

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

LC Paper No. CB(2)2160/16-17  
(These minutes have been  
seen by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/WS

**Panel on Welfare Services**

**Minutes of special meeting  
held on Saturday, 27 May 2017, at 9:30 am  
in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex**

- Members present** : Hon SHIU Ka-chun (Chairman)  
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung  
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, BBS, JP  
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung  
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen  
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki  
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung  
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH  
Hon Alvin YEUNG  
Hon HUI Chi-fung
- Members absent** : Hon KWONG Chun-yu (Deputy Chairman)  
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP  
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP  
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, BBS, MH, JP  
Hon KWOK Wai-keung  
Hon Andrew WAN Siu-kin  
Hon CHU Hoi-dick  
Dr Hon Junius HO Kwan-yiu, JP  
Hon YUNG Hoi-yan  
Dr Hon Pierre CHAN  
Hon Nathan LAW Kwun-chung  
Dr Hon LAU Siu-lai

[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 : Item I  
attending**

Mr Gordon CHONG  
Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare  
(Welfare) 4  
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Ms Maria LAU  
Assistant Director (Social Security)  
Social Welfare Department

Mr Vincent FUNG  
Principal Assistant Secretary (Civic Affairs)1  
Home Affairs Bureau

Miss Vega WONG  
Assistant Director (4)  
Home Affairs Department

Mr Alfred LEE  
Assistant Director (Strategic Planning)  
Housing Department

**Attendance : Item I  
by invitation**

Society for Community Organization

Mr CHENG Wai  
Community Organizer

香港社區組織協會露宿者關注組

Mr CHAN Chung-yin  
Community Organizer

Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of  
Hong Kong

Mr CHOI Tin-yam  
Deputy Spokesperson

The Civic Party

Mr William LI Wai-lam  
District Developer of Kowloon East Branch

Mr Cary LO Chun-yu

Christian Concern For The Homeless Association

Mr MO Cheuk-yin  
Assistant Outreaching Officer

單身狗平權關注組

盧嘉和先生  
會長

Mr LAM Tat-leung

Mr TO Tak-wan

Mr LEUNG Pak-cheung

守望計劃

薛錦屏女士  
代表

香港社區組織協會單身人士關注組

江藝林先生  
代表

Ms LAI Man-shan

Mr CHOW Wai-hung, Member of Kwai Tsing District  
Council

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

**Staff in attendance** : Mr Roger CHUNG  
Council Secretary (2) 4

Miss Alison HUI  
Legislative Assistant (2) 4

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Action

**I. Support services for singletons**  
[LC Paper No. CB(2)1318/16-17(05)]

At the invitation of the Chairman, Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 4 ("PAS(W)4 ") briefed members on the existing welfare, housing and other support services provided by the Administration for singletons.

2. The Chairman invited the deputations/individuals to present their views. A total of 14 deputations/individuals expressed their views which were summarized in the **Appendix**.

The Administration's response to deputations' views

3. PAS(W)4 advised that the Low-income Working Family Allowance ("LIFA") Scheme was launched in May 2016 which aimed to encourage self-reliance of low-income families through employment, with a focus on supporting families with youths and children to ease intergenerational poverty. Therefore, LIFA Scheme did not cover one-person households at this stage. A comprehensive policy review of the LIFA Scheme would be conducted in mid-2017. Areas to be examined included the impact of the LIFA Scheme on poverty alleviation and work incentive, key parameters of the LIFA Scheme, operational issues, etc. The Administration had been receiving feedback and suggestions from concern groups and stakeholders on various aspects of the LIFA Scheme. All the suggestions would be carefully considered in the comprehensive policy review of the LIFA Scheme. He added that the Work

Incentive Transport Subsidy Scheme had been enhanced since 2013 and was open for individual applications in order to help low-income earners reduce their cost of travelling to and from work and encourage them to secure or stay in employment.

4. Assistant Director (Social Security) ("AD(SS)") advised that the Social Welfare Department ("SWD") and subvented non-governmental organizations ("NGOs") operated 65 Integrated Family Service Centres ("IFSCs") and two Integrated Services Centres ("ISCs") over the territory to provide a spectrum of preventive, supportive and remedial welfare services to individuals and families in need. With the aim of facilitating the service users in seeking and utilizing the services, IFSCs/ISCs would serve as a platform to provide welfare services for those living in its respective service boundaries. Social workers of IFSCs/ISCs would assess service users' needs and provide them with appropriate services and assistance in accordance with the situations and needs of the persons concerned. If the persons concerned had financial difficulties, social workers would refer them to apply for appropriate financial assistance. Besides, SWD implemented the Family Support Programme with a view to identifying needy individuals and families who were reluctant to seek help so as to engage them to receive services.

