

# 立法會 *Legislative Council*

LC Paper No. CB(2)1744/17-18

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## **Report of the Panel on Welfare Services for submission to the Legislative Council**

### **Purpose**

This report gives an account of the work of the Panel on Welfare Services ("the Panel") during the 2017-2018 session of the Legislative Council ("LegCo"). It will be tabled at the Council meeting of 11 July 2018 in accordance with Rule 77(14) of the Rules of Procedure.

### **The Panel**

2. The Panel was formed by a resolution of the Council on 8 July 1998 and as amended on 20 December 2000, 9 October 2002, 11 July 2007 and 2 July 2008 for the purpose of monitoring and examining Government policies and issues of public concern relating to welfare (including women welfare) and rehabilitation services, poverty, social enterprise and the Family Council. The terms of reference of the Panel are in **Appendix I**.

3. The Panel comprises 20 members, with Hon SHIU Ka-chun and Hon KWONG Chun-yu elected as its Chairman and Deputy Chairman respectively. The membership list of the Panel is in **Appendix II**.

### **Major work**

#### Social welfare planning and administration

*Governance issues of social welfare organizations and review of the enhancement of the Lump Sum Grant Subvention System*

4. Arising from the staff retrenchment incident ("the Incident") of the Neighbourhood Advice-Action Council ("NAAC") which was a non-governmental organization ("NGO") receiving subvention under the Lump Sum Grant Subvention System ("LSGSS"),<sup>1</sup> members met with the

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<sup>1</sup> The Incident refers to the decision of the management of the Neighbourhood Advice-Action Council ("NAAC") in late August 2017 to prematurely terminate 21 short-term projects and the employment contracts of the additional temporary staff NAAC had hired.

Administration on the governance of social welfare organizations. Some members noted with grave concern that the NGO concerned had spent a total of \$77 million on paying bonus to staff members between 2014-2015 and 2016-2017. Noting that \$12 million was required to continue the 21 projects which had been prematurely terminated, these members considered that the Incident would not have taken place if the NGO concerned had not paid such a large sum of bonus to its staff members. These members were also concerned that the NGO concerned had not sought the agreement of Social Welfare Department ("SWD") to the 21 projects beforehand.

5. These members took the view that the Incident had revealed the problem of wanton use of LSG subvention for providing services which were not recognized by SWD and for paying a large sum of bonus. They considered that the Administration should not allow such a wanton use of LSG subvention and should monitor the use of LSG subvention closely. They urged SWD to encourage NGOs receiving LSG subvention to participate in the Governance Platform Project which was launched by the Hong Kong Council of Social Service to assist NGOs in enhancing their governance. Expressing concern that some NGOs did not have any LSG reserve, these members considered that NGOs without any reserve might be a warning sign and therefore required special attention. According to the Administration, zero reserve could be an indicator of areas which required monitoring and issues relating to the level of LSG reserve to be kept by NGOs should be studied. The SWD's Task Force for Review on Enhancement of Lump Sum Grant Subvention System ("Task Force") would study improvements to the monitoring of NGOs with a view to preventing recurrence of similar incidents.

6. The review conducted by the Task Force was discussed by the Panel which also received public views on the subject. Some members took the view that since the implementation of LSGSS, service quality of many NGOs had deteriorated, manpower resources allocated to service delivery had shrunk and public accountability of NGOs had not been improved. These members were concerned that some NGOs had abused the flexibility in resource deployment, resulting in a great disparity in the pay levels between staff at the top and bottom tiers and high staff turnover. As social workers were the core asset of the social welfare sector, NGOs should offer them with reasonable remuneration to maintain staff stability and foster an environment for staff's upward mobility. These members also pointed out that many NGO staff had expressed great dissatisfaction about "unequal pay for equal work" between staff of NGOs and those of SWD, among staff of different NGOs and even among staff of the same NGO. These members were also concerned about the setting of the benchmark at mid-point salaries of the Master Pay Scale which had adversely affected the pay structures of NGO staff and many of them were

underpaid.

