

**For discussion on  
8 June 2020**

**Legislative Council  
Joint Meeting of Panel on Welfare Services and Panel on Home Affairs  
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 meeting of the Panel on Welfare Services (the Panel) held in June 2018.

**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 15 non-official members from different backgrounds (including academia, legal, business, education, social welfare and community service), three ex-officio members (namely, Chairpersons of the Elderly Commission and the Women's Commission, and the Vice-Chairman of the Youth Development Commission) and four Government representatives (namely, Secretary for Home Affairs, Secretary for Education, Secretary for Labour and Welfare, and Head of the Policy Innovation and Co-ordination Office (PICO)). 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 11 June 2018. 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 applied for all policies. B/Ds are required to take the three sets of family core values (i.e. "Love and Care", "Respect and Responsibilities" and "Communication and Harmony") as identified by the Council, and the impacts on family structure and functions as the basis for assessing the impacts on families arising from relevant policies. Since then, the family impact assessment (FIA) has become an integral part of the policy-making process within the Government. During the two-year period from June 2018 to May 2020, the FIA was conducted for over 193 policy measures and programmes.

6. As part of the public consultation process, B/Ds are also encouraged to consult the Council on policies which may affect families. The Council was briefed and consulted on a number of family-related subjects such as child care, health policies, maternity leave policies, environmental policies. A list of subjects on which the Council's advice was sought during the period from June 2018 to May 2020 is at **Annex B**.

7. To further enhance the FIA system, the Council commissioned, through the then Central Policy Unit, a consultant team to study and evaluate the effectiveness of the FIA framework and develop a checklist tool for assessing the impacts of public policies on families. The consultant team developed a draft FIA checklist comprising 24 questions under six principles<sup>1</sup> and put it on a trial run. According to user feedback collected during the trial run, the checklist proved to be a very useful tool for introducing an explicit family perspective into the policy-making process and a step-by-step framework for assessing the impacts on families, which facilitated B/Ds to envisage both the intended and unintended impacts of public policies on families. With the support of the Council, the Government adopted the refined FIA checklist as the tool for assessing family implications of public policies in August 2018.

8. Furthermore, the Council has been very concerned about how recent social incidents in Hong Kong impact families. Members have discussed and exchanged views on family-related issues arising from the incidents at the Council meetings. Relevant B/Ds were also present at the meetings to give inputs during discussions. The Council will continue to collaborate with the relevant B/Ds to help promote family harmony and strengthen family ties in the community. In addition, the Council is planning to launch the next round of “Thematic Sponsorship Scheme to Support Family-related Initiatives” this year to offer non-profit making and worthwhile family-related initiatives one-off sponsorship in support of raising community awareness of family core values and the importance of families, creating and promoting a pro-family environment, and fostering family well-being.

### **Advocacy of cherishing the family**

9. 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. A list of programmes and activities organised or co-organised by the Council in 2018-19 and 2019-20 is at **Annex C**. Some major programmes are highlighted below.

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<sup>1</sup> The six principles are supporting the functions of families; strengthening family integrity and stability; promoting family harmony and balance between work and family; connecting families to the wider kin and community networks; encouraging families to participate in policy development, programme planning and evaluation; and supporting vulnerable families.

10. The Council has been playing an active role in promoting wider adoption of family-friendly employment policies and practices (FFEPPs) in the community. Since 2011, the Council has launched the biennial “Family-Friendly Employers Award Scheme” (Award Scheme) to give recognition to companies and organisations which attach importance to family-friendly spirit and encourage them to implement more diversified FFEPPs. The previous Award Schemes were well received and the number of applications received rose from 1 112 applications in 2011 to 1 814 in 2013/14, 2 739 in 2015/16, and 3 534 in 2017/18. The 2017/18 Award Scheme featured two new awards, namely, “Family-Friendly Employers – Grand Award” and “Outstanding Family-Friendly Employment Practices”, to promote and encourage the adoption of more diversified and flexible FFEPPs. It was successfully concluded in December 2018, with recipients of various awards from a total of 3 264 companies / organisations / government bureaux or departments.

11. In mid-2019, “The But’s Family Inter-school Colouring Competition for Kindergarten Students and Picture Composition Competition for Primary School Students” was launched to promote the family core value of “Love and Care” to kindergarten and primary school students and their parents. The competition was met with an enthusiastic response and over 19 000 entries were received. Moreover, a public voting for “The Most Liked Award” of the competition entries was held on the Council’s Facebook page from October to November 2019 with over 5 500 votes casted by members of the public. The award presentation ceremony for the competition was successfully held in January 2020.

