

立法會 *Legislative Council*

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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 2022 session of the Legislative Council (“LegCo”). It will be tabled at the Council meeting of 14 December 2022 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, 2 July 2008 and 26 October 2022 for the purpose of monitoring and examining Government policies and issues of public concern relating to welfare, rehabilitation services, poverty and social enterprise. The terms of reference of the Panel are in **Appendix 1**.

3. The Panel comprises 19 members, with Hon CHAN Han-pan and Hon TANG Ka-piu elected as its Chairman and Deputy Chairman respectively. The membership list of the Panel is in **Appendix 2**.

Major Work

Anti-epidemic work at residential care homes

4. The high mortality rate among the elderly population during the fifth wave of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (“COVID-19”) epidemic and the anti-epidemic work in residential care homes for the elderly and residential care homes for persons with disabilities (hereinafter collectively referred to as “RCHs”) received serious attention by the Panel. The Administration briefed the Panel in

two separate meetings in April and October 2022 regarding the latest initiatives to assist and support RCHs in handling the COVID-19 epidemic. Separately, the Panel passed a motion at its meeting on 4 April 2022 urging the Administration to enhance the capabilities of RCHs in fighting against the epidemic and formulate strategies to prevent RCHs from becoming the worst hit again in the event of another epidemic outbreak.

Enhancing ventilation and infection control

5. Deeply saddened that during the fifth wave of the COVID-19 epidemic, over 50 per cent of the fatal cases were from RCHs, members urged the Administration to enhance the epidemic prevention capability of RCHs. Measures put forward by members included providing RCHs with adequate personal protective equipment and disinfection products; using the ventilation system developed by the City University of Hong Kong; providing each resident's room with air purifiers; adopting indoor air quality management practices in RCHs; requiring RCH staff to wear KN95 face masks and increase the frequency of conducting rapid antigen tests from once a day to thrice a day; and using technologies for meal delivery and temperature checking. There was a suggestion that the Administration should set up an independent working group to conduct an in-depth review on the infection prevention measures for RCHs. The Administration took note of members' suggestions and explained that according to RCHs, they had a sufficient supply of anti-epidemic items. Nevertheless, members were welcomed to refer RCHs' requests for additional supplies to the Administration for follow up.

Increasing vaccination uptake

6. As vaccination was pivotal to reducing severe cases and deaths, members urged the Administration to boost the vaccine uptake in RCHs and suggested that small or medium-sized medical organizations and health institutions should also be engaged in the administration of vaccines for elderly RCH residents who were suitable for vaccination. In taking forward its work in this respect, the Administration was requested to formulate measures and a timetable to achieve comprehensive vaccination coverage for all elderly RCH residents. The Administration advised that it had arranged visiting medical officers and outreach medical practitioners to explain to elderly RCH residents and their families the importance of vaccination and had also increased the number of outreach vaccination teams to administer vaccination for elderly RCH residents.

Application of Chinese medicine

7. Members were concerned that many RCHs, particularly the private ones, had reservations about providing infected residents with anti-epidemic proprietary Chinese medicine due to insufficient professional guidance and support provided by the Administration. They called on the Administration to provide Chinese

medicine services for mega-size RCHs and to regularize the provision of Chinese medicine practitioner service to RCHs. The Administration advised that as stipulated in the Codes of Practice for RCHs, RCHs must follow the instructions of registered/listed Chinese medicine practitioners if RCH residents wished to take Chinese medicine. The Hospital Authority had introduced a time-limited special programme during the epidemic to coordinate community Chinese medicine service providers to provide treatment/rehabilitation services for COVID-19 infected RCHs residents.

Responding to epidemic developments

8. On the provision of reverse isolation arrangements, members noted that the two designated RCHs (providing around 220 places in total as at end of September 2022) could meet the demand as infected residents/staff and close contacts of confirmed cases in RCHs were swiftly transferred to other isolation and quarantine facilities. To better prepare for the evolving epidemic situation, members considered that the Administration should adopt preventive measures such as using mobile cabin hospitals as holding centres and drawing up manpower deployment plans. The Administration assured members that it would keep in view the utilization of holding centres and quarantine centres in considering the need to use other isolation facilities for infected RCH residents.

