

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)2045/15-16

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seen by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/WS

Panel on Welfare Services

**Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 13 June 2016, at 10:45 am
in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex**

Members present : Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che (Chairman)
Hon CHAN Yuen-han, SBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming, JP
Hon YIU Si-wing, BBS
Hon Gary FAN Kwok-wai
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH
Hon TANG Ka-piu, JP
Hon Alvin YEUNG Ngok-kiu

Members absent : Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, SBS, JP
Dr Hon LEUNG Ka-lau
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, BBS, MH, JP
Hon CHUNG Kwok-pan

Public Officers attending : Item III

Miss Annie TAM, JP
Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Mr Kenneth CHENG
Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare
(Welfare) 1
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Mr LAM Ka-tai, JP
Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Services)
Social Welfare Department

Mr KOK Che-leung
Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Subventions)
Social Welfare Department

Item IV

Mr Laurie LO Chi-hong, JP
Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (1)
Home Affairs Bureau

Ms Karyn CHAN Ching-yuen
Principal Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs (Civic
Affairs) 2
Home Affairs Bureau

Family Council

Prof Daniel SHEK Tan-lei, SBS, JP
Chairman of the Family Council

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

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

Miss Maggie CHIU
Legislative Assistant (2) 4

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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)1676/15-16(01) to (02)]

2. Members noted that the Administration had proposed to discuss the Pilot Scheme on Residential Care Service Voucher for the Elderly ("the RCSV Pilot Scheme") at the next meeting scheduled for 21 June 2016. The Chairman and Dr Fernando CHEUNG suggested that the Hong Kong Council of Social Service ("HKCSS"), alliance of private and subvented residential care homes for the elderly ("RCHEs") as well as alliance of RCHE residents should be invited to attend the meeting. Members who wished to suggest any organizations to be invited to attend the meeting might inform the Secretariat. Members agreed.

(Post-meeting note: The next meeting of the Panel had been rescheduled to be held on 25 June 2016 and a general notice to invite members of the public to give views at the meeting had been posted on the Legislative Council ("LegCo") website.)

3. In the light of a recent child abuse case occurred in Chi Yun School, which was a school for children with intellectual disability, the Deputy Chairman suggested that the Panel should consider discussing at the next meeting measures for preventing abuse of persons with intellectual disabilities and of elderly persons. In response to the Chairman's enquiry about whether the Administration had sufficient time to prepare a paper on the subject matter for discussion at the next meeting, Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Services) ("DDSW(S)") said that the Administration hoped to make full use of the next meeting to discuss the RCSV Pilot Scheme. He said that the Administration had obtained the Panel's support for its staffing proposal to create a supernumerary post of Assistant Director of Social Welfare to head a new Licensing and Regulation Branch of the Social Welfare Department ("SWD") for strengthening the inspection and monitoring of RCHEs and residential care homes for persons with disabilities. The staffing proposal concerned would be submitted to the Establishment Subcommittee for consideration.

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4. Dr Fernando CHEUNG suggested that to allow sufficient time for discussion, a separate meeting should be held for discussing measures to prevent abuse of persons with intellectual disabilities and of elderly persons. The Chairman said that the Panel of the Sixth LegCo should discuss policies in relation to the subject matter and might consider inviting representatives from the Education Bureau ("EDB") to join the discussion. Individual abuse cases involving children at special schools might be referred to EDB or the Public Complaints Office of LegCo. Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare ("PS(LW)") said that she would discuss with non-governmental organizations ("NGOs") measures to be adopted to ensure that service users would be provided with proper care. The Chairman said that the relevant bureaux/departments should provide members with a response on the abuse case occurred in Chi Yun School.

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III. Progress of implementation of Special Scheme on Privately Owned Sites for Welfare Uses

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1676/15-16(03) to (04)]

5. At the invitation of the Chairman, PS(LW) briefed members on the latest development of the implementation of the Special Scheme on Privately Owned Sites for Welfare Uses ("the Special Scheme").

Completion time of projects under the Special Scheme

6. The Deputy Chairman opined that the time required for completing the six projects under the Special Scheme which had entered the construction stage was too long. She called on the Administration to carry out some procedures in tandem so as to speed up the implementation of these projects. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen said that the lead time for the projects under the Special Scheme was expected to be shorter than that of other projects as time spent on identifying sites for provision of welfare facilities could be saved. It was however not the case in reality. He enquired whether the Administration had examined the completion time of the projects under the Special Scheme.

