

Sha Tin District Council
Minutes of the 6th Meeting of
the Social Welfare and Youth Committee in 2024

Date : 12 November 2024 (Tuesday)
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	3:20 pm
Miss TUNG Kin-lei (Vice Chairman)	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Mr WONG Wai-shing	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Mr KU Wai-ping	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Mr CHU Wun-chiu	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Miss LEE Ching-yee, Janet	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Mr NG Kai-tai	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Ms LAM Siu-man	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Ms LAM Yuk-wa	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Mr LAM Yu-sing	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Ms LAM Chung-yan, Nancy, MH	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Dr LAM Kong-kwan	2:31 pm	3:20 pm
Mr YIU Ka-chun, MH	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Mr HA Kim-kwan	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Mr AU Chi-on, Paul	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Ms GUO Xuantong	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Mr LEUNG Chun-pong, Maverick	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Mr CHAN Tan-tan	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Miss CHAN Hiu-ying	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Miss MOK Hei-man	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Mr WONG Yue-hon	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Ms WONG Po-yee	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Mr YEUNG Ying-hon, Ronald	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Mr TSOI Ming-yang	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Mr DENG Kairong, BBS, MH, JP	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Mr CHOI Wai-shing	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Mr LAU Tak-wing	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Miss LAW Yuen-pui	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Ms LO Tai-suen, Ada	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Ms PONG Scarlett Oi-lan, BBS, JP	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Ms KUNG Mei-chi	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Mr LEE Kang-pan	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Mr CHAU Ping-him	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Ms YIP Shuk-kuen	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Ms YEUNG Suet-man, Kelly (Secretary)	Executive Officer (District Council)1, Sha Tin District Office	

In Attendance

Ms TSANG Ka-yi, Carmen

Mr LEE Man-fai, Dave

Ms WONG So-man, Katrina

Mrs LAU HO Man-wai

Ms TONG Mai-mai

Sergeant YU Wing-chin, Michael

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, Shatin

District, Hong Kong Police Force

Labour Officer (Workplace Consultation Promotion),

Labour Department

In Attendance by Invitation

Ms HUI Yee-mei, Maria

Title

Chief School Development Officer (Shatin),

Education Bureau

The Chairman welcomed members and representatives of government departments to the sixth 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 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 10 September 2024

(SWYC Minutes 5/2024)

3. Members unanimously endorsed the above minutes.

Questions

Question Raised by Mr WONG Wai-shing on Pre-school Rehabilitation Services in Sha Tin District
(Paper No. SWYC 20/2024)

4. Members enquired about the following matters:

- (a) regarding the waiting list statistics for on-site pre-school rehabilitation services in the paper, which had not been displayed since December 2023, clarification was sought on whether there was no longer a waiting period, or if alternative channels existed to access this information;
- (b) it was asked about the expected actual benefits brought by the Social Welfare Department's (SWD) expansion project at Yan On Estate, Ma On Shan after the service commenced;

- (c) whether the SWD could provide information on school referral data or the supports provided in the district and by organisations, so as to facilitate early intervention for children with special educational needs (SEN) and expedite their access to related services; and
- (d) whether the Education Bureau (EDB) had future plans to further expand centres for SEN children, enabling more families to access these services.

5. A member suggested that the EDB and SWD consider transforming properties of kindergartens in the district which were facing the risk of ceasing operation or would soon cease operation to provide educational support services.

6. A representative of the SWD gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) effective from December 2023, for all applications for On-site Pre-school Rehabilitation Services registered in the central referral system, the service teams would immediately contact parents to arrange for services. Consequently, from the 2024/25 academic year, this service had achieved “zero waiting time”. The Government aimed to provide services and training to children in need within the critical intervention period without delay;
- (b) in the 2024-25 financial year, the SWD would establish an Early Education and Training Centre with 92 places and a Special Child Care Centre with 32 places as part of the expansion project at Yan On Estate, Ma On Shan. These new facilities would help address local demand and reduce waiting times;

[Post-meeting note: The Early Education and Training Centre at Yan On Estate commenced operations on 15 November 2024.]

- (c) beginning in the 2024/25 academic year, the SWD had established 50 teams of Social Work Service for Pre-primary Institutions across Hong Kong operating in the “district-based” mode. Currently, four teams were operating in Sha Tin district, visiting kindergartens and child care centres. Social workers of pre-primary institutions provided advice and introduced community resources to parents in need, and also identified cases early and provided support. Additionally, various non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and Integrated Family Service Centres in the district offered diverse activities and services for SEN children and their families; and
- (d) in response to service demands, the SWD was committed to increasing the places of pre-school rehabilitation services through multi-pronged approaches to identify suitable sites and premises for welfare services. This included early reservation of land and space in new housing estates and development projects, and coordination with various government departments to increase the number of Special Child Care Centres. The Chief Executive’s 2024 Policy Address also mentioned that the SWD would study the feasibility of setting up Special Child Care Centres in vacant kindergarten premises.