Monitoring of residential child care services

9. Of equal concern to the Panel in the session was the residential child care services. In December 2021, the suspected child abuse incidents at the Children's Residential Home ("CRH") under the Hong Kong Society for the Protection of Children ("HKSPC") aroused wide public concern. The Panel convened a special meeting with the Administration on 31 January 2022 to review the actions and improvement measures taken/would be taken to safeguard the well-being of the children. The Panel also passed a motion at the meeting, urging the Administration to seriously follow up on the incident at CRH by prosecuting the abusers, imposing severe penalties on HKSPC, conducting a comprehensive review of the monitoring mechanism for child care services, improving the professional training and remuneration package of registered child care workers ("CCWs"), and strengthening the support for foster families.

10. The Panel continued to follow up the matter in the current session and received a briefing from the Administration on the report on the First Phase Review of the Residential Child Care and Related Services ("the Review Report"). Separately, at the invitation of HKSPC, the Panel visited CRH on 28 September 2022 to observe its facilities and environment and exchange views with the senior management of HKSPC on the current operation of CRH and the reform project.

Strengthening service monitoring

11. Members noted the measures proposed in the Review Report to strengthen service monitoring and called on the Administration to step up inspection of residential child care centres (“RCCCs”), apply technologies to the closed-circuit television system (“CCTV”), enhance the accountability of the operators and management staff as well as take forward the legislation on mandatory reporting mechanism of child abuse cases expeditiously. According to the Administration, it had collaborated with a local university to develop and introduce new technologies into the CCTV system of CRH for trial use and explored suitable technologies in the market for strengthening the monitoring of residential child care services. To maximize the effectiveness of service regulation and monitoring, the Social Welfare Department (“SWD”) had formulated a clearer collaboration mode under which the Child Care Centres Advisory Inspectorate and the Subventions Section would review the CCTV footage on the daily operation of RCCCs. The Subventions Section and relevant service branches would also assess the internal risk management and monitoring mechanism of operators.

Enhancing service delivery and manpower supply

12. Members noted with concern that as quite a number of children receiving residential care services (“RCS”) in recent years had special needs, it was necessary to reinforce professional support (such as nurses, allied health staff and social workers), enhance psychological services and augment the manning ratio of CCWs. To ease the manpower strain and cultivate a loving and caring culture, members called on the Administration to review the remuneration of front-line staff and reinforce staff training on positive child care concept. The Administration explained that the salaries of CCWs of RCCCs had been adjusted by making reference to the salary adjustment of CCWs of day child care centres in 2017. To mitigate the work pressure of CCWs, the Review Report had recommended increasing the manning ratio of CCWs from 1:6.2 to 1:4.5, creating the posts of Child Care Aide in RCCCs to share some of the existing duties of CCWs in taking care of the daily basic needs of children, and increase the number of nurses, social workers and clinical/educational psychologists to enhance professional support for RCCCs. The Administration would also strengthen relevant training to staff and require tertiary institutions providing child care training to incorporate topics on child protection into relevant curriculum.

Increasing the provision of residential child care centres

13. Noting that the Administration was identifying a suitable site for a small-scale RCCC and would implement a child-centred care mode on a trial basis, members enquired about the implementation details and timetable of setting up new RCCCs (including small-scale RCCCs) and how the Administration could ensure that the potential service providers could provide quality service and have

an effective monitoring mechanism in place. The Administration advised that it would identify suitable premises to set up a new RCCC to dovetail with the launching of a pilot project to test out the enhanced child care mode. The new centre would also provide opportunities for more service operators to take part in residential child care services to enhance the quality of services.

Welfare facility projects funded by the Lotteries Fund

14. The Panel was briefed by the Administration in April 2022 on its plans to seek funding from the Lotteries Fund (“LF”) for the new welfare facility projects in the 2022-2023 financial year and the latest development of the welfare facility projects which were included in the annual briefing for the Panel in April 2021.

