

**For discussion on
1 November 2019**

Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services

2019 Policy Address

Policy Initiatives of the Home Affairs Bureau

INTRODUCTION

This paper briefs Members on the policy initiatives in respect of the Family Council (the Council), social enterprises (SEs) and the Community Care Fund (CCF).

OUR VISION

2. Cherishing the family is a core value of our society. The Government would strive to collaborate with various sectors in the community to foster a pro-family environment. As for the development of SEs, we would continue to support the diversified and sustainable development of SEs along the principle of “community-driven, government support”. CCF will take account of the needs of different groups and launch more assistance programmes to support the underprivileged and low-income families.

Family Council

Family perspectives in policy formulation

3. With effect from 1 April 2013, a mandatory assessment of family implications has been introduced for all policies. Bureaux and departments (B/Ds) are required to use the three sets of family core values (i.e. “Love and Care”, “Respect and Responsibilities” and “Communication and Harmony”) as identified by the Family Council (the Council), as well as the impact on family’s structure and functions, as the basis for assessing the impact of the relevant policies on families. They are also encouraged to consult the Council on policies which may

affect families.

4. To further enhance the “Family Impact Assessment” (FIA) system, the Council commissioned, through the then Central Policy Unit¹, a consulting team to conduct a study to evaluate the effectiveness of the FIA framework and develop a checklist tool as the basis for assessing the impact of public policies on families. With the support of the Council, the Government has adopted the refined FIA checklist as the basis for assessing family implications for public policies in August 2018.

Advocacy for cherishing the family

5. The Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) and the Council will continue to collaborate with various stakeholders to organise programmes and activities relating to the promotion of family core values to foster a pro-family culture.

6. The 2017/18 Family-Friendly Employers Award Scheme, featured with newly added award items of “Family-Friendly Employers – Grand Award” and “Outstanding Family-Friendly Employment Practices” to promote and encourage the adoption of more diversified and flexible family-friendly employment policies and practices, was successfully concluded in December 2018 with 3 264 companies/organisations/government bureaux or departments awarded different awards. We will launch the next Award Scheme in 2020.

7. The two-year Pilot Scheme on Thematic Sponsorship to Support Family-related Initiatives (Pilot Scheme) launched in March 2016 provides one-off sponsorship to support non-profit making and worthwhile family-related initiatives under specific themes. The themes for 2016-17 are “parent education” and “divorce education”. Four projects were approved with a committed funding of \$2.97 million. These projects were completed in April 2018. For the 2017-18 Pilot Scheme, there were three selected themes, namely “Parent Education – Parenting Stress”, “Step and Split Families” and “Support for Carers”. A total of four projects were approved with a committed funding of \$3.27 million. These projects were completed in June 2019. Further

¹ The Central Policy Unit was revamped as the Policy Innovation and Co-ordination Office on 1 April 2018.

to the conduction of an interim review in end 2018, a final review of the Pilot Scheme is being conducted and is expected to be completed in end 2019.

Family-related research work

8. To foster a better understanding of the issues relating to the family, the Council has been engaging tertiary institutions or research organisations to conduct researches and surveys. Apart from the study on FIA as mentioned in paragraph 4 above, the following survey and researches are now underway –

- (a) Further Study on the Phenomenon of Divorce in Hong Kong – to update the demographic and socioeconomic landscape of divorce in Hong Kong; review the existing systems of collection of maintenance payments and enforcement of maintenance orders, and collect maintenance-related statistics and information; as well as to examine the effectiveness of judgment summons proceedings in recovering default maintenance payments and identify viable improvement measures that are in compliance with Articles 10 and 11 of the Hong Kong Bill of Rights Ordinance; and
- (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 findings of the above studies/survey, when available, will be shared with relevant B/Ds to facilitate their formulation of policies and strategies for supporting and strengthening the family.

Social Enterprise

9. The Government is committed to promoting the development of SEs and the sector has been growing steadily. Currently, there are about 650 SEs in Hong Kong, and the scope of services provided and service target have become more diversified. HAB will keep supporting the continuous development of SEs through various means including the provision of start-up funds and strengthening support platforms to promote cross-sector collaboration and build up the capacity of SEs. The work is set out in paragraph 10 to 13 of the paper.