7. A representative of the EDB said that the Bureau placed significant emphasis on supporting SEN students. In gist, the Health Bureau and Hospital Authority provided assessment and diagnostic services; the SWD offered pre-school rehabilitation services, while the EDB provided learning support.

8. The Chairman announced the end of discussion of the agenda item.

Question Raised by Mr KU Wai-ping on the Improvement to School Facilities in Sha Tin District
(Paper No. SWYC 21/2024)

9. Members enquired about the following matters:

- (a) regarding the safety concerns of the sole entrance at Christian Alliance Cheng Wing Gee College, which was near to the vehicular road, the school wished to relocate the existing entrance to Chik Tai Lane. The EDB was asked to provide information on the application mechanism; and
- (b) in addition to the entrance at the vehicular road and walkway, the school wished to reposition the basketball court and volleyball court. It asked whether the applications could be made under the same mechanism.

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

- (a) the EDB had not received any inquiries from Christian Alliance Cheng Wing Gee College. For matters concerning law enforcement on pedestrian crossing, the Police was to be contacted for assistance. Regarding road design issues outside school premises, the Transport Department was to be contacted. With respect to school building maintenance, the EDB issued circular/letter annually during April to May inviting schools to apply for capital subventions for proposed major repairs/improvement works. The School Management Committee could submit applications for intended major repairs of school premises; and
- (b) schools were required to submit online applications through the School Maintenance Automated Rapport Terminal System via the EDB's Common Log-on System. The engineering consultants appointed by the EDB would review the applications submitted by schools.

[Post-meeting note: Within one week after the meeting, the Shatin District School Development Section of the EDB contacted the relevant school for appropriate follow-up.]

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

Question Raised by Miss LEE Ching-yee, Janet on Support Services for the Singleton and Doubleton Elderly in Sha Tin District
(Paper No. SWYC 22/2024)

12. Members enquired about the following matters:

- (a) regarding residential care homes for the elderly, the waiting time for subvented homes and contract homes was 18 months, and while that for private residential care homes participating in the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme was 4 months. The SWD was asked what measures or supports were provided to assist the elderly facing long waiting periods;

- (b) whether the SWD had established any methodologies or initiatives to collect demographic data on elderly persons living alone in the community to enable the Government to more effectively plan support services for singleton and doubleton elderly;
- (c) elderly persons were often confused about their self-identity during their transition to living alone. It was asked whether the SWD had established any mechanisms or assistance measures with district centres or support teams to provide targeted support for elderly persons transitioning to living alone;
- (d) those being taken care of and the elderly persons who were carers were often unable to take care of themselves, yet could not seek assistance as singleton elderly as they had household members. It was asked how the SWD would provide assistance or support for them;
- (e) some elderly persons only required transitional temporary services, such as meal delivery. It was asked how the SWD would provide corresponding assistance; and
- (f) it was asked whether the SWD would collaborate closely with the ward offices of District Council members and District Services and Caring Teams (Care Teams) to provide support services for the elderly.

13. A member said that the waiting time for day respite service was currently long, and hoped that the SWD could later provide the data on the ten elderly day care centres or units in Sha Tin District, including beneficiary statistics and operational status, to facilitate the SWD's assessment of increasing the numbers of places and facility enhancement.

14. A representative of the SWD gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) various community support and care services were provided for the elderly, encompassing both centre-based and home-based services, which assisted the elderly awaiting residential care placement in maintaining their quality of life during the transitional period;
- (b) the SWD currently identified and reached out to singleton and doubleton elderly through various service units, including SWD's Integrated Family Service Centres and Medical Social Services Units, as well as District Elderly Community Centres and Neighbourhood Elderly Centres operated by NGOs. It was hoped that early identification could be achieved to provide appropriate support and services;
- (c) regarding the need of the elderly adapting to living alone, District Elderly Community Centres or Neighbourhood Elderly Centres in the district provided transitional support to assist them in adapting to a new life of living alone. To address both psychological and practical needs during this transition, NGOs offered counselling, outreach visits, and other support services to facilitate adjustment;
- (d) the SWD was concerned about cases where elderly or disabled persons cared for other elderly individuals. At the district level, enhanced support services were provided for

carers of elderly and disabled persons to enable early identification and intervention, avoiding preventable tragic incidents;

