

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

LC Paper No. CB(2)1964/16-17

(These minutes have been  
seen by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/WS

**Panel on Welfare Services**

**Minutes of meeting**  
**held on Monday, 10 April 2017, at 10:45 am**  
**in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex**

**Members  
present**

: Hon SHIU Ka-chun (Chairman)  
Hon KWONG Chun-yu (Deputy Chairman)  
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung  
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, BBS, JP  
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung  
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP  
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen  
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki  
Hon KWOK Wai-keung  
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung  
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH  
Hon Alvin YEUNG  
Hon Andrew WAN Siu-kin  
Hon CHU Hoi-dick  
Hon YUNG Hoi-yan  
Dr Hon Pierre CHAN  
Hon Nathan LAW Kwun-chung  
Dr Hon LAU Siu-lai

**Members  
absent**

: Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP  
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, BBS, MH, JP  
Dr Hon Junius HO Kwan-yiu, JP

Hon HUI Chi-fung

**Member attending** : Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan

[According to the Judgment of the Court of First Instance of the High Court on 14 July 2017, LEUNG Kwok-hung, Nathan LAW Kwun-chung, YIU Chung-yim and LAU Siu-lai have been disqualified from assuming the office of a member of the Legislative Council, and have vacated the same since 12 October 2016, and are not entitled to act as a member of the Legislative Council.]

**Public Officers attending** : Item IV

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

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

Ms Connie YEUNG Kwong-yim  
Assistant Director (Development and Procurement)  
Housing Department

Mr Kenneth WOO Chi-man  
Chief Executive Officer (Subventions/Planning)  
Social Welfare Department

Items IV & VI

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

Item V

Mrs Helen KWOK LI Mung-yee

Assistant Director (Youth and Corrections)  
Social Welfare Department

Ms Lorensa MAK Suk-kwan  
Chief Social Work Officer (Youth)  
Social Welfare Department

Miss Rebecca KOO Kwok-lai  
Chief Social Work Officer (Corrections)  
Social Welfare Department

Item VI

Ms Micy LUI Siu-ying  
Chief Social Work Officer (Family and Child Welfare)<sup>1</sup>  
Social Welfare Department

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

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

Miss Alison HUI  
Legislative Assistant (2) 4

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**I. Application for late membership**  
[LC Paper No. CB(2)1046/16-17(01)]

Members accepted the application for late membership by Mrs Regina IP vide her letter dated 20 March 2017.

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**II. Information paper(s) issued since the last meeting**

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

**III. Items for discussion at the next meeting**

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1137/16-17(01) to (02)]

3. Members noted that the Administration had proposed to discuss at the next meeting scheduled for 8 May 2017 the following items:

- (a) the proposed legislation to implement the recommendations of the Law Reform Commission Report on Child Custody and Access and relevant support measures; and
- (b) support services for singletons.

4. Dr Fernando CHEUNG said that services and facilities in many newly completed public rental housing ("PRH") estates were not available at the time of intake of residents. As this would cause many problems in the community, e.g. family tragedies, he suggested that deputations should be invited to give views on issues relating to estate-based social welfare services planning at a Panel meeting. He further said that under the Lump Sum Grant ("LSG") subvention system, there were problems of unequal pay for equal work in non-governmental organizations ("NGOs") receiving LSG subvention. There were also concerns about the transparency of salary and cash allowance for senior management of these NGOs. He suggested that the Panel should receive deputations' views in this regard. Members agreed to his suggestions. Given that some residents of newly completed PRH estates only had a few days to find suitable primary or secondary schools for their children, the Chairman said that apart from the Housing Department ("HD"), attendance of representatives from the Education Bureau might be necessary for the discussion of "Estate-based social welfare services planning" at a future Panel meeting.

#### **IV. Estate-based social welfare services planning**

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1029/16-17(01) and CB(2)1137/16-17(03) to (04)]

5. At the invitation of the Chairman, Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Services) ("DDSW(S)") briefed members on the planning for social welfare services for newly completed PRH estates.

