

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

LC Paper No. CB(2)632/19-20

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**Panel on Welfare Services**

**Minutes of meeting**  
**held on Friday, 1 November 2019, at 8:30 am,**  
**in Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex**

**Members present** : Hon KWONG Chun-yu (Chairman)  
Hon SHIU Ka-chun (Deputy Chairman)  
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung  
Prof Hon Joseph LEE Kok-long, SBS, 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  
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH  
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

**Member absent** : Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung

**Member attending** : Hon YIU Si-wing, BBS

**Public Officers : Labour and Welfare Bureau  
attending**

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

Ms CHANG King-yiu, JP  
Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Mr Andrew TSANG  
Acting Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare  
(Welfare) 1/Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour  
and Welfare (Welfare) 1

Mr Johann WONG, JP  
Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 2

Mr David LEUNG, JP  
Commissioner for Rehabilitation

Mr Gordon LEUNG, JP  
Director of Social Welfare

Miss Cecilla LI, JP  
Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Administration)

Mr LAM Ka-tai, JP  
Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Services)

Mr Donald NG, JP  
Head, Working Family and Student Financial  
Assistance Agency

Home Affairs Bureau

Mr Jack CHAN, JP  
Under Secretary for Home Affairs

Ms Carmen KONG  
Principal Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs (Civic  
Affairs) 2

Mr Matthew CHUI

Acting Principal Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs  
(Civil Affairs) 3

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

**Staff in attendance** : Mr Roger CHUNG  
Council Secretary (2) 4

Miss Alison HUI  
Legislative Assistant (2) 4

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Action

**I. Briefing by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare and the Secretary for Home Affairs on the Chief Executive's 2019 Policy Address**

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)62/19-20(01) to (02), CB(2)130/19-20(01) to (02), The Chief Executive's 2019 Policy Address and The Chief Executive's 2019 Policy Address Supplement]

At the invitation of the Chairman, Secretary for Labour and Welfare ("SLW") and Under Secretary for Home Affairs briefed members on the major initiatives of the Labour and Welfare Bureau ("LWB") and the Home Affairs Bureau respectively, as set out in the 2019 Policy Address and the Administration's papers (LC Paper Nos. CB(2)62/19-20(01) to (02)).

Impact of recent social incidents

*Support for social workers and young people*

2. Referring to an incident in which a social worker was injured when providing assistance to an elderly person at a protest scene, the Chairman, Dr KWOK Ka-ki and Dr CHENG Chung-tai expressed concern that the support provided by the Administration for social workers in discharging their duties at protest scenes was inadequate. The Deputy Chairman and Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung pointed out that social workers should not be arrested or injured by the Police while they were performing duties at protest scenes.

3. Dr CHENG Chung-tai was worried that some social workers might

lose their jobs if they were arrested while providing support to people in need at protest scenes. Dr CHENG also opined that social workers had not been provided with adequate training for handling cases involving young people and families affected by recent social incidents.

4. SLW responded that social workers should follow the Code of Practice for Registered Social Workers and give due consideration to both their own personal safety and the safety of their service users while performing duties at protest scenes. In addition, social workers should, when necessary, advise their service users not to participate in violent activities. In response to the Chairman's enquiry about the Administration's stance towards the injury of a social worker while providing assistance for an elderly person at a protest scene, SLW stressed that the Administration would not tolerate any violence.

5. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung expressed concern that many young people were in need of emotional support as a result of family contention arising from recent social incidents. Mr LEUNG, Dr KWOK Ka-ki and Mr Wilson OR enquired whether the Administration had provided adequate support to cater for the needs of these young people.

6. SLW explained that the Social Welfare Department ("SWD") would consider allocating resources, where appropriate, to implement service initiatives proposed by non-governmental organizations ("NGOs") to meet the needs of young people and/or their families. In addition, SWD had invited NGOs to, where feasible, advance the implementation of the measure of "two school social workers for each school" in secondary schools before the commencement of the 2019-2020 school year, so as to provide counselling services for needy students. The Labour Department ("LD") would also promote the employment of young people through the provision of a retention allowance on a pilot basis under the Youth Employment and Training Programme.

