

**For discussion on
10 December 2018**

Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services

**Proposed Creation of
an Administrative Officer Staff Grade C Post
in the Labour and Welfare Bureau for enhancing the secretariat support
for the Commission on Children**

Purpose

This paper presents the Government's proposal to create one directorate post at the rank of Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (AOSGC) (D2) in Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB) on a permanent basis with effect from 1 April 2019 to head a dedicated policy team for providing secretariat support to the newly established Commission on Children (the Commission), providing policy inputs on cross-bureau and cross-department child-related policies and measures, and coordinating relevant bureaux/departments in taking relevant follow-up actions on issues discussed by the Commission, so as to support the work of the Commission and take forward its agenda. Members are invited to note, comment on and support this proposal.

Justifications

Background

2. Children's growth and development is one of the priority policy areas of the current-term Government. The Chief Executive promulgated in her Policy Address in October 2017 that the Government would set up the Commission to amalgamate the efforts made by relevant bureaux/departments and children concern groups, and focus on addressing children's issues as they grow. The Commission, chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration, with the Secretary for Labour and Welfare as the Vice-chairperson, as well as Members comprising various bureau secretaries/department heads (i.e. Secretary for Education, Secretary for Food and Health, Secretary for Home Affairs, Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Director of Social Welfare, Director of Health and Director of Home Affairs) and 21 experts on child-related issues (including healthcare, education, social welfare, legal, academia, ethnic minorities and parent representatives, etc.), was established on 1 June 2018.

The Commission is an on-going, action-oriented, responsive and high-level advisory body that provides overall steer, sets policy directions, strategies and priorities, and translates them into the Government policy agenda, so as to drive and monitor bureaux/departments to take forward policy initiatives related to children and to safeguard children's interests and well-being. The terms of reference and membership list of the Commission are at **Annex I**.

3. At present, the Commission has started work, and is committed to addressing a number of priority areas, including enhanced support for children with special needs, enhanced inclusion of ethnic minority children into the community, improved physical and mental health of children, improved services for children at risk and school social work services at primary schools and kindergartens, consideration of a mechanism for addressing the issue of absentee students, as well as other systematic issues with particular regard to the requests in the community for developing a central databank on children and children-related indices.

4. Meanwhile, to take forward other important work areas, the Commission agreed to set up four Working Groups, namely (a) Working Group on Research and Public Engagement, (b) Working Group on Promotion of Children's Rights and Development, Education and Publicity, (c) Working Group on Children with Special Needs, as well as (d) Working Group on Children Protection, so as to address the diversified issues related to children. The scopes of work of the four Working Groups are as follows:

- (a) The Working Group on Research and Public Engagement focuses on conducting research and mapping out engagement programmes for children and public participation. More specifically, this Working Group will kick start and oversee two important research studies on developing a central databank on children and children-related indices; advise on review of child policies, legislation and services in order to identify areas for improvement and bridge service gaps; consider effective avenues/forums to facilitate children participation, as well as promote public engagement with relevant stakeholders; and manage a new funding scheme for children groups and non-governmental organisations, etc. to organise publicity activities or community projects on children-related issues.
- (b) The Working Group on Promotion of Children's Rights and Development, Education and Publicity will focus on promoting children's rights and interests through public education and publicity and formulating plans on promotion of direct engagement

with children. It will formulate publicity strategy and organise a variety of public education and promotional campaigns and activities, so as to enhance the community's awareness and understanding on children's rights and interests. In promoting direct engagement with children, this Working Group will provide them with effective channels/organise forums so as to listen to their views on various child-related issues for the Commission's reference.

- (c) The Working Group on Children with Special Needs will focus on matters concerning children with special needs, including the needs of ethnic minority children and their inclusion into the community, as well as children with special education needs/needs for residential child care services or those at risk of developmental delay. In this regard, this Working Group needs to address enormous relevant issues urgently, including matters concerning ethnic minority children's learning of Chinese as second language and their university admission, children's mental health, as well as matters related to Hong Kong Children's Hospital.
- (d) The Working Group on Children Protection will focus on matters concerning children at risk, including but not limited to children suffering from domestic violence, child abuse, student suicide, education development and academic pressure for students, absentee students, as well as children of divorced/single-parent families, etc. In this regard, this Working Group needs to urgently address the related issues, including strengthening parent education and family support for children, enhancing support for children of divorced/single-parent families, mechanism for dealing with absentee students, as well as the optimal use of additional resources earmarked for school social work service at primary schools and kindergartens, etc.