12. In January 2020, the Council launched a parent-child reading storybook entitled “The Secret of the But’s Dinner” to promote the importance of caring for and communication among family members. The storybook is suitable for children aged two to six to read under the guidance of their parents or elder family members. Printed copies have been distributed to all kindergartens and primary schools and the digital version, together with a Chinese theme song (“家多點愛”) and an interactive activity book, has been uploaded to the Council’s website for free public download. This aims to foster more exchanges between young and elder family members to help build a closer bonding among them.

13. In addition, the Council has organised territory-wide publicity campaigns to promote family core values in the community. For the publicity campaigns in 2018-19 and 2019-20 on the respective themes of “家・多一點愛

在乎你” and “愛家人・童理心”, the Council has held a variety of programmes, including large-scale publicity events, children’s radio drama, voice acting training, radio programmes, video clips and family activity workshops, to encourage better communication and caring relationship among family members, especially caring for the kids.

14. Furthermore, the Council collaborated with the Consortium of Institutes on Family in the Asian Region<sup>2</sup>, the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Council of Social Service and the Social Welfare Department to organise the Asian Family Summit (AFS) in Hong Kong from 19 to 22 August 2018. The AFS provided a regional platform for the public, private, academic and professional sectors to share knowledge and experience to further advance the well-being of families in the Asian region. It was attended by over 560 participants from 17 countries/regions.

### **Family-related research work**

15. To foster a better understanding of issues relating to family, the Council has engaged tertiary institutions or research organisations to conduct researches and surveys. The following study and survey are in the pipeline –

- (a) Further Study on the Phenomenon of Divorce in Hong Kong (Divorce Study):

The Research Team from the University of Hong Kong was commissioned to conduct the Divorce Study<sup>3</sup> in June 2018 with a view to –

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<sup>2</sup> The Consortium of Institutes on Family in the Asian Region (CIFA) is an independent non-profit making organisation inaugurated in 2008. It aims at serving as a regional platform for networking and collaboration among organisations and professionals who share the mission of “Converging Professional Wisdom for Family Well-Being”. Its function is to help enhance their mutual interest in research and training initiatives as well as to share clinical experiences and discuss the formulation of family-related policies that are unique to the Asian Region.

<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 and the needs of divorced families in Hong Kong. Members were briefed on the study findings at the Panel meeting in June 2014.

- (i) updating the demographic and socioeconomic landscape of divorce in Hong Kong, including a further examination of the correlation between marriage age and divorce rate, the divorce rate of cross-boundary marriages, and the provision of more background information on divorced families (including step and split families arising from remarriage and divorce);
- (ii) reviewing the existing systems of collection of maintenance payments and enforcement of maintenance orders, and collecting maintenance-related statistics and information in Hong Kong; and
- (iii) examining the effectiveness of judgment summons proceedings in recovering default maintenance payments and identifying viable improvement measures that are in compliance with Articles 10 and 11 of the Hong Kong Bill of Rights.

The Council has set up a working group, which is chaired by the Council Chairman, Professor Daniel SHEK, to oversee the Divorce Study, with members comprising Council members, representatives from the Home Affairs Bureau, PICO, the Department of Justice, the Legal Aid Department and the Social Welfare Department. The working group meets regularly to review the progress of the Study, consider and provide comments on the deliverables submitted by the Research Team at various stages.

Given the wide range of subject areas requiring the Research Team to collect data and information, and the latest development in respect of the judgment summons proceedings (including the issue of the latest Practice Direction by the Judiciary on judgment summons proceedings), the Research Team requires more time to collect, organise and analyse data relating to the enforcement of judgment summons after the issue of the Practice Direction. It will then put the relevant information in the scope of the study to facilitate a more comprehensive review of the enforcement of maintenance orders. Moreover, in view of the COVID-19 outbreak, the Research Team has made corresponding adjustments to its work arrangements, including working from home and delaying scheduled interviews, having regard to relevant public health requirements and the need for pandemic prevention. At the same time, as the offices of some organisations/stakeholders are not open for visits or face-to-face discussions during the pandemic outbreak, the Research

Team has to reserve additional time for liaising with such organisations/stakeholders to make appointments for communication and collect data required for further analysis and study. At the moment, the Research Team is still in the course of conducting the study and is expected to submit the draft report to the Council in mid-2020 for discussion.

- (b) Consolidation of Findings of Family Surveys conducted since 2011: to consolidate and compare the raw data collected in the four Family Surveys conducted in 2011, 2013, 2015 and 2017 in order to ascertain the attitude of respondents on various aspects of family over the years; to identify any trends, observations and findings from the Surveys; as well as to provide clear and practical recommendations on how future Surveys should be positioned and conducted. The exercise is underway and is expected to be completed by end-2020.

16. The findings of the above surveys 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. The Council will continue to commission further family-related studies where appropriate. In parallel, PICO will continue to include family-related issues in the scope of study topics of its Public Policy Research Funding Scheme<sup>4</sup>.

