

Sha Tin District Council
Minutes of the 4th Meeting of
the Education and Welfare Committee in 2018

Date : 12 July 2018 (Thursday)
Time : 10:00 am
Venue : Sha Tin District Council Conference Room
 4/F, Sha Tin Government Offices

<u>Present</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Time of joining the meeting</u>	<u>Time of leaving the meeting</u>
Ms LAM Chung-yan (Chairman)	DC Member	10:00 am	11:41 am
Mr WONG Fu-sang, Tiger (Vice-Chairman)	”	10:00 am	11:41 am
Mr HO Hau-cheung, SBS, MH	DC Chairman	10:00 am	11:19 am
Mr PANG Cheung-wai, Thomas, SBS, JP	DC Vice-Chairman	10:00 am	10:27 am
Mr CHAN Billy Shiu-yeung	DC Member	10:11 am	11:41 am
Ms CHAN Man-kuen	”	10:00 am	11:23 am
Mr CHIU Chu-pong, Sunny	”	10:33 am	11:41 am
Mr CHIU Man-leong	”	10:00 am	11:41 am
Mr LEUNG Ka-fai, Victor	”	10:00 am	10:49 am
Mr LI Sai-hung	”	10:12 am	11:41 am
Mr LI Sai-wing	”	10:00 am	11:41 am
Mr LI Wing-shing, Wilson	”	10:00 am	11:41 am
Mr MOK Kam-kwai, BBS	”	10:00 am	10:39 am
Mr NG Kam-hung	”	10:10 am	11:41 am
Ms PONG Scarlett Oi-lan, BBS, JP	”	10:00 am	10:56 am
Mr PUN Kwok-shan, MH, JP	”	10:00 am	11:18 am
Mr SIU Hin-hong	”	10:00 am	11:41 am
Mr TING Tsz-yuen	”	10:00 am	11:30 am
Mr TONG Hok-leung	”	10:12 am	11:41 am
Ms TSANG So-lai	”	10:20 am	11:41 am
Ms TUNG Kin-lei	”	10:00 am	11:41 am
Mr WAI Hing-cheung	”	10:00 am	11:41 am
Mr WONG Hok-lai	”	10:00 am	11:15 am
Mr WONG Ka-wing, MH	”	10:00 am	11:41 am
Ms WONG Ping-fan, Iris	”	10:14 am	11:41 am
Mr YAU Man-chun	”	10:16 am	11:41 am
Mr YIP Wing	”	10:00 am	11:41 am
Mr YIU Ka-chun, MH	”	10:12 am	11:41 am
Mr YUNG Ming-chau, Michael	”	10:00 am	11:41 am
Mr MOK Man-lok, Mannix (Secretary)	Executive Officer (District Council) 1 / Sha Tin District Office		

<u>In Attendance</u>	<u>Title</u>
Ms CHING Oi-ho, Sandy	Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Shatin) 1 (Acting) / Social Welfare Department
Ms CHIU Lo-man	Senior School Development Officer (Sha Tin) 4 / Education Bureau

In Attendance

Ms LAU Yuk-yee, Lydia

Ms CHENG Siu-ling, Katy

Ms CHENG Yuk-kam, Brenda

Mr YUEN Chun-kit, Derek

TitleHousing Manager (Tai Po, North and Sha Tin 1) /
Housing DepartmentChief Liaison Officer
Sha Tin District OfficeSenior Liaison Officer (East) /
Sha Tin District OfficeSenior Executive Officer (District Council) /
Sha Tin District Office**In Attendance by Invitation**

Ms LI Wing-sze, Grace

TitleAssistant District Social Welfare Officer (Sha Tin) 2 /
Social Welfare Department**Absent**

Mr CHAN Nok-hang

Mr CHING Cheung-ying, MH

Mr MAK Yun-pui

Mr WONG Yue-hon

Ms YUE Shin-man

Mr CHAN Kwok-keung, James

Mr HUI Yui-yu, Rick

Mr LAI Tsz-yan

Mr LEE Chi-wing, Alvin, MH

Title

DC Member (Application for leave of absence received)

” (”)

” (”)

” (”)

” (”)

” (No application for leave of absence received)

” (”)

” (”)

” (”)

Action

The Chairman welcomed members and representatives of government departments to the fourth meeting of the Education and Welfare Committee (EWC) of this year. She hoped that members would attend the meeting on time.

