

**For discussion  
on 8 March 2021**

**Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services**

**Long-term planning for provision of child care services**

**Purpose**

This paper briefs Members on the follow-up work with regard to the Final Report of the Consultancy Study on the Long-term Development of Child Care Services (the Study).

**Background**

2. The Government commissioned a consultancy study on the long-term development of child care services in December 2016, and the Study was completed in 2018. The Government accepted in principle the recommendations on the long-term development of child care services in the Final Report and, after making reference to the major recommendations, proposed a series of initiatives in the 2018 Policy Address to strengthen the long-term development of child care services. We briefed this Panel on the Final Report and the Government's follow-up measures in December 2018.

3. The Government understands that the key of early child care/ education is to meet children's developmental needs, and agrees with the recommendation of integrating "care" with "development". To further tie in with this concept, the Government has initiated a series of measures to enhance child care services since 2019-20 to further address the development needs of children through re-engineering child care services, increasing service provision and providing additional professional manpower resources, etc. The relevant new measures are set out in the ensuing paragraphs.

**Follow-up Measures**

*Formulating Planning Ratio for the provision of Child Care Centre (CCC) places*

4. To enhance the long-term planning of child care services, the Government formulated an appropriate planning ratio for aided CCC places on a population basis with a view to reserving suitable premises in housing development projects for CCC operations so as to better meet the service demands in the new community. Taking into account the projected demand for child care services in 2031, i.e. 80 aided CCC places per 20 000 general population under the Study, and in line with the current planning

capacity of 100 places per CCC, we have adopted the planning ratio at 100 aided CCC places per 25 000 general population. The planning ratio has been included in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines since March 2020 and will be reviewed periodically.

#### Increasing Aided CCC places

5. To further enhance day child care services, ten CCCs (involving about 900 aided CCC places) have been planned for provision in the coming three to four years through different development projects (e.g. Land Sale Programmes, Special Scheme on Privately Owned Sites for Welfare Uses, development or redevelopment of public housing estates and urban renewal projects). In addition, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) plans to provide 1 000 long full day child care service places in phases from 2021-22 through the purchase of premises scheme.

#### Enhancing the manning ratio for qualified Child Care Workers (CCWs) serving in day and residential CCCs

6. The Government enhanced the existing manning ratio of qualified CCWs in day and residential CCCs on top of meeting the minimum statutory requirement. With effect from September 2019, the manning ratios for CCWs serving in aided day CCCs have been enhanced from 1:8 to 1:6 for children aged 0 to below two; and from 1:14 to 1:11 for children aged two to below three. With reference to the manning ratios for day CCCs, the ratios for residential CCCs have also been adjusted accordingly in September 2019.

#### Increasing the Level of Subsidy for CCC Service

7. The Government has introduced the Child Care Centre Parent Subsidy in February 2020 to partially subsidise CCC service fees afforded by parents directly, in order to alleviate their financial burden. In addition, in light of the enhanced manning ratios, the Subsidy for Further Manpower Enhancement was introduced in 2019-20, raising the subsidy level of aided standalone CCCs from 20% to 34%.

#### Enhancing the Service Quality of Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project (NSCCP)

8. To enhance the service quality of NSCCP, SWD has provided additional provision to operating non-governmental organisations (NGOs) since January 2020 to increase professional and supporting staff to strengthen the training and monitoring of home-based child carers, and raise the level of incentive payment for home-based child carers to a standard level of \$25 per hour in order to encourage more volunteers to serve as child carers.

#### Re-engineering existing Mutual Help Child Care Centres (MHCCCs) by Phases

9. MHCCCs, which are operated by NGOs on a fee-charging and self-financing basis, provide flexible child care service to children aged below three (if necessary, children aged below six could also use the service) and facilitate mutual help and care within the community. SWD has completed a feasibility study in April 2020 on the provision of after school care service for children aged three to six in suitable welfare facilities with a proposed way forward of revamping MHCCCs to provide after school care service for pre-primary children. SWD has originally planned to re-engineer the 19 MHCCCs in phases from 2020-21 onwards through additional provision of social workers and supporting staff to further meet the child care needs in the community. Since the service has been affected by the Coronavirus Disease 2019 pandemic, the implementation schedule will be adjusted in view of the latest development of the pandemic.

### **Advice sought**

10. Members are invited to note the content of this paper.

Labour and Welfare Bureau  
Social Welfare Department  
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