

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

LC Paper No. CB(2)1898/18-19  
(These minutes have been  
seen by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/WS+CB4/PL/ED

**Panel on Welfare Services and Panel on Education**

**Minutes of joint meeting**  
**held on Tuesday, 28 May 2019, at 9:30 am**  
**in Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex**

**Members  
present**

**: Panel on Welfare Services**

- Hon KWONG Chun-yu (Chairman)
- \* Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
- \* 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
- Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH
- Hon Alvin YEUNG
- Hon Andrew WAN Siu-kin
- Hon Wilson OR Chong-shing, MH
- Hon YUNG Hoi-yan
- Dr Hon Pierre CHAN
- \* Dr Hon CHENG Chung-tai

**Panel on Education**

- Hon IP Kin-yuen (Chairman)
- Hon Vincent CHENG Wing-shun, MH (Deputy  
Chairman)
- Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, GBS, JP
- Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, SBS, JP
- Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, SBS, JP
- Hon Claudia MO

Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, SBS, MH, JP  
Hon Holden CHOW Ho-ding  
Hon HUI Chi-fung  
Hon LAU Kwok-fan, MH  
Hon Gary FAN Kwok-wai  
Hon CHAN Hoi-yan

**Members  
absent** : Panel on Welfare Services

- \* Hon SHIU Ka-chun (Deputy Chairman)
- \* Hon CHU Hoi-dick
- \* Hon LUK Chung-hung, JP

Panel on Education

Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, GBS, JP  
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yee, GBS, JP  
Hon MA Fung-kwok, SBS, JP  
Hon Charles Peter MOK, JP  
Hon Dennis KWOK Wing-hang  
Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan  
Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, SBS, JP  
Hon Jimmy NG Wing-ka, JP  
Dr Hon Junius HO Kwan-yiu, JP  
Hon HO Kai-ming  
Hon Tanya CHAN  
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-kwan, JP  
Hon AU Nok-hin

(\* Also members of the Panel on Education)

**Public Officers** : Item II  
**attending**

Mr Caspar TSUI, JP  
Under Secretary for Labour and Welfare  
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Mr KOK Che-leung  
Assistant Director (Rehabilitation and Medical  
Social Services)  
Social Welfare Department

Mr Godwin LAI  
Principal Assistant Secretary (Special Education)  
Education Bureau

Miss Louise HUI  
Senior Specialist (Speech Therapy)  
Education Bureau

**Attendance  
by invitation**

: Item II

Labour Party

Mr KWOK Wing-kin  
Chairperson

The Civic Party

Miss Gloria NG  
District Developer

Mr WU Chi-kin

智障人士老齡化關注組

Ms Sindycat LEE Cheung-pui  
Member

Mr Harry HO Hei-yin

Mr KO Chin-pang

Miss POON Man-wai

Mr LEE Kam-shing

Hong Kong Christian Service Chih Ai Parents'  
Association

Ms TANG Siu-chi  
Executive Member

**Clerk in attendance** : Ms Wendy JAN  
Chief Council Secretary (2) 4

**Staff in attendance** : Ms Catherina YU  
Senior Council Secretary (2) 4

Miss Alison HUI  
Legislative Assistant (2) 4

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Action

**I. Election of Chairman**

Mr KWONG Chun-yu, Chairman of the Panel on Welfare Services, advised that, as agreed with Mr IP Kin-yuen, Chairman of the Panel on Education, Mr KWONG should chair the joint meeting. In accordance with rule 22(k) of the House Rules, members agreed that Mr KWONG would chair the joint meeting.

**II. Provision of speech therapy services for elderly persons, persons with disabilities and students with special needs**

[LC Paper No. CB(2)1509/18-19(01)]

2. At the invitation of the Chairman, Under Secretary for Labour and Welfare ("USLW") briefed members on the speech therapy services provided by the Administration for elderly persons, persons with disabilities and students with special needs.

3. The Chairman invited the deputations/individuals to present their views. A total of nine deputations/individuals expressed their views which were summarized in the **Appendix**.