15. Members opined that for some of the welfare facility projects in which the Administration planned to seek funding from LF in 2022-2023, consultation should cover various types of grassroots groups and district organizations. Noting that non-governmental organizations (“NGOs”) were encouraged to make better use of their existing sites through expansion, redevelopment or new development to provide much-needed welfare facilities through the Special Scheme on Privately Owned Sites for Welfare Uses, members called on the Administration to accelerate the implementation of the LF-funded welfare facility projects by reinforcing its technical and professional assistance to the NGOs concerned. The Administration assured members that it would endeavour to accelerate the implementation of LF-funded welfare facility projects.

16. Expressing concern that LF had a deficit of \$522 million in the 2019-2020 financial year, members suggested that the Administration should consider increasing the allocation of the proceeds of Mark Six Lottery to LF, exploring investment strategies for LF to ensure its financial sustainability, reducing the financial burden of LF through including welfare facilities in private development projects as well as adopting competitive tender mechanism and streamlining designs for LF-funded projects.

Follow-up work on the Elderly Services Programme Plan

17. The policy objective of the Administration on elderly services is to promote ageing in place as the core, with institutional care as back-up. In the session, the Panel received an update from the Administration in June 2022 on the follow-up work on the recommendations of Elderly Services Programme Plan.

18. Members considered that the Administration should assess the demand, draw up a timetable and deploy the manpower resources required to bridge the supply-demand gap of the long-term elderly care services. The Administration advised that it attached great importance to the supply and planning of elderly services and various means had been adopted to meet the targets. Since the care

needs of elderly persons varied with age, in the years ahead, the Administration would continue to take forward relevant initiatives to meet the varying needs of the elderly persons.

19. Pointing out that the existing complex categorization of elderly services would dilute the resources across too many initiatives, members considered that the Administration should provide integrated and one-stop services for the elderly to improve cost-effectiveness and service quality. The Administration advised that each service category was provided taking into account various factors, including age, level of impairment and the service needs of elderly persons. In providing elderly services, adequate choices should be given to elderly persons and their families to meet their specific needs.

Support to the underprivileged groups in the community

Community care services for the elderly

20. In response to members' concerns about the inadequacy of day care centres for the elderly persons in some districts, the Administration advised that it would review the district-wide demand for community care services, and take into account the demographic factors of elderly persons on district basis to provide the required services.

21. Members pointed out that many elderly persons had faced long waits for Integrated Home Care Services (Ordinary Cases) ("IHCS(OC)") and the co-payment arrangement under the Pilot Scheme on Home Care and Support for Elderly Persons with Mild Impairment ("Pilot Scheme") had posed a heavy financial burden for many grassroots elderly persons, particularly the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ("CSSA") recipients. They considered that the Administration should enhance both schemes to cope with the service demand. The Administration advised that it would regularize the Pilot Scheme in early 2023 and the co-payment principle aimed at providing sustainable home care service.

22. Members were concerned that some elderly persons might not be able to age in place due to space constraints in the homes of most local families, rendering it impossible for equipping their homes with the required facilities. They urged the Administration to provide housing with suitable fitting-out, adequate home care services and community care services as well as neighbourhood and emotional support for the elderly persons. The Administration assured members that it would endeavour to assist elderly persons in ageing in the community by enhancing community care services. The Administration also noted members' suggestion of adopting the concept of the Senior Citizen Residences Scheme launched by the Hong Kong Housing Society under which residences integrating housing and care

services under one roof were provided for elderly persons with self-care abilities. It would explore with other organizations the feasibility of implementing similar schemes.

