

(Translation)

**Minutes of the Second Meeting of the
Social Welfare Committee (2024) of the
Kwai Tsing District Council**

Date: 16 April 2024

Time: 2:30 p.m. – 3:24 p.m.

Venue: Kwai Tsing District Office (“K&T DO”) Conference Room

<u>Present</u>	<u>Time of Arrival</u>	<u>Time of Departure</u>
Miss CHU Lai-ling, MH (Chairman)	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Ms CHAN On-ni (Vice Chairman)	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Ms WANG Chung-wing	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Mr NG Yam-fung Benny	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Mr LEE Wai-lok	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Mr CHOW Kim-ho	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Miss CHAU Kit-ying	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Ms LAM Ying-wai	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Ms LAM Chui-ling, MH, JP	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Mr TSUI Hiu-kit	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Ms LEUNG Kar-ming, MH	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Miss MOK Yee-ki	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Ms GUO Huimin	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Ms Miranda CHAN Oi-yi	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Mr PANG Yap-ming	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Mr AU Chi-fai	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Ms CHENG Lam	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Miss LO Yuen-ting, MH	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting

In Attendance

Ms YUEN Mo-kuen, Monita	Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing) ³ , Social Welfare Department
Mr LAM Ka-yan, Leo	Social Work Officer 2, Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing District Planning and Coordinating Team, Social Welfare Department
Ms WONG Ngan	Senior Housing Manager/Kwai Chung, Housing Department

Ms LIN Shui Ngor, Miranda	Senior School Development Officer (Kwai Tsing) ³ , Education Bureau
Mr TSANG Kin-hang, Gary	Labour Officer (Workplace Consultation Promotion) ² , Labour Department
Miss LEUNG Man-sin, Kammy (Secretary)	Executive Assistant (Kwai Tsing) District Council (5), Kwai Tsing District Office, Home Affairs Department

Opening Remarks

The Chairman welcomed Members and representatives of government departments to the second meeting of the Social Welfare Committee (“SWC”) (2024) of the Kwai Tsing District Council (“K&T DC”).

Confirmation of Minutes of the 1st Meeting (2024) held on 20 February 2024

2. The Chairman said that the Secretariat had consulted the departments concerned on the aforesaid draft minutes, and received a proposal for further amendment from the Education Bureau (“EDB”) prior to the meeting. Paragraph 7(iii) of the draft minutes was therefore amended to read: “To enhance professional competence in supporting students with mental health needs, EDB has all along been committed to providing teachers with professional development courses, which included holding a 60-hour thematic course on “Focusing on Students with Mental Illness” for teachers and organising “gatekeeper” training to invite educational psychologists to share with teachers the information about students’ suicidal behaviours and relevant warning signs, thereby making it easier for teachers to identify students with greater suicidal risk”, whereas paragraph 7(v) was amended to read: “EDB had provided additional “One-off Grant for Mental Health of Parents and Students” to the parent-teacher associations of all publicly-funded primary and secondary schools (including special schools)”.

3. Members endorsed the aforesaid minutes unanimously.

Discussion Items

Concern over the Supporting Services for Elderly Singletons and Elderly Couples Living in Kwai Tsing District

(Proposed by Ms CHAN On-ni, Mr LEE Wai-lok, Miss CHAU Kit-ying, Mr PANG Yap-ming and Mr AU Chi-fai)

(SWC Paper Nos. 3/D/2024, 3a/D/2024 and 3b/D/2024)