Application for Leave of Absence

2. The Chairman said that the Secretariat had received applications for leave of absence in writing from the following members:

Mr CHAN Nok-hang	Official commitment
Mr CHING Cheung-ying	”
Mr MAK Yun-pui	”
Mr WONG Yue-hon	”
Ms YUE Shin-man	”

3. Members unanimously endorsed the applications for leave of absence submitted by the members above.

Confirmation of the Minutes of the Meeting Held on 2 May 2018

(EWC Minutes 3/2018)

4. The Chairman said “increase” in paragraph 20b should be deleted, and “had not increased” should be added before the full stop.

5. Members unanimously endorsed the amendment and confirmed the above minutes.

Discussion Items

2018-2019 Revised Work Plans and Funding Applications of Working Groups under the Committee

(Paper No. EW 16/2018)

6. The Chairman said under Order 40(6) of the Sha Tin District Council Standing Orders, “a standing working group” should draw up the work plan for the first quarter of each financial year, and submit it to the relevant committee for endorsement. Any amendment to the work plan should be submitted to the relevant committee for endorsement. “The standing working group” should submit the work plan to the Sha Tin District Council (STDC) for endorsement if necessary. She asked whether any members had to declare interest for being members of the co-organisers in the revised work plans and funding applications. These co-organisers included the Pharmaceutical Society Charitable Foundation Limited, the Hong Kong Single Parents Association, Silent Youth Power and Love in Society.

7. Ms Scarlett PONG declared her interest as the Chairperson of the Pharmaceutical Society Charitable Foundation Limited, in which she worked as a volunteer and received no remuneration.

8. The Chairman said in accordance with the usual practice, members who held substantive positions in the relevant organisations could attend the meeting after declaring their interests, but they had no right to vote on the funding applications.

9. Members unanimously endorsed the above paper.

Updated Membership Lists of Working Groups under the Committee

(Paper No. EW 17/2018)

10. Members unanimously endorsed the above paper.

Question

Question to be Raised by Mr WONG Fu-sang, Tiger on the Services Provided by the Integrated Community Centre for Mental Wellness in Sha Tin District

(Paper No. EW 12/2018)

11. The views of Mr Tiger WONG were summarised below:

- (a) each Integrated Community Centre for Mental Wellness (Mental Wellness Centre) had to provide service for 330 000 people. The social workers in Mental Wellness Centres not only had to handle cases but also administrative work. In some cases, the clients could not be contacted, and while in some cases, the clients were classified as mentally stable. He asked the Social Welfare Department (SWD) whether random reviews were conducted for such cases. If cases could not be handled in a comprehensive way due to heavy workload and proper follow-up actions could not be taken, patients might have a

bigger risk to relapse. Medication might not be able to cure mental illnesses completely, but it could at least help patients fall asleep. However, patients often refused to take medicine. If the cases were not handled by social workers carefully, the SWD would often terminate the cases after a certain period of time. He enquired of the SWD whether it would review such a practice and follow up cases more carefully; and

- (b) the paper showed that from 2012 to 2017, the files of around 500 cases were closed as the clients could not be contacted. He asked the SWD whether it would follow up these cases. Since the Police deployed officers according to the information provided by informants, if the informants did not state clearly that the case involved mental patients, only ambulances would be sent to the scene. He asked whether government departments provided information to frontline staff to ensure their safety.

12. The views of Mr LI Sai-wing were summarised below:

- (a) he agreed that the integration of ex-mental patients into the community should be encouraged. However, apart from the cases that were mentioned in the question, there was a similar case in Yiu On Estate in his constituency: an ex-mental patient did not receive enough attention or supervision and was in an unstable condition. Recently, the patient had even held a knife and caused trouble. Therefore, residents were so worried and hoped that he could reflect the situation;
- (b) he asked how the SWD or its service organisations could paid more attention to ex-mental patients and assisted them to integrate into the community to avoid tragedies. He asked whether it was because of manpower, or because there was no task force to follow up cases closely, and whether the number of follow-up actions should be reviewed; and
- (c) ex-mental patients' condition might change rapidly within half a year. A member of the public once told him that he had witnessed an ex-mental patient discarding a bag of medicine like rubbish. Many ex-mental patients refused to take medicine to keep their condition under control. However, over the past years, it seemed that the Government had not taken any effective measures to deal with this problem. If the SWD was understaffed, it should reflect the problem to the Government to deal with it.

