

Sha Tin District Council
Minutes of the 4th Meeting of
the Social Welfare and Youth Committee in 2025

Date : 9 July 2025 (Wednesday)
Time : 2:30 pm
Venue : Sha Tin District Office Conference Room 441
 4/F, Sha Tin Government Offices

<u>Present</u>	<u>Time of joining the meeting</u>	<u>Time of leaving the meeting</u>
Mr LEUNG Ka-fai, MH (Chairman)	2:30 pm	3:39 pm
Miss TUNG Kin-lei (Vice Chairman)	2:30 pm	3:39 pm
Mr WONG Wai-shing	2:30 pm	3:39 pm
Mr KU Wai-ping	2:30 pm	3:39 pm
Mr CHU Wun-chiu	2:30 pm	3:39 pm
Miss LEE Ching-yee, Janet, MH	2:30 pm	3:39 pm
Mr NG Kai-tai	2:30 pm	3:39 pm
Ms LAM Siu-man	2:30 pm	3:39 pm
Ms LAM Yuk-wa	2:30 pm	3:39 pm
Mr LAM Yu-sing	2:30 pm	3:38 pm
Ms LAM Chung-yan, Nancy, MH	2:30 pm	3:39 pm
Dr LAM Kong-kwan	2:30 pm	3:39 pm
Mr YIU Ka-chun, MH	2:30 pm	3:39 pm
Mr HA Kim-kwan	2:30 pm	3:39 pm
Mr AU Chi-on, Paul	2:30 pm	3:39 pm
Ms GUO Xuantong	2:30 pm	3:39 pm
Mr LEUNG Chun-pong, Maverick	2:30 pm	3:39 pm
Mr LEUNG Ka-wai	2:30 pm	3:39 pm
Mr CHAN Tan-tan	2:30 pm	3:39 pm
Miss CHAN Hiu-ying	2:30 pm	3:39 pm
Miss MOK Hei-man	2:30 pm	3:39 pm
Mr WONG Yue-hon	2:30 pm	3:39 pm
Ms WONG Po-yee	2:30 pm	3:39 pm
Mr YEUNG Ying-hon, Ronald	2:30 pm	3:39 pm
Mr TSOI Ming-yang	2:30 pm	3:39 pm
Mr DENG Kairong, BBS, MH, JP	2:30 pm	3:39 pm
Mr CHOI Wai-shing	2:30 pm	3:39 pm
Mr LAU Tak-wing	2:30 pm	3:39 pm
Miss LAW Yuen-pui	2:30 pm	3:39 pm
Ms LO Tai-suen, Ada	2:30 pm	3:39 pm
Ms PONG Scarlett Oi-lan, BBS, JP	2:30 pm	3:39 pm
Ms KUNG Mei-chi	2:30 pm	3:39 pm
Mr LEE Kang-pan	2:30 pm	3:39 pm
Mr CHAU Ping-him	2:30 pm	3:39 pm
Ms YIP Shuk-kuen	2:30 pm	3:39 pm
Ms YEUNG Suet-man, Kelly (Secretary)	Executive Officer (District Council)1, Sha Tin District Office	

In Attendance

Ms ZHONG Shek-wa, Sophia
Mr LEE Man-fai, Dave

Ms WONG So-man, Katrina

Mrs LAU HO Man-wai

Ms CHOY Yuk-ling, Elaine

Inspector WONG Hiu-lam, Shirleen

Ms WONG Mo-sze, Nancy

Title

Assistant District Officer (Sha Tin)2

Senior Executive Officer (District Council),
Sha Tin District Office

Executive Officer I (District Council)3,
Sha Tin District Office

Senior School Development Officer (Shatin)5,
Education Bureau

Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Sha Tin)2,
Social Welfare Department

Assistant Police Community Relations Officer (Youth
Engagement), Shatin District, Hong Kong Police Force
Labour Officer (Workplace Consultation Promotion),
Labour Department