## **WAY FORWARD**

17. 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 B/Ds, 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>4</sup> The Public Policy Research Funding Scheme managed by PICO is dedicated to fostering and supporting public policy research in Hong Kong. It covers various themes and research areas. At the request of the Council, family-related issues have been included in the scope of the Scheme from 2016-17 onwards.

## **ADVICE SOUGHT**

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

**Home Affairs Bureau  
June 2020**

## Membership List of the Family Council

### Chairman

Professor SHEK Tan-lei, Daniel

### Ex-officio Members

Dr LAM Ching-choi, Chairperson of the Elderly Commission

Ms CHAN Yuen-han, Chairperson of the Women's Commission

Mr LAU Ming-wai, Vice-Chairman, Youth Development Commission

### Non-official Members

Ms CHAN Suk-mei, May

Ms CHENG Chi-man, Sonia

Ms CHEUNG Lai-chu

Ms CHEUNG Wang-yim, Lavender

Mr FONG Yick-jin, Eugene

Dr LAM Chi-yan

Professor Albert LEE

Mr LEE Tsz-king, Dominic

Professor LEUNG Seung-ming, Alvin

Ms PUN Siu-fung, Cindy

Dr WONG Fung-yee, Margaret

Mrs WONG NG Kit-wah, Cecilia

Mr WOO Kin-man, Clement

Ms YIP Lai-wa, Emily

Ms YIP Yun-wan, Amarantha

### 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 the Policy Innovation and Co-ordination Office or his representative

### Secretary

Principal Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs (Civic Affairs) 2

**List of subjects on which  
the Family Council and its sub-committees were consulted  
from 1 June 2018 to 31 May 2020**

No.	Subject	Bureaux/departments/bodies
1.	Strategy and Action Plan to Prevent and Control Non-communicable diseases in Hong Kong	Department of Health
2.	Health Promoting School Programme of the Department of Health	Department of Health
3.	The Draft Mainland Judgments in Matrimonial and Family Cases (Reciprocal Recognition and Enforcement) Bill	Department of Justice
4.	Report of the Task Force of Home-school Co-operation and Parent Education	Education Bureau
5.	Public Engagement on Long-term Decarbonisation Strategy	Council for Sustainable Development Environment Bureau
6.	Follow-up on the Law Reform Commission Report on Child Custody and Access and Related Support Measures	Labour and Welfare Bureau Social Welfare Department
7.	Consultancy Study on the Long-term Development of Child Care Services	Labour and Welfare Bureau Social Welfare Department
8.	Evaluation Study of the Pilot Scheme on On-site Pre-school Rehabilitation Services	Labour and Welfare Bureau
9.	Extension of Statutory Paternity Leave and Proposed Enhancement of Statutory Maternity Leave	Labour and Welfare Bureau Labour Department
10.	Key Findings on the Manpower Projection to 2027	Labour and Welfare Bureau

**Programmes and Activities  
Organised or Co-organised by the Family Council  
in 2018-19 and 2019-20**

Year	Programmes/Activities	Co-organiser(s)
2018-19	(a) Organising territory-wide publicity programmes on promotion of family core values including the publicity event “家・多一點愛在乎你”	Radio Television Hong Kong
	(b) Organising the “2017/18 Family-Friendly Employers Award Scheme” to continue to give recognition to employers who value the spirit of family-friendliness and to raise awareness of the importance of family core values in the business sector. The Scheme was successfully concluded in December 2018 with 3 264 employers receiving different awards	-
	(c) Co-organising the “Asian Family Summit” with the Consortium of Institutes on Family in the Asian Region (CIFA), the Faculty of Social Sciences of The University of Hong Kong (HKU), The Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS) and the Social Welfare Department (SWD)	CIFA, HKU, HKCSS and SWD
	(d) Providing funds to uniformed groups <sup>1</sup> (UGs) for organising family-related programmes including carnivals, parent-child sports day, adventure-based training camps, orienteering, sharing sessions, interest classes on handicraft, etc.	UGs
2019-20	(a) Organising territory-wide publicity programmes on promotion of family core values including the publicity event “愛家人・童理心”	Radio Television Hong Kong
	(b) Organising “The But’s Family Inter-school Colouring Competition for Kindergarten Students and Picture Composition Competition for Primary	-

<sup>1</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.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Programmes/Activities</b>	<b>Co-organiser(s)</b>
	School Students” to promote the family core value of “Love and Care” to kindergarten and primary school students and their parents	
	(c) Publishing the parent-child reading storybook “The Secret of the But’s Dinner” to promote the importance of sharing love among family members and communicating with one another	-
	(d) Providing funds to UGs for organising family-related programmes, including carnivals, parent-child sports day, adventure-based training camps, orienteering, sharing sessions, interest classes on handicraft, etc.	UGs