4. Members discussed the aforesaid matter, and put forth enquiries and opinions as follows:

- (i) Requests for assistance had been received regarding the infestation of bed bugs in the home environments of the elderly. Many elderly people had also expressed their needs for household cleaning and relocation services. Therefore, Members enquired about the household cleaning and relocation services for the elderly in Kwai Tsing District.
- (ii) Elderly services are a key element of the existing social services. With the population ageing continuously, elderly services have become increasingly essential. It was suggested that the Social Welfare Department (“SWD”) should retain data related to the elderly in various districts, including the household numbers of elderly singletons and elderly couples, so as to facilitate a more objective and accurate understanding of the crux of the problem concerned, as well as to allow the Government to evaluate work efficacy and allocate resources more effectively. In addition, SWD should analyse the data to penetrate the long-term trends of various elderly needs, thereby making adjustments to the overall policies and development directions more effectively.
- (iii) Enquired about the number of beneficiaries, attendances and effectiveness of the elderly support services provided by SWD (including regular and newly launched services), how SWD evaluated the demand for relevant support services in the district, and whether the services were sufficient to meet the district needs. An enquiry was also made on whether SWD would take corresponding follow-up measures in the event that a lack of support services in the district was observed after evaluation.
- (iv) Enquired of the Housing Department (“HD”) about the numbers of elderly singletons and elderly couples residing at the public housing estates in Kwai Tsing District in order to learn about the distribution of elderly residents at such estates in the district.

(Post-meeting note: The information paper submitted by HD regarding the aforesaid enquiries was set out in SWC Circulation (Information) Paper No. 1/2024 and was circulated to SWC on 6 May 2024.)

- (v) Suggested SWD to find out whether the elderly applicants of living allowances are elderly singletons or those from elderly couple families when they file such applications, or when the Department examines/reviews such applications. On the other hand, SWD could collaborate with other departments to identify eligible elderly individuals who have yet to apply for the allowances, and then learn about their needs to offer timely assistance.
- (vi) Elderly tenants in public housing can, without obtaining advice from physiotherapist, apply to HD for installation of grab rails. HD will then install grab rails at the elderly tenants' desired locations according to their preferences. However, some Members deemed that the elderly might not possess relevant professional knowledge and genuinely understand their own needs, so they were worried that the elderly could not choose the right installation locations on their own, thus causing delay in the adaptation works. Therefore, an enquiry was made on whether HD or SWD could, without obtaining recommendations or advice from professionals, contact physiotherapists or social welfare organisations to assist in evaluating the locations for installing grab rails or provide proactive assistance to the elderly when needed.
- (vii) Given that some private organisations provide escorting services for medical consultations, some of which are subsidised by SWD, Members enquired about the details of the existing escorting service policy and the operation of such services in Kwai Tsing District. An enquiry was also made on whether the Government would formulate strategies to expand escorting services and home care services to tie in with the trend of ageing population and respond to the needs of the elderly.

5. Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing)³, SWD, responded as follows:

- (i) The mission of elderly services is to enable the elders to live with dignity and to provide them with appropriate support. The Government's existing community support and care services as well as related measures for the elderly include:
 - Regular community support services, such as District Elderly Community Centres ("DECCs"), Neighbourhood Elderly Centres

(“NECs”) and Support Teams for the Elderly attached to DECCs, provide a variety of support services for the elderly at district level. At that time, there were 2 DECCs and 15 NECs in Kwai Tsing District.

- The types of community care services for the elderly include “home-based” community care services (such as Enhanced Home and Community Care Services Teams and Integrated Home Care Services Teams), “centre-based” services provided by Day Care Centres/Units for the Elderly, and the Community Care Service Voucher Scheme for the Elderly. In addition, the Government would continue to expand the day respite service network for elderly people to further support the elderly and their carers.
- The Government launched the 24-hour Designated Hotline for Carer Support, 182 183, in September 2023 to provide instant consultation, counselling and other support services for carers or other individuals in need, including the elderly. The Government also launched the “Information Gateway for Carers” (website address: www.carers.hk) in November 2023 to provide carers with convenient access to information on welfare services, community resources and caring techniques.
- It was mentioned in the Chief Executive’s 2023 Policy Address that the Government would expand the scope of the “Innovation and Technology Fund for Application in Elderly and Rehabilitation Care” to cover gerontechnology products suitable for household use. Eligible elderly and rehabilitation service units can file applications to procure appropriate technology products for use on loan by the elderly, persons with disabilities and their carers.
- SWD had implemented a 12-month “District Services and Community Care Teams - Pilot Scheme on Supporting Elderly and Carers” since March 2024. Piloting in Tsuen Wan and Southern Districts, “District Services and Community Care Teams” help identify needy households of elderly singletons and elderly couples as well as carers of elderly persons and persons with disabilities through visits or contacts, and refer the cases concerned to relevant

