

(Translation)

Minutes of the 4th Meeting of
Social Welfare Committee (3/24-25)

Date : 2 September 2024
Time : 2:30 p.m.
Venue : Main Conference Room, Tsuen Wan District Office

Present:

Mr CHU Tak-wing, MH (Chairman)
Ms LAM Yuen-pun (Vice Chairlady)
Ms WONG Shuk-fan, Luparker
Mr KOO Yeung-pong, MH
Mr NG Chun-yu
Mr CHOW Sum-ming
Ms CHEUNG Man-ka, Marcella
Ms CHAN Shun-shun
Mr MOK Yuen-kwan
Mr TSANG Tai
Mr FUNG Cheuk-sum
Ms WAH Mei-ling
Mr WONG Kai-chun
Mr KOT Siu-yuen, MH
Mr CHENG Chit-pun
Mr LAU Chung-kong
Mr CHAN Shing-jee

Government Representatives

Mr KWAN Chun-kit, Eric	Assistant District Officer (Tsuen Wan), Tsuen Wan District Office
Ms YUEN Mo-kuen, Monita	Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Tsuen Wan/Kwai Tsing)3, Social Welfare Department
Ms CHEUNG Mei-yee	Social Work Officer 1 (Planning & Coordinating), Social Welfare Department

Tsuen Wan District Council Secretariat Representatives

Mr LIM Kuen	Senior Executive Officer (District Council), Tsuen Wan District Office
Miss LEUNG Wai Ching, Clementine (Secretary)	Executive Officer (District Council)1, Tsuen Wan District Office
Miss WONG Yuen-chee, Connie	Executive Assistant (Community Involvement)5, Tsuen Wan District Office

In Attendance:

For discussion of item 3

Ms TSUI Yan-yan, Judy	Centre-in-charge, Yan Chai Hospital Yim Tsui Yuk Shan Fuk Loi Integrated Community Development Centre
Miss YUE Wing-man	Social Worker, Yan Chai Hospital Yim Tsui Yuk Shan Fuk Loi Integrated Community Development Centre
Miss MA Pui-man	Social Worker, Yan Chai Hospital Yim Tsui Yuk Shan Fuk Loi Integrated Community Development Centre
Mr CHAN Pak-woon	Senior School Development Officer (Tsuen Wan)2, Education Bureau

I Opening Remarks and Introduction

The Chairman welcomed Members and representatives from government departments to the 4th meeting of the Social Welfare Committee (SWC), and introduced Mr CHAN Shing-jee, who attended the meeting for the first time as a co-opted Member.

2. The Chairman said that no Member had submitted an application for absence from this meeting.

3. The Chairman stated that according to the requirements stipulated in the Tsuen Wan District Council Standing Orders, if a District Council (DC) Member found that he/she had any direct personal or pecuniary interests in a discussion item or relevant matters when attending a meeting of the Council or dealing with matters related to the Council, the DC Member should declare the interests. The Chairman said that he himself, Ms CHEUNG Man-ka, Marcella and Mr CHAN Shing-jee had made declarations of interests with regard to the subject matter of agenda item 3 to the Chairman of the Tsuen Wan District Council (TWDC) prior to this meeting. He disclosed himself as the Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of Yan Chai Hospital (YCH). Ms CHEUNG Man-ka, Marcella disclosed herself as the Chairlady of the Board of Directors of YCH. Mr CHAN Shing-jee disclosed himself as the Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of YCH. The Chairman of the TWDC had ruled that he, Ms CHEUNG Man-ka, Marcella and Mr CHAN Shing-jee might remain in the meeting as observers and were not required to withdraw from the discussion of the agenda item concerned.

II Item 1: Confirmation of Minutes of the 3rd Meeting held on 8.7.2024

4. The Chairman said that the Secretariat had not received any proposed amendment prior to this meeting. The Chairman enquired whether Members had to put forth proposed amendments immediately. No Member put forth a proposed amendment immediately. Members unanimously endorsed the captioned minutes.