7. Pointing out that many deputations expressing views to the Panel had called for the abolition of LSGSS because it had caused many severe problems and had an adverse impact on the social welfare sector, some members considered that the scope of the review should include the possibility of such abolition and the name of the Task Force should be revised.

#### *Review of the Poverty Line*

8. Members were briefed on the analytical framework of the poverty line which was set at 50% of the median monthly household income before policy intervention (i.e. before tax and social welfare transfers), its effectiveness and application, as well as the analysis of the poverty situation in 2016. Some members called on the Administration to review the poverty line and set a target size of the poor population. In this connection, the Administration was requested to consider setting the poverty line at a certain percentage of household expenses by household size and households with expenses below that poverty line should be classified as poor. Noting that the setting of the poverty line was based on the concept of "relative poverty", these members also requested the Administration to set another poverty line based on the concept of "absolute poverty" or draw up a subsistence living protection line corresponding to an income level that maintained subsistence living.

#### *Progress of implementation of the Special Scheme on Privately Owned Sites for Welfare Uses*

9. The Panel received the Administration's briefing on the latest development of implementation of the Special Scheme on Privately Owned Sites for Welfare Uses ("Special Scheme"). Members noted that as at the end of December 2017, about 260 elderly service places would be provided under the Special Scheme by phases in or before 2018-2019. Only about 100 of them were subsidized places and the others were non-subsidized (i.e. self-financing) places.

10. Some members took the view that as projects under the Special Scheme were funded by the Lotteries Fund, the proportion of non-subsidized places should not be very high. Otherwise, elderly persons who could not afford non-subsidized places had to wait longer for subsidized places. The Administration was requested to increase the ratio of subsidized to non-subsidized places to at least 8:2. These members also considered that the Administration had attempted to meet the demand for residential care places for the elderly by building large residential care homes for the elderly ("RCHes"). Although large RCHes provided more service places, they could not provide elderly persons with a homely

environment, nor enable them to connect with the community. The Administration was requested to review the service mode of RCHes and construct more small RCHes. To facilitate service users to integrate into the community, these members called for the provision of welfare services in units on the ground floor level of public rental housing ("PRH") blocks instead of in welfare blocks. These members considered that as the size of these units was usually small, provision of large residential care homes could be avoided. The Administration was also requested to include the provision of welfare facilities in the planning stage of community development projects including PRH development.

*Planning of social welfare services in new public rental housing estates and deprived communities*

11. Members discussed the planning of social welfare services for newly completed PRH estates and deprived communities. Members also visited two new PRH estates (viz. On Tai Estate and On Tat Estate) in Kwun Tong to understand the provision of social welfare services to residents of the new PRH estates. Given that the provision of social welfare, education, transport and shopping facilities in new PRH estates often lagged behind the completion of the residential units therein, members urged the Administration to put in place a coordination mechanism, so that the above facilities and services would be well ready for use when members of the public moved into these new PRH estates. The Administration was also requested to provide, on a regular basis, subsidies for social worker teams serving PRH estates.

Social Security

*The Low-income Working Family Allowance Scheme*

12. The Panel was briefed on the enhancements of the Low-income Working Family Allowance Scheme (renamed as the Working Family Allowance ("WFA") Scheme from 1 April 2018) announced in the Chief Executive's 2017 Policy Address.<sup>2</sup> The Panel also received public views on the subject matter. Members requested the Administration to

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<sup>2</sup> The enhancements of the Low-income Working Family Allowance Scheme are:

- (a) extending the Scheme to cover singleton households;
- (b) adding a tier of income limit of 70% of the Median Monthly Domestic Household Income ("MMDHI") and using MMDHI of economically active households instead for calculating the income limits;
- (c) adding a tier of working hour requirement of 168 hours per month for non-single-parent households; and adding a tier of 54 hours per month for single-parent households. Households fulfilling the relevant working hour requirement will receive a higher rate of allowance;
- (d) allowing all household members to aggregate their working hours; and
- (e) raising all the rates of allowances, and adding an additional layer of 3/4 rate between the existing full rate and half rate allowances.