The Administration's response to the views of deputations/individuals

4. Responding to the views expressed by the deputations/individuals, USLW made the following points:

- (a) the Social Welfare Department ("SWD") had progressively implemented the four-year Pilot Scheme on Multi-disciplinary Outreaching Support Teams for the Elderly and the Pilot Scheme on Professional Outreaching Teams for Private Residential Care Homes for Persons with Disabilities ("the Pilot Schemes") since February 2019 and March 2019 respectively. Under the Pilot

Schemes, outreach services, including speech therapy services, were provided for residents of private residential care homes for the elderly ("RCHEs") and of private residential care homes for persons with disabilities ("RCHDs"). SWD had consulted various speech therapy service groups in designing the scope of the Pilot Schemes;

- (b) the number of social workers and speech therapists had been increased with a view to strengthening the support for users of speech therapy services and their carers;
- (c) when compared with private speech therapy clinics/centres, non-governmental organizations ("NGOs") were more experienced in providing territory-wide and multi-professional services for residents of RCHEs and of RCHDs. NGOs were therefore invited to submit proposals for providing services under the Pilot Schemes;
- (d) NGOs were not required to indicate in their proposals the fees for providing services under the Pilot Schemes. Selection of NGOs for providing services under the Pilot Schemes was not based on the fee levels but on the quality of the service proposals. NGOs submitting the proposals were required to have at least three years' experience in providing elderly services in RCHEs or rehabilitation services in RCHDs directly. The Administration would keep in view the implementation of the Pilot Schemes and consider the suggestion of inviting private speech therapy clinics/centres to provide speech therapy services for residents of RCHEs/RCHDs in future;
- (e) the Administration would consider providing speech therapy services under the pre-school rehabilitation services for pre-primary school students who were aged six or above having regard to the circumstances of individual students with justifiable needs;
- (f) SWD and the Education Bureau ("EDB") had enhanced the mechanism for transferring assessment reports of students with special needs from kindergartens ("KGs") to primary schools, so that these students would continue to receive suitable support when they proceeded to receive primary education. Collaboration between SWD and the Department of Health ("DH") with respect to Child Assessment Service had also been strengthened; and

- (g) enhancements of speech therapy services were implemented by phases to ensure that there were sufficient speech therapists for providing the services. The Administration would keep in view the supply of speech therapists.

5. Principal Assistant Secretary (Special Education) ("PAS(SE)") also made the following responses:

- (a) starting from the 2019-2020 school year, EDB would implement the Enhanced School-based Speech Therapy Service ("SBSTS") by creating school-based speech therapist ("SBST") posts in the public sector ordinary schools by phases in three years. The Enhanced SBSTS would allow schools to form clusters and employ SBSTs to support students with speech and language impairment ("SLI"). As SBSTs would become members of the schools under the Enhanced SBSTS, they could strengthen collaboration with teachers and other professional staff of the schools to assist students with SLI in the domains of prevention, remediation and development, thereby providing more stable, sustainable and comprehensive services to help students with SLI;
- (b) speech therapists' previous experience in providing speech therapy services for schools would be recognized in salary assessment under the Enhanced SBSTS, provided that sufficient and valid documents were produced as proof;
- (c) schools were required to refer to the Guide on School-based Speech Therapy Service in setting out working guidelines and duties for SBSTs. To assist schools in monitoring the implementation of SBSTS, Specialists (Education Services)(Speech Therapy) of EDB would pay regular visits to schools to offer advice on the implementation of the Enhanced SBSTS and the performance of SBSTs; and
- (d) EDB would organize thematic seminars, workshops, sharing sessions on good practices, etc. for staff members of schools including SBSTs with a view to enhancing the support for students with SLI.

## Discussion

### *Enhancing provision and quality of speech therapy services*

6. Ms Claudia MO opined that the Food and Health Bureau, SWD and EDB should spare no effort to support persons in need of speech therapy services. She enquired about how the Administration would shorten the waiting time for speech therapy services.

7. USLW responded that the Administration had enhanced the provision of speech therapy services for elderly persons and persons with disabilities under the Pilot Schemes. To strengthen the support for students with SLI, the Administration had increased the number of social workers and SBSTs. The articulation of speech therapy services from KGs to primary schools had also been enhanced. In addition, the Pilot Scheme on On-site Pre-school Rehabilitation Services ("OPRS") had been regularized since October 2018. The number of OPRS places would be increased to 7 000 in October 2019, which would be further increased in the next five years, if resources allowed, with a view to approaching zero waiting time for pre-school rehabilitation services. The Administration would keep in view the provision of speech therapy services under the Pilot Schemes and further enhance the services if necessary.

8. Mr POON Siu-ping and Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung expressed concern about whether there was adequate supply of speech therapists. Mr POON also enquired about the additional resources allocated to the provision of speech therapy services. USLW responded that district-based multi-disciplinary professional teams had been set up to provide outreach services, including speech therapy services, for residents of private RCHEs and of private RCHDs under the Pilot Schemes. According to the Administration's assessment, as some speech therapy services would be provided by phases, there should be adequate supply of speech therapists to meet the service demand. In response to Mr POON's enquiry about the remuneration of SBSTs, USLW said that the starting salary of the SBST post had been increased by two Master Pay Scale points.