7. In response to the Deputy Chairman's enquiry concerning the output standards as stipulated in the Funding and Service Agreements ("FSAs") signed between NGOs operating youth and family services and SWD, SLW advised that, in view of recent social incidents, if NGOs were unable to attain the output standards as stipulated in FSAs, SWD would handle such cases with discretion, so as to allow flexibility for NGOs to deploy manpower for the provision of appropriate services to affected young people and families.

8. The Deputy Chairman asked whether NGOs would be required to

report to SWD the personal information of service users who had received support services during recent social incidents. SLW replied in the negative, and explained that in general, NGOs would only be required to submit statistics on the services they had delivered. Meanwhile, service users might choose not to disclose their personal information when receiving support services.

*Studying root causes of recent social incidents and formulating corresponding welfare measures*

9. Dr CHENG Chung-tai remarked that a large number of young people living in Tin Shui Wai were arrested during recent social incidents. In his view, there were various social problems in Tin Shui Wai which had resulted from poor community planning in Hong Kong. He opined that the Administration should conduct a study on the root cause of recent social incidents. SLW advised that the Administration had invited community leaders, professionals and academics to independently examine and review society's deep-seated problems and to find solutions to these problems.

10. Mr LUK Chung-hung considered that long-standing social injustice, including the disparity between the rich and the poor and long working hours, had aroused public discontent and led to recent social incidents. He urged the Administration to introduce more measures to safeguard social justice and encourage the private sector to engage in the promotion of labour rights. He further enquired whether the Administration would conduct public consultation exercises on issues such as universal retirement protection, standard working hours and the numbers of statutory holidays and public holidays in Hong Kong.

11. Mr Wilson OR called on the Administration to identify the various problems in society having regard to recent social incidents, and formulate effective measures to address such problems. He further opined that the welfare initiatives in the 2019 Policy Address were far from adequate in helping the needy.

12. SLW responded that labour issues would be further discussed at meetings of the Panel on Manpower. As regards the welfare initiatives in the 2019 Policy Address, SLW said that the Administration had proposed various enhancement measures, such as the enhancement to the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ("CSSA") Scheme and the Working Family Allowance Scheme, with a view to strengthening support for the needy.

13. Noting that the Financial Secretary ("FS") had announced in August 2019 a series of measures to support enterprises, safeguard jobs and relieve people's financial burden, Mr CHU Hoi-dick held the view that FS had not proposed any new measures to address the difficulties faced by the needy. He was also concerned that many people, such as members of the tourism industry, were underemployed and unemployed due to recent social incidents. He urged the Administration to introduce targeted measures to provide immediate support to these people.

14. SLW advised that it would take time to consult the Panels and seek funding approval from the Finance Committee ("FC") when introducing new long-term measures. As such, the Administration had introduced various short-term targeted measures to relieve people's financial burden, so that they could receive financial assistance as early as possible. For example, the Administration had proposed to provide a one-off extra allowance to recipients of social security payments since the payments could be disbursed about a month after FC's approval of the proposal.

15. Mr YIU Si-wing expressed concern that there was a significant decrease in the number of visitor arrivals to Hong Kong in recent months and the livelihood of members of the tourism industry had been adversely affected. He suggested that the Administration should provide additional resources for NGOs to collaborate with travel agents to arrange local tours for the underprivileged groups, with a view to assisting the tourism industry. He also suggested that the Administration should consider implementing a one-year pilot scheme to provide a service voucher for the underprivileged groups to participate in such local tours.

16. SLW responded that various community service centres/units, e.g. District Elderly Community Centres ("DECCs"), Neighbourhood Elderly Centres ("NECs") and rehabilitation service units, had all along collaborated with travel agents to arrange local tours for elderly persons and underprivileged groups. The Administration was willing to explore with the aforementioned service units the feasibility of arranging more similar activities. However, any such increase in the number of local tours arranged for elderly persons and underprivileged groups could not compensate for the recent decrease in the number of visitor arrivals to Hong Kong.

## Support for children and families

### *Strengthening After School Care Programme*

17. Mr POON Siu-ping enquired how the additional 2 500 full fee-waiving places under the After School Care Programme ("ASCP") were determined by the Administration, and the geographical distribution of such additional fee-waiving places. He also sought information on the progress of the relevant preparatory work.