simplify the application procedures for WFA and allow applicants to make self-declaration on working hours and income, which might be subject to random checks by the authorities if necessary. The Administration was also requested to strengthen its support for the WFA Scheme by setting up one-stop offices in each of the 18 districts to support on-site oath-making, and the opening hours of such offices should be extended. Members were also concerned that the design of WFA had not considered the situation of households with special needs, including those households with elderly members, members with disabilities, members with special educational needs, or members suffering from chronic diseases, etc. Members suggested that the working hour requirements for these households should be on par with those for single-parent households, and the working hour thresholds should be lowered to 18 hours and 36 hours for the Basic Allowance and the Higher Allowance respectively.

13. Members were advised that upon the implementation of the enhancements on 1 April 2018, the WFA Scheme was expected to basically cover the applicants of the household-based Work Incentive Transport Subsidy ("WITS"). The household-based WITS would therefore be abolished by then. Henceforth, eligible applicants might apply for WFA and/or the individual-based WITS. The way forward for the individual-based WITS would be considered by the Administration having regard to the changes in the number of applications following the implementation of the WFA Scheme on 1 April 2018, and implementation of the proposed non-means-tested Public Transport Fare Subsidy Scheme. Given that the income and asset limits for WITS applicants were to be adjusted concurrently with the asset limits of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ("CSSA") Scheme in February every year and having regard to the aforesaid way forward, members raised no objection to the Administration's proposal of freezing all the income and asset limits of the WITS Scheme for the 2018 annual adjustment.

*Adjustment of social security payment rates and review of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme*

14. Members supported the Administration's proposal to adjust the standard payment rates under the CSSA Scheme and the rates of allowances under the Social Security Allowance Scheme with effect from 1 February 2018, having regard to the latest movement of the Social Security Assistance Index of Prices.

15. The Panel also met with deputations and the Administration on review of the CSSA Scheme. Members shared deputations' concern that the CSSA Scheme had not been reviewed for many years and considered that there was a number of problems in the Scheme. For example, the CSSA payment rates were insufficient to meet basic needs, the rent allowance was inadequate to cover rental of private housing, CSSA

recipients were stigmatized, elderly persons and persons with disabilities were required to apply for CSSA on a household basis and the eligible age for elderly CSSA would be raised from 60 to 65 with effect from the second half of 2018 ("the age adjustment arrangement"). The Administration was therefore requested to conduct a comprehensive review of the CSSA Scheme. Specifically the Administration was requested to ensure that the level of the rent allowance under the CSSA Scheme could cover the actual rent paid by 90% of CSSA households living in private housing and to immediately remove the age adjustment arrangement.

*Provision of extra allowance to recipients of social security payments, Working Family Allowance and Work Incentive Transport Subsidy as well as one-off grant to students in need of support learning*

16. The Panel met with the Administration on its initiative to provide a one-off extra allowance to recipients of social security payments, WFA and WITS; to provide a one-off "top up" payment arising from the Caring and Sharing Scheme ("the Scheme")<sup>3</sup> and a one-off grant to students in need of support learning. Some members were concerned whether there was sufficient manpower to implement the aforesaid provision of allowance and payment. They also considered that recipients of the living allowance for low-income carers of persons with disabilities or living allowance for carers of the elderly persons from low income families should also benefit from the Scheme. As SWD already had the information on the recipients of these living allowances, these members took the view that the carers concerned should not be required to apply for the Scheme so as to save administrative costs.

*Implementation of the Higher Old Age Living Allowance*

17. The Panel was briefed on the implementation arrangements for the Higher Old Age Living Allowance ("Higher OALA"). The Panel also received public views on the subject matter. Sharing deputations' concern that the application procedures for the Higher OALA were too complicated, some members called on the Administration to simplify such procedures. The Administration was also requested to consider relaxing the asset limits of the Higher OALA as early as practicable. Members noted that the implementation of the Higher OALA and relaxation of the asset limits of the Normal OALA were the measures taken to strengthen the social security pillar for elderly persons which was a pillar of the multi-pillar