5. AD(SS) further advised that IFSCs/ISCs had to meet the requirements and performance standards stipulated in the relevant Funding and Service Agreements ("FSAs") with SWD. As regards statistics of specific target groups using the service of IFSCs/ISCs, SWD would take into account the statistics provided by the Census and Statistics Department and the service statistics to better understand the needs of different service users. Noting that there were around 450 000 singletons in the community, the Chairman requested the Administration to provide information on the number of singletons who were using the services provided by IFSCs.

Admin

6. Assistant Director (Strategic Planning) ("AD(SP)") advised that according to the latest projection in the Long Term Housing Strategy, the Administration had adopted 280 000 units as the public housing supply target for the ten-year period from 2017-2018 to 2026-2027. Based on the latest information, the total public housing production of the Hong Kong Housing Authority ("HA") and Hong Kong Housing Society in the five-year period from 2016-2017 to 2020-2021 was about 94 500 units. The total housing production was higher than the housing production figures of the previous four five-year periods. Due to limited public rental housing ("PRH") resources and the fact that it took time to identify suitable land for public housing production, the Administration needed to accord priority to general applicants (i.e. family applicants and elderly one-person applicants).

7. In response to the concern about the long waiting time for PRH allocation to singletons under the Quota and Points System ("QPS"), AD(SP) said that HA had refined the points system under QPS to accord priority to older QPS applicants, which included awarding a one-off bonus of 60 points to QPS applicants when they had reached the age of 45 and increasing the scale of age points. HA also increased the annual allocation quota under QPS from 8% to 10% of the total number of flats to be allocated to general and QPS applicants starting from 2015-2016, subject to a cap which was also increased from 2 000 to 2 200 units. In addition, applicants might apply under the Express Flat Allocation Scheme to increase the chance of earlier PRH allocation. Besides, for those who had imminent and long-term housing needs on medical or social grounds but had no other feasible means to solve their housing problems, they might approach SWD for relevant welfare or assistance. SWD would assess each case and recommend eligible cases to the Housing Department for early allocation of PRH through "Compassionate Rehousing". The Chairman requested the Administration to provide information on the number and the usage rate of the annual allocation quota under QPS in the past five years.

Admin

8. Principal Assistant Secretary (Civic Affairs)<sup>1</sup> advised that the Administration launched the Youth Hostel Scheme ("YHS") to unleash the potential of under-utilized sites held by NGOs and meet the aspirations of some working youths in having their own living space. The target tenants of YHS were working youths who were Hong Kong permanent residents aged 18 to 30. Youth meeting the eligibility criteria might apply for YHS as one-person or two-person applicants.

9. Assistant Director(4)(Home Affairs Department) ("AD(4)(HAD)") advised that the Singleton Hostel Programme ("SHP") under the Home Affairs Department was a designated project to tie in with the introduction of the licensing regime under the Bedspace Apartments Ordinance (Cap. 447) ("the Ordinance") implemented in 1994. The objective of SHP was to provide short-term accommodation for those bedspace lodgers affected by the implementation of the Ordinance, so that they could arrange for long-term accommodation during the transitional period. Since 1995 until now, the number of licensed bedspace apartments had significantly decreased from 152 to 10, which showed that the historical task of SHP had already been completed. Besides, compassionate cases referred by SWD or other NGOs were also accepted under SHP to address the emergency and short-term accommodation needs of singletons. During their stay in the SHP hostels, social workers would provide appropriate assistance to singletons in identifying long-term accommodation or appropriate residential care as necessary. In response to the Chairman's enquiry about the full capacity of the SHP hostels, AD(4)(HAD) said that after the existing occupants had moved out, the singleton hostels had to

undergo clean-up and necessary formalities before admitting new occupants. Hence, an unoccupied window period mainly caused by turnover of occupants was necessary. The average occupancy rate of the singleton hostels was around 85% in recent years.