13. The views of Mr Michael YUNG were summarised below:

- (a) there were 2 special cases in his constituency. There was an aged woman who might have delusional disorder always thought that she was harmed. The SWD staff had carried out a preliminary assessment and confirmed that the aged woman had delusional disorder. When the SWD contacted the aged woman, she said she did not really want to take psychiatric drugs. It might be because the traditional drugs provided by the Government caused more side-effects than the new ones, and might cause discomfort. He asked whether the SWD would reflect the issue to the Hospital Authority (HA), the Department of Health and

the Food and Health Bureau to conduct a review, so as to prescribe drugs that caused less side-effects as far as possible;

- (b) in another case, a public rental housing (PRH) tenant did not get along with his neighbour well and attempted to hit the metal gate of his neighbour by a hammer. The police sent the tenant to the accident and emergency department in a hospital. However, as the tenant was left unattended and there was no SWD staff stationed in the hospital, the tenant left the hospital himself before the doctor could handle his case. The handling of the incident posed a threat to the community and the resident was very dissatisfied. He had had a meeting with the Police and formulated some follow-up measures afterwards. The resident was very upset and requested to be transferred to another flat;
- (c) there was only 1 Mental Wellness Centre for every 330 000 people. He enquired how the manpower of each rank was allocated, and asked about the number of new cases, cases being followed up and terminated cases;
- (d) he was aware that the HA used many generic drugs whose quality might not be good enough. He opined that the HA should not just consider the cost but to provide the best medication which caused less side-effects to patients; and
- (e) the SWD said that there were 2 Mental Wellness Centres and 3 service points in Sha Tin. The SWD might believe that as there were 3 Mental Wellness Centres in the Sha Tin District serving some 600 000 people, the coverage was already above the standard. However, he believed that the SWD should take the unique geographical setting of the Sha Tin District into account. Before the establishment of Ma On Shan (North) Integrated Family Service Centre, residents had to go to the Take Your Way Clubhouse of Stewards at Sha Kok Estate for service. He enquired how the manpower of each Mental Wellness Centre was arranged as the severity of each case was different. He asked whether the number of cases handled by each social worker could be provided after the meeting.

14. The views of Mr SIU Hin-hong were summarised below:

- (a) as the image of Mental Wellness Centres was rather negative, residents had a sense of fear and resistance. If the centres were set up at PRH estates, residents would be worried about their own safety. If the SWD could enhance community education and the understanding of mental illnesses among residents, the image of Mental Wellness Centres could be improved, and thus it would be easier for the community to accept the centres;
- (b) he suggested that the change of names be considered. For example, substituting “psychosis” for “mental illness”, or even not using the names to avoid any labelling effect;
- (c) although ex-mental patients still needed treatment, he believed that social workers could not play the role in provision of treatment. It was most important for clinical psychologists and doctors to provide treatment. It might

not be effective if there were only social workers being stationed in Mental Wellness Centres;

- (d) he believed that psychiatric nurses should visit patients with social workers. In the course of treatment, apart from pharmaceutical treatment, cognitive-behavioural therapy was also important. Therefore, he was glad to know that service provided by clinical psychologists was also available in Mental Wellness Centres; and
- (e) he asked the SWD that before transferring services to Mental Wellness Centres, whether the SWD had evaluated their capacity.