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<sup>3</sup> According to the Administration, the Caring and Sharing Scheme provides a payment of \$4,000 to each eligible person. Social security recipients (i.e. those who will receive the one-off extra allowance) are not eligible for the Scheme. In this connection, for social security recipients who would have received a one-off extra allowance of less than \$4,000, the Government will provide additional payment to make up the difference.

retirement protection system in Hong Kong.<sup>4</sup> Some members were concerned that the Administration might be in financial dire straits because of the long-term financial burden brought about by the provision of Normal and Higher OALA. These members called on the Administration to implement a financially sustainable non-means tested universal retirement protection scheme with tripartite contributions from employers, employees and the Government.

### Services for the elderly

#### *Elderly Services Programme Plan*

18. The Panel met with deputations and the Administration on the Elderly Services Programme Plan ("ESPP") which put forward 20 recommendations under four key strategic directions (i.e. (a) achieving "ageing-in-place" and reducing institutionalization rate through significantly strengthening community care services for the elderly ("CCS"); (b) enabling informed choices and timely access to quality services; (c) further streamlining and promoting integrated service delivery; and (d) ensuring financial sustainability and accountability of elderly services).<sup>5</sup>

19. Some members considered that the Administration should take into consideration current deficiencies of and future demand for elderly services in order to have a comprehensive planning for such services. These members took the view that it was against the Administration's policy of "ageing-in-place" for ESPP to recommend a higher planning ratio for residential care services for the elderly ("RCS") vis-a-vis CCS. They considered that the Administration should put emphasis on CCS in terms of future development of long term care services. Given the long waiting time for RCS and CCS, they called on the Administration to provide specific details for implementing "ageing-in-place" and for achieving the target of zero waiting time for CCS.

#### *New initiatives on setting up funds to provide enhanced care and support for the elderly and persons with disabilities*

20. The Panel supported the Administration's proposals to set up the Innovation and Technology Fund for Application in Elderly and Rehabilitation Care ("the IT Fund for Application") and the Arts

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<sup>4</sup> According to the Administration, the multi-pillar retirement protection system in Hong Kong consists of four pillars, viz. the multi-tier social security system (the zero pillar), the Mandatory Provident Fund Scheme and other occupation-based retirement scheme (the second pillar), voluntary savings (the third pillar), as well as public services, family support and personal assets (the fourth pillar).

<sup>5</sup> Details of the 20 recommendations are set out in Appendix III to the Annex to LC Paper No. CB(2)1825/16-17(01) issued on 6 July 2017.

Development Fund for Persons with Disabilities. Noting that an Assessment Panel ("AP") would be established for vetting applications and recommending the amount of grants for the IT Fund for Application, these members also suggested that the membership of AP should include, inter alia, users so that their views on technology products under assessment could be taken into consideration in the assessment process.

### Services for persons with disabilities

#### *Hong Kong Rehabilitation Programme Plan*

21. The Panel was briefed on the guiding principles, scope of review and mode of public engagement for the formulation of a new Hong Kong Rehabilitation Programme Plan ("RPP").<sup>6</sup> Members also received public views on the subject matter. Taking the view that the guiding principles lacked a policy direction or conceptual framework, some members suggested that the new RPP should have a vision and conceptual framework as well as concrete plans for their implementation.

22. Noting the Administration's advice that the objective of the Government's rehabilitation policy was in line with the purpose of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ("UNCRPD"),<sup>7</sup> some members expressed concern about how the principles, objectives and framework of UNCRPD would be applicable to the RPP review and how the new RPP could address issues such as guardianship system for mentally incapacitated persons. They were also concerned about how the new RPP could facilitate persons with disabilities to uphold their rights. The Administration was requested to establish a Commission on Persons with Disabilities to formulate and oversee implementation of policies for persons with disabilities so as to safeguard their welfare and rights. Sharing some deputations' view that services for persons with disabilities should not be confined to rehabilitation services, these members called on the Administration to consider these deputations' suggestion of renaming RPP as "Plan on issues relating to disabilities" or "Policies and planning for issues relating to disabilities".

