

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)1188/18-19

(These minutes have been
seen by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/WS

Panel on Welfare Services

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 11 February 2019, at 10:45 am
in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex

Members present : Hon KWONG Chun-yu (Chairman)
Hon SHIU Ka-chun (Deputy Chairman)
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen
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 CHU Hoi-dick
Hon Wilson OR Chong-shing, MH
Dr Hon Pierre CHAN
Hon LUK Chung-hung, JP
Dr Hon CHENG Chung-tai

Members absent : Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, SBS, MH, JP
Hon YUNG Hoi-yan

Public Officers attending : Item III

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

Mr Desmond WU
Acting Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and
Welfare (Welfare) 3 / Assistant Secretary for
Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 3A
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Mr TAN Tick-yee
Assistant Director (Elderly)
Social Welfare Department

Ms WONG Yin-yee
Assistant Director (Licensing and Regulation)
Social Welfare Department

Ms Louise SO
Principal Education Officer (School Administration)
Education Bureau

Mrs LI HO Suk-wa
Principal Inspector (Special Education Support 1)
Education Bureau

Item IV

Dr LAW Chi-kwong, GBS, JP
Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Mr Gordon CHONG
Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare
(Welfare) 4
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Ms Michelle LAM
Assistant Director (Social Security)
Social Welfare Department

Mr Andrew KWAN
Senior Statistician (Social Welfare)
Social Welfare Department

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

Action

I. Information paper(s) issued since the last meeting
[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)743/18-19(01) and CB(2)759/18-19(01)]

Members noted that the following papers had been issued since the last meeting:

- (a) letter dated 30 January 2019 from Dr Fernando CHEUNG requesting the Panel to hold a joint meeting with the Panel on Education to discuss the Education Bureau ("EDB")'s tendering arrangements for provision of hearing aids as soon as possible (LC Paper No. CB(2)743/18-19(01)); and
- (b) letter dated 4 February 2019 from Mr SHIU Ka-chun requesting the Panel to discuss the review of special grants, supplements and maximum amount of disregarded earnings and the Support for Self-reliance Scheme ("SFS Scheme") under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ("CSSA") Scheme (LC Paper No. CB(2)759/18-19(01)).

II. Items for discussion at the next meeting
[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)743/18-19(02) to (03)]

2. Members agreed to discuss at the next meeting scheduled for 11 March 2019 the following items:

- (a) Special Needs Trust;

(b) Provision of relocation allowance for poor households; and

(c) Community Investment and Inclusion Fund ("CIIF").

(Post meeting note: On the instruction of the Chairman, relevant deputations would be invited to make oral representations to the Panel on CIIF at its next meeting scheduled for 11 March 2019.)

3. Members also agreed that a special meeting would be held in March or April 2019 to discuss and receive public views on "Review of Hong Kong's poverty situation and setting of a target for poverty elimination".

(Post meeting note: The special meeting was scheduled to be held on 2 April 2019 at 9:30 am.)

III. Policies on preventing abuse of elderly persons and of persons with intellectual disability

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)743/18-19(04) to (05)]

4. At the invitation of the Chairman, Under Secretary for Labour and Welfare ("USLW") briefed members on policies, measures and relevant support services on preventing abuse of elderly persons and persons with disabilities.

Legislation against abuse of elderly persons and persons with disabilities

5. Given that neglect and abandonment of elderly persons and persons with disabilities was not an offence under the Offences against the Person Ordinance (Cap. 212) ("the OAP Ordinance"), Dr Fernando CHEUNG urged the Administration to amend the Ordinance to make such acts criminal offences, so as to enhance the protection of these persons from abuse.

6. The Chairman, the Deputy Chairman and Dr KWOK Ka-ki expressed concern that existing legislation, such as the Crimes Ordinance (Cap. 200), the Theft Ordinance (Cap. 210) and the OAP Ordinance, might not be applicable to cases of abuse of elderly persons and persons with disabilities. The Deputy Chairman and Dr KWOK called on the Administration to make new law dedicated to preventing abuse of elderly persons and persons with disabilities as soon as possible.

