

(Translation)

**Minutes of the 6th Meeting of
Social Welfare and Women Development Committee,
the 7th Term Kwun Tong District Council**

Date: 28 November 2024 (Thursday)
Time: 2:32 p.m. – 5:21 p.m.
Venue: Conference Room, Kwun Tong District Office,
Unit 05-07, 20/F, Millennium City 6, 392 Kwun Tong Road,
Kwun Tong, Kowloon

Present

Ms FU Pik-chun, MH (Chairlady)	Ms CHING Hoi-yan
Ms LEE Shuk-woon, Sophia (Vice-chairlady)	Ms FENG Yunsi
Mr YU Ka-ming	Mr WONG Chun-ping, MH, JP
Mr LEE Ka-hang	Ms ZHAN Baoyu
Mr LAM Fung, MH	Mr LAU Kar-wah
Mr LAM Wai	Ms CHU Lok-wai
Ms KAM Kin	Mr TANG Wing-chun
Mr HUNG Kam-in, MH	Mr CHENG Keung-fung
Mr CHEUNG Yiu-pan	Mr TAM Siu-cheuk
Ms LEUNG Sze-wan	Mr KWAN Kin-wing
Mr HSU Yau-wai	Mr PANG Chi-sang
Mr CHAN Yiu-hung, Jimmy, MH	Ms NGAN Ming-sau (Co-opted Member)
Mr TSANG Wing-fai	

In Attendance

Ms CHAN Wai-chun, Regina	Assistant District Officer (Kwun Tong)1
Mr CHOW Lap-kan, Douglas	Senior Executive Officer (District Council), Kwun Tong District Office
Miss YIK Wai-sze, Cecilia	Senior Liaison Officer (2), Kwun Tong District Office
Miss Sandra LIM	Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Kwun Tong)1, Social Welfare Department

Secretary

Mr WONG King-yui, Bobby

Executive Officer (District Council)1,
Kwun Tong District Office

In Attendance by Invitation

Ms WAI Choi-kei, Maggie

Centre-in-charge,
Suicide Crisis Intervention Centre,
The Samaritan Befrienders Hong Kong

Item II

Ms SHAW Ka-fung, Sally

Senior Social Work Officer,
(Rehabilitation and Medical Social Services)2,
Social Welfare Department

Item III

Ms Louis YIP

Acting Chief Executive Officer,
SAHK

Ms Edith HUNG

Deputy Chief Executive Officer,
SAHK

Ms Silvia LEUNG

Superintendent, LOHAS Garden,
SAHK

Absent

Mr NG Ting-fung

Opening Remarks

The Chairlady welcomed all attendees to the 6th meeting of the Social Welfare and Women Development Committee (“SWWDC”) under the 7th Term Kwun Tong District Council (“KTDC”).

2. The Chairlady said that the Secretariat had received a notice of absence from Mr NG Ting-fung before the meeting. Since the application of Mr NG was in compliance with Order 64 (1) of the Kwun Tong District Council Standing Orders, SWWDC consented to the above application for absence.

I. Confirmation of Minutes of Last Meeting

3. Members did not raise any other comments. The minutes of the 5th meeting were confirmed.

II. Service Introduction of the Samaritan Befrienders Hong Kong

4. The representative of the Social Welfare Department (“SWD”) introduced the background of the Samaritan Befrienders Hong Kong (“SBHK”).
5. The representative of SBHK introduced the organisation’s services.
6. Members raised views and enquiries as follows:
 - 6.1 Members enquired about how to prevent the spread of suicide in the community.
 - 6.2 Members enquired whether mental health screenings could be conducted in the community to identify individuals with potential suicidal risks.
 - 6.3 Members stated that KTDC Members received community help requests mainly from the elderly and wished to strengthen cooperation with SBHK in handling such cases.
 - 6.4 Members mentioned that they had received, from time to time, assistance requests from women indicating that their children needed help and enquired how to handle such cases.
 - 6.5 Members wanted to understand the reasons why students developed suicidal thoughts and how SBHK would assist them.
 - 6.6 Members enquired about how to follow up and support families, residents and other individuals affected by suicide cases.
 - 6.7 Members pointed out that economic issues were the second major reason for suicide help-seeking cases. In view of the current economic downturn, Members were concerned that there would be more such cases and asked whether SBHK, apart from launching the “Working with You, Walking with Youth Project”, would collaborate with Members to provide support programmes for all ages in the community.
 - 6.8 Members enquired about how to deal with and support residents who had repeatedly expressed suicidal intentions.
7. The representative of SBHK responded to Members’ views and enquiries as follows:
 - 7.1 Regarding responding to the spread of suicide cases in the community, SBHK suggested that Members who noticed residents being affected by suicide cases could

refer such cases to SBHK for follow-up to prevent the spread of suicide cases.