7. PS(LW) responded that the time taken for completing expansion, redevelopment or new development projects in the welfare sector could be rather long because of their complexity. Besides, many NGOs were not familiar with the funding procedures of the Lotteries Fund ("LF") as well as the land-related and planning-related procedures. Special arrangements had been made to speed up the completion of the projects under the Special Scheme such as allowing applicant NGOs to apply for LF for engaging

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professionals to assist with the submission of the required information and applications in respect of the technical feasibility studies ("TFSs"). The Administration had also been facilitating applicant NGOs to submit the necessary applications to the Planning Department and the Lands Department in parallel. The time taken for completing the preparatory work for the six projects which had entered the construction stage was shorter than expected.

8. The Deputy Chairman took the view that a dedicated unit should be assigned to provide assistance for applicant NGOs. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung said that a committee should be set up to coordinate assistance provided for applicant NGOs by different government departments so as to speed up the application process.

9. PS(LW) responded that the Policy and Project Co-ordination Unit ("PPCU") under the Chief Secretary for Administration's Office had been providing consultation and coordination services for applicant NGOs. PPCU would also provide targeted assistance for individual applicant NGOs if necessary. Applicant NGOs were also welcomed to approach SWD when they encountered difficulties in submitting the required information and applications. The Labour and Welfare Bureau ("LWB") and SWD had conducted information exchange sessions with applicant NGOs. Having regard to their feedback on the implementation of the Special Scheme, LWB and SWD had made further clarifications on and refinements to the various arrangements under the Special Scheme. Some of these refinements were set out in paragraph 12 of the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. 1676/15-16(03)).

10. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen enquired whether all applicant NGOs which did not have in-house technical or professional manpower support could seek financial support under LF for preparing funding applications for conducting TFSs and the amount of funds involved. PS(LW) responded that applicant NGOs which did not have any experience in preparing funding applications for conducting TFSs might apply for the financial support. Applications for the financial support would be considered by SWD on a case-by-case basis.

Ratio of subvented to self-financing services under the Special Scheme

11. Dr Fernando CHEUNG said that as the projects under the Special Scheme were funded by LF, they should aim at providing subsidized services. Pointing out that no subvented service places would be provided by the expansion of Haven of Hope Woo Ping Care and Attention ("C&A") Home in Tseung Kwan O by Haven of Hope Christian Service ("HHCS")

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("the Tseung Kwan O project") and the proportion of subvented service places of many projects under the Special Scheme was low, he called on the Administration to increase the ratio of subvented to self-financing service ("the ratio") to 8:2. The Chairman said that the ratio of 6:4 did not measure up to the expectation of members and the general public. He urged the Administration to increase the ratio to 8:2. Sharing the view that the ratio for projects under the Special Scheme was too low, Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung asked whether there was any policy for determining the ratio.

12. PS(LW) said that in considering the subvented and self-financing services proposed for the projects under the Special Scheme, the Administration would adhere to the established rules and procedures for LF-funded projects. The ratio of 6:4 was adopted as a general guideline. The Administration would liaise with applicant NGOs regarding the proportion of subvented and self-financing services to be provided under their projects. The ratio of 6:4 was a starting point and the relevant ratio would be adjusted if appropriate. DDSW(S) supplemented that SWD, where appropriate, would take account of other relevant factors, such as the socio-economic condition of the districts where the RCHEs were located and the availability of non-subsidized residential care places in the vicinity, when considering the application of the general guideline for the ratio to individual projects. The ratio of two new contract RCHEs (one at Pratas Street, Sham Shui Po which had commenced service in April 2016 and the other at Wing Shun Street, Tsuen Wan which would be completed in mid-2017) had been increased to 8:2.

13. PS(LW) further said that the entire Tseung Kwan O project was operated on a self-financing basis. A relatively small number of additional places would be provided under that project covered by the Special Scheme, and HHCS would have difficulties in operating these additional places as subvented places in the C & A Home concerned. The Chairman said that by participating in the Special Scheme, HHCS was able to enjoy a shorter lead time for applying for expansion. As such, the Administration should require HHCS to provide some subvented places under the Tseung Kwan O project. Given that the Tseung Kwan O project would only provide self-financing service places, Dr Fernando CHEUNG took the view that the ratio of 6:4 was in effect not a starting point for all projects under the Special Scheme.

14. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung said that when the Administration sought members' support in 2013 for using LF to implement the Special Scheme, members had raised concern about the low proportion of subvented service places to be provided under the Special Scheme and had requested the Administration to review the ratio. In view of the great demand for

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subvented welfare services, members had called on the Administration to increase the ratio to 8:2 for projects under the Special Scheme. However, the ratio of 6:4 was still adopted for many of the projects under the Special Scheme. In his view, the Special Scheme should aim to meet the service needs of the needy groups rather than those who could afford to pay for self-financing services. The Administration should consider fully subsidizing needy users who were not provided with subvented services to use self-financing services or impose conditions to ensure that applicant NGOs would accord priority to the provision of subvented services.

Arrangements for users affected by the Special Scheme

15. Dr Fernando CHEUNG asked whether the in-situ expansion and redevelopment projects under the Special Scheme would disrupt the existing services and sought information on the arrangements for affected service users. PS(LW) responded that applicant NGOs should make appropriate arrangements if the existing welfare facilities had to be relocated to other premises pending the expansion or redevelopment of the sites concerned. SWD would discuss the arrangements with applicant NGOs with a view to minimizing the inconvenience caused to service users by the projects. In response to Dr Fernando CHEUNG's concern that some services might discontinue after the commencement of the redevelopment of the sites under the Special Scheme, PS(LW) said that unless the services were no longer required, applicant NGOs should ensure the continued provision of existing services. The Chairman said that the Administration should inform members in the event of disruption of services caused by the projects under the Special Scheme.

Manpower planning for the Special Scheme

16. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung said that the Administration should plan ahead to ensure sufficient manpower supply for the additional services to be provided under the Special Scheme. PS(LW) responded that applicant NGOs were required to make provisions for manpower requirements for their projects and could consider providing staff training facilities at their sites if appropriate and feasible. Applicant NGOs might apply to SWD for providing staff training facilities in their projects provided that the gross floor area ("GFA") of these facilities did not exceed 10% of the total GFA of the project concerned. Apart from manpower planning for the projects under the Special Scheme, the Elderly Services Programme Plan being formulated by the Elderly Commission would study, inter alia, the medium and long-term manpower supply and training of care staff for providing elderly care services.

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17. Mr POON Siu-ping sought information on the Administration's assessment of the manpower required for the additional services brought about by the five projects which were scheduled for completion in or before 2017-2018 and the relevant recruitment schedule. PS(LW) responded that these projects had entered the construction stage and the applicant NGOs concerned had confirmed that they would be able to provide the manpower required for these projects.

Long-term planning for provision of services for elderly persons and persons with disabilities

18. The Chairman said that all projects under the Special Scheme should be completed by 2024 according to the Administration's schedule. Members should be informed of delays, if any, in the completion of these projects. While the Administration had included details of the preliminary proposals received under the Special Scheme, it did not provide members with information on the services to be provided outside the Special Scheme. In his view, the Administration should have drawn up long-term plan for the provision of services for elderly persons and persons with disabilities outside the Special Scheme. In this connection, he requested the Administration to provide information on the planned provision of services for elderly persons and persons with disabilities up to 2024, with a breakdown of the number of places by service type and by district so that members could have a full picture of the services to be provided both under and outside the Special Scheme. PS(LW) undertook to provide the requested information.

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19. Given that only a small number of or no additional service places would be provided for the elderly and/or persons with disabilities in some districts (e.g. Central and Western, Wong Tai Sin, Sha Tin, Wan Chai, and Islands) under the Special Scheme, the Chairman said that the Administration should identify sites in these districts to replenish the provision of services for the elderly and persons with disabilities. PS(LW) responded that the distribution of service places under the Special Scheme was subject to the locations of the sites owned by applicant NGOs. The Administration would endeavour to look for suitable sites in the territory to meet the service demand, particularly in those districts which had a service demand but were not covered by the Special Scheme so as to bridge the service gap.