18. The Deputy Chairman was concerned that students with special educational needs might have difficulties in using the services of ASCP, and enquired about the details of the provision of extra subsidy for students with special educational needs under ASCP. Taking the view that the provision of ASCP places was inadequate, the Deputy Chairman asked whether the Administration would take measures to address the keen demand for ASCP places.

19. SLW explained that ASCP was operated by NGOs to provide support services and suitable care for children aged from six to 12 in the 18 districts. Under the Fee-waiving Subsidy Scheme ("FWSS"), SWD provided fee reduction for children from needy low-income families. To strengthen support for low-income families, the Community Care Fund ("CCF") launched a three-year "Pilot Scheme on Relaxing the Household Income Limit of the Fee-waiving Subsidy Scheme under the After School Care Programme for Low-income Families and Increasing Fee-waiving Subsidy Places" in October 2017.

20. SLW further explained that the Administration had proposed to regularize the pilot scheme under CCF and implement a number of enhancement measures on FWSS, including addition of fee-waiving places and provision of extra subsidy for students with special educational needs. However, the provision of additional fee-waiving places would be subject to the availability of manpower and facilities of NGOs for provision of services under ASCP. Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Services) ("DDSW(S)") supplemented that the details of the provision of extra subsidy for students with special educational needs would be announced in the coming Budget.

### *Enhancing child care centre service*

21. In the light of the keen demand for child care centre ("CCC") service in various districts, Mr Wilson OR enquired about the details of

the Administration's plan in purchasing premises for provision of CCC places for children aged below three. SLW responded that the Administration was seeking funding approval from FC for purchasing premises for provision of welfare facilities. The Administration had included the provision of at least one additional CCC in each district, with a view to setting up a total of over 20 CCCs in the premises acquired through the purchase exercise.

### *Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project*

22. Noting from the 2018 Policy Address that the Administration would enhance the service quality of the Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project by strengthening the training of home-based child carers, the Deputy Chairman enquired about the progress of this matter. DDSW(S) advised that, commencing in January 2020, additional provision would be allocated to NGOs to increase the number of professional and supporting staff to provide training for home-based child carers and to monitor home-based child carers' performance.

Admin 23. At the Deputy Chairman's request, SLW undertook to provide information on how to strengthen the training for home-based child carers under the Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project, the number of home-based child carers who had received the training and the effectiveness of the training.

*(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)447/19-20(01) on 23 December 2019.)*

### *Advocacy for cherishing the family*

24. Mr POON Siu-ping held the view that the Administration should be playing an active role in promoting wider adoption of family-friendly employment policies and practices in the community. He also enquired whether the Administration would take forward the proposal to legislate for standard working hours. SLW responded that issues relating to standard working hours would be discussed by the Panel on Manpower.

### Care for elderly persons and persons with disabilities

#### *Promoting Gerontechnology*

25. In response to Mr POON Siu-ping's enquiry about the number of



applications received under the Innovation and Technology Fund for Application in Elderly and Rehabilitation Care, SLW advised that over 210 elderly and rehabilitation service units had received subsidies under the first tranche of the Fund to purchase or rent over 870 technology products. For the second tranche, the Fund received applications from 650 service units, covering more than 2 300 technology products.

*Navigation Scheme for Young Persons in Care Services*

26. Mr POON Siu-ping enquired about the effectiveness of the Navigation Scheme for Young Persons in Care Services ("Navigation Scheme"), including the number of trainees who continued to work in the elderly or rehabilitation care services sector upon completion of the training programmes under the Navigation Scheme.

27. DDSW(S) advised that as at August 2019, a total of 1 140 trainees were recruited under the Navigation Scheme. Among them, 330 trainees had graduated and 355 trainees were still participating in the Navigation Scheme. Based on the information provided by the trainees upon graduation, 193 graduates continued to work in the elderly or rehabilitation care services sector. SLW added that SWD would enhance the Navigation Scheme through reducing the weekly working hours of the trainees and raising their salaries in order to attract more young people to join the elderly or rehabilitation care services sector.

*Support measures for persons aged between 60 and 64*

28. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung and Mr Wilson OR shared similar views that the Administration had not provided adequate support for persons aged between 60 and 64. They considered that the Administration should enhance the provision of employment support services and community services for persons aged between 60 and 64.