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<sup>6</sup> The guiding principles for the formulation of a new Rehabilitation Programme Plan are:

- (a) adopting a life span approach in examining the rehabilitation and care needs of persons with disabilities in different aspects;
- (b) promoting cross-sectoral collaboration in providing diversified services for persons with disabilities and achieving barrier-free environment; and
- (c) conducting in-depth review and extensive consultation for stakeholders to have systematic and thorough discussion on the various rehabilitation service needs of persons with disabilities.

<sup>7</sup> The purpose of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.



23. Noting that a Review Working Group would be established under the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee to take forward the task of formulating the new RPP, some members called on the Administration to consider appointing LegCo Members and service users with different background to the Review Working Group. These members took the view that special task groups should be formed to study topics covered by the RPP review and views of the public should be reflected in the discussion of the special task groups. The Review Working Group should set specific policy directions and draw up plans for service contents, manpower and land requirements, etc. after collating views from the public.

*Community care support for persons with dementia and their carers*

24. The Panel met with the Administration on its community care support for persons with dementia and their carers. Expressing concern that the number of persons with dementia was increasing and there was a trend of early onset of dementia, members called on the Administration to implement comprehensive measures to address the problems.

25. Members considered that the 480 training places to be provided by SWD in 2017-2018 for professional and non-professional staff of elderly service units to enhance their knowledge of dementia and strengthen their skills in caring for elderly persons with dementia might not be able to meet the increasing service demand. Members urged that the Administration should contract out the comprehensive dementia care planner courses in collaboration with NGOs which were professionally engaged in following up dementia cases, with a view to enabling persons with dementia and their carers to receive the most appropriate assistance. The Administration was further requested to provide basic training on nursing skills and knowledge for foreign domestic helpers who were dedicated to taking care of persons with dementia.

*Pilot Scheme on On-site Pre-school Rehabilitation Services*

26. The Panel was briefed on the progress of the Pilot Scheme on On-site Pre-school Rehabilitation Services ("OPRS") and preliminary observations of the evaluative study on the Pilot Scheme.<sup>8</sup> Noting that the Administration

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<sup>8</sup> There were two preliminary observations:

- (a) positive impacts were found on child performance in both quantitative and qualitative analyses. Significant improvements were shown with respect to all of the five developmental domains under study, viz. gross motor skills, social and emotional skills, language skills, cognitive skills and fine motor skills; and
- (b) out of a total of 4 381 questionnaires received by the non-governmental organizations ("NGOs") from November 2015 to November 2017, 4 370 (99.8%) parents/carers indicated that they were satisfied with the services provided by NGOs under the Pilot Scheme on On-site Pre-school Rehabilitation Services.

would increase the number of service places to 7 000, some members considered that the supply of OPRS places would still be inadequate to meet the demand even after the increase. Given that schools were not equipped with the required training facilities for the provision of special training and care services for children who were using services in special child care centres ("SCCCs"), these members took the view that OPRS could not benefit some 1 600 children who were waiting for SCCC services. The Administration was therefore requested to speed up the provision of SCCC places. Considering that the long waiting time for pre-school rehabilitation services was a result of the Administration's poor planning for service provision in the past, these members called on the Administration to draw up comprehensive plans for provision of manpower and service venues for such services.

27. Noting that pre-school rehabilitation services were targeted at children aged from birth to six, some members were concerned that these children could not continue to use the services when they went to primary school. These members urged the Labour and Welfare Bureau and Education Bureau ("EDB") to discuss the transitional arrangements from kindergartens to primary schools, with a view to ensuring that children with special needs would be provided with appropriate services when they proceeded to primary school.

#### *Preliminary framework of a Special Needs Trust*

28. The Panel discussed the Administration's preliminary thinking on the framework of the proposed Special Needs Trust ("SNT"). Members noted that SNT was targeted at persons with special needs whose parents wished to manage their wealth under a trust to better ensure, after their death, the long-term sustainability of the care plan these parents had prepared for their children. Some members suggested that mentally ill persons should also be covered by SNT. These members pointed out that in Canada, the assets of parents with special needs children were managed in the form of a discretionary trust and were not counted towards the assets of their children so that their eligibility for social security assistance would not be affected. The Administration was requested to follow suit. The Administration was also requested to provide a case manager for monitoring the medical needs of the beneficiary of an SNT and making recommendations on the beneficiary's medical care.