Residential care services for the elderly

23. Noting that many elderly persons had passed away while being waitlisted for subsidized residential care places, members called on the Administration to set a target waiting time for RCS, adopt a target-oriented approach in increasing the supply of RCS places, and allow more operators to run residential care homes for the elderly (“RCHEs”) across the border to meet service demand and provide another option for elderly persons in need. The Administration advised that compared with the 40-month average waiting time for residential care places in subvented/contract RCHEs, the average waiting time for subsidized residential care places in RCHEs participating in the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme was around eight months. Elderly persons who had pressing needs were encouraged to consider bought place homes. The Administration would endeavor to increase the supply of RCHEs in response to the rapidly increasing elderly population.

24. Expressing grave concern that RCHs was plagued by the problems of ageing labour force, recruitment difficulties and chronic manpower shortage, members held different views on the importation of care workers to strengthen manpower supply. While some members expressed support for the importation of care workers, some other members worried that local care workers’ employment opportunities and remuneration would be adversely affected. The Administration advised that it would continue to explore how best the RCH sector could import care workers with greater flexibility, whilst ensuring that local workers were accorded priority in employment.

Appointment of a subcommittee under the Panel

25. To enable a more focused discussion on the Administration’s effort in increasing the provision of residential care places for the elderly, the Panel decided at its meeting on 14 February 2022 to appoint a Subcommittee on Increasing the Provision of Residential Care Places for the Elderly (“the Subcommittee”), which was tasked to make recommendations where necessary. Under the chairmanship of Hon CHAN Han-pan, the Subcommittee held three meetings between May to July 2022. The Subcommittee would continue its work in the next session.

Support for carers

26. As carers played an important role in supporting elderly persons and persons with disabilities to live in the community, members considered that they deserved stronger support. After the release of the final report on the Consultancy Study on

Needs and Support Required of Carers of Elderly Persons and of Persons with Disabilities (“the Consultancy Study”) in early June 2022, the Administration briefed the Panel in July 2022 on the outcome and recommendations in the report.

27. Pointing out that the Consultancy Study was more theoretical than pragmatic, members opined that the definition of carers should be expanded to cover carers of persons who needed intensive care. Furthermore, they considered that the Administration should provide a range of comprehensive services to strengthen carer support, including providing subsidies to needy elderly persons and their carers to acquire gerontechnological products; setting up a 24-hour emergency hotline for carer support; reinforcing case management service; establishing dedicated teams to provide counselling services for elderly carers/carers with disabilities; and providing one-stop support service platform to co-ordinate and arrange rehabilitation and welfare services.

28. Members also suggested that the geographical distribution of respite services should be improved and relax the eligibility criteria for using such services. Furthermore, home-based respite services should be provided by volunteers and district support and dedicated service centres for specific types of care recipients should be set up. There was a call for the Administration to promote greater use of technologies in elderly and rehabilitation care in the community, with a view to improving the quality of life of service users as well as reducing the burden and pressure on carers.

29. The Administration advised that as announced in the Chief Executive’s 2022 Policy Address (“the 2022 Policy Address”), from October 2023, it would regularize the allowance for carers of elderly persons and persons with disabilities under the Community Care Fund and raise the amount of subsidy. In addition, a number of measures would be rolled out from 2023, including setting up a one-stop information gateway and a designated hotline for carers; increasing the number of respite service places and enhancing the service enquiry system; promoting community-based peer support for carers; and launching a territory-wide publicity campaign to raise public awareness of the needs of carers.

Support for ethnic minority youngsters

30. Members expressed concerns about the difficulties faced by ethnic minority (“EM”) youngsters in employment and education and enquired how the Administration could assist them to integrate into the community. The Administration advised that it would recruit more ethnic minorities (“EMs”) for appointment as Employment Assistants and General Assistants in the Labour Department, and set up a service centre on a trial basis to provide emotional support and counselling for EMs. This apart, SWD launched a 3-year Ethnic Minority District Ambassador Pilot Scheme in October 2020, under which some welfare service units of subvented NGOs were provided with additional resources to

employ a total of 46 EM District Ambassadors with a view to enhancing welfare and support services for EM communities.

Subventions and subsidies to welfare service providers

31. Welfare services in Hong Kong have been mainly operated by NGOs with resources provided by the Government. During the session, the Administration briefed the Panel on different types of subvention and subsidies provided by SWD to welfare service operators.