7. USLW responded that the Administration attached great importance to the well-being of elderly persons and persons with disabilities and strived to protect them from abuse. To this end, the Administration had implemented a series of measures to strengthen the monitoring of residential care homes for the elderly ("RCHEs"), residential care homes for persons with disabilities ("RCHDs") and special schools. The Administration would keep in view the enforcement of relevant legislation and the implementation of preventive measures against abuse of elderly persons and persons with disabilities.

Monitoring of residential care homes

8. Mr POON Siu-ping said that in its report on Direct Investigation into Social Welfare Department's Monitoring of Services of Residential Care Homes for the Elderly published in December 2018, the Ombudsman had recommended the Social Welfare Department ("SWD") to, inter alia, step up inspections of RCHEs and strengthen enforcement actions against RCHEs with irregularities. In this connection, he enquired about how the Administration would take forward these recommendations. Mr Alvin YEUNG asked whether SWD had put in place a round-the-clock inspection mechanism for residential care homes ("RCHs") or conducted inspections of RCHs at night.

9. Assistant Director (Licensing and Regulation) ("AD(LR)") responded that in the past few years, the number of inspectors responsible for RCHE inspection and for RCHD inspection had been increased to more than 60 and 20 respectively. Under the enhanced mechanism, these inspectors had strategically conducted surprise inspections in the form of small teams or multi-disciplinary inspectorate teams during office hours and non-office hours as well as on public holidays.

10. Mr Alvin YEUNG further sought information on the number of advisory/warning letters issued to RCHs by SWD from 2016-2017 to 2018-2019 and the number of cases where SWD had taken actions against RCHs for their failure to comply with the requirements specified in the directions on remedial actions required by SWD.

11. USLW responded that SWD had issued 3 237, 2 557 and 1 776 advisory letters to RCHEs and 343, 390 and 238 advisory letters to RCHDs in 2016-2017, 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 (as at end-December) respectively. During the same years, the numbers of warning letters issued to RCHEs were 477, 141 and 74 respectively and those issued to RCHDs were 36, 16 and two respectively. SWD had taken prosecution

actions against the RCHs which were found to have areas of non-compliance, and in a number of these cases, the RCHs were convicted.

12. Both Mr Alvin YEUNG and Mr CHAN Chi-chuen expressed similar view that the number of advisory/warning letters issued by SWD should have been increased rather than reduced when more inspections were conducted by SWD. Mr YEUNG further sought the reasons for the reduction in the number of advisory/warning letters issued to RCHs in the past few years. Mr CHAN opined that the Administration might have reservation about taking stringent actions against substandard RCHEs because it would have difficulties in making alternative arrangements for affected residents if the RCHEs concerned were required to cease operation. In this connection, he urged the Administration to critically examine how to strengthen the enforcement mechanism against non-compliant RCHs, with a view to creating a greater deterrent effect.

13. USLW explained that the inspectorate teams of the Licensing Office of Residential Care Homes for the Elderly ("LORCHE") and the Licensing Office of Residential Care Homes for Persons with Disabilities ("LORCHD") of SWD conducted around 5 000 and 2 000 inspections to RCHEs and RCHDs respectively every year. In addition to taking sanction actions, the inspectorate teams provided advice and guidance, as necessary, to RCHs to assist them in rectifying the irregularities identified during inspections, thereby improving their service quality. As a result, the number of advisory/warning letters issued to RCHs had dropped in the past few years.

14. USLW further explained to members about the various measures to be implemented by the Administration to assist RCHs in enhancing their service quality, such as the five-year scheme to be launched by the Administration in the first quarter of 2019 to provide full subsidies for managers, health workers and care workers of all RCHEs and RCHDs to enroll in Qualifications Framework-based training courses. The Administration had further enhanced the transparency of the monitoring system of RCHEs and RCHDs by making available on SWD's website the warning records of non-compliant RCHEs and RCHDs since 1 April 2018.

15. AD(LR) supplemented that SWD had also rolled out a two-year Quality Improvement Project for RCHEs in November 2016 with a view to facilitating day-to-day operation and enhancing management quality of RCHEs. Under the Project, training programmes, which included classroom learning and on-site coaching sessions, were conducted by the Hong Kong Association of Gerontology for operators, managers and staff

of RCHEs.