#### Family and child welfare

##### *Policy to deal with domestic violence*

29. The Panel discussed the current policy on tackling domestic violence and various support services for those exposed to domestic violence. Some members expressed disappointment about the Administration's

non-provision of an analysis on domestic violence cases in Hong Kong. They were of the view that in the absence of an in-depth analysis of the number and nature of such cases, the reasons for domestic violence, etc., the problem of domestic violence could not be addressed at root. In this connection, the Administration was requested to conduct such an analysis and brief members on the results thereof.

30. Noting that there was only a small number of applications for the grant of a non-molestation order under the Domestic and Cohabitation Relationships Violence Ordinance (Cap. 189), these members attributed the small number of applications to the difficulty in obtaining legal aid by the victims of domestic violence for making such applications. These members considered that the application procedures for non-molestation orders in Hong Kong were complicated and the victims had to rely on the assistance of lawyers to file the applications. These members pointed out that in some overseas places, the victims could apply for such orders in police stations or through NGOs by completing a simple application form. The victims were not required to engage lawyers during the application process. The Administration was therefore requested to critically review the relevant application procedures.

#### *Child protection policy and procedures*

31. The Panel met with deputations and the Administration to discuss child protection policy and procedures in the light of recent child abuse cases.<sup>9</sup> Some members supported deputations' call for a review of the relevant legislation to protect children from abuse. The Administration was also requested to review the current mechanism for reporting suspected child abuse cases to EDB which was considered ineffective. These members also urged the Administration to expeditiously implement the policy of "one school, one social worker" for primary schools and kindergartens. The Administration was requested to resolve the problem of child abuse and, for such purpose, establish a cross-bureaux centre to involve relevant government bureaux/departments and stakeholders, e.g. teachers, parents, students and neighbours, in handling child abuse cases. The centre could also provide support services for families which sought assistance or might have a higher risk of child abuse (e.g. families with a history of domestic violence). These members considered that training programmes should be separately provided for police officers and teachers, with a view to enhancing police officers' handling of legal issues related to child abuse as well as strengthening teachers' ability to identify and report child abuse cases.

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<sup>9</sup> The recent child abuse cases refer to a number of suspected child abuse cases occurred in January 2018 which include the death of a five-year-old girl in Tuen Mun arising from suspected child abuse.

*Law Reform Commission Report on Child Custody and Access and related support measures*

32. The Panel discussed at the last session the Administration's proposed legislation to follow up the recommendations of the Law Reform Commission Report on Child Custody and Access. Having regard to the views collected in the Administration's public consultation exercise on the proposed legislation,<sup>10</sup> the Panel considered it not advisable to legislate hastily without sufficient support measures.

33. In the light of the aforesaid views of the public and the Panel, the Administration had reverted to the Panel in the current session that it would not introduce the proposed legislation to LegCo at this stage. Whilst welcoming the Administration's response, members urged the Administration to put more efforts in improving the system of maintenance such as setting up a maintenance board to help divorced parents collect maintenance payments. The Administration was also requested to enhance support services for divorced families which included providing adequate resources for co-parenting support centres and putting in place safety facilities for such centres.

*Work of the Family Council*

34. When the Panel was briefed on the work progress of the Family Council, some members expressed dissatisfaction at the Administration's inaction on setting up a maintenance board despite the fact that the suggestion of such setting up had been put forward for many years. Noting that the Family Council would commission a consultant to conduct a "Further Study in the Phenomenon of Divorce in Hong Kong" ("the Study"), these members strongly requested that the setting up of a maintenance board should be covered by the Study which should make recommendation on whether or not a maintenance board should be set up. In the light of the adverse impact of long working hours on family life, some members suggested that the Family Council should also conduct a research on the implications of long working hours on family life.