#### Timely provision of welfare services and facilities in newly completed public rental housing estates

6. Mr Andrew WAN said that it had all along been the Administration's policies to make various types of services and facilities available in newly completed PRH estates only after a certain percentage of residents had moved in. Such services and facilities might be provided several years after the intake of residents had commenced and the provision of welfare services was particularly late. Although some NGOs were willing to provide transitional services in new PRH estates, the Administration had been rigid in acceding to such requests. As such, residents who moved in new PRH estates at the early stage of intake were not provided with any welfare services. Instead of adhering to the prescribed occupancy rate for providing welfare services, the Administration should provide these services in proportion to the number of residents once after their intake. DDSW(S) responded that planning for the provision of welfare services would commence when a development area or site was identified as having potential for PRH development.

7. The Chairman said that the Integrated Children and Youth Services Centres ("ICYSC") in On Tat Estate, Kwun Tong was still under renovation although the intake of residents took place in 2016 and social workers had to provide children and youth services on street. If provision of welfare facilities in a new PRH estate was planned before intake of residents, the ICYSC concerned should have commenced operation. DDSW(S) responded that the provision of that ICYSC was planned at an early stage of the development of On Tat Estate. As conversion and fitting-out works were required for that ICYSC and approval from the relevant authorities had to be obtained for carrying out such works, that ICYSC would commence operation within 2017.

8. In response to the Chairman's enquiry about whether the 18-month lead time between the intake of residents and commencement of operation of that ICYSC could be shortened, DDSW(S) said that the plans for the conversion

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and fitting-out works for that ICYSC could only be prepared after the Occupation Permit was issued. The Occupation Permit was issued in mid-July 2016 and time was required for preparing the aforesaid plans for relevant approval. Minor remedial works were also required for that ICYSC premises. The Administration would endeavor to speed up the process to enable that ICYSC to commence operation earlier. In response to the Deputy Chairman's enquiry, DDSW(S) said that it had taken about two months to complete the minor remedial works for the ICYSC premises. Dr KWOK Ka-ki said that conversion and fitting-out works for that ICYSC should be carried out upon completion of the construction of the block where that ICYSC was located. Taking the view that the existing arrangements had caused unnecessary delay in the provision of welfare services to new residents of PRH estates, he urged the Administration to make a pledge to provide such services expeditiously.

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9. Assistant Director (Development and Procurement) ("AD(D&P)") said that conversion or fitting-out works for welfare facilities in PRH were sometimes required to meet the operational needs of NGOs. These works should comply with the relevant legislation and should be approved by relevant government departments. The time required for completing the necessary procedures would vary from project to project. The Independent Checking Unit under the Office of Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing) would vet NGOs' applications upon receipt. HD would approach NGOs and offer them assistance (such as streamlining the procedures) during the process, if necessary. At the Chairman's request, AD(D&P) undertook to provide information for the case of ICYSC in On Tat Estate.

10. The Chairman expressed concern about the disruption of services for residents of On Tat Estate as the social worker team there was required to return its office to HD. AD(D&P) clarified that the captioned services were not permanent regular services. Nevertheless, HD would provide appropriate assistance with a view to supporting the policy of the Administration.

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11. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung said that while the provision of welfare services in new PRH estates should be planned ahead, such services were not available before intake of residents in most cases. He sought information on the policies and mechanism as well as the workflow in relation to the planning for the provision of social welfare services in On Tat Estate and On Tai Estate in Kwun Tong, Tak Long Estate and Kai Ching Estate in Kowloon City, and Hung Fuk Estate in Yuen Long. DDSW(S) undertook to provide the relevant

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workflow.

12. Taking the view that the long lead-time for the provision of welfare services and facilities in new PRH estates was caused by the Administration's bloated work procedures, Mr Nathan LAW suggested that tendering procedures for selection of service providers for welfare services should be advanced and streamlined. A time frame (e.g. three months before intake or within three months after intake) should be set for providing welfare services in new PRH estates to ensure that there would be no delay in such provision in future. To ensure that welfare facilities would be provided in PRH estates, the Administration should include in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines the minimum threshold for provision of such facilities in a PRH estate. The Administration should keep in view whether the minimum threshold was sufficient to meet the service needs of the community concerned. At Mr Nathan LAW's request, the Administration undertook to provide a written response to his suggestions.