32. Noting that the Administration would launch open invitations for services which were being provided by only a small number of operators such as residential child care services, and consideration would be given to those with the capability and experience in providing the required services, members suggested that to offer more choices for service users, patriotic district organizations, women's groups or clansmen associations should be enlisted to operate subvented services. This apart, the existing social welfare services could be categorized into standing services (e.g. residential care and home care services for the elderly and persons with disabilities) and non-standing services (e.g. community care services for youth and families) and the Administration could use different subvention modes for respective categories of services.

33. On monitoring of service effectiveness/quality, members noted that SWD had imposed a surveillance period on operators which persistently failed to meet the requirements of Funding and Service Agreements ("FSAs") or had seriously violated the Service Quality Standards. Noting that SWD had deducted some \$1.8 million in the subvention for HKSPC on the grounds that CRH under its management had failed to meet the Service Quality Standards under the FSA, members commented that the penalty did not carry sufficient deterrence as HKSPC might resort to reducing manpower and activities as a result of the deduction of funding. They called on the Administration to ensure service sustainability when penalty was imposed on the underperforming service operators.

34. The Administration explained that in the case of CRH, the FSA had been adjusted from non-time-defined to a time-defined FSA of one year, with the imposition of a 12-month surveillance period during which CRH was required to submit an evaluation report to SWD once every three months. SWD would closely monitor CRH's effectiveness in implementing the improvement measures throughout the surveillance period, before deciding whether it was suitable for the continued provision of the services or whether the surveillance period should be extended.

Review on the enhancement of the Lump Sum Grant Subvention System

35. The Lump Sum Grant Subvention System (“LSGSS”) was introduced in 2001 for voluntary adoption by NGOs. Under LSGSS, NGO management has autonomy and flexibility in the deployment of subvention resources to meet service needs. In this session, the Panel received an update from the Administration on the findings and key recommendations of the review on the enhancement of LSGSS which was completed in July 2021.

36. Some members commented that the review had failed to address the problems related to salary structure and salary benchmark of NGOs receiving the subvention as well as high staff turnover in NGOs. Coupled with the implementation of the Expenditure Reduction Programme under the 2021-2022 Budget with the aim to trim recurrent expenditure by 1%, these members expressed grave concern that NGOs would encounter difficulties in maintaining high standards of service on lower budgets and fewer staff headcounts. They reiterated the call for revamping LSGSS and providing compensatory subventions to the affected NGOs. Some other members, however, responded positively to LSGSS as NGOs had become more proactive and could flexibly deploy resources to meet the needs of service users.

Social security

37. Social security plays an essential role in helping people meet their basic needs and alleviating poverty. It has always been a key area of concern for the Panel. In this session, the Administration briefed the Panel on the cash welfare provided to the elderly and the proposal to adjust the standard payment rates under the CSSA Scheme and the rates of allowances under the Social Security Allowance (“SSA”) Scheme with effect from 1 February 2023.

Cash welfare for elderly

38. Noting that the estimated recurrent expenditure on elderly cash welfare reached \$51.2 billion in 2022-2023, members suggested that the Administration should come up with innovative ideas for elderly cash welfare to ensure the financial sustainability of the social security system. They considered that the Administration should integrate various welfare measures and strive to formulate a consolidated retirement package for the elderly.

39. To provide better retirement protection for the elderly, members considered that the Administration should strengthen the functions of the HKMC Annuity Plan (“Annuity Plan”) with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of redistribution of wealth and providing elderly persons with a stream of steady income after retirement. To ensure a stable income for annuitants, members opined that the Administration should assure that the return of the Annuity Plan would outperform inflation or inflation-linked. They further suggested increasing the maximum

premium amount and lowering the minimum eligible age of the Annuity Plan. The Administration noted members' views and suggestions on the possible development of the Annuity Plan and advised that careful consideration should be given in mandating or incentivising participation in the Annuity Plan.

