

(Translation)

Minutes of the 5th Meeting of the Youth, Community Development and Innovation Committee of
Sham Shui Po District Council (7th Term)

Date: 17 October 2024 (Thursday)

Time: 9:30 a.m.

Venue: Conference Room, Sham Shui Po District Council

Present

Chairman

Mr HO Kwan-chau, Leo

Vice-Chairman

Mr LEUNG Ping-kin

Members

Ms WU Wanqiu

Ms WU Sze-wan

Mr CHEUNG Tak-wai

Mr CHAN Wai-ming, BBS, MH, JP

Mr CHAN Kwok-wai, MH

Mr CHAN Lung-kit

Ms CHEN Lihong

Ms CHUM Pik-wa

Mr WONG Chun-hung, Hanson

Dr WONG Chung-leung, JP

Ms LAU Pui-yuk, MH

Ms CHUNG Ching-may, MH

Mr LO Chi-chiu

Dr PONG Chiu-fai, MH

Co-opted Member

Mr LAM Wai-keung

In Attendance

Miss LAI Ho-ting, Ally

Ms YUEN Pui-yuk, Quinnie

Mr YEUNG Tsz-hin

Assistant District Officer (Sham Shui Po) 1

Senior Liaison Officer 2, Sham Shui Po District Office

Senior School Development Officer (Sham Shui Po)1, Education
Bureau

Ms LEUNG Shui-toi, Polo	Social Work Officer 1 (Planning & Coordinating), Sham Shui Po District, Social Welfare Department
Mr LI Yiu-ming, Leo	Assistant Police Community Relations Officer, Sham Shui Po District, Hong Kong Police Force
Ms CHONG Yuen-man	Community Liaison Officer, Police Community Relations Office, Sham Shui Po District, Hong Kong Police Force
 <u>Secretary</u>	
Miss LO Ki-chi, Becky	Assistant Executive Manager (District Council) 5, Sham Shui Po District Office

Opening Remarks

The Chairman welcomed members and representatives of government departments to the fifth meeting of the Youth, Community Development and Innovation Committee (“YCDIC”) of the seventh term of the Sham Shui Po District Council.

Item 1: Confirmation of Minutes of the Fourth Meeting of the Youth, Community Development and Innovation Committee

2. Members confirmed the above meeting minutes without amendment.

Item 2: Concern about the Physical and Mental Health of School Children

3. Members introduced the United College Student Wellness Programme of the Chinese University of Hong Kong (“Wellness Programme”).

4. The views of members were consolidated as follows: (i) noted that various government policy bureaux had been implementing different programmes supporting students’ mental health, including the Child Development Fund, the Strive and Rise Programme, as well as an ambassador programme designed for ethnic minorities and new immigrants; (ii) according to the latest data from the HKJC Centre for Suicide Research and Prevention of the University of Hong Kong, the suicide rate in Hong Kong was 13.6 last year, showing a slight decrease from the previous year. It was hoped that the community would continue to foster an atmosphere of mutual support to enhance residents’ mental health and further reduce the suicide rate; (iii) suggested adopting more preventive measures to enhance students’ resilience, rather than solely focusing on how to address mental health issues; (iv) suggested using Members’ ward offices as community contact points to assist residents in finding relevant resources and organising group activities; (v) suggested strengthening the referral mechanism with SWD to ensure that cases seeking help received professional support in a timely manner; (vi) suggested exploring ways to bring the Wellness Programme into the community and adopt creative methods to attract young people; (vii) thought that students’ emotional problems and mental health could be

influenced by a variety of factors, including family relationships, personality and physiological problems, and suggested implementing various measures to help students relax, such as ending school earlier or providing more after-school activities. Team building activities for classes could also help students establish peer relationships and support networks; (viii) suggested developing a community-based programme in Sham Shui Po with the assistance of universities, and collaborating with non-governmental organisations to promote the physical and mental health of young people through various aspect like arts and cultural activities; (ix) said that some students face issues such as school bullying and academic pressure without receiving substantial support, and suggested that the Education Bureau (“EDB”) should establish more effective monitoring and communication mechanisms to work closely with schools and the community to address these issues; (x) as at the start of each new school year, there would be cases of doubly non-permanent resident children and students who previously studied in the mainland feeling lost because they could not find school placements. It was hoped that EDB could provide more support for these students, including timely school placement arrangements; and (xi) suggested that EDB should take more measures to promote adolescent mental health. In addition to leveraging community resources, consideration should also be given to incorporate relevant content into the existing curricula and trainings.

5. The Chairman added that (i) there was information indicating that many mental health patients often experienced their first episode after the age of 14. Some students with mental health issues might face delays in treatment due to their inability to express themselves appropriately or because others failed to notice the signs in a timely manner. This could also be one of the reasons for the rising suicide rates among students in recent years; and (ii) it was suggested that schools should provide mental health support and with the assistance of peer groups and resources in the community to offer diverse services for students and their families, helping them to face and address pressures from family, school and interpersonal relationships.