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Reviewing work procedures in relation to provision of welfare facilities in new public rental housing

13. Dr LAU Siu-lai expressed grave concern about the non-provision of welfare services for needy elderly persons and grass-root families living in new PRH estates. She urged the Administration to speed up the process and provide home-care services for elderly residents in tandem with the intake for PRH estates. DDSW(S) responded that a Neighbourhood Elderly Centre in On Tat Estate had commenced service on 31 March 2017. There were altogether nine Day Care Centres/Day Care Unit for the Elderly (DEs/DCU) and three Enhanced Home and Community Care Services ("EHCCS") teams in Kwun Tong District. On Tat Estate and On Tai Estate which would be completed soon were within the service boundaries of seven DEs/DCU and the three EHCCS teams. Under the recommendation of SWD, five organizations were funded by the Community Investment and Inclusion Fund or the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust to run a three-year project ("the Project") in the Anderson Road Public Housing Development to facilitate new residents and families to integrate into the community. Dr LAU Siu-lai opined that relevant government departments should start the coordination work earlier so as to ensure that adequate services would be provided for elderly persons in a timely manner. DDSW(S) responded that the Administration would make its best effort to expedite the necessary procedures to facilitate earlier provision of

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welfare services in new PRH estates.

14. Expressing concern that the Project might not be able to cater for the service needs of residents of On Tat Estate and On Tai Estate given its time-limited nature, the Chairman said that regular services should be provided for residents of new PRH estates. He also enquired about SWD's role in providing support services for these residents. DDSW(S) responded that as the services under the Project aimed to help new residents adapt to the new environment and provide them with information on services which were available in the community, three years was a suitable period. Regular services would also be provided in the community and there would be an interface between services under the Project and regular services.

15. Dr Fernando CHEUNG said that many services were only available several years after the residents had moved in a new PRH estate. The Administration should formulate policies for providing welfare facilities for a new PRH estate at the intake of residents. The Administration should advance the necessary procedures, e.g. procedures in relation to tendering and conversion works, so that the services and facilities would be ready at the time of intake. DDSW(S) responded that SWD had improved the tendering arrangements for welfare services. SWD would obtain the plans of welfare premises from HD nearer the completion of the premises concerned so that invitation of tenders could commence earlier. In response to the Chairman's enquiry about the progress of provision of welfare services and facilities in On Tai Estate, DDSW(S) said that services for persons with disabilities would be provided at an Ancillary Facilities Block in On Tai Estate. SWD was preparing tender invitations for operation of these services which were expected to commence starting from 2018 onwards, if everything was smooth.

16. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung said that the Administration should consider providing prospective service providers with the location and area of welfare premises in new PRH estates at the planning stage so that they could submit their proposals for conversion or fitting-out works to HD before the premises were constructed. This would enable HD to carry out the conversion or fitting-out works at the time the premises were constructed, which was more time and cost effective. AD(D&P) responded that under the prevailing arrangement, bare-shell welfare premises would be provided for individual NGOs to carry out fitting-out works that would best serve their operation needs. That said, HD would collaborate with SWD once the service providers had



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been selected and the works proposals were received by HD. DDSW(S) said that the Administration would study the feasibility of Mr LEUNG's suggestion as it would involve changes to the existing tendering and funding arrangements. SWD and HD would provide a written response on whether the conversion or fitting-out works for welfare facilities could be carried out in tandem with the construction of PRH blocks.

17. The Deputy Chairman said that the absence of welfare services and facilities in new PRH estates could cause many social problems, e.g. youth problems. The Deputy Chairman and Mr Nathan LAW opined that the delay in provision of social welfare services in new PRH estates was due to poor communication and coordination between SWD and HD. SWD and HD should make improvements in this regard. DDSW(S) responded that SWD would maintain close contact and collaboration with HD on the progress of PRH developments so as to select suitable service providers for welfare services before intake of residents.