5. In view of the urgent tasks that the Working Group on Research and Public Engagement and the Working Group on Promotion of Children's Rights and Development, Education and Publicity are committed to, and the time that it would take to complete these tasks, we will first establish these two Working Groups in the first instance at the end of 2018 so as to kick start the work as soon as practicable; and will plan to progressively establish the remaining two Working Groups in the first half of 2019 which target at the priority and urgent proposals on children with special needs and on children protection, and support the Commission to discuss and formulate action programmes. LWB is responsible for the secretariat work of the Commission and its four Working Groups.

The Urgent Need for Creation of an AOSGC Post

6. The current-term Government is deeply concerned about the healthy growth of children, both physical and psychological. The setting up of the Commission is an important initiative in taking forward this policy. The vision of the Commission is to ensure that Hong Kong is a place where the rights, interests and well-being of all children are respected and safeguarded and their voices are heard, and where all children enjoy healthy and happy growth and optimal development, so as to achieve their fullest potentials. Members of the Commission and the public have earnest expectations for the work of the Commission. The Commission also has on-going and heavy work commitment that needs to be implemented. To ensure that the Commission can effectively perform its duties, the Commission needs a dedicated team led by a directorate officer to provide policy advice and secretariat support. Taking into account the nature, scope, complexity of the tasks as well as the cross-bureau/cross-department issues to be handled by the Commission, we propose setting up a dedicated policy team to be headed by a directorate AOSGC officer, who will be supported by 10 non-directorate staff (including one Chief Executive Officer (CEO), one Administrative Officer (AO), two Senior Executive Officer (SEO), four Executive Officer I (EOI), one Personal Secretary I (PS I) and one Assistant Clerical Officer (ACO) posts) as the secretariat to support the work of the Commission¹. The major responsibilities of the proposed dedicated policy team as the secretariat include -

- (a) providing policy support for the Commission and its four Working Groups, conducting research and coordinating cross bureaux/departments child-related policies and measures, writing discussion papers and other information papers, managing a funding scheme amounting to about \$7,000,000 per year, formulating public engagement programmes, organising various large-scale territory-wide and individual district-based publicity activities as well as those activities targeting at specific groups, such as schools, etc.;
- (b) conducting review on child welfare policy as appropriate and providing relevant policy proposals. These include effectively implementing two important consultancy study reports, viz. the Pilot Scheme on On-site Pre-school Rehabilitation Services and the

¹ The Government created one CEO, one SEO and one EOI posts to support the work of the Commission in 2018-19. In view of the expanding scope of work of the Commission, including the establishment of four Working Groups in addressing a series of issues, the Government will allocate additional resources to the Commission from 2019-20 onwards to enhance the support to the secretariat.

Consultancy Study on the Long-term Development of Child Care Services, exploring the expansion of the existing after school care services as well as extending the coverage to pre-school children and to formulate relevant policies and oversee the implementation, exploring measures to strengthen residential child care services, supporting children's healthy development to the interest of children, etc.;

- (c) coordinating the efforts of bureaux/departments for enhancing cross-bureau and cross-department collaboration in areas of concerns raised by the Commission as well as implementing appropriate follow-up measures, such as strengthening cooperation between Education Bureau, Food and Health Bureau/Hospital Authority (HA) and Social Welfare Department (SWD) to provide more suitable bridging and support services for children with special needs in kindergartens and when they proceed to primary and secondary schools, coordinating the efforts of SWD, HA, Police, etc. in providing protection measures and welfare plans as appropriate for children who are suspected to have been subjected to abuse, and conducting follow up improvement measures on the school social work service in primary schools and kindergartens provided for children at risk;
- (d) coordinating efforts for and assisting in overseeing relevant research studies conducted by the Commission, especially on the two important researches on developing a central databank on children and children-related indices, including defining the scope, framework, objectives and deliverables etc. of the researches and commissioning consultants to conduct the researches, encouraging public engagement by relevant stakeholders, as well as formulating plans to facilitate public engagement, for example, considering to collect children and public views on the development of a central databank on children through organising focus groups and meetings with stakeholders, especially children, and exploring on how to take forward and implement the relevant work; and
- (e) overseeing the publicity and implementation of funding schemes, promoting participation by stakeholders, especially children, as well as formulating publicity strategy to organise various public education and promotional activities, for example, considering the production of promotional videos to introduce the Commission and promote children's interests, conducting promotion through social media, organising competitions that could encourage children's

participation and unleash their potential in creativity, etc. Besides, we also plan to organise, through concerted efforts with different stakeholders and cross bureaux/departments, a large-scale territory-wide campaign with the theme of "Caring for Our Kids", so as to increase public awareness and understanding on safeguarding children's rights and promoting children's interests.

