

**For discussion on
11 October 2021**

Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services

2021 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 strives to collaborate with various sectors in the community to foster a pro-family environment. As regards SEs, we continue to support their diversified and sustainable development along the principle of “community-driven, government support”. Programmes covering different areas are launched under CCF to provide assistance to people with financial difficulties, in particular those who fall outside the social safety net or those within the safety net but still have some special needs that are not covered.

Family Council

(a) Family perspectives in policy formulation

3. With effect from 1 April 2013, a mandatory assessment of family implications has been introduced for all government 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 and initiatives which may affect families.

4. To 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 since August 2018. The FIA checklist includes six principles which 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”.

(b) Advocacy for cherishing the family

5. The Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) and the Council continue to collaborate with different stakeholders to organise programmes and activities relating to the promotion of family core values to foster a pro-family culture. The routine programmes include promotion through different electronic media such as producing television, radio and online programmes and audio clips, placement of advertisements; production of family educational videos; publicity via the social media; sponsoring youth uniformed groups to organise family activities, etc.

6. Upon reviewing 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”. Four projects organised by non-governmental organisations were approved with a funding commitment of about \$3.2 million. These

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

projects will be completed by February 2022.

(c) *Family-related studies*

7. 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 projects are now underway –

- (i) Further Study on the Phenomenon of Divorce in Hong Kong – The Council commissioned a research team to conduct the above Study for providing information on the demographic and socioeconomic landscape of divorce in Hong Kong and statistics on maintenance payments. The Study also examines the effectiveness of judgment summons proceedings in recovering default maintenance payments. The Study is currently underway. A report will be submitted to the Council for deliberation and discussion upon completion of the Study. With reference to the findings of the Study, the views of the Council and other relevant factors, the Government will consider the recommendations of the report; and
- (ii) Family Survey 2021 – To collect updated and empirical information on families of Hong Kong through a general survey; as well as to gather data under the theme “Preventing and Resolving Family Disputes” through a thematic survey.

The findings and statistics of the above projects, when available, will be shared with relevant B/Ds to facilitate their formulation of policies and initiatives for supporting and strengthening the family.

Social Enterprises

8. The Government is committed to promoting the development of SEs. Currently, there are about 660 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 9 to 12 of the paper.

(a) Providing funding support for individual SEs

9. 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 \$360 million for over 250 SEs projects. Over 6 600 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

10. 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 plans with provision of relevant training. Through providing start-up fund to the winners to implement their SE business plans, the programme promotes the development of a new generation of SEs. So far, the programme has accumulated more than 8 800 participants. Of the 90 grand finalists, 52 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

11. The Government promotes the social benefits of SEs through a wide range of channels with a view to enhancing the public’s recognition of SEs and encouraging 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 will continue to identify suitable opportunities for enhancing the publicity work.

(d) Promoting cross-sectoral collaboration for SE development

12. 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 2021 will organise community forums, tours and carnival in nine districts (including Central and Western District, Kwun Tong, Southern District, Sham Shui Po, Yuen Long, Yau Tsim Mong, Kowloon City, Wan Chai and Tai Po). 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

13. Since its establishment in 2011, CCF has launched 59 assistance programmes, with a total commitment of about \$20.3 billion, to identify those who cannot benefit from the existing social safety net and provided them with assistance. Rolled-out programmes have benefitted more than 2.69 million cases. In addition, 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 20 programmes under CCF into its regular assistance programmes or services.

14. To relieve the financial pressure of low-income households, CCF launched two rounds of the “One-off Living Subsidy for Low-income Households Not Living in Public Housing and Not Receiving CSSA” programme (one-off living subsidy) from July to November 2020 and from January to May 2021 respectively. Around 115 000 households

have benefitted from the first round of subsidy, while about 118 000 households are expected to benefit from the second round of subsidy. The total estimated expenditure of the two rounds of one-off living subsidy is around \$3,137.74 million. 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. Besides, CCF launched the “One-off Allowance for New Arrivals from Low-income Families” programme from September to December 2020 to provide eligible new arrivals with an allowance of \$10,000 each, aiming at helping them adapt into the community as soon as possible for better preparing themselves for permanent settlement in Hong Kong, while coping with their financial pressure. Around 175 000 persons benefitted from the programme. The total estimated expenditure of the programme is around \$2,131.04 million.

15. Through ongoing review of existing programmes, CCF would identify individual programmes that need to be revised or extended in a timely manner to better meet the needs of target beneficiaries.

ADVICE SOUGHT

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

Home Affairs Bureau
October 2021