

**For discussion on  
13 June 2016**

**Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services**

**Work Progress of the Family Council**

**PURPOSE**

This paper briefs Members on the work progress of the Family Council (the Council) since our last briefing at the Panel meeting held in June 2014.

**BACKGROUND**

2. Established in December 2007, the Council has been serving as a cross-sector and cross-bureau platform for examining family-related policies and promoting a culture of loving families in the community. It was reconstituted under a non-official Chairman with effect from 1 April 2013 with a view to strengthening its advisory role. Chaired by Professor Daniel SHEK, the Council currently comprises 14 non-official members from different backgrounds (including academia, business, education and social welfare), three ex-officio members (namely Chairpersons of the Commission on Youth, Elderly Commission and Women's Commission) and four Government representatives (namely Secretary for Home Affairs, Secretary for Education, Secretary for Labour and Welfare, and Head of the Central Policy Unit (CPU)). The current membership of the Council is at **Annex A**.

3. Members were briefed on the work progress of the Council at the Panel meeting on 9 June 2014. Since then, the Council has continued to collaborate with various sectors in the community to enhance the functions of families and create a pro-family environment.

## **PROGRESS OF WORK**

4. The work of the Council mainly includes the following three aspects –
  - (a) advising Government bureaux and departments (B/Ds) on the application of family perspectives in the policy formulation process;
  - (b) advocating cherishing the family and promoting family core values as a main driver for social harmony through organising various programmes and activities; and
  - (c) conducting researches and surveys to foster a better understanding of the issues relating to the family.

Details of the Council's major deliverables and work in the pipeline are set out in the ensuing paragraphs.

### **Family perspectives in policy formulation**

5. With effect from 1 April 2013, a mandatory assessment of family implications has been introduced for all policies. B/Ds are required to use the three sets of family core values (i.e. "Love and Care", "Respect and Responsibilities" and "Communication and Harmony") as identified by the Council, as well as the impact on family's structure and functions, as the basis for assessing the impact of the relevant policies on families. During the three-year period from April 2013 to April 2016, Family Impact Assessment (FIA) was conducted for over 250 policy measures and programmes.

6. As part of the public consultation process, B/Ds are encouraged to consult the Council on policies which may affect families. The Council was briefed and consulted on a number of family-related subjects, including education and child development, retirement protection, family-friendly workplace policies, etc. A list of subjects on which the Council's advice was sought during the period from June 2014 to May 2016 is at **Annex B**.

7. FIA has now become an integral part of the policy making process within the Government. With the experience gathered over the past three years, the Council considers it timely to conduct a review on the FIA framework. The Council has commissioned a consultancy study through the CPU to evaluate the

effectiveness of the FIA framework and develop a more elaborated FIA checklist as the basis for assessing the impact of public policies on families. Apart from conducting desktop research and consultative interviews, the researcher will also organise focus groups and related activities on training and experience sharing with B/Ds which will form part of the implementation research. A post-implementation review will be carried out before the FIA checklist is finalised. The study commenced in early June 2016 and is expected to be completed by the end of 2017.

### **Advocacy for cherishing the family**

8. Since its establishment, the Council has been collaborating with various stakeholders to organise programmes and activities relating to the promotion of family core values with a view to reaching out to different sectors of the community and benefitting the whole community in general. A list of programmes and activities organised or co-organised by the Council in 2014-15 and 2015-16 is at **Annex C**. Some major programmes are highlighted below.

#### *2015/16 Family-Friendly Employers Award Scheme*

9. The Council has been playing an active role in promoting wider adoption of family-friendly employment policies and practices in the community. Since 2011, the Council has launched “Family-Friendly Employers Award Scheme” (Award Scheme) on a biennial basis to give recognition to companies and organisations which attach importance to family-friendly spirit and encourage them to implement more diversified family-friendly policies and practices. Riding on the success of the previous two Award Schemes organised in 2011 and 2013/14 which attracted over 1 100 and 1 800 enrolments respectively, the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) and the Council launched the third Award Scheme on 15 December 2015. The Awards for Breastfeeding Support 2015/16 have been newly added in the third Award Scheme to commend employers that provide suitable facilities in the workplace to support employees who are breastfeeding. The third Award Scheme has been well received with a record high entries of 2 739, representing an increase of some 50% as compared with the 1 814 in the second Award in 2013/14. Adjudication is underway and the results will be announced in October 2016.