15. The views of Ms Scarlett PONG were summarised below:

- (a) for ex-mental patients, the most important point was to receive medical treatment from doctors. However, the time for consultation was limited and doctors might not be able to examine the patients carefully before prescribing medicine. Ex-mental patients might not need medication in most cases and the SWD should think about how treatment should be improved. It was common for people to feel reluctant to take medicine. Pharmacists played an important role in this aspect and should explain the uses of the drugs in detail to patients. She opined that the SWD should think about how it could complement the service of pharmacists to help patients take medicine on time. She believed that it would be an opportunity for Mental Wellness Centres and was worth consideration; and
- (b) she agreed with Mr Michael YUNG's views. The HA currently used many generic drugs which costed less but were of lower quality. She opined that the HA should provide the best, instead of the cheapest, medicine to patients so that they could have better recovery.

16. Mr YIP Wing shared a case that he encountered. He knew an elder in seventies who seemed to suffer from dementia. When the elder visited his office, the elder would cry and complain about his/her home being burgled and disturbed by the noise from upper floors every time. However, he had never heard any noise when he visited the elder's home. He asked how the Government could persuade persons with suspected mental illnesses to seek medical treatment, and whether it could provide more resources so that social workers could visit persons with suspected mental illnesses more frequently.

17. The views of Mr PUN Kwok-shan were summarised below:

- (a) he hoped that the SWD would share its experience in implementing medical-social collaboration in the Kwai Tsing District. Since the HA already had a very heavy workload, he believed that it would be better if the SWD could take the lead in the implementation of medical-social collaboration that ex-mental patients needed;
- (b) drug dependence might be caused when patients took medicine very often. If patients did not take the appropriate dosages of medicine on time, the result

might not be satisfactory. He asked the SWD whether it could provide more assistance. If a mental patient engaged in extreme behaviours, whether there were any mandatory medical measures that could be taken; and

- (c) he asked whether the Housing Department (HD) had conducted any assessment when allocating PRH units to ex-mental patients. Whether the assessment was done by doctors or the SWD, and factors including floor, location, neighbours, etc., were taken into account, and how the transfer requirement made by neighbours would be dealt with.

18. The views of Mr WONG Ka-wing were summarised below:

- (a) there were mental patients of this kind in the housing estate that he lived in, and some of them did not affect others. For example, a mental patient went to his office every day and read out the content on the leaflets then left. However, some patients caused nuisance to other residents. For example, there was a person who was incontinent in the housing estate he lived in. Members or residents were unable to know whether these patients received medication or treatment. What they were concerned most was how they could submit the relevant information to the SWD for follow-up actions, so that the patients would receive appropriate treatment; and
- (b) he asked whether there was any simple legal procedure that could be initiated by the SWD to require patients to receive mandatory treatment. For example, requiring patients to report to hospitals every day and take medicine under supervision. Mental patients were quite common in Hong Kong and he believed that members had quite a lot of relevant information. He hoped that the SWD would have more communication with members in terms of legislation, or when transferring cases.

19. The views of the Chairman were summarised below:

- (a) Mental Wellness Centres had been established for some time, but she found out that even members who were most familiar with community issues did not know much about the service and operation of the centres. She hoped that the SWD would review its work in this regard;
- (b) she asked how the SWD would follow up the situation in which ex-mental patients might refuse to take medicine;
- (c) if the SWD had close contact with the patients and their families, there would be fewer problems. She enquired about the SWD's work in the past in this regard; and
- (d) she believed that these cases could not be dealt with in one or two days, but the cooperation between several government departments would be required instead. Recently, in her constituency, someone hit the fire doors with an iron hammer and disturbed the residents of a few floors. Finally, various parties jointly dealt with the case. The SWD should enhance public education on how similar cases should be dealt with.

