

(Translation)

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

Date: 17 December 2024

Time: 2:30 p.m. – 3:41 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
Mr YU Kin-chung, Philip (Co-opted Member)	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Mr ZHAO Rong (Co-opted Member)	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Mr LAW King-shing, BBS, MH, JP (Co-opted Member)	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting

Standing Representatives of Departments and Institutions

Ms YUEN Mo-kuen, Monita	Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Tsuen Wan/Kwai Tsing) ³ , Social Welfare Department
Ms LIN Shui-gor, Miranda	Senior School Development Officer (Kwai Tsing) ³ ,

Mr TSANG Kin-hang, Gary	Education Bureau Labour Officer (Workplace Consultation Promotion) ² , Labour Department
Ms WAN Yuet-ting, Clarissa	Assistant District Officer (Kwai Tsing), Kwai Tsing District Office

Representatives of Departments and Institutions Attending by Invitation

Mr LAM Ka-yan, Leo	Social Work Officer (Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing Planning and Coordinating Team) ² , Social Welfare Department
Mr LEE Yip-ki, Ricky	Senior Manager, Hong Kong Family Welfare Society Kwai Chung (South) Integrated Family Service Centre
Mr WONG Chun, Horace	Manager, Hong Kong Family Welfare Society Kwai Chung (South) Integrated Family Service Centre

Secretary

Miss LEUNG Man-sin, Kammy	Executive Assistant (Kwai Tsing) District Council (5), Kwai Tsing District Office
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Opening Remarks

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

Confirmation of Minutes of the 5th Meeting (2024) held on 22 October 2024

2. Members endorsed the minutes unanimously.

Discussion Items

Introduction of the “Family-centric” Service of the Hong Kong Family Welfare Society

3. Representatives of the Hong Kong Family Welfare Society (“HKFWS”) introduced the service.
4. Members thanked Cheung Hang Service Centre of HKFWS for providing meal

delivery services to the elderly of Kwai Tsing District and praised the staff of HKFWS for their efficient and quality service. Besides, Members thanked Social Welfare Department (“SWD”) and HKFWS for their assistance and follow-ups regarding earlier incidents in the community, which have facilitated cross-sector collaborations among District Council (“DC”) members, members of the three committees, SWD and non-governmental organisations (“NGOs”). Members hoped that there would be more similar cross-sector collaborations in the future and that DC members and HKFWS would communicate more on social welfare activities, services and information.

Concern about the Situation among the Needy Elderly People and Persons with Disabilities in respect of the Installation and Utilisation of Indoor Emergency Alarm System

(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. 12/D/2024 and 12a/D/2024)

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

- (i) Many elderly people in the district speak different dialects as their mother tongues and encounter difficulties in using Emergency Alarm System (“EAS”). Therefore, Members recommended exchanges and co-operation between the Government and relevant Chinese Mainland departments so as to enhance the effectiveness of communication between EAS users and relevant companies through translation of dialects using gerontechnology (e.g. artificial intelligence systems);
- (ii) Expected that the issue of aging population would become increasingly severe. In view of the huge elderly population in Kwai Tsing District, government departments should formulate contingency plans in advance to support the healthcare system and alleviate its burden as far as possible. Members recommended that the Government refer to the practices of Chinese Mainland, such as making use of gerontechnology to help monitor the health conditions of the elderly with their consent. Members hoped that SWD could relay the views to policy bureaux;
- (iii) Recommended the coverage of the Community Care Service Voucher

Scheme for the Elderly (“CCSV”) be further expanded to include more gerontechnological products, so as to ensure that the elderly can age in place with support in a comprehensive manner;

- (iv) Many elderly people in the district are unfamiliar with SWD’s Subsidy Scheme for Provision of Emergency Call System Service (“Subsidy Scheme”) and the application procedures for EAS. Therefore, Members recommended that SWD step up its publicity efforts, such as contacting EAS-related organisations and holding large-scale lectures in the community;
- (v) The elderly told DC members that they had been unable to get assistance from the EAS hotline following the failure of their EAS at home. Furthermore, service providers and third parties remained unaware of the malfunction of the EAS, reflecting the existence of loopholes in relevant services;
- (vi) At that time, there were rather significant differences in the fees charged for EAS in the market, ranging from 100-odd dollars to 500 dollars. Services offered by different service providers of EAS varied, so Members recommended SWD to establish a monitoring mechanism for service quality and charging level of EAS services, as well as to print reference frameworks that introduce the service content, features and ranges of charges from different EAS service providers for public reference. Besides, the government departments were recommended to provide eligible persons with lists of relevant service providers and application guidelines regarding its scheme; and
- (vii) Proposed the establishment of a “four-tier framework” to enhance support for elderly singletons at four levels, namely individual, neighbourhood, community and elderly centres:
 - Individual: Relevant government departments could assess the physical functioning and health conditions of elderly singletons through the Standardised Care Need Assessment Mechanism for Elderly Services and regularly review whether frail elderly persons had installed EAS.
 - Neighbourhood: To motivate residents to establish neighbourhood

support and mutual assistance networks through District Services and Community Care Teams (“Care Teams”), so as to support and express care for singleton elderly.