20. Dr Fernando CHEUNG took the view that the projects under the Special Scheme should adopt new modes for the provision of elderly and rehabilitation services. In designing these welfare facilities, the Administration should take into account the early onset of dementia and

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ageing of persons with intellectual disabilities. Reference should also be made to the latest facilities provided for persons with intellectual disabilities and persons with dementia in places outside Hong Kong. He said that in a homicide case occurred in the Haven of Hope Woo Ping C&A Home a few months ago, a resident was killed by his room-mate who was suspected to be suffering from dementia. To prevent recurrence of similar tragedy, residential care homes should avoid admitting persons suffering from dementia and other residents in the same ward. The Administration should take this into account when designing the relevant services.

21. PS(LW) responded that the Special Scheme would not only enable better use of the land owned by NGOs to provide more diversified subvented and self-financing facilities but also help revitalize the sites of applicant NGOs. In considering the service modes, the Administration would take into account users' needs. As the welfare facilities under the Special Scheme would be used throughout the next few decades, the Administration would discuss the service modes with applicant NGOs and give them due flexibility in handling the projects. Recognizing that additional services to be provided under the Special Scheme could not meet the service demand fully, the Administration would continue to identify sites and premises for the provision of welfare facilities. As at May 2016, SWD was implementing or planning to implement 24 development projects for the construction of new contract RCHEs and day care centres for the elderly. For rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities, SWD would also implement 33 development projects to increase the provision outside the Special Scheme. The implementation of the Special Scheme would not affect the implementation by SWD of other projects on welfare facilities.

22. Given that SWD might exercise discretion to waive an applicant NGO's contribution which amounted to 10% of the total capital cost on the self-financing portion, Dr Fernando CHEUNG opined that such an arrangement was inappropriate as the self-financing portion was in a way fully subsidized by public money.

IV. Work progress of the Family Council

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1676/15-16(05) to (06)]

23. At the invitation of the Chairman, Prof Daniel SHEK, Chairman of the Family Council, briefed members on the work progress of the Family Council.

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Family-related issues in the community

24. Dr Fernando CHEUNG declared that he was a colleague of Prof Daniel SHEK. He said that the results of the survey on social development of Hong Kong published by HKCSS in June 2016 had revealed the followings: housing-related expenses had increased, Hong Kong people's happiness index was low due to long working hours, the number of singleton elderly had increased, the suicide rate of elderly persons had risen and the state of the low-income group had worsened. As many people could not afford the high housing costs, they were unable to start a family. He asked how the Family Council would help families address these problems and pressures and what advice it would give to the Administration in this regard.

25. Prof Daniel SHEK responded that the Family Council had discussed issues relating to the impact of long working hours on families and would continue to do so. The Family Council was very concerned about and had been responsive to family-related issues. For instance, in view of the great demand for pre-school rehabilitation services, the Family Council had given its views to the Chief Secretary for Administration on the need to increase the provision of rehabilitation services for pre-school children. Having considered the Family Council's view, the Administration had provided around \$400 million for the provision of rehabilitation services for pre-school children.

Collection of maintenance by divorced mothers

26. Given that there were different forms of families, Dr Helena WONG said that the work of the Family Council should take into account families' diversified needs. She said that many divorced mothers were unable to receive maintenance and thus had financial difficulties in raising their children. She asked whether the Family Council would impress upon the Administration to take on board the suggestion of setting up a maintenance board to ensure that the payment of maintenance to divorced mothers.

27. Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (1) ("DSHA)(1)") responded that the Administration had previously set up an inter-departmental working group to examine the suggestion of setting up a maintenance board and considered that adopting administrative arrangements might be more effective in helping maintenance payees to recover arrears of maintenance. Measures had been taken to tackle the difficulties faced by maintenance payees. For example, it was now an established policy that in case of arrears of maintenance and the maintenance payer concerned could not be located,

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designated government departments (i.e. the Immigration Department, the Transport Department and the Housing Department) were allowed to disclose the addresses of maintenance payers to maintenance payees. The requirements imposed on the making of attachment of income orders had been relaxed to make the issuance procedure more flexible and interest or even surcharge against defaulting maintenance payers would also be imposed. To evaluate the effectiveness of these measures, the Family Council planned to conduct a study examining issues pertaining to collection of maintenance, enforcement of maintenance orders and maintenance systems of other jurisdictions. Dr Helena WONG requested the Administration to provide information relating to recovering arrears of maintenance. DSHA(1) responded that Home Affairs Bureau would attempt to provide the information requested.

28. The Chairman and Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung took the view that the Administration should endeavour to help maintenance payees to recover arrears of maintenance. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung said that the Administration should provide needy maintenance payees who were unable to receive maintenance with financial assistance.