- 7.2 Concerning screening work, SBHK stated that its main task was to handle crisis cases. It suggested that if Members found any unusual behaviour or suicidal tendencies in the residents they contacted, they could refer the cases to SBHK for further assessment and counselling.
- 7.3 SBHK indicated that it had been working closely with the Miscellaneous Enquiries Sub-unit of the Kwun Tong Police District of the Hong Kong Police Force. If the families of the involved cases agreed, the sub-unit would refer the cases to SBHK for follow-up.
- 7.4 Regarding elderly suicide cases, SBHK indicated that many elderly people did not understand how to seek help. It suggested that if Members discovered any elderly individuals with potential suicide risks, they could refer these cases to SBHK for follow-up.
- 7.5 In handling children or family members with potential suicide risks, SBHK would provide support to the family members and friends of the potential suicide cases, offering them professional advice and contacting the individuals involved through them.
- 7.6 As for students with suicidal thoughts, SBHK would first conduct a grade-wide assessment to identify students with such thoughts and then assign personnel to conduct one-on-one interviews with the students concerned. If further assessment confirmed that the students were indeed at risk of suicide, SBHK would, with parental consent, open a file for the students concerned and conduct follow-up actions.
- 7.7 SBHK stated that its Suicide Crisis Intervention Centre was a territory-wide service, which contacted and followed up on suicide cases involving economic pressure issues. SBHK had also maintained close cooperation and liaison with the Integrated Family Service Centres and elderly centres in various districts.
- 7.8 SBHK indicated that the risk of suicide among individuals who had attempted suicide was 40 times higher than that of the general population. Therefore, SBHK urged Members to refer such cases to SBHK for close follow-up.

8. Members raised views and enquiries as follows:

- 8.1 Members enquired about the difficulties encountered by SBHK in following up on the suicide crisis cases and the resources needed.
 - 8.2 Members enquired about how volunteers should identify whether a help-seeker was at risk of suicide.
 - 8.3 Members relayed that there were more suicide cases during festive periods than usual. Additionally, Members were concerned that holding suicide prevention seminars in the community might trigger a copycat effect. Some volunteers considered the suicide issue a taboo, thus refusing to hold seminars.
 - 8.4 Members enquired about how Hong Kong's suicide rate compared to other Asian regions.
9. The representative of SBHK responded to Members' views and enquiries as follows:
- 9.1 Follow-up of suicide crisis cases: The cases handled by SBHK were generally divided into referral cases and direct help-seeking cases. SBHK would conduct suicide risk assessments and counselling for all cases and collaborate with different community organisations to understand the underlying reasons why the persons concerned had suicidal thoughts.
 - 9.2 Concerning SBHK's resources and the difficulties it encountered in following up on cases, SBHK stated that there were currently 18 social workers responsible for handling suicide crisis cases across the territory, and the manpower was stretched thin. SBHK hoped to receive additional resources to hire more staff. Furthermore, SBHK believed that it was crucial for different units in various districts to coordinate in handling cases.
 - 9.3 SBHK acknowledged that there were indeed more suicides during festive periods and encouraged Members and Care Teams to consider arranging visits to the elderly during these periods to offer them care and support.
 - 9.4 SBHK agreed that life education should be well-promoted in the community to help the public identify suicide crisis cases. SBHK hoped to collaborate with Members to promote life education in the community.
 - 9.5 SBHK reminded Members that they must obtain the consent of the persons concerned

and explain the details of the referral when referring cases.

9.6 SBHK stated that in the Asian region, South Korea had the highest suicide rate. Although Hong Kong's suicide rate was lower than South Korea's, it was still relatively high.