In Attendance by Invitation

Ms YEUNG Kai, Venus

Mr CHAN Yee, Wilson

Mr NGAI Wing-chung, Patrick

Mr LAM Ding-fung

Dr CHU Wing-ho, Rico

Ms Clara LEUNG

Title

Senior School Development Officer (Shatin)2,
Education Bureau

Chief Management Services Officer (Digital Inclusion and
Research)2, Digital Policy Office

Senior Systems Manager (Digital Inclusion and Research)4,
Digital Policy Office

Chief Operation Officer (Community Dental Service),
Department of Health

Senior Dental Officer (Healthy Teeth Collaboration),
Department of Health

Deputy Project Manager,
Putonghua Culture Association

The Chairman welcomed members and representatives of government departments and organisation to the fourth meeting of the Social Welfare and Youth Committee this year.

Application for Leave of Absence

2. The Chairman said that the Sha Tin District Council (STDC) Secretariat had not received any application for leave of absence in writing from members prior to the meeting.

Confirmation of Minutes of Meeting

Minutes of the Meeting Held on 7 May 2025
(SWYC Minutes 3/2025)

3. Members unanimously endorsed the above minutes.

Discussion Items

Brief Introduction of the “Smart Silver” Digital Inclusion Programme for Elders
(Paper No. SWYC 15/2025)

4. Representatives of the Digital Policy Office (DPO) and Putonghua Culture Association briefly introduced the paper.
5. The Chairman invited members to speak.
6. Members enquired about the following matters:
 - (a) the criteria for setting up a community-based help desk (help desk) and the possibility to expand services to more areas;
 - (b) the percentage of repeated requests for assistance from the elderly; and
 - (c) the major scope of problem that elderly people often encountered.
7. Members' views and suggestions were as follows:
 - (a) members agreed that the elderly had increasing learning needs for digital technology, which was even more significant when their family members were outside of Hong Kong;
 - (b) members agreed that community participation could expand its influence like seeds, helping more elderly people;
 - (c) while the elderly often visited ward offices of District Council (DC) members to learn digital knowledge and how to use smartphones, it was difficult for them to completely master digital skills due to limited memory and learning capacity. Consequently, DC members had to teach them multiple times;
 - (d) as a result of limited community resources, the five help desks were insufficient to address all demands. Members suggested that the STDC and District Services and Community Care Teams (Care Teams) work together to enhance promotion and service capacity of the programme to attract participation of more elderly people;
 - (e) members suggested that the DPO add assessments or tasks to the training courses for the elderly to review their learning outcomes, so as to ensure that they were able to apply the knowledge in practice; and
 - (f) ward offices of DC members provided assistance to the elderly in smartphone usage every day, which costed plenty of human resources. Members suggested using video clips to aid teaching and also reviewing the room for future optimisation to improve teaching efficiency.
8. A representative of the DPO gave a consolidated response as follows:
 - (a) he agreed that the elderly needed repeated practice during learning to enhance memorisation of digital technology. The existing training guidelines suggested that after teaching, organisations should employ relaxing methods such as mini quizzes to help elderly people revise and consolidate what they had learnt;
 - (b) there were staff at help desks providing one-on-one technical support services to help elderly people in need solve problems associated with mobile phone usage;

- (c) he added that aside from the five help desks operating at fixed time and locations, the implementing organisations also arranged mobile service stations from time to time to address the demand of elderly people living in remote areas; and
- (d) since the “Smart Silver” Digital Inclusion Programme for Elders (“Smart Silver” Programme) was officially launched in December 2024, the DPO had been regularly collecting service data from implementing organisations for monitoring purpose. The DPO would continue to review the operating situation and identify what could be improved to optimise services, especially targeting the needs of elderly people and the problems they encountered.