The proposed organisation chart of the dedicated policy team as the secretariat headed by the proposed AOSGC post (Principal Assistant Secretary (Commission on Children) (PAS(CoC))) is at **Annex II**.

7. Given the breadth, diversity and complexity of the coverage of children issues which involve various bureaux and departments, we consider that the aforementioned dedicated policy team needs to be led by a directorate officer with rich experience in policy formulation, implementation and management, so as to effectively coordinate relevant bureaux/departments in taking forward the Commission's recommendations and implementing relevant follow-up actions, and to address a series of priority issues as soon as practicable for the early benefits of children. Therefore, we propose to create, on a permanent basis from 1 April 2019, an AOSGC post in LWB to enhance support for the Commission's secretariat and to provide policy advice in respect of issues discussed by the Commission. The officer will serve as the secretary of the Commission and, apart from managing and overseeing the secretariat support provided by his/her dedicated policy team to the Commission, to coordinate all relevant bureaux/departments in taking forward child-related work. When conducting public engagement activities for the establishment of the Commission, there were views that the Commission should formulate the child policy. Since the child policy covers a wide range of policy issues including education, health, welfare, etc., the directorate AOSGC officer and his/her dedicated policy team could start work to formulate the child policy by first looking into and examining policy issues related to child welfare (including residential child care services, support for children of divorced families, etc.) as appropriate. Following the expanding scope of the work of the Commission arising from doubling the number of Working Groups from the original plan of two to four, and the corresponding increase in workload (such as research on new issues, coordination and writing papers, etc.), the directorate AOSGC officer will need to handle the Commission's work in full strength. The proposed job description of the proposed AOSGC post is at **Annex III**, and he/she will report to the Deputy Secretary(Welfare)¹ of LWB who assumes responsibilities over, among other things, child welfare policy. An organisation chart of LWB showing the proposed creation of the AOSGC post is at **Annex IV**.

Alternatives Considered

8. The secretariat work of the Commission is currently supported by Principal Assistant Secretary (Welfare) 1 (PAS(Welfare)1) on top of the officer's existing portfolios. While under the current establishment of LWB, the policy purview of PAS(Welfare)1 is partially related to child issues, PAS(Welfare)1 has been fully engaged with the existing duties and follow-up work, including overseeing SWD's review on the enhancement of the Lump Sum Grant Subvention System; conducting review on the Special Scheme on Privately Owned Sites for Welfare Uses for non-governmental organisations; overseeing policies covering the welfare services for families, children and youth; overseeing the training and manpower planning on social welfare workers; overseeing the Legal Representation Scheme for children/juveniles involved in care or protection proceedings; providing secretariat support to the Social Welfare Advisory Committee; overseeing the management of the Community Investment and Inclusion Fund (CIIF) and providing secretarial support to the CIIF Committee; coordinating the Chief Executive's Community Project List; overseeing the relevant policy matters on the Lotteries Fund, Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged and Child Development Fund; implementing the Financial Assistance Scheme for Family Members of Those Who Sacrifice their lives to Save Others; as well as overseeing the implementation and review of Short-term Food Assistance Service, etc.

9. Since the Chief Executive promulgated in her Policy Address in October 2017 that the Government planned to set up the Commission in 2018, PAS(Welfare)1 has all along endeavoured to take care in addition to PAS(Welfare)1's own duties the work of the Preparatory Committee and the subsequent reporting and follow up tasks. However, since the establishment of the Commission on Children in mid-2018, and with the Commission's resolve to undertake an ambitious and comprehensive programme via the four Working Groups, there is an urgent need to establish a dedicated secretariat to handle the important duties for the Commission and children policy.

10. We have also critically examined the possibility of redeploying the other Principal Assistant Secretaries (PASs) in LWB to share out the responsibilities of the proposed PAS(CoC) post but find this not feasible. As all the directorate staff in LWB are fully engaged with their own schedules of duties, it is operationally not possible for them to take up the extra tasks without adversely affecting the discharge of their current duties. The main responsibilities of the existing PASs are set out at Annex V.