10. Members raised views and enquiries as follows:

10.1 Members mentioned that some residents experienced psychological trauma after witnessing others commit suicide and enquired about how to help residents alleviate psychological stress.

10.2 Members expressed the concern of some volunteers that holding suicide prevention seminars might lead the audience to develop suicidal thoughts.

11. The representative of SBHK responded to Members' views and enquiries as follows:

11.1 SBHK stated that it offered the Live the Rainbow Service to assist the families and friends of suicide victims, particularly those experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder due to the suicide of a loved one, to help them overcome their difficulties.

11.2 SBHK indicated that the purpose of life education was to encourage people to care for those around them and would not inspire suicidal thoughts in the audience.

12. Members noted the relevant matters.

III. Relocation Plan of SAHK LOHAS Garden

13. The representatives of SWD and SAHK presented the plan.

14. Members raised views and enquiries as follows:

14.1 Members conveyed the residents' views to SWD, pointing out that the living and ancillary transport facilities near the selected site were not very convenient, and that most of the heavy industrial facilities in the area had not yet been relocated, raising concern that service users of LOHAS Garden might find it inconvenient.

14.2 Members hoped that SWD would strengthen consultations and explanations to local

residents in order to gather their views.

- 14.3 Members pointed out that service users and trainees of LOHAS Garden were of pure and innocent character and hoped that the community would accept them.
- 14.4 Members enquired about the waiting status for residential care homes for persons with disabilities (“RCHDs”).
- 14.5 Members shared that there were schools for social development with boarding facilities in their sub-district, which not only promoted community inclusion but also created synergistic effects, expediting the improvement of other community facilities.
- 14.6 Members shared that there were RCHDs in their sub-district, which maintained good relationships with nearby residents. Members suggested increasing publicity and strengthening community education to achieve inclusivity between persons with and without disabilities.
- 14.7 Members suggested that SWD arrange for residents and KTDC members to visit LOHAS Garden or other RCHDs to gain a deeper understanding of the operation of these services. They believed this would help alleviate concerns and increase residents’ acceptance of the relocation plan.
- 14.8 Members cited residents who said they opposed the relocation plan because the sales brochure did not specify that the mall would be converted into social welfare facilities. However, considering past tragedies where carers of persons with disabilities committed suicide due to excessive stress, Members believed that such facilities were necessary to provide adequate support for carers and thus supported the relocation plan.
- 14.9 Members expressed the concern of residents about losing livelihood facilities if the mall was converted into social welfare facilities. They suggested that SAHK provide more services that were convenient for residents, such as opening convenience stores or supermarkets at the site, to make good use of social resources to assist the disadvantaged in employment while providing value-added services for local residents. This would address their needs for livelihood facilities and enhance their acceptance of the residential care home.

15. The response from the representative of SWD to Members’ views and enquiries was summarised as follows:

- 15.1 SWD stated that it had always been attentive to community views. Before consulting KTDC, the department had introduced the relocation plan to the management committee of the relevant owners' corporation on 16 August 2024, and attended the owners' meeting on 31 August to understand the residents' views. The department also invited members of the owners' corporation management committee and other owners to visit a social welfare facility for persons with disabilities located in a private housing estate in November. However, concerned parties expressed no interest in attending at that time.
- 15.2 SWD hoped to continue promoting and maintaining close liaison with SAHK to share and explain the operation and successful experiences of the services to residents. The department would also continue to listen to different views and take into consideration the suggestions put forward by Members.
- 15.3 SWD indicated that LOHAS Garden was an integrated rehabilitation services complex and must comply with the requirements of the Residential Care Homes (Persons with Disabilities) Ordinance and the Code of Practice for Residential Care Homes (Persons with Disabilities).
- 15.4 SWD stated that mentally or physically handicapped persons aged 15 or above could register for subvented services through the central waitlist system after assessment and referral by social workers. The waiting time depended on the application date, the required hostel services, and location requirements. The department noted that male service users generally had longer waiting times.
- 15.5 SWD explained that according to the average waiting time for 2023-2024, applicants for hostels for moderately mentally handicapped persons had to wait for about 12 years, while those for hostels for severely mentally handicapped persons had to wait for about 13 years.
- 15.6 SWD stated that the department had a priority processing mechanism under which applicants with pressing needs could submit priority queue applications to social workers.