## Discussion

### *Housing needs of singletons*

10. Noting that the objective of SHP was to accommodate the bedspace lodgers affected by the implementation of the Ordinance and the scale of YHS was limited, Mr CHAN Chi-chuen called on the Administration to strengthen its efforts to address the housing needs of singletons. He enquired whether the Administration would consider providing special arrangements for PRH applicants who were living in Shenzhen and therefore could not provide proof of residential address in Hong Kong. In his view, the Administration should implement measures to facilitate the processing of PRH applications from singletons who could not provide updated proof of their marital status. Sharing a deputation's concern about the eligibility criteria for PRH applicants, Mr CHAN suggested that a group of singletons should be allowed to jointly apply for and share a PRH unit.

11. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung expressed dissatisfaction about the absence of senior officials of the government departments in attending the meeting. He criticized that the housing problem of singletons was the result of the Administration's policies implemented in the past, e.g. reducing the public housing production and abolishing the rent control policy. In his view, the Administration should launch the rent control policy to stop the emergence of sub-divided units. Mr LEUNG said that it was difficult for a singleton to be granted a PRH unit under the QPS quota system.

### *Support services for singletons provided by Integrated Family Service Centres*

12. Noting that the Society for Community Organization had published a comprehensive report on the street-sleeping situation of singletons in 2017, Mr Alvin YEUNG suggested that the relevant subject should be revisited by the Panel on Welfare Services. He expressed concern that while the Administration had stipulated the requirements and performance standards in FSAs under the Lump Sum Grant Subvention System, it did not have the latest information regarding the specific service needs of singletons. Mr YEUNG enquired whether the staffing establishment of IFSCs was adequate in catering for different needs of singletons.

13. AD(SS) said that SWD would make suitable staffing arrangements for its IFSCs on the basis of the district service needs and characteristics. As regards IFSCs operated by NGOs under subventions, NGOs had the flexibility to deploy the subventions and make suitable staffing arrangements to meet the requirements as set out in FSAs, and were accountable for the service provision and staff deployment. She added that IFSCs/ISCs acted as a platform to provide a spectrum of welfare services and refer persons in need for appropriate support services when necessary. Apart from IFSCs/ISCs, there were other service units to provide useful reference for the Administration in identifying the needs of disadvantaged groups across different districts. District Social Welfare Officers of SWD would coordinate the support services in the districts accordingly.

14. Dr KWOK Ka-ki criticized the Administration for the lack of a dedicated policy for singletons. He considered that the range of services provided by IFSCs could not meet the changing needs of singletons. Dr KWOK expressed grave concern about the absence of dedicated support services for singletons. He urged the Administration to formulate such a policy and consider establishing dedicated service centres for singletons.

15. AD(SS) advised that SWD had commissioned a consultant team to conduct a review on the implementation of the IFSC service mode. The review report considered that the IFSC service mode had received general support from IFSC management and frontline workers, stakeholders and service users, and was suitable for delivering family services in contemporary Hong Kong. It was recommended in the report that IFSCs could serve as a one-stop platform to identify specific target groups in the communities and provide appropriate services for them. To more effectively prevent and deal with service users' problems and reduce the workload of social workers of IFSCs, the Administration had allocated additional resources to provide four additional IFSCs in areas with high demand for services. SWD had been keeping in view the workload and manpower demand of IFSCs and would strengthen the manpower resources of frontline social workers and supervisory staff through provision of additional resources when necessary.

16. At the invitation of the Chairman, the following deputations/individuals gave views as follows:

- (a) Mr CHENG Wai of Society for Community Organization expressed concern about the rising number of non-elderly singletons applying for PRH units. He called on the Administration to review its policy on providing singleton hostels;