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<sup>10</sup> The percentage of public views in support of the implementation of the proposed legislation to follow up the recommendations of the Law Reform Commission Report on Child Custody and Access at this stage was about the same as that opposing it (i.e. 34.5% on each side), while another 20% supported the proposed legislation in principle, but requested additional resources and support measures as a prerequisite.

35. Noting that a refined Family Implication Assessment ("FIA") checklist comprising 24 questions under six principles<sup>11</sup> had been developed, some members called on the Family Council to follow up on the FIA checklists completed by government bureaux and departments ("B/Ds") and ensure that B/Ds had made use of the FIA checklist as the basis for assessing family implications for public policies.

#### Provision of welfare facilities

36. When the Panel was briefed on the Administration's proposal to set up contract RCHEs and day care centres for the elderly ("DACs") at Ma On Shan and land sale site of Kai Tak Development, Kowloon, some members requested the Administration to shorten the long lead time for selection of service operators before commencement of service of these welfare facilities. Some members were concerned that the provision of non-subsidized places in contract RCHEs would prolong the waiting time of elderly persons who could not afford non-subsidized places. These members considered that as public money should be used in helping the needy, there should not be any non-subsidized places in contract RCHEs. The Administration was therefore requested to review the ratio of subsidized to non-subsidized places in contract RCHEs and the waiting time for subsidized RCHE places.

37. Noting that the setting up of RCHEs and DACs at the land sale site of Kai Tak Development was included in the relevant land sale conditions, some members considered that disputes over the provision of such facilities could be avoided as potential buyers of the private properties under the same project knew in advance of such provision. It would also reduce the risk of discrimination against users of these facilities. Given that some RCHEs in private development projects were very difficult to locate, members were concerned that this would give an impression that the developers intended to marginalize welfare facilities. The Administration was therefore requested to impress upon developers to set up welfare facilities in better locations of the site.

#### Welfare support for the homeless

38. The Panel met with the Administration and the Society for Community Organization ("SOCO") to discuss welfare support for the homeless (particularly those staying overnight in 24-hour fast food

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<sup>11</sup> The six principles are: (a) supporting the functions of families; (b) strengthening family integrity and stability; (c) promoting family harmony and balance between work and family; (d) connecting families to the wider kin and community networks; (e) encouraging families to participate in policy development, programme planning and evaluation; and (f) supporting the vulnerable families.

restaurants).<sup>12</sup> Members noted that according to the SOCO's study on the homeless who stayed overnight in 24-hour fast food restaurants, the number of these homeless people had increased substantially from 2013 to 2017. According to the analysis made in the study, while subvented hostel places were available to street sleepers, the short duration of stay (i.e. six months) was of little help to street sleepers in ceasing street sleeping. Some members were concerned that as it was difficult for street sleepers to find suitable accommodation within the short duration of stay, they had to revert to street sleeping. To avoid this, these members called on the Administration to take timely and specific measures to address the housing needs of street sleepers. Specifically the Administration was requested to make housing arrangements for all the 1 091 street sleepers registered in SWD's Street Sleepers Registry (as at end-February 2018). Noting that street sleepers in need could use the various medical and mental health services under the Hospital Authority or the Department of Health, some members supported SOCO's suggestion that the Administration should deploy medical staff to provide outreaching services for street sleepers. These members also shared SOCO's concern that whilst street sleepers could benefit from the short-term relief, to be provided by the Community Care Fund, for low-income households not living in public housing and not receiving CSSA, it would only be provided in the 2018-2019 financial year. These members supported SOCO's suggestion that it should be regularized.

### Community development policy and services

39. The Panel was briefed on the Administration's community development policy and services.<sup>13</sup> According to the Administration, the existing community development services included, inter alia, 13 community centres and 17 Neighbourhood Level Community Development Projects ("NLCDPs"). The priority of community development services should be accorded to disadvantaged communities and groups. Some members were concerned that there were still many deprived communities in various districts of Hong Kong and many people were residing in inadequate housing, including sub-divided units, squatters and transitional housing, etc. These members urged the Government to recognize the importance of community development policy and relevant services, allocate additional resources and earmark sites for expanding the services of community centres and NLCDPs to all the 18 districts in the

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<sup>12</sup> The Society for Community Organization is one of the four NGOs specialized in serving street sleepers. The other three NGOs are the Salvation Army, the St. James' Settlement and the Christian Concern for the Homeless Association.