- **Community:** Home and Youth Affairs Bureau was recommended to coordinate with SWD to optimise Care Teams’ database of singleton elderly. Such a measure could consolidate community networks, as well as enhance support for singleton and hidden elders.
- **Elderly Centres:** There were around 1.4 million elderly people aged 65 and above in Hong Kong, but only about 17% of them were members of elderly centres. Therefore, the Department was recommended to develop plans to strengthen publicity of elderly centres in order to raise the membership ratio.

6. Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Tsuen Wan/Kwai Tsing)³, SWD, introduced the reply document and responded as follows:

- (i) In March 2024, SWD launched District Services and Community Care Teams - Pilot Scheme on Supporting Elderly and Carers (“Pilot Scheme”) and designated Tsuen Wan and Southern districts as pilot areas. Care Teams were arranged to help identify needy singleton and doubleton elderly households, carers of elderly persons and carers of persons with disabilities through home visits or contact. Besides, follow-up care and follow-up support services were offered to facilitate the referral of cases in need to social welfare service units for follow-ups. The Subsidy Scheme under the Pilot Scheme had been launched in April 2024 to provide needy as well as eligible elderly people and persons with disabilities with a safety net, so as to increase support for them and reduce accident risk. District Services and Community Care Teams - Scheme on Supporting Elderly and Carers would be expanded to all districts in Hong Kong in April 2025 to render support to the elderly and carers across the 18 districts. Meanwhile, the Subsidy Scheme, which subsidises eligible elderly persons and persons with disabilities to install and use EAS, would also cover users in need of such services across the 18 districts (including Kwai Tsing District). By then, Care Teams could

refer cases to designated EAS service operators for follow-ups;

- (ii) SWD noted Members' views that the CCSV Scheme should cover the application of gerontechnology and that the publicity for the Subsidy Scheme should be strengthened;
- (iii) "The Chief Executive's 2024 Policy Address" stated that the Government would explore the setting up of an inter-disciplinary and inter-organisation database. It would cover carers of elderly persons and carers of persons with disabilities and the use of identification tools designed by university teams for the detection of high-risk cases and early intervention and support;
- (iv) At that time, under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ("CSSA") Scheme implemented by SWD, CSSA recipients who met relevant criteria could apply to SWD for a grant to pay for the cost of EAS. If CSSA recipients wished to apply for the EAS Grant, they should first enquire of the Social Security Field Unit responsible for their CSSA cases about the application conditions and procedures before deciding to purchase the services. Eligible recipients had to choose for themselves the suitable EAS service providers. They would be provided with a grant on a reimbursement basis for a one-off installation cost (up to a maximum of \$2,500) or a monthly service charge (up to a maximum of \$100 per month). SWD did not maintain information of the EAS Grants received by CSSA recipients of various districts. Moreover, Hong Kong Housing Society and Housing Department had rolled out subsidy schemes for EAS; and
- (v) At that time, EAS was a commercial item provided by commercial institutions or non-profit-making organisations, and the service was not subvented by SWD. When needy persons were deciding to pay for EAS service, they could enquire of various service providers about the details of relevant products and services (e.g. information on the safety of the products, service regularity, coverage of the service and fees) for comparison.

Concern about Youth Drug Abuse and Enquiry into the Preventive Education and the Supportive Work offered by Social Welfare Department and Social Welfare Organisations

(Proposed by Ms WANG Chung-wing, Miss CHU Lai-ling, MH, Ms CHENG Lam, Ms Miranda CHAN Oi-yi, Ms GUO Huimin, Mr LAW King-shing, BBS, MH, JP, Mr NG

Yam-fung Benny, Ms LAM Chui-ling, MH, JP and Ms LEUNG Kar-ming, MH)
(SWC Paper Nos. 13/D/2024 and 13a/D/2024)

7. Members discussed the aforesaid matter, and put forth opinions as follows:
- (i) According to recent news reports, the youngest abuser of “space oil” was only 12 years old, reflecting the inadequacy of anti-drug education and publicity at that time. Members worried that some senior primary pupils would take drugs to prove that they had grown up and thus reckoned that relevant departments should pay more attention to the pupils. Members recommended that SWD co-operate with NGOs to extend anti-drug education and publicity activities to primary schools and remind school-based social workers to keep an eye on the drug abuse problem among pupils. Members also recommended that community publicity and education be enhanced to increase parents’ updated drug knowledge, thereby preventing their children from abusing drugs. Moreover, co-operation between parents and schools could contribute to early identification, intervention and more effective prevention of drug abuse among students;
 - (ii) Recommended that relevant departments consider conducting publicity work on social media and platforms commonly used by young people (such as Instagram), so as to raise the effectiveness of disseminating information to and exerting preventive efforts on target audience (i.e. the youth). Besides, the Department could consider producing practical anti-drug publicity materials (e.g. stationery such as rulers and pens) to enhance the publicity effect;
 - (iii) Recommended that Education Bureau (“EDB”) issue notices to schools and provide them with a QR code of the anti-drug programme “The Talk. Detox”, thereby encouraging and further motivating anti-drug education and publicity work of schools to prevent the inflow of emerging drugs like “space oil” into schools;
 - (iv) “The Chief Executive’s 2024 Policy Address” indicated that the control of the etomidate, an ingredient of “space oil”, would be stepped up and proposed bringing etomidate under control of the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance (Cap. 134) and listing it as a dangerous drug. Upon implementation of the proposal, illegal possession, smoking, inhaling,