- (b) Mr CHAN Chung-yin of 香港社區組織協會露宿者關注組 suggested that the LIFA Scheme should be extended to cover one-person households. He urged the Administration to review the maximum rates of the rent allowance under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme and increase the amount so as to catch up with the high rental of private housing. Besides, the Administration should implement measures to help singleton hostel applicants who could not pay a deposit for making such applications;
- (c) Mr CHOI Tin-yam of Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong was of the view that given the limited capacity of IFSCs in meeting the needs of various service users, the Administration should allocate additional resources to increase the manpower of frontline social workers of IFSCs for providing support services for singletons;
- (d) Mr William LI of The Civic Party said that the Administration should show empathy and consider the needs of singletons in drawing up relevant policies and provision of appropriate support services;
- (e) Mr Cary LO considered that the Administration should make better planning for the provision of public housing and produce smaller PRH units to cater for the needs of singletons. He criticized that the living condition of the street sleepers' services units in Yau Ma Tei was worse than that of sub-divided units, as the street sleepers' services units were co-located with the refuse collection point in the same building;
- (f) Mr MO Cheuk-yin of Christian Concern For The Homeless Association called on the Administration to review its policies on provision of singleton hostels and implement new measures to address the housing needs of singletons. Besides, some singletons who could not provide updated proof of their marital status faced difficulties in making PRH applications; and
- (g) Mr CHOW Wai-hung, Member of Kwai Tsing District Council considered that the Administration should make use of vacant school premises or public space under flyovers to build temporary apartments for singletons. He criticized that the Administration had no planning to assist singletons in achieving their long-term accommodation goal after they had moved out from the singleton

hostels. The Administration should also subsidize middle-aged singletons to receive training and attend courses for their career development.

Admin 17. The Chairman requested the Administration to provide information on (a) whether the Administration would consider providing special arrangements for PRH applicants who were living in Shenzhen and therefore could not provide proof of residential address in Hong Kong; (b) whether the Administration would consider providing financial assistance for singleton hostel applicants who could not pay a deposit for making such applications; and (c) whether the Administration would consider reviewing its policy on providing singleton hostels.

*(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response to the required information under this discussion item was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)1836/16-17(01) on 7 July 2017.)*

## **II. Any other business**

18. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 11:32 am.

Council Business Division 2  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
3 October 2017

## Panel on Welfare Services

Special meeting on Saturday, 27 May 2017, at 9:30 am

## Support services for singletons

## Summary of views and concerns expressed by deputations/individuals

No.	Name of deputation / individual	Views
1.	Society for Community Organization	[LC Paper No. CB(2)1470/16-17(01)]
2.	香港社區組織協會露宿者關注組	[LC Paper No. CB(2)1526/16-17(02)]
3.	Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Administration should require the Integrated Family Service Centres to collate statistics of singleton service users in the quarterly statistical reports submitted under the arrangement of the Funding and Service Agreements.</li> <li>• Hong Kong citizens who currently lived in Shenzhen could not apply for public rental housing ("PRH") since they could not provide proof of residential address in Hong Kong.</li> <li>• Given the limited accommodation places of the Youth Hostel Scheme, the singletons' housing needs could not be addressed since both one-person households and two-person households could apply.</li> </ul>
4.	The Civic Party	[LC Paper No. CB(2)1526/16-17(01)]
5.	Mr Cary LO Chun-yu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Given limited supply of PRH units and the long waiting time for non-elderly singleton applicants, the Administration should review the Quota and Points System for PRH allocation.</li> <li>• The income limit for PRH applicants should be increased as singletons who exceeded the limit could not afford the high rental of private housing.</li> <li>• Current policies and support services were inadequate to cater for singletons' needs.</li> </ul>

No.	Name of deputation / individual	Views
6.	Christian Concern For The Homeless Association	[LC Paper No. CB(2)1470/16-17(02)]
7.	單身狗平權關注組	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Current housing and labour policies were inadequate to cater for singletons' needs.</li><li>• A group of singletons should be allowed to jointly apply for and share a PRH unit.</li></ul>
8.	Mr LAM Tat-leung	[LC Paper No. CB(2)1526/16-17(02)]
9.	Mr TO Tak-wan	[LC Paper No. CB(2)1526/16-17(02)]
10.	Mr LEUNG Pak-cheung	[LC Paper No. CB(2)1526/16-17(02)]
11.	守望計劃	[LC Paper No. CB(2)1526/16-17(02)]
12.	香港社區組織協會單身人士關注組	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Current housing policies were inadequate to accommodate young singletons' needs and the waiting time for PRH was very long.</li><li>• The Administration should review its policy on providing singleton hostels.</li></ul>
13.	Ms LAI Man-shan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Private housing was unaffordable for young people and the average waiting time for PRH was very long.</li></ul>
14.	Mr CHOW Wai-hung, Member of Kwai Tsing District Council	[LC Paper No. CB(2)1526/16-17(03)]