- (e) NGOs prioritised service delivery based on the nature of required services or users' needs. Urgent needs of elderly persons/carers, such as meal delivery or medical escort services, generally received priority consideration;
- (f) the SWD valued its collaboration with Care Teams in supporting singleton and doubleton elderly. The SWD commenced the District Services and Community Care Teams - Pilot Scheme on Supporting Elderly and Carers in Tsuen Wan and Southern Districts, assisting in identifying singleton and doubleton elderly, hidden elderly, and carers of disabled persons requiring assistance. As the Pilot Scheme would be expanded to all 18 districts, cooperation between the SWD and Care Teams would intensify, including training for Care Teams to strengthen concern and support for singleton and doubleton elderly as well as carers; and
- (g) the SWD understood the high community demands for day respite services and had been actively promoting these services to support families and carers in need. The 2023 Policy Address last year mentioned the expansion of the network of respite services. Effective from 1 December 2023, for residential care homes which participated in the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme and offered residential respite services, vacant respite places would be utilised to provide day respite services. Furthermore, from 1 December 2024, the SWD would invite approximately 170 recognised service units to provide day respite services to the elderly in need when vacancies arose. This expansion would benefit more elderly individuals requiring such services.

15. A member hoped that the SWD could later provide a briefing on the Residential Care Service Voucher for the Elderly Scheme (RCSV Scheme), enabling District Council members and community organisations to obtain more detailed information.

16. A SWD representative provided an overview of the RCSV Scheme, which was regularised in April 2023. This initiative offered additional options for the elderly who had been assessed as requiring residential care services and were currently on the waiting list for residential care homes. The RCSV Scheme operated on the principles of “money-following-the-user”, “co-payment”, and “affordable users pay”. Eligible elderly persons had the flexibility to select and transfer between participating residential care homes. Those with lower financial capacity were eligible for more government subsidies. In essence, this enabled direct admission to participating residential care homes without waiting, thereby helping to alleviate queuing pressure.

17. The Chairman announced the end of discussion of the agenda item.

Question Raised by Mr LAU Tak-wing on Support Services for Carers in Sha Tin District
(Paper No. SWYC 23/2024)

18. Members' views were as follows:

- (a) the SWD had received 50 000 incoming calls in the past year, with only 390 callers from Sha Tin District were willing to disclose their residential location, representing approximately 1% of total calls. It demonstrated the difficulty in data collection;

- (b) the district's demographic and household compositions were diverse, including singleton and doubleton elderly. Carers had insufficient awareness of available support services and the access channels were limited. It was opined that the statistical data might not have adequately reflected the actual needs of carers in Sha Tin District;
- (c) while there had been extensive promotion on the Designated Hotline for Carer Support 182 183, promotional efforts had appeared insufficient. It was hoped that the SWD could articulate future directions and strategies;
- (d) Hong Kong experienced increasing population in elderly persons, persons with disabilities, and individuals with chronic conditions, with many frail persons primarily receiving care from family members; and
- (e) at present, elderly care policies and rehabilitation measures primarily focused on alleviating pressure on carers and care recipients, but carers themselves also needed support and attention.

19. Members' suggestions were as follows:

- (a) the SWD should enhance the identification of callers' residential areas to provide more accurate data support for Government's resource allocation;
- (b) members suggested introducing carer passes that provided transportation or medical subsidies. Members had discussed with bus companies, and these enterprises expressed willingness to provide relevant support. It was hoped that the Government could establish a clear definition of carers, grant them legally recognised status, and include them in eligibility criteria for social subsidy; and
- (c) it was hoped that the Government could provide professional support for carers, including assessing the eligibility of carers and providing professional training, to train specialised carers who could take care of others in need after their care recipients no longer required support.

20. A representative of the SWD gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) the 390 reported calls solely represented callers who had voluntarily disclosed their residence in Sha Tin District and did not reflect the actual service demand in the district. As standard practice, social workers operating the Designated Hotline for Carer Support 182 183 would inquire about callers' residential districts, though disclosure remained voluntary;
- (b) the SWD agreed that such data collection would be useful for meeting service demand;
- (c) the SWD representative said that continuous promotional efforts had been implemented to enhance the awareness of the Designated Hotline for Carer Support 182 183 among various sectors, and relevant information had been disseminated in different events/occasions. Furthermore, the SWD had been collaborating with elderly service units in the district to produce calendars incorporating the 182 183 hotline information

and related community services, which would be widely distributed to district stakeholders for maximising promotional effect;

- (d) the SWD representative encouraged members to promote the hotline during routine meetings with the public to enhance awareness among carers and utilisation rates; and
- (e) regarding the suggestion about carer identification and support, including carer passes, the SWD said that discussions among various sectors were welcomed.