Standard working hours and retirement protection

29. In response to Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung's enquiry about the Family Council's advice to the Administration on standard working hours ("SWH") and universal retirement protection, Prof Daniel SHEK said that the Family Council had discussed the consultation documents on SWH and retirement protection and provided its views to the Administration. As members of the Family Council were from different backgrounds, they did not have a unanimous stance on these matters.

30. Mr TANG Ka-piu said that it was very common in Hong Kong that both parents needed to work and long working hours had an adverse impact on family life. He wondered why the Administration had not consulted the Family Council on SWH. He also asked whether the Family Council had the required resources to promote SWH for the wellness of employees, e.g. persuading employers to allow employees to decide whether to work overtime.

31. Prof Daniel SHEK responded that the Family Council had lengthy discussions on SWH at its meeting on 15 August 2013 and had requested LWB to brief its members on the development of SWH at its meeting scheduled for 16 June 2016. He personally shared the view that long

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working hours had a great impact on families. Parents working long hours had little time to spend with their children and it was an issue to be addressed. The Family Council would continue to follow up on family issues arising from long working hours. He further said that the Family Council had launched the Family-Friendly Employers Award Scheme ("the Award Scheme") to promote wider adoption of family-friendly employment policies and practices. Many award-winning employers in the previous two rounds of the Award Scheme indicated that their companies or organizations had achieved better performance after adopting family-friendly employment practices. The Family Council would promulgate the good practices adopted by the award-winning companies or organizations. While implementing SWH by legislative means might be the last step, he took the view that it was important to make cultural change and strengthen community education on work-life balance.

32. Mr TANG Ka-piu asked whether the Family Council would give its views on SWH upon the completion of the Consultation on Working Hours Policy Directions ("the Consultation Exercise") and impress upon the Administration the importance of legislating for SWH. Noting that some members of the Family Council were from the commercial sector, he asked whether members of the Family Council generally considered long working hours a problem. Prof Daniel SHEK responded that the majority of the members of the Family Council were from the welfare and education sectors. As the Consultation Exercise was still underway, the Family Council had yet to conclude its views. In general, members of the Family Council considered that the community should face up to the problem of long working hours. The Family Council would discuss the matter later.

33. The Deputy Chairman said that the Administration should legislate for SWH before considering the adoption of the contractual working hours approach. Many employees who had low bargaining power were oppressed by their employers and had to work long hours. The labour sector had called for the implementation of SWH as long working hours had led to many family problems and health issues. Given that these problems would give rise to social problems, she hoped that the Family Council could look into the impact of long working hours.

34. Noting that only less than 1% of the companies/organizations in Hong Kong had participated in the Award Scheme, the Chairman said that the low participation rate reflected that promoting work-life balance out of employers' initiative was not effective. The Family Council should therefore press the Administration to legislate for SWH. Prof Daniel SHEK responded that members of the Family Council were committed to helping

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the community address family-related issues. He assured members that the Family Council would further discuss issues relating to SWH and recovery of arrears of maintenance with a view to preparing its consolidated views on both subjects.

35. Prof Daniel SHEK further said that the entries to the third Award Scheme had increased by some 50% when compared with the entries to the second Award Scheme. He hoped that more companies/organizations would sign up for the Award Scheme in future.

Comprehensive Social Security Assistance

36. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung pointed out that needy elderly persons could apply for Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ("CSSA") on their own only if their children made declaration of not providing financial support to them (commonly known as the "bad son statement"). He was of the view that such a requirement had adversely affected the relationship among family members. He called on the Family Council to put more efforts in addressing this problem. Expressing similar concern, Dr Fernando CHEUNG asked about the Family Council's views and advice to the Administration on the requirement of "bad son statement". Prof Daniel SHEK said that the Family Council had not yet discussed the requirement of "bad son statement" and would follow up as appropriate.

Assistance to families with special needs

37. The Chairman suggested that the Family Council should consider conducting a survey to collect statistics about families with members suffering from chronic illness, mental/physical disabilities or dementia to foster a better understanding of the problems faced by these families and facilitate members to make recommendations for addressing their problems. Dr Fernando CHEUNG said that under the existing policy, CSSA applicants living with their families were required to apply for CSSA on a household basis. Needy families with members having special needs were already facing great financial burden but had to lower their family income to the CSSA level in order to apply for CSSA. Moreover, disabled members of these families had to cease living with their families if they wished to apply for CSSA. While the Administration's policy should encourage families to take care of their disabled members, he took the view that the relevant policy was illogical and inhumane. Besides, only one out of seven persons with disabilities was granted the disability allowance ("DA") and the amount of DA was insufficient to support the daily living of a person with disabilities.