16. The Deputy Chairman said that the Administration had invited him to join the Service Quality Group ("SQG") Scheme to conduct unannounced visits to RCHs but he had only been invited twice to join these visits in the past two years. In his view, the SQG Scheme would not serve its purpose if the frequency of visits to RCHs was low. In this connection, he enquired about the number of visits conducted by SQG in the past two years. Assistant Director (Elderly) ("AD(E)") responded that SQG conducted unannounced visits to RCHs on a regular basis and each visit was conducted by a small group of two to three members. At the Deputy Chairman's request, AD(E) undertook to revert to the Deputy Chairman on whether his term of office as an SQG member had already expired.

17. The Deputy Chairman further said that some RCH operators had reflected an opinion that some inspectors of LORCHE/LORCHD who were retired disciplined service officers were very rude to their staff during inspections. Moreover, he was concerned that some RCHs had abused the use of restrainers, such as safety vest, thereby imposing unnecessary physical restraint on some RCH residents. He hoped that the Administration would rectify these problems. USLW responded that the Administration would follow up accordingly.

Actions taken against abuse cases

18. Noting that LORCHE and LORCHD had received nine and 17 abuse cases involving RCHEs and RCHDs respectively in the past three years, Mr POON Siu-ping enquired about the follow-up actions taken by the Administration on these cases. AD(LR) responded that on receiving complaints regarding abuse of RCH residents, SWD would require the RCHs concerned to submit reports on the incidents, and inspectors of LORCHE/LORCHD would investigate into the cases by approaching the victims, their family members, staff of RCHs, etc. All abuse cases involving RCHs had been investigated and followed up seriously.

19. Noting that there were 569 elder abuse cases in 2018, Mr LUK Chung-hung called on the Administration to reinforce its criminal follow-up actions on these cases in order to achieve a higher deterrent effect. AD(LR) responded that when circumstances warranted, SWD would refer abuse cases in RCHs involving criminal offences to the Police. AD(E) supplemented that the 569 elder abuse cases included cases reported by SWD, the Police, the Hospital Authority,

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non-governmental organizations, etc. As the majority of these cases were received by the Police, the Police should have taken necessary actions, including criminal follow-up actions against these cases. At Mr LUK's request, the Administration undertook to check the availability of information on how many of these 569 cases had been reported to the Police and the nature of these cases, and revert as appropriate.

20. Mr LUK Chung-hung also noted that the number of cases involving embezzlement of property of elderly persons had increased from 66 in 2017 to 109 in 2018. He urged the Administration to implement policy to encourage elderly persons to make wills or enduring powers of attorney so as to minimize occurrence of such cases. USLW took note of Mr LUK's view and said that the Administration would step up public education and publicity to prevent abuse of elderly persons and raise the awareness of elderly persons about protecting themselves from abuse.

21. Referring to the five substantiated abuse cases which occurred in special schools involving teachers from 2009 to 2018, the Deputy Chairman enquired whether EDB had cancelled the registration of the teachers concerned. Principal Education Officer (School Administration) responded that of those five cases, one teacher was convicted of a serious offence and the registration of the teacher had been cancelled by EDB. For the remaining four teachers, EDB had issued warning letters to three of them and an advisory letter to one of them. The Deputy Chairman took the view that it might not achieve the desired deterrent effect if only warning/advisory letters were issued to these teachers.

Statistics on abuse cases

22. The Chairman and Dr KWOK Ka-ki opined that the number of abuse cases in RCHEs received by SWD were just the tip of the iceberg and the actual number of abuse cases should be significantly higher. They requested the Administration to provide more information on abuse cases. USLW responded that according to the Police, there were a total of 314 abuse cases in 2018, which included 186 cases of physical abuse, 90 cases of financial abuse, 37 cases of psychological abuse and one case of sexual abuse.

23. Dr Fernando CHEUNG said that he had compared the statistics on elder abuse cases captured by SWD with those captured by the Police, and found many discrepancies between them. He requested the Administration to sort out such discrepancies and include the number of prosecution and convicted cases involving abuse of elderly persons,

persons with intellectual disability and persons with mental illness in the relevant database.