### Motions

18. Dr LAU Siu-lai moved the following motion:

"鑒於現時各區的現有社會福利設施服務已嚴重不足，尤其為長者服務的各類社區照顧服務已嚴重不足，就此，本委員會建議：

- (a) 要求盡快檢視現行的各類社區照顧服務的資源及人手編制，並需就此進行 18 區公眾及業界諮詢；
- (b) 要求政府成立跨部門工作小組，在新落成的屋邨規劃時，預留空間作社區照顧服務設施及院舍服務設施；及
- (c) 要求政府相關部門檢視並修訂《香港規劃標準與準則》，以增訂條文，需按區內的長者人口增加資助社區照顧服務設施及院舍服務，並以社區照顧服務為主。"

(Translation)

"Given that currently the existing social welfare facilities in various districts are already in acute shortage, which is particularly the case for

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various types of community care services for the elderly, this Panel proposes in this regard that:

- (a) a request be made for an expeditious review of the resources and staffing establishment for various types of existing community care services, and consultation should be conducted in this regard with the public across the 18 districts and the trade;
- (b) the Government be requested to set up an inter-departmental working group to make available space reserved for community care and residential care facilities in the planning of newly built housing estates; and
- (c) the relevant government departments be requested to review and revise the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines, so as to add a provision requiring that subsidized community care facilities and residential care services should be increased in accordance with the elderly population in the district, with the primary focus on community care services."

19. The Chairman put the motion to vote. All members present voted for the motion. The Chairman declared that the motion was carried.

20. Dr Fernando CHEUNG moved the following motion:

"鑒於多年來搬遷至新落成公共屋邨的居民往往要做開荒牛，面對社福、教育、醫療、交通、就業、購物等各類設施及服務不足，本委員會建議：

- (a) 設立新公共屋邨的社工服務隊，為期 5 年，協助居民適應新環境，建立社區資本；
- (b) 區內的服務及設施，包括幼兒、殘障、長者、家庭、兒童及青少年等相關服務，應於居民入伙前提供；及
- (c) 新屋邨入伙前，政府應成立跨部門工作小組，計劃及提供足夠服務，以滿足居民在社福、交通、教育、就業、醫療及購物等基本需要。"

(Translation)

"Given that over the years, residents moving into newly completed public housing estates have often acted as pioneers and faced shortages of various social welfare, education, health care, transport, employment and shopping facilities and services, this Panel proposes that:

- (a) a team of social workers serving new public housing estates be established for a period of five years to assist the residents in adapting to the new environment and building community capital;
- (b) the services and facilities for the district, including those provided for young children, persons with disabilities, elderly persons, families, children and youngsters, should be made available before the intake of residents; and
- (c) the Government should, before the intake of residents of a new housing estate, set up an inter-departmental working group to plan and provide sufficient services to meet the residents' basic needs for social welfare, transport, education, employment, health care and shopping, etc."

21. The Chairman put the motion to vote. All members present voted for the motion. The Chairman declared that the motion was carried.

**V. Progress of implementation of after-school care and support services**  
[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1137/16-17(05) to (06)]

22. At the invitation of the Chairman, Assistant Director (Youth and Corrections) ("AD(Y&C)") briefed members on the progress of implementation of after-school care and support services provided by the SWD.

Increasing quotas under the After-school Care Programme and subsidy for providing after-school care services

23. Noting that the Administration only provided around 1 800 full fee-waiving quotas under the After-school Care Programme ("ASCP") for families in need, the Chairman said that the full fee-waiving quotas should be

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increased to meet the high service demand. He sought information on the number of ASCP service users who were children in poverty and the number of children in poverty who were not provided with ASCP service because of inadequate fee-waiving quotas. AD(Y&C) responded that while ASCP service was operated on a self-financing basis, target beneficiaries of fee-waiving quotas under ASCP were mainly families with financial difficulties. Applicants for fee-waiving subsidy were required to declare their financial conditions and provide proof of income. Families with monthly income at or below 55% of Median Monthly Domestic Household Income ("MMDHI") would receive full fee-waiving and families with monthly income above 55% but not exceeding 75% of MMDHI would receive half fee-reduction. In addition to the 1 800 full fee-waiving quotas, an additional 462 full fee-waiving quotas were provided for needy families under the Enhanced ASCP.