6. Members added that (i) the efforts of the community and schools were noted, but there were still many issues that needed to be addressed; (ii) the various programmes lacked

coherence and had not effectively integrated with other activities; (iii) they agreed on the importance of linking culture, sports and other activities to promote the mental health and cultural development of members in the community; and (iv) they believed that it was necessary to combine the strengths of universities or experts, community resources and networks, along with the efforts of Members.

7. Mr YEUNG Tsz-hin gave a consolidated response: (i) EDB had established Regional Education Offices to provide placement assistance services to parents and students in need. Under the existing mechanism, respective regional education offices would offer the necessary assistance, including providing parents with a list of schools with available placements and/or offering immediate assistance in arranging placements according to specific circumstances. EDB would make every effort to ensure that there would be no case where children in need of schooling could not be admitted. If parents or students in the district encountered difficulties in searching for placements, Members or parents were welcome to contact the responsible section of the district (“the Section”); and (ii) for matters concerning students’ mental health, EDB had implemented the Three-tier School-based Emergency Mechanism in December 2023 through interdepartmental collaboration with the Health Bureau and SWD to help schools identify students with higher suicide risk early and provide them with appropriate support as soon as possible. Under the Emergency Mechanism, schools could fill out referral forms based on the circumstances of individual cases, and relevant departments would follow up upon receiving the referral forms. EDB had sent letters to all secondary schools in Hong Kong, notifying them of the extension of the implementation of the Three-tier School-based Emergency Mechanism until 31 December 2024. Besides, in response to local situation, the Section held a training seminar titled “Enhancing Students’ Mental Health: Professional Roles in Handling Campus Crises” for the 2023/24 school year, inviting educational psychologists from EDB and officers from the Police Negotiation Cadre to share their experiences with local principals, teachers and social workers.

8. Ms Polo LEUNG gave a consolidated response: (i) SWD was of great concern about public mental health. In addition to the Integrated Community Centre for Mental

Wellness and mainstream welfare units operated by SWD and subvented non-governmental organisations, under the second-tier emergency mechanism, SWD also collaborated with the Health Bureau and EDB and commissioned five non-governmental organisations to form an off-campus support network team. This team would immediately contact relevant students and arrange follow-up services upon receiving referrals, which included emergency intervention services, such as individual, group and online assessments, support and counselling; and (ii) the Sham Shui Po District Social Welfare Office had implemented the Job Shadowing Mentorship Programme since 2013. The programme targeted students in Form 4 or above who were referred by the social workers from their schools or Integrated Children and Youth Services Centres. The mentors in the programmes were all professionals from the business sector, and through mentor-mentee interactions, they had positive impact on students.

9. The views of members were consolidated as follows: (i) agreed that communication was easier among young people of similar age, but emphasised the need to strengthen training and be aware of the risks of peer influence to prevent worsening of the issues, particularly for students who might already be at a critical point and were more easily affected by negative emotions; (ii) suggested enhancing the promotion of EDB's "4Rs Mental Health Charter" to local schools, hoping for greater involvement; (iii) suggested inviting representatives from various industries to hold seminars on mental wellness for students, sharing success stories of different pathways; (iv) suggested establishing a central platform to allow families of students struggling with mental health problems to quickly and easily find suitable support organisations; (v) the existing systems and mechanisms provided insufficient practical support for mental health, and parents often had to seek costly services from psychiatrists and psychologists out of pocket; (vi) students from either low-income families or middle-class families might experience mental health problems; (vii) suggested that the university should specifically plan how to implement community-based mental health-related programmes and focus on targeted groups to enhance effectiveness; and (viii) suggested continuing to seek suitable stakeholders for collaboration and advancing follow-up work related to students' mental health on pathways suitable for the district.

10. Mr YEUNG Tsz-hin gave a consolidated response: (i) the Section occasionally received feedback from local schools indicating that some students required support and understood that parents wished to obtain assessments and assistance from school-based educational psychologists as soon as possible. In this regard, EDB had consistently encouraged schools to adopt the principle of “intervention before assessment”, providing necessary support based on the actual needs of students; and (ii) if there were specific cases that needed assistance, such as cases where students in the district were facing severe stress or issues related to school bullying, Members were welcome to contact the Section, which would follow up with the schools concerned. If necessary, the Section could also offer placement assistance for the parents and students involved.

11. Ms Polo LEUNG gave a consolidated response: (i) the need for a one-stop platform or booklets on information and services related to mental health would be reported to the department; and (ii) circumstances and family background of each student were different, and frontline staff had to conduct detailed assessment on each case and develop feasible and suitable welfare plans. If necessary, they could contact personnel from the District Social Welfare Offices, the Integrated Family Service Centres or other relevant units under SWD.

12. The Chairman concluded that: (i) the Committee noted the Wellness Programme and agreed that it could help young people in need from the point of view of the students; and (ii) the Committee hoped that continued efforts would be made on the follow-up work related to students’ mental health.

Item 3: Any Other Business

13. Members did not raise any other business.

Item 4: Date of Next Meeting

14. The next meeting would be held at 9:30 a.m. on 19 December 2024 (Thursday).

15. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10:35 a.m.

District Council Secretariat

Sham Shui Po District Council

December 2024