social welfare service units for follow-ups. Upon reviewing effectiveness, SWD will consider extending the scheme to other districts.

- The Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing District Social Welfare Office of SWD (“Welfare Office”) is committed to coordinating and connecting various social welfare service units and stakeholders in the district to jointly implement various welfare service work plans and activities, such as the “Unlock the Smartphone - Cross Generation Connect” Project and the “Caring Organisations for the Elderly Award Scheme”, to support the elderly in the district and respond to the welfare needs of the district, thereby promoting community care and mutual help spirit.
- (ii) Integrated Home Care Services (Frail Cases)/ Enhanced Home and Community Care Services are home-based community care services which are aimed at providing a range of care and support services, such as household cleaning service, escorting service for medical consultations, safety assessment and recommendations for improvement on home environment, to frail elderly persons who are aged 60 or above living in the district and are assessed and recommended for Community Care Services or Residential Care Services under the “Standardised Care Need Assessment Mechanism for Elderly Services”. People in need can make enquiries at nearby DECCs, NECs, or Integrated Family Service Centres. In addition, Support Teams for the Elderly have been set up in DECCs to conduct simple assessments for ill elderly persons aged 60 or above in the district so as to provide appropriate support services. Recipients under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (“CSSA”) Scheme who are not public housing tenants can, upon recommendations by doctors, occupational therapists or physiotherapists in public hospitals or clinics, apply for special allowances under the CSSA Scheme to improve the safety of their home environments.
- (iii) SWD provides subsidies to non-governmental organisations to operate elderly care services. The purposes and objectives, natures and content, service recipients, essential service requirements, service outputs and outcomes of various subsidised elderly care services are defined in the Funding and Service Agreement. For example, SWD has stipulated that the average number of members of a DECC must reach an agreed level within a

year, whilst no upper limit is set.

6. Senior Housing Manager/Kwai Chung, HD, responded as follows:

- (i) HD is concerned about the needs of elderly tenants and is supportive in offering policy and facility assistance. Since February 2021, the Hong Kong Housing Authority (“HA”) has extended the scope of the Emergency Alarm System (“EAS”) Grant for eligible elderly tenants to cover mobile devices, including mobile phones and watches with EAS functions, smart phones installed with dedicated app, fall prevention devices and other related products. Each tenant concerned can receive a one-off accountable allowance of no more than \$2,500 for the EAS installation cost or service charge.
- (ii) Public housing tenants with special needs for physical activities (such as the elderly or people with disabilities) can apply to HA for modifying facilities in their units. To better address the special needs of individual elderly persons and those in need, with reference to the advice from doctors, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, medical social workers, etc., HA carries out corresponding adaptation works free of charge. If a tenant requests only for the installation of grab rails or provision of a shower area in the bathroom, HA will directly conduct the works for the tenant free of charge, without the need for obtaining prior advice from doctors or physiotherapists. If a tenant has a special request, for example, installation of a grab rail at a specific height, the Department will address his/her request subject to the circumstances, or refer the case to SWD and professionals for advice and support.
- (iii) HA collaborates with other government departments and non-governmental organisations every year to hold various community building activities (such as the “Healthy Recipes for Elderly” cooking tutorial videos and the “Stay Active at Home” home-based exercise videos under the “Healthy Ageing in Public Rental Housing Estates” programme co-organised by HA and the Department of Health) to strengthen the spirits of community care and mutual assistance, create a harmonious living environment, enhance the health consciousness of the elderly, and publicise information about active ageing.
- (iv) In terms of the application of gerontechnology products, HA will maintain

close contact with the Labour and Welfare Bureau (“LWB”), and complement the publicity plans of LWB and relevant departments (such as posting as well as distributing posters, leaflets and other publicity materials in public housing estates, and arranging playback of video clips) to help public housing residents learn about gerontechnology products.