24. Taking the view that the number of ASCP places in the community was far from adequate to meet the service needs, Dr KWOK Ka-ki said that in planning for the provision of ASCP service, the Administration should assess the number of families in need of such service. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung said that the Administration should establish a mechanism for evaluating the service demand and simplify the application procedures to facilitate more eligible families to apply for ASCP service. AD(Y&C) responded that as at end-December 2016, the overall utilization rate for ASCP centres was 92.5% and the number of untaken ASCP places was 435. The Administration would discuss with the District Social Welfare Offices and NGOs operating the ASCP centres the demand for ASCP service and fee-waiving subsidies in each district. The utilization rate and allocation of fee-waiving quotas would be examined and reviewed every six months. The Administration would adjust the quotas for ASCP, if necessary. Apart from ASCP, the approved after-school learning and support programmes under the Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged ("PFD") were expected to benefit over 60 000 primary and secondary school students from grass-root families. In response to Dr KWOK Ka-ki's enquiry about the estimated number of families in need of ASCP service, AD(Y&C) said that she did not have the required information at hand.

25. Dr Fernando CHEUNG said that there had been inadequate supply of after-school care services since the implementation of ASCP and the problem had not been resolved. Many NGOs and social workers expressed concern about the inadequate provision of ASCP places and insufficient subsidies for

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NGOs for providing ASCP service. He further said that many users of ASCP were children with special educational needs ("SEN") and the number of these users had increased over the years. However, the amount of subsidy per fee-waiving quota had not been increased for many years. NGOs did not have sufficient funds for hiring persons who had the skills and experience to provide care services for children with SEN. He called on the Administration to address the shortfall in the supply of after-school care services and increase the subsidy for each fee-waiving quota from \$750 to \$1,200. AD(Y&C) responded that the Administration would increase subsidy per fee-waiving quota to \$900 in 2017. The Administration was also seeking resources for providing more fee-waiving quotas.

26. The Chairman enquired the number of children with SEN receiving ASCP service and whether they were provided with any subsidy for using the service. AD(Y&C) responded that the number of service users with SEN varied among ASCP centres and the Administration did not keep record on the number of these users. As ASCP sought to provide after-school care services for families in need, the learning needs of children with SEN were addressed through other programmes. Families with children with SEN would be provided with fee-waiving or fee-reduction subsidies if they met the income requirements under ASCP.

27. Mr POON Siu-ping enquired the allocation of the 460 additional full fee-waiving quotas to the 35 ASCP centres operating the Enhanced ASCP and the service hours of ASCP centres on Saturdays and Sundays. AD(Y&C) responded that Enhanced ASCP places were provided in almost every district and NGOs were encouraged to provide these places in all districts as far as practicable. The latest utilization rate of Enhanced ASCP places was 76.6%. The service hours of ASCP centres were from 3 pm to 9 pm on weekdays and ASCP centres were required to operate eight hours on Saturdays and Sundays and 10 hours on school holidays. NGOs had the flexibility to decide the service hours on Saturdays, Sundays and school holidays according to users' needs.

28. Dr Helena WONG opined that the Administration should substantially increase the provision of after-school care services to unleash women labour force. Given that some ASCP centres had surplus places, the Administration should redeploy these places or provide additional ASCP places to districts which had an over demand for ASCP places. Mr POON Siu-ping asked

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whether the Administration would provide additional quotas for ASCP centres or districts with high service demand. Dr LAU Siu-lai said that there were around 30 000 residents in the two estates in Kai Tak but only 50 ASCP places were provided in these estates. In light of the acute shortage of after-school care services, the Administration should substantially increase ASCP places without the need to conduct any review. AD(Y&C) responded that the Administration would endeavour to increase the provision of fee-waiving quotas for ASCP having regard to service demand.