Social security allowance

40. Members were pleased to note that as pledged in the 2021 Policy Address, the Normal and Higher Old Age Living Allowance (“OALA”) would be merged with the adoption of the payment rate of Higher OALA and more lenient asset limits of Normal OALA across-the-board. Members urged the Administration to speed up the implementation progress and further increase the asset limit to \$1 million. Subsequently, SWD announced in June 2022 that the merger of the Normal and Higher OALA would be implemented on 1 September 2022 to better support the elderly in need.

41. Given that many Hong Kong elderly persons had retired in Beijing, Hainan, Guangxi, Shanghai, Suzhou and Zhejiang, members considered that in addition to Guangdong and Fujian, SSA should be provided to Hong Kong retirees residing in these places. Members also suggested that the Administration should disburse the social security payments by electronic means, relax the absence limit from Hong Kong during receipt of payment and review the residence requirement for applicants. The Administration subsequently advised the Panel at its meeting in November 2022 that as pledged in the 2022 Policy Address, the pre-application absence limit of the SSA Scheme would be adjusted from 56 days to 90 days. Upon implementation of the proposed relaxation, applicants only needed to reside in Hong Kong for a minimum of 275 days to be eligible for applying for the SSA Scheme, provided that they also met other eligibility criteria (e.g. financial test, age and health conditions). While welcoming the extension of the absence limit, members suggested that in addition to Guangdong and Fujian, elderly persons living in other Mainland provinces should also benefit from the relaxation as well.

Funding proposal

42. The Panel had examined the funding proposal for annual adjustment to social security payment rates under the CSSA and SSA Schemes. While members generally supported the funding proposal, there was a view that the Administration should work out afresh the standard rates for the CSSA Scheme taking into account the basic living expenses of the recipients.

Legislative proposals

43. During the session, the Panel had considered three legislative proposals concerning respectively the enhancement of the quality of RCHs, registration of social workers, and the mandatory reporting requirement for suspected child abuse cases.

Enhancing the quality of residential care homes for the elderly and residential care homes for persons with disabilities

44. The Administration briefed the Panel on its proposals to amend the Residential Care Homes (Elderly Persons) Ordinance (Cap. 459), the Residential Care Homes (Persons with Disabilities) Ordinance (Cap. 613) and their subsidiary legislation at the meeting on 14 February 2022. The proposed legislative amendments sought to, among others, raise the minimum staffing requirements, increase the minimum area of floor space per resident, enhance the accountability of RCH operators, provide for the registration of home managers and renewal of registration of health workers, provide for the administration of medicine, and increase the penalties for certain offences. Members in general supported the legislative proposals, but expressed concerns that many RCHs, especially private ones, had neither the space nor resources to meet the proposed statutory requirement, the move would spark waves of closures, leaving many residents facing longer waits for care places. Members also worried that the costs incurred by RCHs in meeting the statutory requirement would ultimately be transferred to the residents, making those relying on CSSA unable to afford the care places. Some members requested the Administration to consider relaxing the 24-metre height restriction of RCHs to expand their capacity limit, thereby increasing the number of care places. Subsequently, the Administration introduced the Bill into the Council at its meeting of 25 May 2022. The Bill is currently under scrutiny by a Bills Committee.

Registration of social workers

45. The Panel was consulted at its meeting on 16 May 2022 on the Administration's proposal to amend Schedule 2 of the Social Workers Registration Ordinance (Cap. 505) ("SWRO") by adding "An offence endangering national security" ("the Specified Offence") to Schedule 2 so that a person convicted of any offence endangering national security shall be disentitled from being or continuing to be a registered social worker, unless all members of the Social Workers Registration Board resolved otherwise.

46. Members supported the broad direction of the proposed legislative amendments. They considered that the social work profession played a pivotal role in helping people in need and shouldered social responsibility towards their service users with whom they were in frequent contact. Social workers, with the trust of service users, stood to exert on them significant influence in matters including those of concern to national security. Some members, however, pointed out that given the wide scope of the Specified Offence, the social work profession had expressed concerns about contravening the law inadvertently. To address such concerns, these members suggested that the Administration should provide legal consultancy services and establish a redress mechanism to handle complaints from disentitled social workers. Members also suggested that the Administration should

provide training on national security to the social work profession to enhance their awareness on the Specified Offence.