- (v) Once the Department identifies elderly and disabled individuals in need or notices their special needs, it will provide appropriate assistance and support. With the consents of such individuals, the cases concerned will be referred to SWD or non-governmental organisations for further assistance, e.g. provision of bed bug control information to the residents.
- (vi) In the public housing estates in Kwai Tsing District, there were approximately 15 100 households of elderly singletons and 8 200 households of elderly couples.

Concern over the Work Effectiveness, the Training Mechanism and the Monitoring Scheme of the Training Mechanism of Home-based Child Carers

(Proposed by Ms GUO Huimin, Ms WANG Chung-wing, Miss CHU Lai-ling, MH, Mr TSUI Hiu-kit, Mr NG Yam-fung Benny, Ms LAM Ying-wai, Ms LAM Chui-ling, MH, JP, Ms LEUNG Kar-ming, MH, Miss MOK Yee-ki, Ms Miranda CHAN Oi-yi, Ms CHENG Lam and Miss LO Yuen-ting, MH)

(SWC Paper Nos. 4/D/2024 and 4a/D/2024)

7. Members discussed the aforesaid matter, and put forth enquiries and opinions as follows:

- (i) Deemed that the training hours of home-based child carers (“HCCs”) were too short (14 hours of basic training plus an additional 4 hours of advanced training developed for looking after children with special learning needs), hence the failure to reassure parents to hand over their children to HCCs for care. Members were also concerned that the advanced training hours might be too short for HCCs to grasp the characteristics and needs of children with special learning needs. Therefore, an enquiry was made on the content of the basic and advanced training, as well as the requirements for the attendance rates. As for supervision, Members asked whether the Department would arrange spot checks to ensure the maintenance of service quality among child carers at a certain level, and to reduce the risk of child

abuse. Members also suggested increasing the hours of advanced training, providing information to prove the professional qualifications or abilities of the trainees, and issuing certificates to qualified HCCs, so as to strengthen parents' confidence in using home-based child care services.

- (ii) Believed that home-based child care services could take advantage of the spirit of mutual help in communities, thereby allowing the communities' young children caregivers in need to spare their energy and time for their workplaces. On the other hand, Members thought that the "Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project" ("Care Project") could make up the shortfall in child care services in the market, and it was worth encouraging that HCCs contributed their time as volunteers or semi-volunteers to assist other child caregivers. In the event that HCCs were required to provide highly professional volunteer services, Members were concerned that some individuals might refrain from engaging in home-based child care services. The Government was recommended to evaluate the demand for HCCs in the society at that time. If the demand was rather large, the Government should explore ways to change the volunteer or semi-volunteer nature of HCCs by upgrading their services to a professional level, whereby the salaries of HCCs could be raised and aspects such as the evaluation, training, and monitoring of HCCs could be optimised.
- (iii) It was noted that the society's demand for HCCs was high, and even though Women Service Association Limited provided many related services in Kwai Tsing District, local residents' needs and their expectations for the service quality still could not be fully met. Members enquired of SWD whether it would evaluate the demand for HCCs, and requested it for the data on the demand for home-based child care services as well as related services in Kwai Tsing District at that time, so as to facilitate their understanding of the general demand and supply situation.
- (iv) Enquired of SWD about its criteria for recruiting HCCs and whether it would relax such criteria if there were insufficient candidates. Enquiries were also made on whether social workers, professionals, or more experienced HCCs would be available to provide guidance during the course of HCC internships, and whether the Department required live-in or HCCs to receive further training regularly from service operators to improve service quality.