Relaxing working requirements under the After-school Care Programme

29. Dr LAU Siu-lai said that many non-working parents who wished to enter the workforce could not spare time to seek job as they had to take care of their children. As applicants should be in employment in order to be eligible for ASCP service, non-working parents were unable to benefit from such service. To facilitate these parents to seek employment and release labour force, the Administration should relax the working requirements under ASCP. Sharing a similar view, the Deputy Chairman said that it would be difficult for these parents to look for employment if their children were not provided with after-school care services. AD(Y&C) responded that children of the parents with the intention to look for employment or receive vocational training to strengthen their self-reliance capabilities were also eligible for ASCP service according to the assessment of the NGO concerned.

30. The Deputy Chairman said that he was told that the waiting time for ASCP places was around two years. Expressing concern that inadequate provision of ASCP service might bring about child safety issues as some parents might not be able to make arrangements for taking care of their children while they were working, he urged the Administration to increase the provision of ASCP places. AD(Y&C) responded that the waiting time would depend on the utilization rate of individual ASCP centres. NGOs and District Social Welfare Offices would assist families which had an urgent need for after-school care services by providing them with short-term ASCP service or information on other available after-school care services.

Provision of after-school care services for small children

31. Given that about 75% of children were studying in half-day kindergartens, Dr Helena WONG said that the Administration should consider

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providing after-school care services for children aged between three and five to facilitate their parents to join the labour market. AD(Y&C) responded that the Administration had been subsidising NGOs to provide a variety of child care services for small children. These included Extended Hours Services, Occasional Child Care Services and the Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project ("NSCCP") in respect of which subsidy schemes were in place to provide fee subsidies for needy families. Dr Helena WONG said that NSCCP could not address the needs of parents who wished to take up full-time job and all places of subvented child care centres had already been taken up. She urged the Administration to explore the provision of care services for children aged between three and five. AD(Y&C) responded that the Administration was planning to set up aided child care centres in some districts to meet the service needs. The Administration would keep in view the demand for child care services.

32. In response to the Chairman's enquiry about the study on care services for children aged below six, AD(Y&C) said that the Administration had commissioned a consultancy study to advise on the long-term development of child care services.

Monitoring of Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged

33. Dr LAU Siu-lai said that according to a media report and a survey conducted by the Society for Community Organization, students had to pay high fees for PFD programmes. She enquired about the monitoring of the fees and the quality of these programmes. AD(Y&C) responded that usually PFD programmes were provided for eligible students without any fee. To ensure that PFD would not be abused, the Administration would carefully examine proposals submitted by NGOs and schools and monitor the implementation of the PFD programmes. Matching grants would be disbursed to participating NGOs and schools after they had received donations from the business sector and confirmed commencement of the projects. All the business donations or income generated from the projects, if any, had to be first used up, and any unspent matching grants would be returned to the Administration. For projects which lasted for more than a year, matching grants would be disbursed by instalments according to their implementation timetable. The Administration could withhold any payment of the matching grants if NGOs or schools failed to provide adequate information as required by the Administration. NGOs and schools were required to submit progress reports,

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review reports and audited financial statements to the Administration. Members of the Advisory Committee of PFD and the PFD Secretariat would conduct project visits to better understand the progress of the projects.

*(At 12:36 pm, the Chairman extended the meeting for 25 minutes beyond the appointed ending time with the consent of all members present.)*

**VI. Review of the role and staff establishment of Integrated Family Service Centres of the Social Welfare Department**

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1137/16-17(07) to (08) and CB(2)1162/16-17(01)]

34. At the invitation of the Chairman, Assistant Director (Family and Child Welfare) ("AD(Family & Child Welfare)") briefed members on the role and staff establishment of the Integrated Family Service Centres ("IFSCs") of SWD and on the relevant review and improvement measures.

Family services for sexual minorities and specific target groups

35. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen said that some members had requested the Administration to provide designated family services for sexual minorities but the Administration's stance was that IFSCs could meet the service needs of sexual minorities effectively. Many sexual minorities had reflected that they were unable to obtain the necessary assistance from IFSCs as many frontline staff of IFSCs did not have the skills and experience in interacting with them. Some frontline staff of IFSCs did not have empathy with sexual minorities and transgender persons and were not willing to offer help because of their own values or religious background. The Advisory Group on Eliminating Discrimination against Sexual Minorities ("the Advisory Group") had submitted its report to the Administration in 2016 recommending, inter alia, that training and resources with a focus on sensitivity toward sexual minorities should be provided for frontline staff, social workers in particular. The Advisory Group also recommended that existing support services for sexual minorities should be reviewed and improved, and designated services should be provided for sexual minorities. He enquired whether SWD had taken forward the Advisory Group's recommendations.