Financial Implications

11. The additional notional annual salary cost of the proposed permanent AOSGC post at mid-point is \$2,179,800, and the full annual average staff cost, including salaries and staff on-cost, is about \$3,074,000. As for the 10 non-directorate permanent posts as mentioned in paragraph 6 above, the additional notional annual salary cost at mid-point is \$8,316,540 and the full annual average staff cost, including salaries and staff on-cost, is about \$11,278,000.

12. We will include the necessary provision in the Draft Estimates of 2019-20 and the subsequent years to meet the cost of the relevant proposed posts.

Advice Sought

13. We see the need to create the proposed AOSGC post as soon as practicable so as to enhance the secretariat support for the Commission. Members are invited to note and comment on this proposal. Subject to Members' views, we will seek the necessary funding approval from the Legislative Council in accordance with established mechanism.

**Labour and Welfare Bureau
December 2018**

Commission on Children

Terms of Reference

With a vision of ensuring that Hong Kong is a place where all children's rights, interests and well-being are respected and safeguarded, their voices are heard, and where all children enjoy healthy and happy growth and optimal development so as to achieve their fullest potentials, the Commission on Children will:

1. Develop policies, set strategies and priorities related to the development and advancement of children, and oversee their implementation;
2. Enhance and monitor integration and rationalisation of children-related policies and initiatives under different bureaux/departments and with advisory bodies;
3. Review children-related services by the Government and non-governmental organisations, foster cross-sector collaboration, and identify areas for better integration and improvement;
4. Promote and promulgate children's rights as articulated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and engage with children on matters that affect them;
5. Manage funding schemes for promotional and public educational projects which should have children's and stakeholders' participation, and organise other promotional activities; and
6. Develop a framework with indicators to monitor and evaluate the extent to which the vision is achieved.