16. The response from the representative of SAHK to Members' views and enquiries was summarised as follows:

16.1 The representative of SAHK thanked Members for supporting the plan and expressed willingness to communicate with residents, with a view to sharing the association's successful experience of integrating into the community and gaining support from local residents at its former site in Ho Man Tin. SAHK could also arrange for residents to visit its hostels and sheltered workshops to help them understand its services and promote inclusivity between persons with and without disabilities.

16.2 The representative of SAHK stated that if the relocation to the area was successful, the association would actively consider Members' suggestions to provide appropriate measures for the benefit of the public.

17. Members indicated that there was a shortage of community facilities in the district, where there would be many construction projects in the future, expressing concern that construction noise would affect service users.

18. The representative of SWD responded to Members' views and enquiries as follows:

18.1 SWD said it understood that there would be more than ten housing estates completed in the area in the future and believed that community facilities would gradually improve.

18.2 SWD indicated that since most users of LOHAS Garden were residential service users who mainly entered or left its premises only on weekends, and there were only a few daytime trainees, most of whom stayed in the premises, the impact of the surrounding environmental issues on the trainees was expected to be minimal.

19. Members enquired whether the relocation plan was permanent.

20. The representative of SWD stated that the relocation plan was a medium to short-term arrangement. Furthermore, the representative added that SAHK had not yet officially submitted a relocation application to the department and that SAHK still needed to clarify the lease terms with the relevant property owners.

21. Members noted the relevant matters.

IV. Social Welfare Department – Report on the data on major social services in Kwun Tong District
(KTDC SWWDC Paper No. 7/2024)

22. The representative of SWD presented the paper.

23. Members pointed out that under the tightened Well-off Tenants Policies, many elderly people had their units recovered by the Housing Department (“HD”), rendering them homeless. They enquired how SWD would assist these elderly individuals.

24. The representative of SWD stated that Hong Kong had a sound social safety net to ensure that elderly people with housing needs would still receive relevant support even if their units were recovered. Social workers from SWD or social welfare organisations would follow up depending on the circumstances of each case.

25. Members raised views and enquiries as follows:

25.1 Members enquired about the arrangements for compassionate rehousing.

25.2 Members hoped that HD would, at its discretion, consider the circumstances of different cases and provide sufficient time and space for SWD staff to assist the affected elderly.

26. The representative of SWD indicated that the situations faced by the elderly and the services they required varied. The representative suggested that Members refer needy cases to SWD as early as possible to facilitate early intervention by social workers, thus providing timely and appropriate assistance to the elderly.

27. Members noted the paper.

V. **Any Other Business**

Activities Scheme for Kwun Tong District International Day of Disabled Persons 2024/25

28. The Chairlady stated that on 11 September 2024, the Secretariat circulated Paper No. 5/2024 to seek consent from Members for SWWDC to co-organise the activities for Kwun Tong District International Day of Disabled Persons 2024/25 with the Hong Kong Federation of Handicapped Youth. Since the Secretariat did not receive any objections or other comments from Members before the deadline, the above matter was endorsed.

29. Members noted the relevant matters.

Occupational Safety and Health Promotional Campaign 2024-25

30. The Chairlady stated that KTDC had earlier received a letter from the Occupational Safety and Health Council (“OSHC”) inviting the Council to participate in this year’s Occupational Safety and Health (“OSH”) Promotional Campaign with local groups. After discussion at the Full Council meeting on 7 November, KTDC decided to refer the matter to SWWDC for follow-up. She added that the Secretariat had sent an email on 13 November 2024, inviting KTDC Members to recommend local groups to co-organise the campaign. The Secretariat did not receive any suggestions or other comments from Members before the deadline. According to the Funding Guidelines on the OSH Promotional Campaign 2024-2025, KTDC must submit an application form to OSHC eight weeks before the start date of the campaign. Given the lack of recommendations for local groups from Members and insufficient preparation time, she suggested that SWWDC should not apply to host this year’s “OSH Promotional Campaign 2024-2025”.

31. Members noted the relevant matters.

VI. Date of Next Meeting

32. The next meeting was scheduled to be held on 23 January 2025 (Thursday).

33. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:21 p.m.

The minutes of the meeting were confirmed on 23 January 2025.

Kwun Tong District Council Secretariat
January 2025