### *Pilot Scheme on Thematic Sponsorship to Support Family-related Initiatives*

10. With the aim of creating a pro-family environment, HAB and the Council launched a two-year Pilot Scheme on Thematic Sponsorship to Support Family-related Initiatives (Pilot Scheme) in March 2016. The Pilot Scheme provides one-off sponsorship to support non-profit making and worthwhile family-related initiatives which are able to meet the objectives of raising community awareness of family core values and the importance of families; creating and promoting a pro-family environment; and promoting family well-being. A total of \$6 million (i.e. \$3 million per year) has been earmarked for the Pilot Scheme. The themes for 2016-17 are “parent education” and “divorce education”. A total of 12 applications were received by the closing date of 20 May 2016. The first batch of projects are expected to commence in the last quarter of 2016.

### *Other publicity programmes and activities*

11. The Council has been collaborating with the Radio Television Hong Kong to organise territory-wide publicity programmes in the past few years to promote family core values in the community. In 2016-17, a publicity campaign entitled “「家·多一點愛」－順逆齊擔起，攜手返屋企” comprising a variety of programmes (e.g. parent-child sports day, large-scale publicity event, radio programmes and video clips) will be launched to enhance resilience of families in meeting life challenges.

12. In addition, the Council produced a family education package for families with newborn babies in 2015. Education videos have been broadcast in the Maternal and Child Health Centres (MCHCs) under the Department of Health and the Integrated Family Services Centres under the Social Welfare Department. The education package attracted wide press coverage with over 30 000 copies of baby journals<sup>1</sup> distributed to mothers-to-be registered at the MCHCs for ante-natal service so far. In 2016-17, the Council will develop a new pre-marital family education package with a view to inculcating a positive attitude towards marriage and family at an early stage.

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<sup>1</sup> The baby journals aim to provide tips to parents of newborn babies and record important milestone events of the newborn babies.

## **Family-related research work**

13. To foster a better understanding of the issues relating to the family, the Council has been engaging tertiary institutions or research organisations to conduct researches and surveys. Apart from the study on the FIA framework as mentioned in paragraph 7 above, the following survey and researches are in the pipeline and are expected to be completed later this year –

- (a) Family Survey 2015 – Following the completion of the Family Surveys in 2011 and 2013<sup>2</sup>, the Council decided to carry out similar surveys on a biennial basis to keep track of the changes and development of Hong Kong families in terms of family structures, attitudes and values, etc. Family Survey 2015 was commissioned to collect updated and empirical information on families in Hong Kong, covering topics such as the importance of family, parenthood, family functioning, satisfaction with family life, work-life balance, availability of social support network, awareness of and participation in family-related programmes.
- (b) Study on Family Mediation Services in Hong Kong – Family mediation is generally considered an effective way to resolve family disputes and help family members affected by separation and divorce (especially children) alleviate the psychological damage and embarrassment arising from litigation. The Council commissioned the study through the CPU to review the provision of family mediation services in Hong Kong and make recommendations on future development including how to improve the family mediation process and outcomes.
- (c) Study on Parenting Practices in Hong Kong – While being a parent could provide a joyful and rewarding experience, Family Survey 2013 and other relevant studies indicated that some parents seemed to encounter difficulties in childrearing and found the stress of raising their children overwhelming. The study was commissioned through the CPU to give a more comprehensive account of current parenting practices in Hong Kong; identify factors affecting parenting decisions and sources of parenting stress; examine the impact of different parenting practices on parent-child relationship, child development, family well-being, etc.; and provide recommendations on promoting positive values on family formation and childrearing.