Membership

Chairperson

Chief Secretary for Administration

Vice-chairperson

Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Non-official Members

Mr Peter Au Yeung Wai-hong

Miss Bakar Fariha Salma Deiya

Miss Cheng Hui-kiu

Ms Janus Cheng

Mr Chow Wai-chung

Ms Kathy Chung Lai-kam

Mr Dennis Ho Chi-kuen

Dr Patrick Ip

Dr Sanly Kam Shau-wan, MH

Mr Edwin Lee

Mrs Priscilla Lui Tsang Sun-kai, BBS

Ms Shalini Mahtani

Mr Kenny Ng Kwan-lim

Dr Halina Poon Suk-han, MH

Ms Susan So Suk-yin

Ms Michelle Tam Chi-yun

Dr Sandra Tsang Kit-man, JP

Mr Gary Wong Chi-him

Dr Lilian Wong Hiu-lei

Ms Kathy Wong Kin-ho

Dr Wong Kwai-yau, MH

Ex-officio Members

Secretary for Education

Secretary for Food and Health

Secretary for Home Affairs

Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs

Director of Social Welfare

Director of Health

Director of Home Affairs

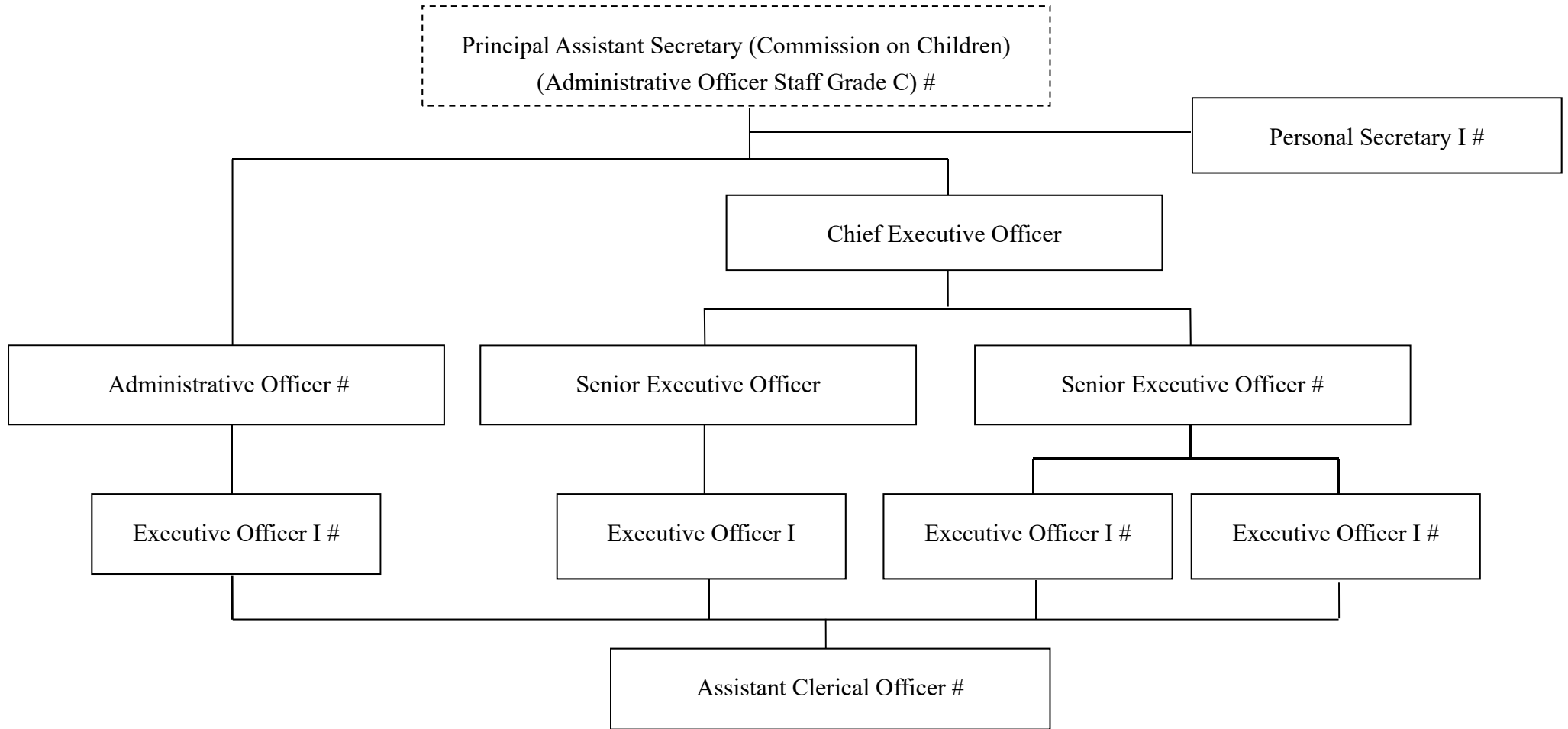
Chairperson of Family Council

Chairperson of Women's Commission

Secretary

Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 1

Proposed Organisation Chart of the Commission on Children Secretariat



 Directorate post proposed to be created

Posts planned to be created in 2019-20

**Proposed Job Description for
Principal Assistant Secretary (Commission on Children)**

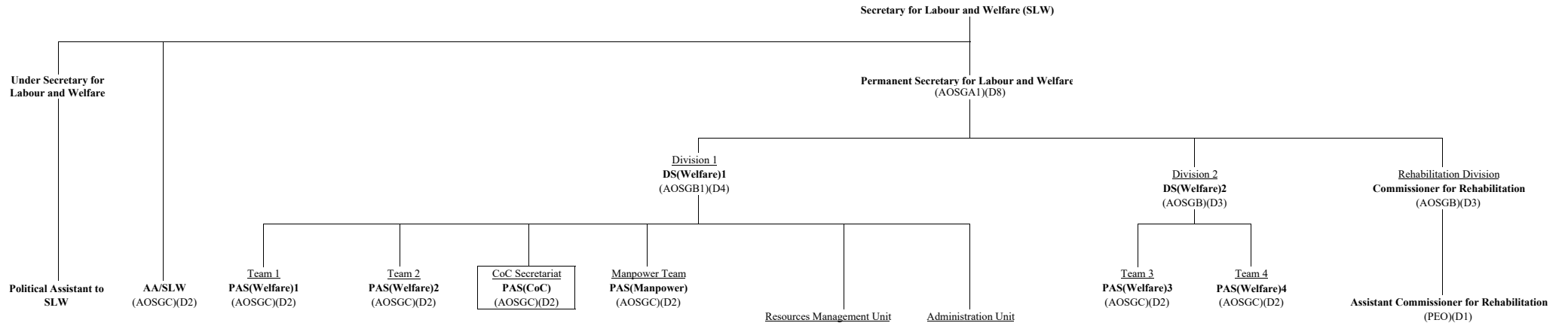
Rank: Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2)