<sup>13</sup> According to the Administration, community development services seek to mobilize community resources and encourage people to interact with one another through participation in a series of activities and networking groups. They aim at promoting self-help and mutual help in solving community problems and building up social support networks.

territory, and provide additional support to the deprived communities. Members noted that the NGO Forum on Community Development ("NGO Forum") was set up in 2004 to provide a platform for discussing issues relating to community development among the Government, service operators and related interested parties. Taking the view that the communication between the Administration and NGOs should be strengthened, some members suggested that the NGO Forum should be conducted more frequently and on a regular basis.

#### Joint Subcommittee on Long-term Care Policy

40. The Joint Subcommittee on Long-term Care Policy, established under the Panel and the Panel on Health Services in December 2016, studied long-term care policy and services. The Joint Subcommittee had ceased its operation upon completion of its 12-month period of work which ended on 15 December 2017, pending re-activation of work when a vacant slot was available. A motion debate on the Joint Subcommittee report was held at the Council meeting of 23 May 2018.

#### Meetings held and visits conducted

41. During the period between 11 October 2017 (on which the 2017-2018 session began) and 30 June 2018, the Panel held a total of 19 meetings<sup>14</sup> with the Administration and received views from 338 deputations/individuals at 11 of these meetings. Three meetings have been scheduled for July 2018.<sup>15</sup> In addition to the visit to two PRH estates in Kwun Tong, the Panel will visit a self-financing family care home for adults with intellectual disabilities and a subvented day activity centre cum hostel for severely mentally handicapped persons in July 2018.

Council Business Division 2  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
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<sup>14</sup> Of the 19 meetings, two were joint meetings with the Panel on Health Services and the Panel on Education and one was a joint meeting with the Panel on Housing ("HG Panel").

<sup>15</sup> Apart from a regular meeting of the Panel, a special meeting of the Panel and a joint meeting with the HG Panel will also be held in July 2018.

## **Appendix I**

### **Legislative Council**

#### **Panel on Welfare Services**

##### **Terms of Reference**

1. To monitor and examine Government policies and issues of public concern relating to welfare (including women welfare) and rehabilitation services, poverty, social enterprise and Family Council.
2. To provide a forum for the exchange and dissemination of views on the above policy matters.
3. To receive briefings and to formulate views on any major legislative or financial proposals in respect of the above policy areas prior to their formal introduction to the Council or Finance Committee.
4. To monitor and examine, to the extent it considers necessary, the above policy matters referred to it by a member of the Panel or by the House Committee.
5. To make reports to the Council or to the House Committee as required by the Rules of Procedure.



**Panel on Welfare Services**

**Membership list for the 2017 - 2018 session\***

<b>Chairman</b>	Hon SHIU Ka-chun
<b>Deputy Chairman</b>	Hon KWONG Chun-yu
<b>Members</b>	Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP Hon CHAN Chi-chuen Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, SBS, MH, JP Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki Hon KWOK Wai-keung, JP Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH Hon Alvin YEUNG Hon Andrew WAN Siu-kin Hon CHU Hoi-dick Dr Hon Junius HO Kwan-yiu, JP Hon Wilson OR Chong-shing, MH Hon YUNG Hoi-yan Dr Hon Pierre CHAN Hon LUK Chung-hung, JP  (Total : 20 members)
<b>Clerk</b>	Mr Colin CHUI
<b>Legal adviser</b>	Miss Rachel DAI

\* Changes in membership are shown in Annex.

**Annex to Appendix II**

**Panel on Welfare Services**

**Changes in membership**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Relevant date</b>
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, SBS, JP	Up to 23 October 2017
Hon Kenneth LAU Ip-keung, BBS, MH, JP	Up to 26 October 2017