24. AD(E) responded that the statistics on abuse cases captured by SWD were based on the number of victims while those captured by the Police were based on the number of convictions. As there might be more than one offence in an abuse case, the two sets of numbers would not be the same. USLW added that when collecting the case data, SWD and the Police adopted their own statistical definitions and bases according to their various operational needs and hence the statistics could not be compared directly.

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25. At Dr KWOK Ka-ki's request, USLW undertook to provide information on the number of abuse cases involving elderly persons and persons with intellectual disability on the following types of abuse: (i) physical; (ii) psychological; (iii) embezzlement of property; (iv) neglect; (v) abandonment; (vi) self-neglect; (vii) violation of individual rights; and (viii) abuse cases involving RCHs. Dr Fernando CHEUNG remarked that the Administration should include the relevant statistics in its papers to the Panel in future to facilitate members' discussion.

Implementation of licensing scheme for residential care homes for persons with disabilities

26. The Chairman recalled that the then Secretary for Labour and Welfare had undertaken that all RCHDs operating with certificate of exemptions ("CoEs") were required to meet the licensing requirements by end-2019. Given that many of these CoEs issued to RCHDs would expire in mid-2019, the Chairman asked whether the Administration would renew the CoEs for these RCHDs or require them to cease operations if they were unable to meet the licensing requirements by end of 2019.

27. USLW responded that as at end-January 2019, out of the 318 RCHDs, 142 had been issued with licences. The remaining 176 RCHDs were operating with CoEs and undergoing improvement works. Financial or technical assistance had been provided to these RCHDs to facilitate them to carry out their improvement works. According to the Administration's assessment, most of these RCHDs should be able to comply with the licensing requirements by end-2019. The Administration would monitor the progress and provide assistance to individual RCHDs, if necessary. The Chairman and the Deputy Chairman expressed concern on whether these RCHDs would be able to comply with the licensing requirements by end-2019 and requested the Administration to keep the

Panel abreast of the progress.

Motion

28. Dr Fernando CHEUNG moved the following motion:

"鑒於本港目前沒有專門法例保障長者及殘疾人士免受虐待，本委員會認為政府應就此訂定法例。在此之前，應先修訂《侵害人身罪條例》(第 212 章)，將疏忽照顧及遺棄長者及殘疾人士定為罪行。此外，社會福利署及警方應公開每年受虐的長者及殘疾人士的數字，包括報案、拘捕、檢控和定罪數字。"

(Translation)

"Given that there is currently no dedicated legislation in Hong Kong to protect elderly persons and persons with disabilities ("PWDs") from abuse, this Panel considers that the Government should formulate legislation in this regard. Before doing so, the Offences against the Person Ordinance (Cap. 212) should first be amended to make neglect and abandonment of elderly persons and PWDs an offence. In addition, the Social Welfare Department and the Police should publish the annual statistics on abuse cases involving elderly persons and PWDs, including the number of reported cases, arrests, prosecutions and convicted cases."

29. The Chairman put the motion to vote. All members present voted for the motion. The Chairman declared that the motion was carried.

IV. Review of supplements and special grants under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)743/18-19(06) to (07), CB(2)759/18-19(02) and CB(2)763/18-19(01) to (02)]

30. At the invitation of the Chairman, Secretary for Labour and Welfare ("SLW") briefed members on the payments under the CSSA Scheme, including supplements and special grants. SLW said that the preparatory work for a review of supplements and special grants ("the Review") had commenced in mid-2018. The Administration aimed to complete the Review by end-2019.

Provision of supplements and special grants for persons aged between 60 and 64

31. Dr KWOK Ka-ki was concerned that after raising the eligible age for elderly CSSA from 60 to 65 on 1 February 2019 ("the new policy"), CSSA recipients aged between 60 and 64 were no longer eligible for supplements and special grants payable to elderly CSSA recipients ("elderly supplements and special grants"). Dr KWOK, Mr KWOK Wai-keung and Mr LUK Chung-hung strongly urged the Administration to provide these CSSA recipients with elderly supplements and special grants.