21. The Chairman announced the end of discussion of the agenda item.

Question Raised by Mr DENG Kairong on Meal Services in Sha Tin District
(Paper No. SWYC 24/2024)

22. Members enquired about the following matters:

- (a) ward offices of District Council members and Care Teams encountered elderly persons requiring meal support during their routine work, including elderly persons who had recently undergone surgery and singleton elderly. It was asked whether the SWD provided emergency support services to assist the elderly in need of meal assistance; and
- (b) it was asked when District Council members identified cases in the community requiring assistance, whether they had referral authority or alternative channels to assist the persons involved in applying for the Community Care Service Voucher Scheme for the Elderly (CCSV Scheme). It was hoped that the SWD could provide detailed information on facilitating the elderly's access to necessary services.

23. Members' views were as follows:

- (a) the Mainland made rapid progress in elderly services, particularly in community canteen for the elderly, which served as valuable references for Hong Kong;
- (b) with the increasing elderly population in Sha Tin District, the demand for elderly household services continued to rise, with the district and Care Teams frequently receiving requests for meal services;
- (c) it was agreed that the CCSV Scheme established in 2013 was an effective measure in assisting with the daily living needs of singleton elderly;
- (d) there were actually numerous single elderly living in private residence in the district, with some relying on Comprehensive Social Security Assistance;
- (e) members shared a district case involving an elderly woman who encountered difficulties after breaking her leg. She required medical attention for chronic conditions but lacked access to meal delivery and home care services. The escort service fees were substantial, starting at \$500 with additional charges of \$150-200 per hour, presenting a significant financial burden for those who had lost employment; and

- (f) social workers from the SWD and non-public hospitals should have enhanced the promotion of relevant services to prevent information gaps that might have impeded the elderly from accessing necessary resources.

24. Members' suggestions were as follows:

- (a) the Sha Tin District should consider implementing a community canteen programme and conduct feasibility assessments to facilitate improvements and developments in elderly care services in Hong Kong; and
- (b) the SWD should evaluate strategies to enhance service provision for single individuals, with particular emphasis on middle-class elderly persons experiencing financial hardship.

25. A member expressed gratitude to the Sha Tin District Office for facilitating a visit to elderly community meal services in Shanghai, and said that the visit provided significant insights.

26. A representative of the SWD gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) there were currently three District Elderly Community Centres and four Neighbourhood Elderly Centres subsidised by the SWD in Sha Tin District providing meal services to the elderly in need;
- (b) additionally, nine service providers in Sha Tin District and 45 in other districts, recognised under the CCSV Scheme, offered meal services. These included the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong, Smart Club, Po Leung Kuk Care Service for the Elders, and Tung Wah Group of Hospitals Top-tact Home Care Services. Furthermore, there were four Integrated Home Care Services Teams and two Enhanced Home and Community Care Services Teams in the district, collectively offering over 2 000 service quotas, which included meal delivery services to assist frail/mobility-impaired elderly;
- (c) frail elderly individuals assessed as suitable for community care or residential care services through the SWD's Standardised Care Need Assessment Mechanism for Elderly Services could opt to participate in the CCSV Scheme to receive and select subsidised community care services. The CCSV Scheme encompassed centre-based services, home-based services, and hybrid models, including respite care, soft meal provisions, and rental services of assistive technology products. Moreover, the CCSV Scheme offered other community support services such as elderly sitting and medical escort services, which could assist elderly individuals with chronic conditions and those recently discharged from hospitals; and
- (d) the representative of the SWD said that colleagues of the relevant service branch would be invited to provide detailed introductions to services under the CCSV Scheme and RCSV Scheme, to promote these services and encourage greater utilisation among the elderly population.

27. The Chairman announced the end of discussion of 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 (August to September 2024)
(Paper No. SWYC 25/2024)

28. Members noted the above paper.

29. The Chairman announced the end of discussion of the agenda item.

Report on Youth Crimes in Sha Tin District (July to September 2024)
(Paper No. SWYC 26/2024)

30. Members noted the above paper.

31. The Chairman announced the end of discussion of the agenda item.

Date and Time of the Next Meeting

32. The next meeting was scheduled to be held at 2:30 pm on 15 January 2025 (Wednesday).

33. The meeting was closed at 3:20 pm.

Sha Tin District Council Secretariat
STDC 13/15/80

January 2025