

**For discussion on
14 December 2020**

Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services

2020 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. 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 Responsibility” 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 Council strives to promote family-friendly employment policies and practices (FFEPPs). Since 2011, the Council has launched four “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 3 534 in 2017/18. The Council will continue to play an active role in promoting wider adoption of FFEPPs in the community.

7. Following the completion of the final review of the Pilot Scheme on Thematic Sponsorship to Support Family-related Initiatives which revealed satisfactory results, the Council launched a new round of the Thematic Sponsorship Scheme to Support Family-related Initiatives (the Scheme) in June 2020. The Scheme continues to provide one-off sponsorship to support non-profit making and worthwhile family-related initiatives under specific themes. The themes for the Scheme are “divorce education”, “step and split families” and “preventing and resolving family conflicts/disputes”. Fifteen applications were

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

received under the Scheme and assessment of the applications is in progress.

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. Upon completion of the Study, the final report will be submitted to the Family Council for discussion. Based on the findings of the Study and the views of the Family Council, the Government will take follow-up actions as deemed appropriate; 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. It is expected that the survey report will be completed by early 2021.

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. Currently, there are about 670 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 paragraphs 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 \$330 million for 238 SEs projects. Over 6 000 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. The Home Affairs Department (HAD) will continue to implement the ESR Programme to encourage establishment and business expansion of SEs.

(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 8 200 participants. Of the 82 grand finalists, 45 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. Moreover, a new set of TV and Radio Announcements in the Public Interest and a new set of posters for promoting SEs were launched in 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 backgrounds 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 2020 will organise community forums, tours and carnival in eight districts (including Central and Western District, Kwun Tong District, Southern District, Wong Tai Sin District, Sham Shui Po District, Kwai Tsing District, Yuen Long District and Yau Tsim Mong District)². 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 58

² Due to the epidemic, the international symposium and most of the community programmes in 2020 will be held online.

assistance programmes, involving a total commitment of about \$17 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 1.89 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 has incorporated 15 programmes under the CCF into its regular assistance programmes and plans to incorporate two programmes³ into the Government's regular service by end-March 2021.

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. In addition, the Chief Executive has announced in the "2019 Policy Address" that the Government invites the CCF to launch two rounds of "one-off living subsidy" for low-income households not living in public housing and not receiving CSSA in 2020-21 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, the CCF rolled out the 2020 Programme on 2 July 2020 and will launch the 2021 Programme in January 2021 to relieve the financial pressure of low-income households. The subsidy amount is \$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 \$1,118.18 million which is expected to benefit about 105 500 households (about 272 000 persons). The total estimated expenditure on the 2021 Programme is around \$1,447.73 million which is expected to benefit about 137 150 households (about 353 600 persons).

³ These two programmes are "Pilot Scheme on Raising the Maximum Level of Disregarded Earnings for Recipients with Disabilities under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme" and the "Pilot Scheme on Providing Special Subsidy for Persons with Permanent Stoma from Low-income Families for Purchasing Medical Consumables".

17. Moreover, the Government has announced in the Budget Speech of the 2020-21 Budget to disburse \$10,000 to Hong Kong permanent residents aged 18 or above, and invited the CCF to provide subsidy to new arrivals. In this regard, the CCF rolled out the “One-off Allowance for New Arrivals from Low-income Families” programme on 27 September 2020. The Programme aims to provide an allowance to eligible new arrivals to help them adapt into the community as soon as possible for better preparing themselves for permanent settlement in Hong Kong and relieve their financial pressure. Each eligible person can get \$10,000 allowance. The CCF has set aside around \$2,131.04 million which is estimated to benefit about 203 000 persons. Beneficiaries should be aged 18 or above and have settled in Hong Kong for less than 7 years as at 31 March 2021 and should come from low-income families.

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

ADVICE SOUGHT

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

Home Affairs Bureau
December 2020