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He took the view that the Family Council should study the support for these families under the existing welfare system seriously. Prof Daniel SHEK responded that the Family Council was concerned about families which had members with disabilities. The Family Council would consider the Chairman's suggestion and follow up issues relating to persons with disabilities.

Sense of responsibilities of young people

38. Mr YIU Si-wing said that if emphasis was only placed on responsibilities of parents, teachers and society for the young generation, young people might put the blame on family, school and society when they experienced frustrations. He asked whether the Family Council had conducted any research on young people's sense of responsibilities for society, school and family. Prof Daniel SHEK responded that the Family Council had identified three sets of family core values (i.e. "Love and Care", "Respect and Responsibilities" and "Communication and Harmony"). Materials promoting "Respect and Responsibilities" had been uploaded onto the Happy Family Info Hub and a study on parenting practices in Hong Kong ("the Study") was being conducted. Upon completion of the Study, the Family Council would consider how the message about the importance of striking a balance between responsibilities and rights should be disseminated to young people. In response to Mr YIU Si-wing's enquiry about whether the Study would cover relationship between schools and families and provide recommendations in this regard, Prof Daniel SHEK said that the researcher would examine the impact of the findings of the Study on different stakeholders including schools.

Establishment of a Children Commission

39. Pointing out that advisory bodies such as the Elderly Commission, Women's Commission and Commission on Youth had been set up to examine policies for different age and gender sectors, Dr Fernando CHEUNG opined that a Children Commission should also be established. Given that the Family Council's core function was to examine family-related policies, it might not have the capacity to study child development policies in detail. He suggested that the Family Council should recommend the establishment of a Children Commission to the Administration.

40. Prof Daniel SHEK responded that the Family Council had discussed whether a Children Commission should be established and considered that

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such establishment was not necessary. The Hong Kong Pediatric Foundation ("HKPF") also advocated the establishment of a Children Commission and as a member of HKPF, he had exchanged views with other members of HKPF on such establishment. He said that the Family Council would continue to follow up the matter. The Family Council would also deliberate matters which were discussed at the Children's Rights Forum. The Chairman called on the Family Council to meet with the concern groups which advocated the establishment of a Children Commission and to recommend such establishment to the Administration for consideration.

Student suicides

41. Expressing concern about a spate of student suicides occurred recently, Dr Fernando CHEUNG asked whether the Family Council had studied the matter. Prof Daniel SHEK responded that the Committee on Prevention of Student Suicides ("the Committee") set up by EDB was studying the matter and would prepare a report on the study. The Family Council would invite EDB to brief it on the Committee's findings and recommendations and study how student suicides could be prevented from the family perspectives.

Paid maternity/paternity leave and unleashing women workforce

42. Dr Helena WONG said that the statutory maternity leave had not been reviewed for a long time and the paid paternity leave should be increased to seven days. Given that one of the roles of the Family Council was to promote family-friendly employment policies, the Family Council should urge the Administration to extend the duration of both the maternity leave and paternity leave. She took the view that the Family Council should step up its efforts in promoting support for carers of young children, elderly persons and disabled members of their families.

43. The Deputy Chairman said that given inadequate provision of child care services, many women who wished to join the workforce were unable to do so because they needed to take care of their children. She hoped that the Family Council would study issues in relation to unleashing women workforce. Prof Daniel SHEK suggested that the Deputy Chairman write to him about her concerns. The Family Council would follow up with the Administration.

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Transparency of the work of the Family Council

44. In response to the Deputy Chairman's enquiry about whether it was the Administration or the Family Council to decide discussion items for meetings of the Family Council, Prof Daniel SHEK said that in most cases, he and the Secretariat of the Family Council would decide the agenda taken into account family-related issues which required prompt attention. Items proposed by the Administration would also be considered. The Chairman said that the Family Council should enhance its transparency to enable members of the public to know more about its work.

V. Any other business

45. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:56 pm.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
14 September 2016