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<sup>2</sup> The reports of Family Survey 2011 and Family Survey 2013 have been uploaded onto the Council's website ([www.familycouncil.gov.hk](http://www.familycouncil.gov.hk)) for public information.

The findings of these survey and researches will be shared with relevant B/Ds when available to facilitate their formulation of policies and strategies for supporting and strengthening families. The reports will also be uploaded onto the Council's website for public information.

14. In addition, the following two studies will be commissioned in 2016-17 –

- (a) Family Studies in Hong Kong: A Summary Analysis and Annotated Bibliography – to identify the existing research gap and build up a more comprehensive database of family-related studies.
- (b) Further Study on the Phenomenon of Divorce in Hong Kong<sup>3</sup> – to gather more quantitative and qualitative data to examine various issues relating to marriage and divorce.

15. At the request of the Council, the CPU has also expanded the scope of study topics of its Public Policy Research Funding Scheme<sup>4</sup> to cover family-related issues starting from 2016-17 onwards.

## **WAY FORWARD**

16. The Council firmly believes that family is the cornerstone of social harmony and the basic unit for community building. As family-related subjects straddle the policy areas of different bureaux and departments, the role of the Council is to provide a cross-sector and cross-bureau platform to examine family-related issues and advise the Government from an integrated and holistic perspective. The Council will continue to adopt a multi-pronged approach and collaborate with relevant stakeholders to carry out its functions.

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<sup>3</sup> The Council completed a “Study on the Phenomenon of Divorce in Hong Kong” in 2014 which aimed to identify the demographic and socioeconomic patterns, trend of divorce, the risk and protective factors, impacts of divorce as well as the needs of divorced families in Hong Kong. Members were briefed on the study findings at the Panel meeting in June 2014.

<sup>4</sup> The Public Policy Research Funding Scheme administered by the CPU has a recurrent funding of \$30 million to support researches on public policy under seven categories, namely (a) land and housing, (b) poverty and ageing/retirement protection, (c) political development and governance, (d) external economy, (e) social issues, (f) economic development and (g) environmental protection.

**ADVICE SOUGHT**

17. Members are invited to note the work progress of the Family Council.

**Home Affairs Bureau  
June 2016**

**Membership List of the Family Council  
(from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2017)**

**Chairman**

Professor SHEK Tan-lei, Daniel

**Ex-officio Members**

Mr LAU Ming-wai, Chairperson of the Commission on Youth

Dr LAM Ching-choi<sup>1</sup>, Chairperson of the Elderly Commission

Mrs LAU KUN Lai-kuen, Stella, Chairperson of the Women's Commission

**Non-official Members**

Mrs CHU YEUNG Pak-yu, Patricia

Professor LAM Tai-hing

Ms LAW Suk-kwan, Lilian

Mr LEE Luen-fai

Professor LEUNG Seung-ming, Alvin

Dr LI Sau-hung, Eddy

Ms LOO Shirley Marie Therese

Miss TANG Pui-yee, Phoebe

Dr TSUI Luen-on, Gordon

Ms WONG Pik-kiu, Peggy

Miss WONG Siu-ling, Gabriella

Ms YAU Oi-yuen, Irene

Ms YIP Lai-wa

Mr YIU Tze-leung, Ivan

**Official Members**

Secretary for Home Affairs or his representative

Secretary for Labour and Welfare or his representative

Secretary for Education or his representative

Head of Central Policy Unit or his representative

**Secretary**

Principal Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs (Civic Affairs) 2

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<sup>1</sup> Dr LAM Ching-choi succeeded Professor CHAN Cheung-ming, Alfred, as the Chairman of the Elderly Commission and became an ex-officio member of the Family Council in April 2016.