9. The Chairman called on the Administration to draw up long-term development plans for provision of speech therapy services. Mr IP Kin-yuen opined that a professional registration system should be established as soon as possible to ensure the quality of speech therapy services. Ms Claudia MO took the view that there should be a statutory registration system for speech therapists. USLW responded that he would relay these views to relevant policy bureaux.

10. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok said that in the light of ageing population, the Administration should estimate the demand for speech therapy services by elderly persons and formulate long-term plans for meeting the service needs. USLW responded that it was expected that around 45 000 residents of private RCHEs, including those with swallowing difficulties or speech impairment, would benefit from the services under the Pilot Scheme. The Administration would monitor the service demand and increase the service provision if necessary.

11. In response to Mr HUI Chi-fung's concern about the quality of speech therapy services provided for students with SLI, PAS(SE) said that EDB attached great importance to the quality of such services. He assured members that EDB as well as schools would monitor the implementation of the Enhanced SBSTS and make improvements to the services if necessary.

*Provision of speech therapy services for pre-primary school students*

12. Mr IP Kin-yuen enquired whether it was the Government's policy to cease the provision of on-site speech therapy services for KG students with SLI when they reached the age of six. USLW responded that the Administration would consider providing on-site speech therapy services for KG students who were aged six or above and were in need of speech therapy services on a case-by-case and discretionary basis. The Administration would explore how these special cases could be better handled. The Administration would also keep in view the transition of speech therapy services from KGs to primary schools and enhance the arrangement if necessary. PAS(SE) supplemented that assessment information and progress reports of KG students with special needs from the child assessment centres under DH, the Hospital Authority and the pre-school rehabilitation service units subvented by SWD respectively would be forwarded to primary schools to facilitate their teachers and SBSTs to plan and arrange appropriate SBSTS for the students concerned. EDB and the schools would monitor the progress of these students after they were admitted to primary schools. PAS(SE) further said that apart from intervention, the future direction of the Enhanced SBSTS was to enhance the domains of prevention and development by incorporating language learning strategies into teaching.

13. Opining that it was a right of students with SLI to receive speech therapy services, Ms Claudia MO enquired about the justifications for setting an age limit for providing on-site speech therapy services for KG students with SLI. USLW reiterated that when KG students with SLI proceeded to primary schools, they would be provided with speech therapy services if needed.



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14. Mr IP Kin-yuen, Dr Fernando CHEUNG, Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung, Ms Claudio MO, Dr KWOK Ka-ki and Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok took the view that it was unreasonable for the Administration to impose an age limit on providing on-site speech therapy services for KG students in need. They strongly urged the Administration to continue the provision of such services for these students until they proceeded to primary schools. The Administration was requested to provide a written response in this regard.

15. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok further said that it was important for children with special needs to receive necessary training early in their prime learning period. As such, there should be a mechanism for early identification and intervention of children with special needs. USLW responded that the Maternal and Child Health Centres of DH monitored children from birth to five years of age for early detection of growth, developmental or behavioural problems. Children with significant health, developmental or behavioural problems would be referred to DH's Child Assessment Service for further follow-up. Recognizing the importance of early intervention for pre-primary school children with special needs, USLW reiterated that the number of OPRS places would be increased to 7 000 in October 2019.

*Admission of children with speech and language impairments*

16. Referring to a case under which a school had refused to arrange an admission interview for a child with SLI, Mr IP Kin-yuen enquired about whether the school concerned had contravened relevant regulations. PAS(SE) responded that under the Disability Discrimination Ordinance (Cap. 487) ("DDO") and the Code of Practice on Education issued under DDO, an educational establishment should not discriminate against a person with disability by refusing or failing to accept that person's application for admission as a student on grounds of his/her disability. PAS(SE) said that schools complied with the statutory requirements under DDO in general and parents might relay similar cases, if any, to relevant Regional Education Office of EDB for follow-up.

*(At 11:23 am, the Chairman extended the meeting for 15 minutes beyond the appointed ending time to allow sufficient time for discussion.)*

*Invitation of proposals for providing speech therapy services*

17. Given that invitation of proposals for providing speech therapy services under the Pilot Schemes was limited to NGOs only, Mr HUI Chi-fung expressed concern that many experienced speech therapists might be excluded from the selection exercise. Dr KWOK Ka-ki opined that the

Administration should ensure that providers of speech therapy services had the relevant experience to meet the various needs of service users. In this connection, he enquired about the selection criteria for providers of speech therapy services and the involvement of parents of children with SLI and speech therapists in the selection exercise.