20. Ms Grace LI, Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Sha Tin) 2 of the SWD gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) she thanked Members for attaching great importance to and expressing concern about mental health service. Integrated Community Centres for Mental Wellness (Mental Wellness Centres) were established in 2010 and 1 centre was set up for every 330 000 people. There were 2 Mental Wellness Centres in Sha Tin, which were run by the Stewards and the New Life Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association respectively. 3 service points were set up: the centre in Sha Kok Estate and the temporary centre in Sun Chui Estate had come into operation; the centre in Yiu On Estate was currently under renovation and would commence operation by the end of this year; the temporary centre in Sun Chui Estate would be relocated to Mei Lam Estate. The service in the Tai Wai District was provided by the New Life Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association while the service in those areas in the Sha Tin District other than the Tai Wai District was provided by the Stewards;
- (b) the Government established the Mental Wellness Centres by reorganising resources to reinforce the support for persons with suspected mental illnesses living in the community who had yet to receive medical care, as well as their families. Manpower and resources increased in each financial year. As at the last financial year, the resources had increased by 2.4 times, that is, from over \$100 million in 2010 to over \$300 million. An additional fund of over \$30 million was provided in the 2018-2019 Budget for the Mental Wellness Centres for recruiting additional clinical psychologists and social workers. Therefore, although the numbers of Mental Wellness Centres remained the same, the manpower had been doubled, including social workers, psychiatric nurses, occupational therapists, peer counsellors, etc.;
- (c) social workers, nurses and occupational therapists could all provide casework service and each Mental Wellness Centre could deploy manpower flexibly. For Members' views regarding the manpower arrangement of Mental Wellness Centres, the number of visits and random check on terminated cases, they would be relayed to the Headquarters;
- (d) in respect of persuading persons with suspected mental illnesses to receive medical treatment, as every case was different, the staff would handle each case flexibly according to professional assessment. If persons with suspected mental illnesses were not willing to receive services but their families agreed to seek help from Mental Wellness Centres, the Centres would provide assistance to the families. The Centres were aware that patients might not take the initiative to receive medical treatment, so services would not be terminated simply because the patients had turned down the assistance once. If patients or persons with suspected mental illnesses were assessed to be posing a risk to the safety of their own or others, under the Mental Health Ordinance, qualified social workers, doctors or families might apply to the court for a hospital order to hospitalise the patients for treatment on a compulsory basis. The Mental Wellness Centres in the Sha Tin District worked closely with the HA and had regular meetings with doctors to discuss how to handle special/difficult cases;

- (e) in respect of the medication of mental patients, social workers in the Centres could serve as a bridge between patients and doctors, and relay to the doctors the side-effects that the patients experienced after taking the medicine;
- (f) in respect of the follow-up service, Mental Wellness Centres had adopted certain methods to assist in patients' recovery including: i) provision of day vocational training and activities to provide continuous support to ex-mental patients; ii) rehabilitation needs of patients were followed up through casework counselling. In 2017 and 2018, the number of outreach visits of the 2 Mental Wellness Centres in the Sha Tin District both exceeded 6 000, while the number of new clients in the Sha Tin District in the last financial year was around 760;
- (g) in respect of the monitoring of services and cooperation, the operation of Mental Wellness Centres was monitored by the Headquarters and apart from that, district liaison groups were set up in each district. The SWD and the HA co-hosted meetings and members included: Mental Wellness Centres, the Police, the HD, Integrated Family Service Centres, medical teams, and the Medical Social Services Units, etc. Cooperation with Mental Wellness Centres and work strategy were discussed at the meetings. Besides, the Sha Tin District Social Welfare Office of the SWD kept contact with STDC Members to exchange views on the service of Mental Wellness Centres. Publicity activities would be held during Sha Tin Festival 2018 to enhance the understanding of the service of Mental Wellness Centres among Members and residents;
- (h) currently, the names of the Mental Wellness Centres were quite neutral, for example, "Take Your Way Clubhouse" and "The Wellness Centre". Members were welcomed to contact the 2 Mental Wellness Centres in Sha Tin directly to discuss cases. The telephone number of the Wellness Centre was 3552 5460, while the number of Take Your Way Clubhouse of Stewards was 2645 1263; and
- (i) clients had their own reasons for discontinuing service. Under the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance, Mental Wellness Centres could not transfer the personal information of clients who could not be contacted to the Police or other organisations. The Fire Services Department was currently keeping record of the usage of emergency services and did not transfer the information to other government departments.

21. Ms Lydia LAU, Housing Manager (Tai Po, North and Sha Tin 1) of the HD gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) she said as housing resources were very limited, the HD could only allocate vacant PRH units by the computer system. The SWD might process the information of some of the applicants, but would not provide their medical reports. Moreover, mental patients in severe condition might not be arranged to live in the community. The HD would provide objective information of PRH units to potential residents as far as possible, and would also allocate units on floors with accessible lifts to wheelchair users; and

- (b) if an unfortunate incident had happened in an unit before, the HA would inform the PRH applicant and allowed them to decide whether they would take the unit. Estate offices would arrange flat transfer at discretion if the residents had special needs. The Department also tried to avoid labelling individuals in PRH estates.