**List of subjects on which  
the Family Council and its sub-committees were consulted  
from 1 June 2014 to 31 May 2016**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Bureaux/departments/bodies</b>
1.	Implementation of Family Friendly Policies in the Civil Service	Civil Service Bureau
2.	Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace Policy	Department of Health
3.	Comprehensive Child Development Service	Department of Health, Social Welfare Department and Hospital Authority
4.	Report of the Committee on Free Kindergarten Education	Education Bureau
5.	Judgment Summons Proceedings for the Enforcement of Maintenance Orders	Home Affairs Bureau
6.	Review of Family Procedure Rules	Judiciary
7.	Low-income Working Family Allowance	Labour and Welfare Bureau
8.	Pilot Scheme on On-site Pre-school Rehabilitation Services	Labour and Welfare Bureau
9.	Pilot Project on Child Care Training for Grandparents	Labour and Welfare Bureau
10.	Retirement Protection	Labour and Welfare Bureau
11.	Proposed Legislation to Implement the Recommendations of the Law Reform Commission's Report on Child Custody and Access	Labour and Welfare Bureau

**Programmes and Activities  
Organised or Co-organised by the Family Council  
in 2014-15 and 2015-16**

Year	Programmes/Activities	Co-organiser(s)
2014-15	(a) Territory-wide publicity programmes on promotion of family core values including “2013/14 Family-friendly Employers Award Scheme” <sup>1</sup>	-
	(b) Organising a series of activities celebrating the “20 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the International Year of the Family” including Family Summit, Regional Symposium and publicity programmes in collaboration with the Consortium of Institutes on Family in the Asia Region (CIFA), the Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS) and the Social Welfare Department (SWD). Publicity programmes included large-scale launching and closing events, radio programmes and workshops	CIFA, HKCSS and SWD
	(c) Providing funds to Uniformed Groups <sup>2</sup> (UGs) for organising family-related programmes including parent-child sports day, adventure-based training camps, orienteering, visits to elderly homes, sharing sessions, etc.	UGs
2015-16	(a) Territory-wide publicity programmes on promotion of family core values including “2015/16 Family-friendly Employers Award Scheme” <sup>3</sup>	-
	(b) Territory-wide publicity programmes on promotion of positive messages and values on family formation including distribution of baby journal to mothers-to-be registered at Maternal and Child Health Centres under the Department of Health for ante-natal services, organisation of related workshops in 18 districts and radio programmes	Boys’ & Girls’ Clubs Association of Hong Kong and Radio Television Hong Kong

<sup>1</sup> The “2013/14 Family-friendly Employers Award Scheme” was launched in September 2013 and enrolment ran from September 2013 to January 2014. Following the completion of the adjudication in April 2014, the prize presentation ceremony was held in June 2014.

<sup>2</sup> The UGs include the Scout Association of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Girl Guides Association, Hong Kong Air Cadet Corps, Hong Kong Sea Cadet Corps, Hong Kong Adventure Corps, Hong Kong Red Cross, Hong Kong St John Ambulance, Boys’ Brigade Hong Kong, Girls’ Brigade Hong Kong, Hong Kong Road Safety Association and Association of Hong Kong Flag-guards.

<sup>3</sup> The “2015/16 Family-friendly Employers Award Scheme” was launched in December 2015. Following the close of enrolment period on 14 April 2016, 2 739 companies/organisations have enrolled for the Award Scheme. Upon the completion of adjudication, the results will be announced in October 2016.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Programmes/Activities</b>	<b>Co-organiser(s)</b>
2015-16	(c) Organising the Exchange Programme on “Sharing Session on 2014 Asian Award for Advancing Family Well-being” in collaboration with CIFA	CIFA
	(d) Providing funds to UGs for organising family-related programmes including parent-child water sports day, adventure-based training camps, sharing sessions, handicraft interest classes, dance and musical performance, etc.	UGs
	(e) Launching a two-year Pilot Scheme on Thematic Sponsorship to support non-profit making and worthwhile family-related initiatives. The themes for 2016-17 are “parent education” and “divorce education”.	-