- (v) As for the assessment of HCCs, Members enquired about the details of the assessment content, assessment form, and marking scheme. An enquiry was also made on whether SWD would verify the scores and issue certificates of competency.
- (vi) Said that the incentive payments for HCCs at that time were too low. The incentive payment for carers of children aged 3 to 9 was \$40 per hour, while that for carers of children with special learning needs was \$60 per hour. Members hoped that the Government could increase incentive payments to encourage more people to participate in the project and become HCCs.

8. Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing)³, SWD, responded as follows:

- (i) The Care Project provides day child care services, including “home-based child care service” for children aged under 9 provided by HCCs at HCCs’ own residences or other suitable locations as approved by the service operators. There are 18 service operators in Hong Kong responsible for recruiting and providing suitable training for HCCs participating in the Care Project, and the service operator implementing the Care Project in Kwai Tsing District at that time was Women Service Association Limited. As of December 2023, there was a total of 82 HCCs in Kwai Tsing District. Between April and December 2023, a total of 495 children used the services under the Care Project.
- (ii) SWD had been requiring service operators to establish mechanisms for recruiting, evaluating, screening and training HCCs, and to arrange service matching. At that time, HCCs had to receive 4 hours of basic training. While the social workers of service operators were required to conduct monthly home visits to HCCs who were on service, Child Care Workers were responsible for providing them with individual training/supervision. Service operators must also continuously evaluate and follow up on the performances of HCCs to ensure service quality.
- (iii) To better respond to the demand for day child care services in the district, SWD had reviewed home-based child care services and planned to implement measures to strengthen relevant services in the fourth quarter of this year. As for strengthening the training for HCCs, the trainees are required to

undergo 14 hours of basic training. The training content, which is standardised and formulated by SWD, includes infant and child physical and psychological development, special development milestones and needs of growth, care and communication skills, home safety and hygiene, as well as handling of accidents and special incidents. Trainees must pass an examination before they could be arranged to provide services. HCCs who are arranged to look after children with special learning needs must receive an additional 4 hours of advanced training to acquire relevant knowledge and skills of looking after the children. Besides, upon training completion, service operators are also required to evaluate HCCs for their child care skills and knowledge, and confidence in providing care services, as well as to evaluate whether their home environments are suitable for providing care services before they would arrange for them to provide such services.

- (iv) In terms of service monitoring, SWD requires service operators to evaluate and follow up on the performances of HCCs continuously, provide further training for HCCs regularly, and submit statistics on relevant services to SWD every quarter.
- (v) The Government has increased the past incentive payment at the standard rate of \$25 per hour for HCCs since April this year. For carers of infants and young children aged 0 to 3 or children with special learning needs, the rate has been increased to \$60 per hour. For carers of children aged 3 to 9, the rate has been increased to \$40 per hour.
- (vi) SWD will continue to review the overall implementation of relevant services. At that time, there was one service team in each of the 18 districts in Hong Kong. Taking into consideration the service needs of each district, SWD planned to establish an additional service team in districts where service demand was greater in the fourth quarter of this year.

Any Other Business

9. Members said that they had once visited residential care homes for persons with disabilities in the district with SWD, and recommended the Department to arrange visits/tours to the social welfare facilities in the district, so that Members could further learn about the social welfare facilities/policies in the district and provide relevant information to the residents.

10. Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing)³, SWD, pointed out that Social Welfare Office prepares an annual welfare work plan every year, and proposed introducing the welfare work plan to Members in the subsequent SWC meeting. In addition, SWD noted the recommendation put forward by Members on arranging visits/tour to social welfare facilities.

Date of Next Meeting

11. The next meeting was scheduled to be held on 18 June 2024 (Tuesday).

Kwai Tsing District Council Secretariat
June 2024