29. SLW advised that over 200 DECCs and NECs in the territory provided a range of community services for elderly persons aged 60 or above. The Leisure and Cultural Services Department also provided community recreation activities for them. Besides, LD would launch a pilot scheme to encourage elderly persons aged 60 or above to undergo and complete on-the-job training ("OJT") under the Employment Programme for the Elderly and Middle-aged through the provision of a retention allowance. Subject to the length of the OJT period, the maximum amount of retention allowance that a full-time employee might receive was \$12,000. At Mr Wilson OR's request, SLW undertook to

provide information on the effectiveness of support measures provided by the Administration for persons aged between 60 and 64 in 2019.

*(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)447/19-20(01) on 23 December 2019.)*

30. Mr Wilson OR called on the Administration to introduce a "silver age card" scheme for persons aged between 60 and 64 and offer them public transport fare concessions and other benefits, such as free basic physical examination, under the scheme. The Chairman urged the Administration to review the Senior Citizen Card Scheme. He suggested that the Administration should extend the Scheme to cover persons aged between 60 and 64, and liaise with the private sector on the provision of new concessions to eligible persons under the Scheme.

31. SLW advised that SWD had all along been encouraging the private sector to provide concessions for eligible persons under the Senior Citizen Card Scheme. The Administration was prepared to listen to the views of stakeholders on ways to further promote the Scheme, and take follow-up actions as appropriate.

#### *Community care services*

32. Referring to the provision of an additional 1 000 vouchers under the Pilot Scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly, Mr LEUNG Che-cheung asked whether training would be provided to better prepare frontline care workers to cope with the additional workload arising from the additional vouchers. SLW responded that service providers would train up newly recruited staff to cope with the additional workload.

33. The Deputy Chairman opined that the additional service quota provided under the Integrated Home Care Services (Frail Cases) and the Enhanced Home and Community Care Services were insufficient to meet the service needs of elderly persons. He enquired when the Administration would achieve the target of zero waiting time for home and community care services for elderly persons.

34. SLW advised that the elderly care services sector had experienced manpower shortage problem for a long time, which was the major issue for an increase in service provision. SLW further advised that the vacancy rates of personal care workers and home helpers in elderly

services were both around 19%. SWD had since 2018 provided additional resources for subsidized elderly service units to increase the salaries of personal care workers and home helpers. The Administration would closely monitor the manpower shortage situation in the elderly care services sector.

Admin 35. At the Deputy Chairman's request, SLW undertook to provide information on the distribution of the additional 2 000 service quota provided in 2019, among the 34 service teams under the Enhanced Home and Community Care Services.

*(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)447/19-20(01) on 23 December 2019.)*

*Transportation needs of persons with disabilities*

36. The Chairman considered that the cost of taxi-hailing service was too expensive for persons with disabilities, and that the proposed enhancement to the service capacity of Rehabus was far from adequate in meeting the demand of persons with disabilities. The Chairman asked how the Administration would address their transportation needs.

37. SLW advised that the Administration planned to provide an additional 20 Rehabuses in the 2020-2021 financial year to meet the rising demand of Rehabus service. In addition, the special transport services for persons with disabilities, including the positioning of Rehabus service and interface between accessible public transport system and Rehabus service, would be covered in the formulation of a new Hong Kong Rehabilitation Programme Plan.

*Support for carers of elderly persons and of persons with disabilities*

38. The Chairman expressed concern that a carer being a recipient of CSSA or Disability Allowance would not be eligible to apply for the living allowances for carers of elderly persons and of persons with disabilities. He called on the Administration to provide carers who accompanied elderly persons and persons with disabilities to receive medical consultation with transport subsidies.

39. SLW advised that CCF had launched the Pilot Scheme on Living Allowance for Carers of Elderly Persons from Low-income Families and the Pilot Scheme on Living Allowance for the Low-income Carers of

Persons with Disabilities. LWB would conduct a study on carer policy, which would cover issues such as training for carers, support services for carers and the relationship between these support services and other community care services. The study on carer policy was expected to be completed in 2021.

#### Poverty alleviation and social security

##### *One-off Living Subsidy for Low-income Households Not Living in Public Housing and Not Receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance*

40. The Chairman and Mr Andrew WAN enquired about the implementation details of the One-off Living Subsidy for Low-income Households Not Living in Public Housing and Not Receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Programme (2020) ("the 2020 Programme"). The Chairman also asked whether the Administration would regularize the 2020 Programme.