9. A representative of the Putonghua Culture Association gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) in view of the common phenomenon that elderly people could not remember what they had learnt, the “Smart Silver” Programme welcomed them to visit the help desks for enquiries about the application of digital technology;
- (b) the “Smart Silver” Programme arranged elderly people having participated in the courses to serve as ambassadors to assist in teaching during training sessions, which enhanced engagement of the elderly;
- (c) in addition to the five help desks, the Putonghua Culture Association also held smartphone classes in the community or in collaboration with DC members to expand service coverage;
- (d) the representative shared cases of her daily encounters in the district, indicating that the digital technology application issues commonly faced by the elderly covered a wide variety of areas, such as mobile phone settings; download, registration and operation of applications; and security of personal data. Services provided at the help desks aimed to help elderly people solve their problems individually; and
- (e) she agreed that providing technical support services at fixed time and locations could ease the worries of elderly people, so that they would be more willing to make an attempt for digital technology learning to build digital confidence.

10. A representative of the DPO added that the Office had launched the online learning platform, “Smart Silver” Elderly IT Learning Portal, which provided video tutorials on commonly used mobile applications and digital technology, enabling the elderly to self-learn according to their interest anytime and anywhere.

11. The Chairman announced the end of discussion on the agenda item.

Brief Introduction of the Community Dental Support Programme
(Paper No. SWYC 16/2025)

12. A representative of the Department of Health (DH) briefly introduced the paper.

13. The Chairman thanked the DH representative for the detailed briefing and invited members to speak.

14. Members' enquiries and suggestions were as follows:

- (a) members expressed their concern about the service scope of the Community Dental Support Programme (CDSP) and enquired whether it could be expanded to cover other dental services such as scaling;
- (b) members wished to know the standard waiting time for appointment and the mechanism for handling emergency cases;
- (c) members wished to know the application mechanism for referral services to improve service efficiency;
- (d) a member shared a case of an elderly person using dental services subsidised by the Community Care Fund where the expected results could not be achieved after two moulds had been made. The member asked whether a user in the CDSP could use the service quota again and whether there would be other subsequent follow-up measures if the problem was still unsolved after receiving services twice;
- (e) at present, the CDSP primarily provided X-ray examination, tooth extraction and tooth filling services but did not cover the making of dentures. Members asked in the event of similar unsolved problems, how the CDSP would handle them and whether there would be flexible arrangements to provide assistance to the elderly;
- (f) members mentioned that certain elderly centres imposed limits on service time and quotas regarding the assistance they provided for CDSP application. They enquired whether the DH could relax relevant restrictions and allow registered social workers in the area as well as Care Team members to help elderly people apply on phone or by email so as to ease the burden on the elderly;
- (g) members wished to know the reason why the assistance from registered social workers was necessary in CDSP application. They opined that social workers should focus on assessing demands or offering help instead of merely assisting in form filling;
- (h) members asked whether the DH had commissioned specific non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or elderly centres to be responsible for this kind of application;
- (i) residents in the district had a host of enquiries regarding the CDSP, including its differences from the Community Care Fund Elderly Dental Assistance Programme and the appointment making procedures. They suggested providing appointment making service and relevant information via mobile or online platforms, making it convenient for carers to help elderly people make appointments, collect medications or attend appointments;
- (j) inconsistent replies had been received from different clinics when calling to make an appointment. Members hoped that the appointment making procedures and standards could be optimised to enable NGOs, volunteers or carers to accurately grasp the appointment schedules and help the elderly make appointments;
- (k) seeing that the DH had yet to provide dental general public sessions in Sha Tin District until now, members hoped that the representative could relay the demand to the Department;

- (l) despite the population of approximately 700 000 in Sha Tin District, there were currently only four NGO dental clinics in the district participating in the CDSP. Members hoped that more dental service points could be provided in Sha Tin District according to the population ratio;
- (m) members hoped to streamline the service procedures and allow application via mobile devices or the internet in order to make it convenient for ward offices of DC members or social workers to make referrals, hence minimising complicated administrative procedures;
- (n) members pointed out that application procedures of the CDSP were complicated. Elderly people were required to provide the application number of the Old Age Living Allowance, yet many of them were unable to find the letters or recall the complex numbers and needed community assistance in the communication process of retrieving the application numbers. They hoped that the application procedures could be optimised so that elderly people could dispense with the inconvenience during the course of application; and
- (o) members suggested streamlining the application procedures. For example, applicants could directly contact dental clinics, making the process more convenient and enabling the elderly to receive services directly.