ingestion or injection of “space oil” containing etomidate would be liable to a maximum penalty of 7 years’ imprisonment and a fine of \$1 million, while trafficking or illegal import of such a substance would be liable to a maximum penalty of life imprisonment and a fine of \$5 million. Members remarked that anti-drug education should not only cover differences between medicines and dangerous drugs, but also emphasise drug-related penalties to raise deterrence;

- (v) As “space oil” containing anaesthetic etomidate has rapid onset and short duration of action, the difficulty in identifying abusers and carrying out law enforcement may be increased. In this context, the Department should proactively study and implement corresponding plans to curb the spread of “space oil” and other drugs in schools and the community; and
- (vi) There were only 11 Counselling Centres for Psychotropic Substance Abusers (“Counselling Centres”) across 18 districts of Hong Kong. Some of the Counselling Centres have to serve more than one district and may be unable to meet community needs. Furthermore, there are many drug abusers in Kwai Tsing District while there is merely one Counselling Centre serving both Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing Districts, so the supporting facility may be insufficient to meet the demands of the population. In view of that, Members hoped that SWD could introduce more Counselling Centres and relevant service points for Kwai Tsing District.

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

- (i) Under the leadership of Narcotics Division (“ND”) of Security Bureau (“SB”), SWD subvented NGOs to operate 11 Counselling Centres and 2 Centres for Drug Counselling across the territory, rendering comprehensive anti-drug services and support to residents in all districts. At that time, Hong Kong Children & Youth Services – Sane Centre was the organisation that offered counselling centre service in Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing Districts. In terms of anti-drug prevention, publicity and education (including efforts against emerging drugs such as “space oil”), the Counselling Centre would organise anti-drug education and publicity activities for students of secondary schools, post secondary colleges and vocational training organisations, as well as other community members. Meanwhile, the

Counselling Centre would reach out to habitual/occasional/potentially psychotropic substance abusers through outreach and various means for early identification and timely intervention so as to help them stay away from drugs. SWD did not keep statistics on cases related to drugs (including emerging drugs like “space oil”) which had been received and handled by welfare organisations in Kwai Tsing District. Members’ opinion on the number of Counselling Centres, as well as the supply and demand of service would be relayed to relevant responsible units for consideration. In the event that cases in need of services are identified, they could be referred to Sane Centre for follow-ups;

- (ii) Noted Members’ views that anti-drug education and publicity activities should be stepped up and extended to primary schools. SWD would encourage relevant service centres to reach out to the needy and perform publicity work through various channels. Besides, Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing District Social Welfare Office coordinates local youth service units (e.g. Sane Centre) under the “Project A.I. - Accommodation • Inclusion” in order to support psychological and development needs of school-attending children and youth on multiple fronts both inside and outside schools. Members could also contact SWD to assist in matching suitable service units with primary schools in need and deliver relevant in-school support, education and publicity work; and
- (iii) ND of SB would launch a new anti-drug programme “The Talk. Detox”, which its first series “Vaping ‘space oil’ is the same as taking drugs” would have its premiere on 20 December 2024. The trailer for this series had been uploaded to ND’s Facebook and Instagram official accounts (“narcotics.divisionhk”), and Members and the public are welcome to watch.

9. Senior School Development Officer (Kwai Tsing)³, EDB, responded as follows:

- (i) EDB encouraged schools (including primary and secondary schools) to utilise the learning and teaching resources (including anti-drug animations, infographics and short videos) continuously developed by EDB and various government departments (e.g. ND of SB) in teaching students to stay away from psychotropic substances and resist harmful substances. Moreover, some secondary schools contacted the Police Community Relations Office for anti-drug education and publicity in schools. School-based social

workers also launched preventive education and anti-drug activities to foster a healthy school culture; and

- (ii) Noted Members' recommendation that anti-drug education and publicity efforts in schools should be strengthened. The recommendation would be relayed to relevant departments after the meeting.

Any Other Business

- 10. There was no other business.

Date of Next Meeting

- 11. The next meeting was scheduled to be held on 18 February 2025 (Tuesday).

Kwai Tsing District Council Secretariat
February 2025