(a) Providing funding support for individual SEs

10. The Enhancing Self-Reliance Through District Partnership Programme (the ESR Programme) provides grants to eligible organisations for setting up or scaling up SEs targeting at the socially disadvantaged to enhance their self-reliance and integration into the community. Since its launch in 2006, it has approved grants of around \$300 million for 227 SEs projects. About 5 800 persons have been directly employed by the funded SEs and about 80% of those employed were socially disadvantaged. Also, around 80% of the SEs remains in operation after completion of the funding period. As it is estimated that the last injection of \$150 million for the ESR Programme in 2016-17 would not sustain the Programme beyond 2019-20, the Government will provide an additional funding of \$150 million for its continued operation. Any uncommitted fund left from the last injection would also be deployed for operating the Programme beyond 2019-20.

(b) Supporting the building of market adaptability and competitiveness of SEs

11. To assist SEs in enhancing their capacity, the Government has been providing training and other support services to SEs through sponsoring relevant SE platforms and organisations. Among other things, since 2008, HAB has been providing funding support to the Center for Entrepreneurship of the Chinese University of Hong Kong for the organisation of the “Hong Kong Social Enterprise Challenge”, which invites tertiary students and graduates to write SE business plan

with provision of relevant training. Through providing start-up fund to the winners to implement their SE business plan, the programme promotes the development of a new generation of SEs. So far, the programme has accumulated more than 7 800 participants. Of the 74 grand finalists, 34 have established their own SEs which are in active operation. We will continue to support the programme this year to nurture the new SEs and young social entrepreneurs.

(c) Enhancing public awareness and support of SEs

12. The Government promotes the social benefits of SEs through a wide range of channels with the view to enhancing the public's recognition of SEs and encourage them to support SEs. For example, HAD has launched a designated website on SEs, arranged SEs to participate in popular trade and food fairs, publicised SEs through a wide range of media and online platforms. These publicity measures are well received by the general public. We plan to broadcast a new set of TV and Radio Announcements in the Public Interest and publish a new set of posters for promoting SEs in around end 2019 to early 2020. We will continue to identify suitable opportunities for enhancing the publicity work.

(d) Promoting cross-sectoral collaboration for SE development

13. Since 2008, HAB has been providing funding support to the industry for organising the Social Enterprise Summit (the SE Summit) and related activities. This provides a platform for SEs to nurture partnership with people from various background such as corporate and academia and helps facilitate cross-sectoral collaboration for SE development. To step up the efforts in promoting SEs at the district level, apart from a three-day international symposium, the SE Summit in 2019 will organise community forums, tours and bazaars in seven districts (including Central and Western District, Kwun Tong District, Southern District, Wong Tai Sin District, Sham Shui Po District, Kwai Tsing District and Yuen Long District). Leaders from the business and SE sectors in each district join hands with the local community bodies to set up exchange platform for SEs, with a view to promoting the concept and spirit of SEs and social innovation.

Community Care Fund

14. Since its establishment in 2011, the CCF has launched 51 assistance programmes, involving a total commitment exceeding \$10 billion, to identify those who cannot benefit from the existing social safety net and provided them with assistance. Rolled-out programmes have offered benefits for more than 1.72 million cases. In addition, the CCF may consider implementing measures on a pilot basis to help the Government identify those initiatives that have been proven effective for incorporation into the regular assistance programmes. So far, the Government had incorporated 13 programmes under the CCF into its regular assistance programmes.

15. In August 2019, the Government announced various relief measures, including the launch of the “One-off Living Subsidy for Low-income Households Not Living in Public Housing and Not Receiving CSSA” Programme (2020) (the 2020 Programme) through the CCF. The Chief Executive has just announced in the “2019 Policy Address” that the Government invites the CCF to launch two rounds of “one-off living subsidy” for the above-mentioned low-income households in the next financial year, the first round of which was announced in August 2019 as part of the relief measures. This will allow time for the Government to complete the study to devise a scheme on providing a cash allowance on a regular basis towards the end of 2020.

16. In response to the invitation from the Government in August 2019, the CCF plans to launch the 2020 Programme in mid-2020 to provide a one-off living subsidy to those “N-have nots” who do not benefit from the short-term relief measures announced by the Government in August 2019. The proposed subsidy amount will be \$4,500 for one-person households, \$9,000 for two-person households, \$12,500 for three-person households, \$14,500 for four-person households and \$15,500 for five-or-more-person households. The total estimated expenditure on the 2020 Programme is around \$1,120 million which is expected to benefit about 105 500 households (about 272 000 persons). The detailed proposal for the 2020 Programme was supported by the CCF Task Force and would be considered by the Commission on Poverty in late October 2019.

17. The CCF Task Force will continue to draw up new programmes to assist more people-in-need.

ADVICE SOUGHT

18. Members are invited to note the initiatives in respect of the Council, SEs and CCF as set out above.

Home Affairs Bureau
October 2019