from maintaining close communication with other Departments to identify suitable sites for social welfare facilities, we are also exploring 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 lands owned by the non-governmental organisations, through redevelopment or in-situ expansion, 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.

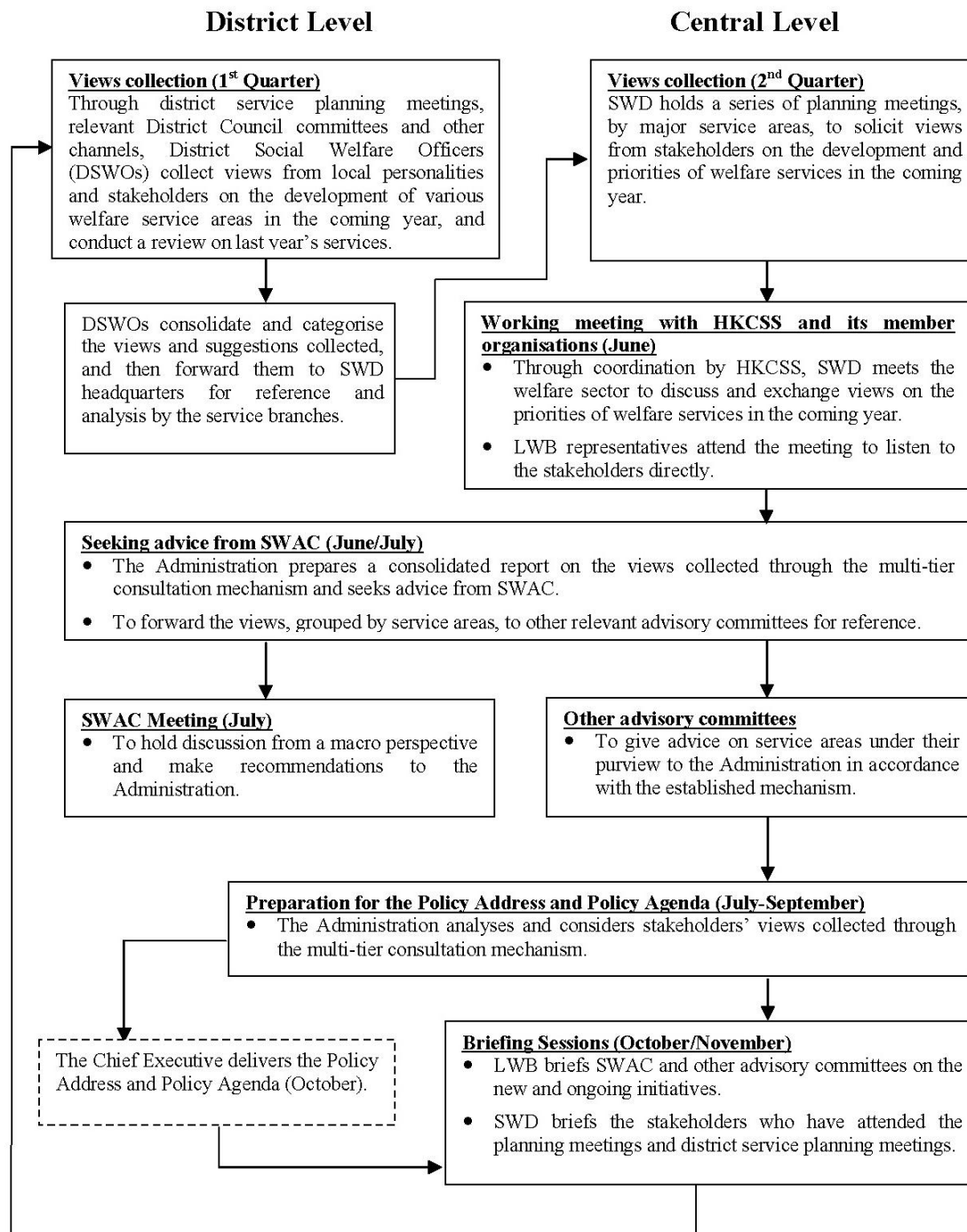
7. On the other hand, we are concerned about the shortage of allied health workers and frontline care staff in the welfare sector, particularly in the elderly services and rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities. To address the problem, we have allocated funding to increase the number of training places for nurses and allied health professionals (including physiotherapists, occupational therapists etc.) for the three years starting from 2012-13. Relevant policy bureaux will work with the welfare sector and relevant organisations to explore feasible options for retaining existing workers and attracting new recruits to the elderly services and rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities.

Advice sought

8. Members are invited to note the Administration's report on welfare planning.

Labour and Welfare Bureau
February 2013

Workflow of the Welfare Planning Mechanism proposed by SWAC



**Major Social Welfare Policies and Services of
the Labour and Welfare Bureau**

The Government has invested vast resources in social welfare. The recurrent expenditure in this financial year (i.e. 2012-13) is estimated to be \$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.