22. The Chairman suggested that the SWD send the contact methods of Mental Wellness Centres to all members by email. Information related to manpower arrangement could be provided after the meeting. She also asked the SWD to convey to the Headquarters members' views on how cases that could not be contacted should be handled.

Information Item

Reports of Working Groups
(Paper No. EW 18/2018)

23. Members noted the above paper.

Information Paper

Number of Children Referred to Public Sector Primary and Secondary Schools in Sha Tin District Provided by the Education Bureau
(Paper No. EW 19/2018)

24. The views of Mr YAU Man-chun were summarised below:

- (a) the paper provided by the Education Bureau (EDB) showed that only a few students were transferred to schools in the Sha Tin District. However, as far as he was aware, quite a number of cases referred to the EDB by members were still being processed. Many parents in Shui Chuen O Estate had already submitted applications for transfer of schools for their children, but arrangements had yet been made;
- (b) if parents called the EDB, they would be told to lodge an application to the schools on their own first, and this made them feel helpless. It was difficult for the parents to apply to the schools on their own in the Tai Wai and Sha Tin School Nets because even if the schools accepted their application forms and arranged tests for their children, the schools would only admit their children when school places were available. The EDB even told the parents that they might consider the schools in Ma On Shan. He asked whether there were any remaining Primary 2 to 6 places in the Tai Wai and Sha Tin School Nets. If the relevant information was not available at the moment, he asked whether it could be provided after the meeting. He repeatedly asked the same question every year, but the EDB had never provided the data in the paper. He felt sorry about that; and
- (c) many parents said they would consider sending their children to schools not too far away from their homes, even for those schools in Tai Wai, if school places

were available. It was because it would be easier for them to drop off and pick up their children at schools. If they had to send their children to schools in Ma On Shan, due to inconvenient transportation, they would rather send their children to schools in the Kwai Tsing District.

25. The views of Mr Michael YUNG were summarised below:

- (a) the intake of various PRH estates would take place one by one. For example, 18 blocks in Shui Chuen O Estate, and in Shek Mun Estate, Phase 2, 3 blocks in the third quarter of this year, and another block in the first quarter of next year. However, as the construction of schools at the reserved site had just started, it caused problems to the whole district. It could be seen from the doubly non-permanent resident children problem to the present school places problem in the Sha Tin District that the EDB lacked vision and planning. He said he did not understand why schools were built only after the intake of a large PRH estate, let alone the worsening congestion problem at Shek Mun Interchange caused by the approval of the use of vacant school premises by an international school; and
- (b) he queried whether the EDB was serious about handling parents' requests for assistance in enrolling their children in schools in the middle of the school year. Although the residents of Shui Chuen O Estate had enquired of the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals, the school sponsoring body, about transfer of schools many times, the principal told them that the school had to await EDB's instruction before making any arrangements. Moreover, as residents would move in the new PRH estate in Fo Tan soon, he asked how this would be handled. He queried how the principle of vicinity could be fulfilled if the students living in Shui Chuen O Estate had to go to schools in Ma On Shan. He asked the EDB how it would handle the problem of small class teaching turning into large class size, and the problem brought by the Year of the Dragon Effect in the coming year.

26. The Chairman was disappointed that the EDB failed to provide various information. Members reminded the EDB every year to prepare the figures of school places in the Sha Tin District before the meetings so that members could fully get hold of the situation. She enquired whether schools were required to process the applications for transfer of schools within a certain timeframe.