32. SLW responded that the persons aged between 60 and 64 who had already been receiving elderly CSSA before 1 February 2019 would be "grandfathered" and would not be affected by the new policy. As regards persons aged between 60 and 64 who were able-bodied adults and had never received elderly CSSA before 1 February 2019, they were eligible for special grants applicable to able-bodied adults, such as water and sewage charge allowance. Given that some special grants, such as medical and rehabilitation grants, were only provided for CSSA recipients who were elderly, disabled or in ill-health to meet their specific needs, able-bodied adults, regardless of their age, were not entitled to these grants. SLW added that it was estimated that only around 30% of CSSA recipients aged between 60 and 64 were able-bodied adults and thus not eligible for special grants applicable to disabled persons or persons in ill-health.

33. SLW further explained that the Administration had to take into account previous considerations, new developments, etc. in considering changes to existing policies and go through the necessary procedures before taking forward policy changes. The Chairman and the Deputy Chairman took the view that the Administration, due to political pressure, had introduced the new Employment Support Supplement for CSSA recipients aged between 60 and 64 without going through such procedures. Similarly, the Administration could provide more supplements and special grants for CSSA recipients aged between 60 and 64 without waiting for the Review.

34. Mr Wilson OR noted that the Director of Social Welfare ("DSW") might exercise discretion in approving applications for special grants which did not meet the prescribed eligibility criteria, and requested the Administration to provide information on such cases to facilitate members' understanding of the basis on which DSW exercised such discretion.

Admin SLW undertook to provide the information after the meeting.

Review of supplements and special grants

35. The Chairman, Dr Fernando CHEUNG, Mr KWOK Wai-keung and Mr LUK Chung-hung expressed similar view that the provision of special grants, such as housing and related grants and dental grant, should not be restricted to elderly persons, persons with disabilities or persons in ill-health only, but should be payable to all CSSA recipients. Mr KWOK and Mr LUK called on the Administration to address this issue in the Review. Dr CHEUNG urged the Administration to resume the provision of various special grants for able-bodied adult CSSA recipients, which had been suspended since 1999, before findings of the Review were available.

36. The Deputy Chairman said that at its meeting of 16 January 2019, the Council passed a motion urging the Administration to, inter alia, review the CSSA Scheme and conduct a study on basic and essential needs to re-determine the CSSA rates. He expressed disappointment about the Administration's refusal to conduct the review and the study. The Deputy Chairman also considered that various supplements should be provided for low-income earners, unemployed persons, needy family carers, children and single-parents before findings of the Review were available.

37. SLW explained that the Review would not target at specific groups of CSSA recipients and would cover the supplements and special grants under the CSSA Scheme. In response to Dr KWOK Ka-ki's enquiry about the timetable for making adjustments to the supplements and special grants after the Review, SLW said that relevant adjustments were expected to take effect in the 2020-2021 financial year at the earliest.

38. The Deputy Chairman further said that the Administration should provide the latest information on the Review, including its scope, progress and implementation schedule, in its paper. Stressing the importance of civic engagement, he asked whether the Administration would consider setting up a working group and engaging stakeholders in conducting the Review. SLW responded that the Administration had been receiving views on the CSSA Scheme from various stakeholders. The Administration would take into account these views in examining the components of supplements and special grants.

Subsidies provided for recipients of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance by the Community Care Fund

39. Mr LUK Chung-hung said that various assistance programmes were implemented under the Community Care Fund ("CCF") to provide subsidies for CSSA recipients. The programme entitled "Subsidy for CSSA Recipients Living in Rented Private Housing" ("the Programme"), which was relaunched in November 2017, was an example of these programmes. In his view, subsidies for CSSA recipients should be provided under the CSSA Scheme and CCF should be used to provide assistance for other needy groups.

40. SLW responded that CCF was established to provide assistance to people facing financial difficulties, in particular those who fell outside the social safety net or those within the safety net but still had special needs that had not yet been addressed. In addition, CCF would consider introducing programmes on a pilot basis to help the Government identify measures that could be considered for incorporation into its regular assistance and service programmes. For example, the implementation of the Programme would serve as the basis of a model for its possible regularization in future.

41. In response to Mr POON Siu-ping's enquiry about the total amount of subsidies disbursed by CCF in assisting CSSA recipients, SLW said that the Administration did not have the required information at hand.

Rent allowance and subsidy

42. While hoping that the Programme would be regularized as early as practicable, Mr POON Siu-ping was concerned that the provision of subsidies to CSSA households living in rented private housing might trigger an increase in the rental level in private housing. As a result, the recipients of these subsidies might not be able to benefit from the assistance in the end.