36. AD(Family & Child Welfare) responded that services were provided to individuals and families in need, including sexual minorities, through the 65



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IFSCs across the territory, so as to avoid the probable labelling. Social workers of IFSCs provided services for all service users irrespective of their sexual orientation. To enhance communication and facilitate the delivery of services, SWD and relevant NGOs had regular meetings with sexual minorities groups. Representatives from the Police would be invited to attend these meetings when necessary. Having regard to the views and recommendations gathered, training for frontline staff on sensitivity towards sexual minorities had been strengthened. The Administration would continue to enhance the knowledge, skills and sensitivity of frontline staff working with sexual minorities through suitable training.

37. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen suggested that the Administration should consider setting up special service units under IFSCs to provide services for sexual minorities. Staff who volunteered to provide services for sexual minorities or experienced frontline staff should be assigned to these special service units. The Chairman said that designated services should be considered for specific target groups, e.g. single parents. AD(Family & Child Welfare) responded that the Administration had commissioned The University of Hong Kong ("HKU") to conduct a review of the implementation of the IFSC service mode and released the review report in May 2010. The consultant team of HKU noticed that the IFSCs located in the residing areas of specific target groups could serve as a natural platform to facilitate their integration into the community and their easy access to the services required. IFSCs identified specific target groups in the community and provided appropriate services to meet their service needs. Coupled with the consideration of allowing more frontline staff to gain exposure and experience in working with various specific target groups, it might not be suitable to set up special service units for sexual minorities. To better meet the service needs of specific service users, the management of IFSCs would take into account the experience and knowledge of frontline staff when assigning cases.

38. Dr Fernando CHEUNG said that since special services for specific target groups were not provided in all IFSCs and needs of these groups varied among communities, IFSCs could not address the needs of specific target groups. As it would be easier for individuals to identify themselves with people in the same target group and accept offers for assistance, the Administration should set up service centres for specific target groups (e.g. single parents and sexual minorities). In his view, family services should aim at community building but the existing family services were remedial in nature. A

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community-oriented and community capital development approach should be adopted for delivering family services so as to address the service needs of families in different communities. He called on the Administration to review the mode of family services. AD(Family & Child Welfare) responded that services provided by IFSCs were more comprehensive than designated service centres. While community building was a cross-department policy issue, SWD had been reaching out to needy families who were not familiar with available services through outreach services, visits by volunteers, etc. and providing these families with various support services.

Processing of compassionate rehousing cases

39. Dr Fernando CHEUNG said that under the existing arrangements, compassionate rehousing ("CR") cases could only be handled by SWD-operated IFSCs. To streamline the process and improve efficiency, the Administration should consider empowering NGO-operated IFSCs to process CR cases. Sharing a similar view, Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung said that to ensure that requests from families who warranted CR would be considered, NGO-operated IFSCs should also be allowed to process CR cases. AD(Family & Child Welfare) responded that, given that CR involved the use of public resources, both SWD and HD considered that recommendation on CR cases should be provided by government departments. However, NGO-operated IFSCs could make assessments on the eligibility for CR having regard to individual case circumstances, decide whether the cases met the eligibility criteria for CR and refer suitable cases to District Social Welfare Officers ("DSWOs") to follow up with HD, as appropriate. To ensure consistency in assessment yardsticks, cases would be examined and endorsed by 11 DSWOs who would recommend eligible cases to HD. A working group under SWD was formed in November 2016 to conduct a comprehensive review of the processing of CR cases ("the CR Review"). The CR Review aimed at devising more guidelines on CR assessment yardsticks used by SWD and relevant NGO service units, including NGO-operated IFSCs, and covered the processing procedures, mode and mechanism. Personnel directly involved in processing CR cases (e.g. medical social workers, social workers of the Family and Child Protective Services Units, etc.) and representatives from staff unions concerned were invited to give views at five focus group sessions held in March 2017. Views from stakeholders concerned on the review were also collected through other means.