47. There was also a view that sections 17, 20 and 22 of SWRO should be reviewed along with the proposed amendment to ensure consistency in the criteria for rejecting applications for first registration or renewal of registration as social workers as well as deregistration of social workers in respect of persons who had committed offences endangering national security.

48. The Social Workers Registration Ordinance (Amendment of Schedule 2) Notice 2022 was tabled before LegCo at its meeting of 25 May 2022, and had come into operation on 22 July 2022.

Mandatory reporting requirement for suspected child abuse cases

49. The Administration briefed the Panel on the legislative proposal on mandatory reporting requirements for suspected child abuse cases at the meeting on 14 November 2022. Members in general supported the legislative proposal, but opined that the three-tier reporting mechanism was too complicated and requested the Administration to define clearly the reasonable timeframe for mandated reporters to report child abuse cases. Members also expressed concern that some practitioners in the list of mandated reporters (such as Pharmacists, Chinese medicine practitioners, midwives, chiropractors and dentists) might not have frequent contacts with children. While some members considered that the proposed level of penalty (i.e. three-month imprisonment and a fine at level 5 (i.e. \$50,000)) for failure on the part of mandated reporters to report child abuse cases could not serve as a useful deterrent, there was a view that the punishment was too harsh.

50. The Administration noted members' views and advised that the proposed level of penalty was set having regard to the punishments for offences of a similar gravity in other local legislations. A specific reporting timeframe might not be able to cater for different cases involved a variety of circumstances. As regards the list of practitioners, it should cover those whose professions or work were currently subject to some form of regulation. According to the Administration, subject to the progress of law drafting, it planned to introduce the bill on mandatory reporting requirement into LegCo in the first half of 2023.

Meetings held

51. During the period between January and November 2022, the Panel held a total of 10 meetings, including two special meetings to review the residential child care services. The Panel has scheduled another meeting on 12 December 2022 to receive the Administration's briefing on (a) the new measures to enhance support

for carers of elderly persons and of persons with disabilities; and (b) the initiatives to promote and apply gerontechnology in elderly services.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
2 December 2022

Legislative Council

Panel on Welfare Services

Terms of Reference

1. To monitor and examine Government policies and issues of public concern relating to welfare, rehabilitation services, poverty and social enterprise.
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 2022 session*

Chairman	Hon CHAN Han-pan, BBS, JP
Deputy Chairman	Hon TANG Ka-piu, BBS, JP
Members	Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP Hon LUK Chung-hung, JP Hon Doreen KONG Yuk-foon Hon Stanley LI Sai-wing, MH Dr Hon TIK Chi-yuen, SBS, JP Hon Stanley NG Chau-pei, SBS Hon CHAU Siu-chung Hon LAM So-wai Hon LEUNG Man-kwong, MH Hon Kenneth LEUNG Yuk-wai, JP Hon Judy CHAN Kapui, MH Hon Maggie CHAN Man-ki, MH, JP Hon Lillian KWOK Ling-lai Hon Benson LUK Hon-man Hon YANG Wing-kit Revd Canon Hon Peter Douglas KOON Ho-ming, BBS, JP Dr Hon NGAN Man-yu (Total : 19 members)
Clerk	Ms Joyce KAN
Legal adviser	Ms Clara WONG

* Changes in membership are shown in Annex to Appendix 2.

Annex to Appendix 2

Panel on Welfare Services

Changes in membership

Member	Relevant date
Hon YANG Wing-kit	Since 25 January 2022
Prof Hon Nelson LAM Chi-yuen, JP	Up to 18 June 2022

For **changes in LegCo Membership**, please refer to the link below:
(<https://www.legco.gov.hk/en/members/legco-members/changes-in-legco-membership.html>)