27. Ms CHIU Lo-man, Senior School Development Officer (Sha Tin) 4 of the EDB gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) regarding the arrangement for transfer of schools, parents should go to the Regional Education Offices nearby in person for Placement Assistance Services. The EDB staff would endeavour to assist the parents in transferring their children to other schools to continue education. Parents could also contact schools directly to apply for admission for their children;
- (b) paper No. EW 19/2018 showed the number of student referrals from April to May. The EDB had also received more enquiries and applications recently. Generally speaking, there were more referrals when school terms ended and

during summer holidays. The number of referrals from June to July was still being counted and would be provided in the information paper Number of Children Referred to Public Sector Primary and Secondary Schools in Sha Tin District Provided by the Education Bureau at the next meeting; and

- (c) the EDB was aware that parents wished to enrol their children in schools nearby, and would offer assistance as far as possible. As in the past, factors including students' residential addresses, school places available in the district, school locations, etc., would be taken into consideration when the EDB referred students, who had to change schools due to removal, to public sector schools in the Sha Tin District. Generally speaking, schools would process the applications as soon as possible in accordance with school-based procedures upon receipt of applications of student referrals.

28. The views of Mr YAU Man-chun were summarised below:

- (a) he was handling a few cases and in one of the cases, the parents submitted the application for transfer of schools around April or May, but still had not been informed of any progress. The EDB said that it had received the application and was handling the case. He asked when the case would be completed. Members had been asking over the past 3 years how long it would take to process the applications. He asked whether the EDB could provide a concrete timeframe and enhance the administrative efficiency;
- (b) regarding the arrangement of transfer of schools for Primary 2 to 6 students, the EDB said it would place them in schools in the vicinity of their homes as far as possible. The former EDB representative had said that all places in the School Nets nearby had been taken up. He believed that the situation was the same in the School Net in Tai Wai. If students living in Shui Chuen O Estate had to go to schools in more remote areas in Ma On Shan, for example, the Ng Clan's Association Tai Pak Memorial School at Kam Ying Court, as the transportation was very inconvenient, it would take 1 hour and 15 minutes for the school bus to arrive at the school;
- (c) he asked why the EDB did not allow the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals Shui Chuen O Primary School to operate Primary 2 to 6 classes; and
- (d) he said he had not finished his speech and whether the speaking time could be extended.

29. The Chairman said members' speaking time could be extended for 30 seconds.

30. Mr YAU Man-chun said 30 seconds were not enough and thus he chose not to speak.

31. The Chairman said each member had 6 minutes to speak and should treasure the time. She heard that Mr YAU Man-chun had said "ridiculous". She demanded that the wording be put on record and opined that he should withdraw his remark.

32. Mr Michael YUNG advised everyone to stay calm and not to jeopardise the harmony. He opined that the EDB was the main cause of the problem. He did not understand why the number of transfer students or the number of students who needed referral because of removal could not be provided in the information paper. He was aware that the EDB had to take care of new arrival children, but it failed to provide the figures upon request every time. Members were therefore discontented. The EDB knew clearly when the intake of Shui Chuen O Estate would start, and he queried why the arrangement was still so poor. The principle of vicinity and small class teaching no longer existed. He believed that members should reflect the problems directly to the Secretary for Education when he visited the STDC and ask him how the problems, including the upcoming intake of housing estates along the south-bound and north-bound road sections in the constituency, should be handled.

33. The Chairman said members were concerned about the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals Shui Chuen O Primary School and why the EDB did not place transfer students in that school. She was aware that the EDB submitted a report to the EWC every year, and she hoped that the EDB would respond to members' concerns in the report. She was aware that members had their own views on the EDB's work. However, members should not slam the table when expressing their views, but should urge the government to work in a practical approach instead.

34. Ms CHIU Lo-man responded that the factors including students' residential address, school places available in the district, school locations, etc., would be taken into consideration when the EDB referred students, who had to change schools due to removal, to public sector schools in the Sha Tin District. Vacant classrooms of individual schools would be used when necessary to operate additional classes to address the new demand for Primary 2 to 6 places. Parents' different needs would also be addressed. In addition, regarding the information paper related to referral of students, the EDB had already included the number of students who needed to be referred due to their return to Hong Kong and removal since the last meeting as requested by the EWC.

35. The Chairman hoped that the EDB would respond to members' concerns if it submitted a work plan at the next meeting.

36. Members noted the above paper.

Date of Next Meeting

37. The next meeting was scheduled to be held at 10:00 am on 13 September 2018 (Thursday).

38. The meeting was adjourned at 11:41 am.

Sha Tin District Council Secretariat
STDC 13/15/35