43. SLW responded that under the Programme, the maximum level of subsidy for one-person households was around \$3,300 per year, whereas that for two-or-more-person households was around \$6,650 to \$11,600 per year, depending on the number of household members. As the subsidy under the Programme did not fully cover the amount of rent which exceeded the maximum rent allowance ("MRA") under the CSSA Scheme, it should not incentivize landlords to increase rent. Nevertheless, the Administration would analyse the data collected during the

implementation of the Programme when considering its regularization in future.

44. Mr Wilson OR expressed concern that MRA could only cover the actual rent paid by 40% of CSSA households living in rented private housing. He called on the Administration to critically review MRA and enquired about the considerations in adjusting the amount of MRA.

45. SLW responded that the annual adjustment of MRA was based on movement of private housing rent borne by households in the lower expenditure group ("rent index"). As the mode of accommodation of grass-root households had progressively changed from bedspace apartments to cubicle apartments, and then to sub-divided flats in the past two decades, the rent index could not reflect the increase in rental expenses faced by these households. The Administration would take this factor into account in the Review with a view to narrowing the gap between the rent allowance and the actual rent paid by CSSA households living in private rental housing.

(At 12:35 pm, the Chairman extended the meeting for 15 minutes beyond the appointed ending time to allow sufficient time for discussion.)

Employment support for persons aged above 60

46. Mr KWOK Wai-keung expressed concern that Employment Programme for the Elderly and Middle-aged ("EPEM") was ineffective in facilitating persons aged 60 or above to seek employment. Sharing a similar concern, Mr Alvin YEUNG sought information on the numbers of employers participating in and job seekers benefited from EPEM since its implementation on 1 September 2018.

47. SLW responded that EPEM aimed to encourage employers to engage unemployed job seekers aged 40 or above in permanent full-time or part-time jobs. Employers participating in EPEM would be provided with training allowance for offering on-the-job training to their middle-aged and elderly employees. The Administration planned to enhance the coordination among SWD, the Labour Department ("LD") and the Employees Retraining Board to better support the employment of able-bodied adult CSSA recipients. Regarding the statistics on EPEM, SLW said that the Administration had provided members with the position of EPEM up to December 2018 at the Panel meeting on 28 January 2019 and updated information on EPEM was not yet available.

48. Expressing concern that some employers, particularly those of small or medium enterprises, might not be aware of EPEM, Mr Alvin YEUNG urged the Administration to step up publicity for EPEM. SLW responded that LD would proactively approach employers who had placed job vacancies with LD and those who had hired middle-aged or elderly job seekers through LD's employment services to encourage them to participate in EPEM. In response to Mr Alvin YEUNG's enquiry about the number of employers who were aware of EPEM, SLW said that the Administration did not have such information.

49. The Deputy Chairman said that according to some media reports, the implementation of the new policy, which was scheduled for 1 February 2019, had been deferred for two weeks. He asked whether it was the case and if so, the reasons for the deferral. He also enquired whether the Administration would revise the undertaking form of the Integrated Employment Assistance Programme for Self-reliance ("IEAPS") under the SFS Scheme having regard to the comments made by members.

50. SLW responded that the new policy had been implemented on 1 February 2019 as scheduled. To allow the Administration sufficient time for briefing operators of IEAPS on its new arrangements, the date for inviting able-bodied recipients aged between 60 and 64 who were unemployed, or with monthly earnings or working hours less than the prescribed levels set by SWD, to participate in IEAPS had been postponed. Assistant Director (Social Security) supplemented that new guidelines would be drawn up for the operators concerned and the undertaking form of IEAPS would be revised to facilitate the implementation of the new arrangements. At the Deputy Chairman's request, SLW undertook to provide the Panel with a copy of the updated undertaking form of IEAPS.

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Statistics on applications for Comprehensive Social Security Assistance from persons who had resided in Hong Kong for less than seven years

51. Dr CHENG Chung-tai said that according to the Administration, there were a total of around 22 000 CSSA applications from persons who had resided in Hong Kong for less than seven years ("new arrivals") in the past five years, which accounted for more than 10% of the total number of CSSA applications. In his view, the figure had indicated that many new arrivals were in need of assistance.