15. A member said that since the CDSP was launched, promotion at street booths had received positive response to a certain extent. Currently, it was not difficult to make an appointment for services but a relatively long waiting time of about one to two months was required.

16. A representative of the DH gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) at present, the DH required the NGO dental clinics to contact applicants within 10 working days upon receiving service applications to offer a date of first appointment within one month and provide services within 30 working days. While most clinics were able to meet the requirement at the moment, some eligible persons could only receive services more than one month after application due to personal schedules or other factors. The DH would continue to monitor the service level of NGOs;
- (b) if resources were available, the DH would study whether the service scope could be expanded to cover services such as scaling and endodontic treatment;
- (c) he agreed that the number of existing service points could be increased and said that the Government would encourage NGOs to offer more service points for the convenience of eligible persons to attend appointments;
- (d) since the CDSP did not restrict the district where eligible persons received services, they could choose any NGO dental clinics participating in the programme according to their own needs. The DH had a mechanism to monitor utilisation of the CDSP in each district, and in the event of keen demands in certain districts, the DH would coordinate with NGOs in neighbouring districts to enable eligible persons to receive services within a reasonable time frame;
- (e) regarding the way to verify whether service users were recipients of the Old Age Living Allowance, the DH allowed applicants to show bank deposits of the Old Age Living Allowance in the most recent three consecutive months as supporting documents (including

bank passbooks or monthly statements), whereas the approval letter of the Old Age Living Allowance was not required;

- (f) it was not necessary to apply for the CDSP through registered social workers and applicants could directly call or visit the clinics for application. With most applicants applying for the programme by visiting the clinics on their own at present, the major role of social workers was to make resource referrals or provide assistance to applicants with difficulties;
- (g) all registered social workers of NGOs under the Social Welfare Department could provide referral services;
- (h) there were currently 11 DH clinics offering dental general public sessions. From 2022 to 2024, the Working Group on Oral Health and Dental Care established according to the Policy Address had completed the review of the past effectiveness of general public sessions and proposed an optimisation plan. The report pointed out that the services provided had been mainly basic dental services such as tooth extraction, but it might be outdated to provide merely tooth extraction service. Nonetheless, there was not much room to increase the number of clinics providing traditional dental general public sessions in the short run; and
- (i) the CDSP adopted a two-pronged approach that focused resources on prevention and treatment with an aim to retain teeth as much as possible, avoid tooth loss and improve overall oral health.

17. Members' further suggestions were as follows:

- (a) members looked forward to the expansion of service scope of the CDSP to cover common dental procedures such as scaling and endodontic treatment so as to provide more comprehensive services;
- (b) members proposed to digitalise the appointment making and registration process of the CDSP to make it more convenient for carers and social workers to register on behalf of the elderly; and
- (c) members suggested providing healthcare facilities such as a dental clinic and a woman health centre as well as offering dental general public sessions at the joint-user complex at Tsuen Nam Road, Tai Wai that was soon to be constructed, in order to meet the demand of elderly people in Sha Tin District.

18. Members asked what subsequent regulatory and follow-up measures the DH would take if the services under the CDSP could not solve the dental problems or symptoms of eligible persons. Members also enquired whether there were relevant mechanisms or arrangements for organisations to follow.

19. A representative of the DH gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) since 32 NGOs were involved and their internal appointment making systems and procedures were different, it was difficult to digitalise CDSP application in the short term; and
- (b) in connection with the suggestions on the administration and services of NGO dental clinics, participants of the programme could directly express their views to the corresponding NGOs

of the dental clinics. Furthermore, they could contact the programme office in case of any enquiries, comments or complaints regarding the programme.