18. USLW responded that service quality was a major factor of consideration in selecting service providers. Given that training programmes for speech therapists covered various specialties (e.g. SLI and swallowing disorders), speech therapists should be able to provide various treatment according to the circumstances of service users. PAS(SE) supplemented that applicants applying for SBST posts were required to provide proving document on their academic qualifications and relevant working experience. Applicants should also provide proving documents of their experience in rendering SBSTS in schools.

19. Noting that some NGOs had subcontracted speech therapy services to private speech therapy clinics/centres, the Chairman asked whether and how the Administration would monitor the deployment of resources by these NGOs. USLW responded that as the Pilot Schemes covered multi-disciplinary professional services, some NGOs might need to outsource certain services. While NGOs had the flexibility in resources deployment, the Administration would ensure that they satisfied the requirements under the Funding and Service Agreement.

*(With the consent of all members present, the Chairman extended the meeting for 15 minutes beyond the extended ending time.)*

20. Dr Fernando CHEUNG took the view that given that NGOs offered relatively low salary to speech therapists, they were unable to engage experienced speech therapists in providing the services under the Pilot Schemes. He called on the Administration to examine the existing service arrangements under the Pilot Schemes and include private speech therapy clinics/centres in the service provision. USLW reiterated that the Administration would keep in view the implementation of the Pilot Schemes and consider engaging private speech therapy clinics/centres in providing speech therapy services in future.

### **III. Any other business**

21. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 11:56 am.

Council Business Division 2  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
5 September 2019

**Panel on Welfare Services and Panel on Education**

**Joint meeting on Tuesday, 28 May 2019, at 9:30 am**

**Provision of speech therapy services for elderly persons,  
persons with disabilities and students with special needs**

**Summary of views and concerns expressed by deputations/individuals**

No.	Name of deputation / individual	Views
1.	Labour Party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Administration should aim to provide each school having students with speech and language impairment ("SLI") with a school-based speech therapist ("SBST") and increase the supply of speech therapists.</li> <li>• Schools should be allowed to opt for implementing school-based speech therapy services ("SBSTS") or procuring speech therapy services from the market.</li> <li>• The Administration should monitor the quality of speech therapy services provided for students and assist schools in monitoring such services.</li> </ul>
2.	The Civic Party	LC Paper No. CB(2)1571/18-19(01)
3.	Mr WU Chi-kin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Administration should continue to provide on-site pre-school speech therapy services for pre-primary school students in need until they proceeded to primary school.</li> <li>• The Administration should consider adopting the "money follows the users" approach and providing subsidies for parents to acquire speech therapy services for their children with SLI.</li> <li>• The Education Bureau should advise schools not to reject admission applications from students with special educational needs.</li> </ul>
4.	智障人士老齡化關注組	LC Paper No. CB(2)1571/18-19(02)
5.	Mr Harry HO Hei-yin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Administration should increase the provision of subsidized speech therapy services</li> </ul>

No.	Name of deputation / individual	Views
		<p>in order to reduce the waiting time for such services.</p>
6.	Mr KO Chin-pang	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In formulating policies on provision of speech therapy services, the Administration should study the cost effectiveness of engaging various organizations including social enterprises, non-governmental organizations ("NGOs") and private speech therapy clinics/centres in providing speech therapy services.</li> <li>● The Administration should not limit the invitation of proposals for providing speech therapy services under the Pilot Scheme on Multi-disciplinary Outreaching Support Teams for the Elderly and the Pilot Scheme on Professional Outreaching Team for Private Residential Care Homes for Persons with Disabilities ("the Pilot Schemes") to NGOs. Service contracts under the Pilot Schemes should be open for bidding by private speech therapy service clinics/centres.</li> <li>● The Administration should formulate policies to ensure that reasonable remunerations were offered to speech therapists by NGOs.</li> </ul>
7.	Miss POON Man-wai	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Administration should review its existing tendering policies for speech therapy services to ensure that service contracts would be awarded to the most qualified service providers.</li> <li>● The Administration should consult speech therapists in the private sector on how to take their previous relevant experience into account when determining their salary under SBSTS.</li> <li>● The Education Bureau should recognize SBSTS experience of speech therapists in the private sector in the employment of SBSTs.</li> </ul>
8.	Mr LEE Kam-shing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● NGOs had to outsource speech therapy services to the private sector after they had been awarded the service contract under the Pilot Schemes because they did not have multi-disciplinary professional teams.</li> <li>● The Administration should not exclude private speech therapy clinics/centres from bidding for speech therapy service contracts.</li> <li>● The Administration should consider adopting</li> </ul>

No.	Name of deputation / individual	Views
		the "money follows the users" approach and providing subsidies for parents to acquire speech therapy services for their children with special needs.
9.	Hong Kong Christian Service Chih Ai Parents' Association	LC Paper No. CB(2)1509/18-19(02)

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