Action

40. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung opined that it was illogical that NGO-operated IFSCs could reject CR requests but could not approve CR applications. AD(Family & Child Welfare) said that the client could file a complaint to the management of the NGO concerned if he/she was dissatisfied with the services of an NGO-operated IFSC. If the client was discontent with the NGO's reply to his/her complaint, he/she might lodge an appeal with the DSWO concerned.

41. The Chairman said that many social workers considered that processing CR cases by dedicated teams could effectively narrow inconsistencies in the assessment of CR cases. He urged the Administration to consider setting up CR teams. AD(Family & Child Welfare) responded that the suggestion of setting up CR teams was discussed at the focus group sessions held in March 2017 and further views would be collected on the subject matter.

42. In response to the Chairman's enquiry about when the outcome of the CR Review would be ready, AD(Family & Child Welfare) said that the Administration planned to conduct another series of focus group sessions in the fourth quarter of 2017 to discuss major views collected from the focus group sessions held in March 2017. It was preliminarily planned that a conclusion could be drawn in March 2018. Dr Fernando CHEUNG suggested that the Panel should have an opportunity to give views on the preliminary findings of the CR Review. AD(Family & Child Welfare) said that information on the scope, terms and schedule of the CR review was available at the SWD website and the Panel would be briefed on the recommendations of the working group when available.

Roles and positioning of Integrated Family Service Centres

43. The Chairman said that IFSCs should attach greater importance to developmental and preventive services than to support and counseling services. However, according to many social workers and NGOs, they were required to spend most of their time and resources on providing counseling services. He was concerned that the Administration had re-positioned IFSCs by placing less emphasis on developmental and preventive services. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung said that the Administration should not change the prime roles of IFSCs because of lacking resources. Instead, the Administration should capitalize resources in the community to foster the concept of self-help and mutual help of the disadvantaged groups.

Action

44. AD(Family & Child Welfare) responded that SWD had been keeping in view the workload and manpower demand of IFSCs and had provided additional resources for frontline social work manpower in the past few years. The Committee on Integrated Family Service Centres ("the Committee") comprising representatives from SWD, NGOs and The Hong Kong Council of Social Service held meeting once every three months to discuss the issues of concern related to the operation of IFSCs. Allocation of additional resources secured for IFSCs and the roles of IFSCs were reported and discussed in the meetings and the views of the Committee were sought in that regard. That said, the Administration would bring the subject matter to the Committee's attention. In response to the Chairman's suggestion of inviting representatives of staff unions and concern groups to join the platform relating to the CR Review, AD(Family & Child Welfare) said that representatives of staff unions had joined the focus groups of the CR Review.

Workload of Integrated Family Service Centres

45. The Chairman expressed concern that some IFSC social workers had to handle 80 cases a month and many IFSC staff members were overloaded. Many IFSCs did not have adequate resources as old cases would not be counted as output under the Funding and Service Agreements ("FSAs"). Noting that the Administration considered it reasonable and appropriate for an IFSC to serve a population size of 100 000 to 150 000, he enquired about the number of IFSCs which were serving more than 150 000 population. AD(Family & Child Welfare) responded that the average caseload per IFSC social worker was 36.8 cases a month. Currently, only an IFSC was delivering services to areas with a population of slightly over 150 000 and some IFSCs were serving areas with a population of below 100 000. DSWOs would adjust the service boundaries of IFSCs taking into account factors such as the complexity of social problems and district needs, and changes in population size of the districts, if necessary. While IFSCs were not required to report the number of cases handled in each month, the number of cases brought forward from the previous month and the number of new/reactivated cases of the current month were reported. NGOs and the Administration had reviewed and improved the contents of FSAs in 2011, and reached a consensus on the data to be collected under FSAs.

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**VI. Any other business**

46. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 1:11 pm.

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