20. The Chairman announced the end of discussion on the agenda item.

Question

Question Raised by Mr HA Kim-kwan on the Implementation of Small Class Teaching in Public Sector Primary Schools in Sha Tin District
(Paper No. SWYC 17/2025)

21. Members' views and suggestions were as follows:

- (a) members commended the work of the Education Bureau (EDB) to enable all primary schools in Sha Tin District to implement small class teaching in the 2026/27 school year, which helped ensure teaching quality and resources;
- (b) noting that as shown in the EDB's projection, the number of primary school-age children would decrease by 23% from 2025 to 2031, members worried that the scale of schools and the allocation of resources in Sha Tin District would be affected;
- (c) members suggested that the EDB should consider how to ensure sustainable educational resources and should not close down schools prematurely due to the decline in population, for fear that keen competition for school places would be resulted if the birth rate bounced back in the future; and
- (d) five universities in Hong Kong managed to rank among the top 100 in the world, behind which primary and secondary education was instrumental. Members suggested that the EDB should actively promote the strengths of primary and secondary education in Hong Kong, make effective use of the Quality Migrant Admission Scheme to attract outstanding students from the Mainland and overseas to study in Hong Kong, and enhance the attractiveness of schools in Sha Tin District.

22. A representative of the EDB gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) in planning the provision of public sector school places and the development of schools, the EDB took the interests of students as the prime consideration, ensuring the healthy and sustainable development of the education system in Hong Kong; and
- (b) the EDB had implemented a series of transitional measures in the past due to transient fluctuation in the school-age population in Hong Kong. However, in view that the future decline in school-age population was structural rather than transient, the EDB aimed for "soft landing". It responded to the changes in demand and supply of school places while constantly enhancing the quality of education by conducting continuous assessments of the demand and supply of school places, reviewing various arrangements concerning class structure, and maintaining close communication with school sponsoring bodies in support of the sector to plan ahead and adopt appropriate measures and strategies to consolidate resources.

[Post-meeting note: The EDB had been working closely with Hong Kong Talent Engage (HKTE) to provide the children of new migrant talents with an array of support services, including launching a new dedicated website that provided an in-depth introduction of international schools and other schools offering a non-local syllabus in Hong Kong for parents' convenience to grasp relevant information. In addition, with the support of the EDB, local school councils held joint exhibitions and talks in Hong Kong and on the Mainland to provide Mainland parents and students intending to study at local schools with comprehensive education information and answer their enquiries, enabling more people to know the features and strengths of education in Hong Kong. Participating schools included kindergartens, primary schools, secondary schools and tertiary institutions. At the same time, on the EDB website and at the four Regional Education Offices under the EDB, school information and frequently asked questions about placement assistance services were also provided for public reference.]

The EDB would continue to work closely with HKTE to help the children of new migrant talents adapt to the learning life and the education system in Hong Kong as soon as possible.]

23. Members understood that the EDB might not be able to respond to relevant questions at the moment and hoped that it could inform the STDC should any further plans be made.

24. The Chairman announced the end of discussion on the agenda item.

Information Papers

Number of Children Referred to Public Sector Primary and Secondary Schools in Sha Tin District Provided by the Education Bureau (April to May 2025)
(Paper No. SWYC 18/2025)

25. Members noted the above paper.

26. The Chairman announced the end of discussion on the agenda item.

Report on Youth Crimes in Sha Tin District (April to May 2025)
(Paper No. SWYC 19/2025)

27. Members noted the above paper.

28. The Chairman announced the end of discussion on the agenda item.

Any Other Business

29. The Chairman asked members whether they had any other business.

30. A member briefly introduced the activities of International Day of Disabled Persons 2025, calling for members' attention to the activity day and their assistance in distribution of tickets to people in need.

31. The Chairman announced the end of discussion.

Date and Time of Next Meeting

32. The next meeting was scheduled to be held at 10 am on 3 September 2025 (Wednesday).
33. The meeting was closed at 3:39 pm.

Sha Tin District Council Secretariat
STDC 13/15/80

September 2025