41. SLW responded that in August 2019, the Administration announced various relief measures, including the launch of the 2020 Programme through CCF. The first round of the 2020 Programme was expected to be launched in July 2020 by phases. It was expected that the first round of the subsidy would be disbursed in about a month after the vetting and approval of applications. In addition, the Administration would conduct a study in 2020 regarding the provision of cash allowance for low-income households not living in public housing and not receiving CSSA ("the Study"). SLW added that the Panel on Home Affairs would discuss CCF, which would cover the details of the 2020 Programme.

42. Mr Andrew WAN and Mr Michael TIEN expressed concern that since the Administration did not re-introduce tenancy control, the provision of subsidy under the 2020 Programme and the increase in the maximum rates of rent allowance ("MRA") under the CSSA Scheme might trigger an increase in rental level in private housing. As a result, low-income households might not be able to benefit from the rental assistance in the end.

43. Mr Michael TIEN suggested that the Administration should address the issue of high rental faced by low-income households through inter-departmental collaboration. He further suggested that the Administration should consider implementing partial tenancy control and vacancy tax on second-hand flats in parallel to prevent the possible increase in the rental level in private housing.

44. SLW responded that when the Administration conducted the Study, he would collaborate with the Transport and Housing Bureau to explore the feasibility of introducing tenancy control. As the mode of accommodation of grass-root households had changed in the past two decades, MRA under the CSSA Scheme could only cover the actual rent paid by around 40% of CSSA households living in rented private housing. In order to relieve the financial burden of these CSSA households, the Administration would increase MRA from about 3% to 27% with reference to the number of members in the household. Nevertheless, the Administration would be cautious in adjusting MRA as it might trigger a rental hike at the lower end of the private rental housing.

*(At 10:27 am, the Chairman extended the meeting for 10 minutes beyond the appointed ending time to allow sufficient time for discussion.)*

#### *Old Age Living Allowance*

45. Regarding Mr Andrew WAN's suggestion to relax the asset limits for the Old Age Living Allowance ("OALA"), SLW advised that the asset limits for OALA had been relaxed in 2017 and the total number of Higher OALA recipients was about 500 000 as at end-September 2019. Furthermore, elderly persons could turn part of their savings into fixed annuity income under the HKMC Annuity Plan, so that they could keep their savings below the asset limits for OALA.

#### *Supplements under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme*

46. The Chairman was of the view that the Administration should provide unemployed CSSA recipients aged under 60 with the Employment Support Supplement. SLW responded that the Administration had introduced the Employment Support Supplement especially for able-bodied CSSA adult recipients aged 60 to 64 to offer better employment support.

#### Provision of social welfare services for tenants of new public rental housing estates and sub-divided units

47. Noting that the duration of funding for the community support programmes for new public rental housing ("PRH") estates would be N+36 months (in which "N" represented the time required for resident-intake of the new PRH estates concerned and "36 months"

represented the maximum duration of approval) under the Community Investment and Inclusion Fund, the Chairman took the view that such duration was too short. He called on the Administration to extend the maximum duration of approval to beyond 36 months and provide dedicated offices in new PRH estates for social worker teams.

48. SLW responded that the Administration would explore with relevant government departments the feasibility of identifying temporary premises for social worker teams to use as temporary offices during the funding period. Besides, the Administration would keep in view the development of the community support programmes and consider reviewing the duration of funding after the programmes had been implemented for a period of time.

49. In response to the Chairman's suggestion to set up social worker teams to provide services to tenants of sub-divided units, SLW advised that community centres would provide services to meet the needs of tenants of sub-divided units in a flexible manner. Given that the Assistance Programme to Improve the Living Environment of Low-Income Subdivided Unit Households would be launched under CCF in the second quarter of 2020, NGOs would refer tenants of sub-divided units to apply for the services under the Assistance Programme where necessary.

#### Training on cultural sensitivity within the civil service

Admin

50. At the Deputy Chairman's request, SLW undertook to check the availability of information on how to strengthen the training on cultural sensitivity within the civil service, the implementation details and effectiveness of the training, and revert as appropriate.

## **II. Any other business**

51. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10:35 am.