Complementing the Work of Commission on Poverty

- 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.
- The focus of the CoP is on 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. The Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB) and other relevant policy bureaux will complement the work of the CoP.
- 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 CoP will set a poverty line within this year. 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

- 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 (OALA)” under the SSA Scheme. Each eligible elderly person will receive a monthly allowance of \$2,200. The Social Welfare Department (SWD) is pressing ahead with the preparation work at full speed with the aim of rolling out the new allowance in April this year. We estimate that over 400 000 elderly people will benefit from the OALA.
- SWD is making preparation for the Guangdong (GD) Scheme under which eligible elderly persons who reside in GD can receive OAA 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 this year.
- We will conduct a review some time after the implementation of the OALA and the GD Scheme. 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.

- 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, non-governmental organisations (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.
- The Chief Executive has included in his election manifesto a proposal to allow people with loss of one limb to apply for DA. LWB will convene an inter-departmental working group to study this proposal and related issues. As DA is an element of social security, the inter-departmental working group will report to and seek direction from the Social Security and Retirement Protection Task Force of the CoP.

Elderly Care Services

- 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 continue to allocate additional resources to strengthen subsidised community care services (CCS) and residential care services (RCS) in order to provide elderly care services for needy elderly which suit their needs.

CCS

- 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.
- 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.
- We will review the implementation of and the elderly people’s

feedback on the pilot scheme, and explore the feasibility of adopting this voucher subsidy mode for RCS.

- At the same time, 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.
- The Government will continue to implement Improvement Programme of Elderly Centres (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.
- The Government will continue to implement the Integrated Discharge Support Programme for 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 on Carer Training” and provide respite service for the elderly, with a view to assisting carers in looking after their elders.

RCS

- 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.

- To assist frail elders who need residential care services to receive appropriate and quality subsidised residential care services, the Government will, under the Conversion Programme, 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. The Government will also continue to make efforts in enhancing the service quality of residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) under the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme (EBPS).
- 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.

Others

- 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 HA, has been running a two-year full-time programme to train enrolled nurses for the welfare sector since 2006. Altogether 12 classes have been organised so far, providing a total of 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.

Poverty Alleviation Measures under LWB

- 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.
- 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.

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

- 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, we are considering the technical arrangements for extending the Scheme to children with 100% disabilities aged below 12 receiving CSSA or DA.

Rehabilitation and Medical Social Services

- 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 United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (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.
- 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.
- 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 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.

- In tandem, 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.
- As regards enhancing the day 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 to meet the keen demand for day training and residential care services for persons with disabilities. 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.
- 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.
- We are also 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.
- 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 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.

- 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.
- Furthermore, the Community Care Fund (CCF) currently provides a Special Care Subsidy to persons with severe disabilities from low-income families. The CCF further introduced a new programme on 31 January 2013 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
- SWD 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.
- 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.

- 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.
- 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.
- 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".
- On the other hand, the Labour Department (LD) provides employers with subsidy under the Work Orientation and Placement Scheme (WOPS). An eligible employer who employs a person with disabilities is granted a subsidy equivalent to two-thirds of the monthly salary of that employee, subject to a maximum of \$4,000 per month. The maximum period of subsidy is six months. LD will further enhance WOPS by increasing the subsidy payable to employers so as to encourage employers to offer persons with disabilities more job opportunities. LD will introduce a two-month work adaptation period under WOPS. An additional subsidy up to a maximum of \$5,500 per month for two months will be paid to an employer who employs a person with disabilities with employment difficulties and provide him/her with training or support during the work adaptation period.
- SWD will also 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 March 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.
- 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.
- We have all along been 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.

Family and Child Welfare Services

- To support parents who are unable to take care of their children temporarily because of work or other reasons, SWD provides subvention to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to run a variety of day child care services, including child care centre services, occasional child care services, extended hours services, mutual held child care centre services, Neighborhood Support Child Care Project (NSCCP) and After School Care Programmes, and has endeavoured to enhance the flexibility of such services. Families with financial difficulty may apply for different service subsidies or fee waiver.
- 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 NSCCP 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.
- 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. To further enhance the residential child care services, starting from 2012-13, we have increased in phases a total of 130 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 have also raised the foster care allowance, including the maintenance grant for foster children and incentive payment for foster parents.

Tackling Domestic Violence

- 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.
- The Victim Support Programme for Victims of Family Violence (VSP), which was launched by SWD 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.
- 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 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.
- 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 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.
- 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.
- 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.

- 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.

Development of Women

- With the assistance of the Women's Commission (WoC), the Government has adopted a three-pronged strategy, namely provision of an enabling environment, empowerment and public education, with a view to promoting the well-being and interests of women in Hong Kong.
- 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.
- 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.