Responsible to: Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)1

Major Duties and Responsibilities –

1. To support the work of the Commission on Children (the Commission) by providing policy input and coordinating contribution from bureaux/departments in relation to the Commission's discussion of children-related issues.
2. To conduct policy review on child policy on welfare as appropriate.
3. To liaise with relevant bureaux/departments on children-related policies and measures for the Commission, in particular on areas which cut across different policy bureaux, and identify areas for improving collaboration.
4. To assist the Commission in overseeing research studies on children issues as well as formulating and planning for the overall strategy in respect of public engagement and children engagement with relevant stakeholders, promotion and publicity.
5. To coordinate relevant bureaux/departments to take forward the Commission's agendas and other follow-up actions.
6. To provide policy input to the working groups under the Commission and assist the working groups in overseeing the follow up actions of relevant bureaux/departments.

Organisation Chart of Labour and Welfare Bureau



Legend

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|-----|-------------------------------|--|--|
| DS | Deputy Secretary | AOSGA1 | Administrative Officer Staff Grade A1 |
| AA | Administrative Assistant | AOSGB1 | Administrative Officer Staff Grade B1 |
| PAS | Principal Assistant Secretary | AOSGB | Administrative Officer Staff Grade B |
| PEO | Principal Executive Officer | AOSGC | Administrative Officer Staff Grade C |
| CoC | Commission on Children | | AOSGC (D2) post proposed to be created |

Major Responsibilities of Current Principal Assistant Secretaries in Labour and Welfare Bureau

Post / Rank	Major Responsibilities / Subject Areas
Principal Assistant Secretary (Welfare) 1/ Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (AOSGC) (D2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Social welfare subvention system● Long-term social welfare planning● Special Scheme on Privately Owned Sites for Welfare Uses● Welfare services for families, children and youth● Rehabilitation services for young offenders● Social work training and manpower planning● Legal Representation Scheme for Children/Juveniles involved in Care or Protection Proceedings● Secretarial support to the Social Welfare Advisory Committee● Exchange with the Mainland on welfare matters● Community Investment and Inclusion Fund and social capital development● Chief Executive's Community Project List● Lotteries Fund, Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged and Child Development Fund● Financial Assistance Scheme for Family Members of Those Who Sacrifice their lives to Save Others● Short-term food assistance
Principal Assistant Secretary (Welfare) 2/ AOSGC (D2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Policy on combating domestic violence● Policy on support for victims of sexual violence● Secretarial support to the Women's Commission and its working groups● Policy and strategies to promote the well-being and interests of women in Hong Kong● Gender mainstreaming within the Administration● Promotional and educational activities to enhance the awareness of public and civil service on women issues

Post / Rank	Major Responsibilities / Subject Areas
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Research, studies and surveys on women issues ● Liaison and meetings with local women's groups and relevant international bodies ● United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women ● Beijing Platform for Action ● United Nations Commission on the Status of Women ● Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme for the Elderly and Eligible Persons with Disabilities
Principal Assistant Secretary (Welfare) 3/ AOSGC (D2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Policy matters relating to elderly with long-term care needs ● Allocation mechanism for subsidised long-term care services ● Home and community care services for elderly ageing in place ● Residential care services for frail elderly and continuum of care, including the licensing regime ● Carers' support and training ● Manpower supply and training of care staff in elderly care services ● Implementation of the recommendations of the Elderly Services Programme Plan
Principal Assistant Secretary (Welfare) 4/ AOSGC (D2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme, including the Portable CSSA Scheme ● The Social Security Allowance Scheme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Old Age Allowance - Old Age Living Allowance - Disability Allowance - Guangdong Scheme and Fujian Scheme ● Coordination of retirement protection matters under the Bureau ● Working Family Allowance Scheme ● Promotion of active ageing, including lifelong learning and senior volunteerism

Post / Rank	Major Responsibilities / Subject Areas
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support for vulnerable elderly people, including matters related to elder abuse and elderly suicide ● Secretariat of the Elderly Commission ● Coordination of poverty alleviation matters under the Bureau, including input to the work of the Commission on Poverty and its Task Forces ● Coordination of Bureau's input relating to welfare-related initiatives under the Community Care Fund
Principal Assistant Secretary (Manpower)/ AOSGC (D2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Manpower statistics and projections ● Vocational training and retraining ● House-keeping of the Employees Retraining Board and the Clothing Industry Training Authority ● Continuing Education Fund ● Apprenticeship Scheme and Adult Education Subvention Scheme ● APEC Human Resources Development Working Group ● Talent list