52. SLW responded that in addition to new arrival families, these applications might be lodged by existing CSSA households due to the joining of new members who were new arrivals. At Dr CHENG's request,

Admin SLW undertook to provide information on the number of CSSA households with members who were new arrivals and the number of non-CSSA households which had applied for CSSA due to addition of members who were new arrivals from 2013-2014 to 2017-2018.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response to members' request for information as mentioned in paragraphs 50 and 52 above had been issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)1133/18-19(01) on 29 March 2019.)

Motions

53. The Deputy Chairman moved the following motion:

"本委員會促請有關當局重訂部分補助金及特別津貼的資格和水平，以解綜合社會保障援助("綜援")受助人燃眉之急：

- (a) 恢復一般成人及兒童受助人的資格，讓他們可領取長期個案補助金，協助更新耐用品或應付其他必要的生活開支；
- (b) 將一般成人及兒童受助人與其他殘疾人士及長者受助人看齊，可按需要領取特別津貼，包括：(一)健康相關的津貼，如眼鏡、牙科等特別津貼；(二)房屋相關津貼，如搬遷、租金按金、水電煤按金津貼等；及(三)就業相關津貼，如每月電話費津貼；以及
- (c) 政府應透過每月補助金，增加兒童、單親人士、照顧家庭人士及失業/低收入等受助人的補助金。"

(Translation)

"In order to meet the urgent needs of the recipients of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ("CSSA"), this Panel urges that the eligibility criteria for and the levels of some of the supplements and special grants should be revised by:

- (a) reinstating the eligibility of able-bodied adult and children recipients for long-term supplement, so as to enable them to replace durable goods and meet other necessary living expenses;

- (b) allowing able-bodied adult and children recipients to receive special grants as needed, which is on par with the provision for persons with disabilities and elderly persons on CSSA, including (i) health-related grants such as special grants to cover costs of glasses, dental treatment, etc.; (ii) housing-related grants such as grants for domestic removal, rent deposit, and water, electricity and gas deposits; and (iii) employment-related grants such as grant to cover monthly telephone charges; and
- (c) increasing supplements for children, single parents, family carers and the unemployed/low-income earners on CSSA through the provision of a monthly supplement to them."

54. The Chairman put the motion to vote. All members present voted for the motion. The Chairman declared that the motion was carried.

55. Dr Fernando CHEUNG moved the following motion:

"鑒於綜合社會保障援助("綜援")制度下的特別津貼皆針對基本需要(包括租金按金津貼、水、電、煤氣/石油氣按金津貼、搬遷津貼、眼鏡費津貼、牙科治療津貼、電話安裝費津貼、每月電話費津貼、更換家居電線費用津貼及長期個案補助金等), 而且是有上限按需要地發放, 本委員會促請政府無須檢討, 立即恢復發放該等津貼予健全成人/兒童受助人。政府應立即檢討綜援租金津貼釐定機制, 將超租的貧窮住戶(租住私人物業者)的比例大幅下降至一成以內。此外, 政府亦應進行基本生活需要研究, 重訂綜援標準金額。"

(Translation)

"Given that special grants under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ("CSSA") system (including grant for rent deposit, grant for water, electricity and gas/LPG deposits, domestic removal grant, grant to cover costs of glasses, grant to cover costs of dental treatment, grant to cover telephone installation fees, grant to cover monthly telephone charges, grant for renewal of electrical fittings and long-term supplement, etc.) are all aimed at covering the basic needs, which are capped at certain amounts and paid on a need basis, this Panel urges the Government to, without the need of conducting any reviews, immediately reinstate the payment of these grants to able-bodied adults/children recipients. The Government should

immediately review the mechanism for determining the rent allowance under the CSSA Scheme, so as to substantially reduce the ratio of poor households (living in rented private housing) paying a rent exceeding the rent allowance to a level of 10% or below. Moreover, the Government should also conduct a study on the basic needs and re-determine the CSSA standard rates."

56. The Chairman put the motion to vote. All members present voted for the motion. The Chairman declared that the motion was carried.

V. Any other business

57. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:48 pm.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
10 April 2019