III Item 2: Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Previous Meetings

5. The Chairman said that there were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

6. The Chairman said that since he had made a declaration of interests with regard to the subject matter of the next agenda item, he asked the Vice Chairlady to take over the chair temporarily.

IV Item 3: Discussion on the Home-based Child Care Service and the School-based After School Care Service Scheme in Tsuen Wan District

(TWDC SWC Paper No. 5/24-25 & No. 6/24-25)

7. The Acting Chairlady said that Ms WONG Shuk-fan, Luparker submitted Paper No. 5/24-25 and the Social Welfare Department (SWD) submitted Paper No. 6/24-25. The two papers would be discussed together under this agenda item. The representatives from the department and the organisation attending the meeting included:

- (1) Ms YUEN Mo-kuen, Monita, Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Tsuen Wan/Kwai Tsing)3 (ADSWO(TW/KwT)3), SWD;
- (2) Ms CHEUNG Mei-yee, Social Work Officer 1 (Planning & Coordinating), SWD;
- (3) Ms TSUI Yan-yan, Judy, Centre-in-charge, Yan Chai Hospital Yim Tsui Yuk Shan Fuk Loi Integrated Community Development Centre (YCHYTYSFLICDC);
- (4) Miss YUE Wing-man, Social Worker, YCHYTYSFLICDC; and
- (5) Miss MA Pui-man, Social Worker, YCHYTYSFLICDC.

8. Ms WONG Shuk-fan, Luparker introduced Paper No. 5/24-25.

9. ADSWO(TW/KwT)3 of the SWD and Centre-in-charge of the YCHYTYSFLICDC introduced Paper No. 6/24-25.

10. The views and enquiries of Members were summarised as follows:

- (1) a Member suggested that the SWD should provide adequate training to home-based child carers (HCCs) and increase the incentive payment, thereby attracting and encouraging more people to become a HCC. The Member also proposed that in addition to enhancing the assessment work during the recruitment of HCCs, their service performance should also be monitored and followed up continuously afterwards;
- (2) a Member enquired whether kindergartens would be included as one of the service providers under the Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project (the "Project");
- (3) a Member asked whether the department concerned had purchased insurance for HCCs;
- (4) a Member enquired whether HCCs would be requested to install a CCTV system at home;

- (5) a Member enquired whether the tutor-to-student ratio under the School-based After School Care Service Scheme (the “Scheme”) on weekends was the same as that on weekdays;
- (6) a Member relayed the views of parents who had participated in the Scheme and said that the Scheme had been welcomed by parents. The Member hoped that the Scheme would be further extended to cover and benefit more families in need; and
- (7) a Member enquired whether service operators had encountered any difficulties in implementing the Project and the Scheme.

11. ADSWO(TW/KwT)3 of the SWD responded as follows:

- (1) the SWD had increased the incentive payment for HCCs under the Project since April 2024. The rate for carers of infants and young children aged 0 to 3 or children with special educational needs had been increased to \$60 per hour. The rate for carers of children aged 3 to 9 had been increased to \$40 per hour. The SWD noted Members’ suggestions on increasing the incentive payment;
- (2) the SWD had not requested HCCs to install a CCTV system at their homes since privacy issues were involved. Upon completion of training by the HCCs, service operators were required to evaluate the HCCs’ child care skills and knowledge, their confidence in providing care services, and whether their living environment was suitable for the provision of care services. Only after that would the HCCs be arranged to provide services;
- (3) HCCs were required to receive 14 hours of basic training, the content of which was standardised and formulated by the SWD, including infants and young children’s physical and psychological development, special development milestones and needs of growth, care and communication skills, home safety and hygiene, handling of accidents and special incidents, etc. HCCs who were arranged to take care of children with special educational needs were required to receive an advanced training for an additional four hours, so as to acquire the knowledge and skills in caring for the children concerned. Upon completion of training, the HCCs must pass an assessment before being arranged to provide services; and
- (4) as regards the after school care services provided on weekdays at school and on weekends at service units, the manning ratio was the same. The ratio of tutors to ordinary students was 1:8, while the ratio of tutors to students with special educational needs was 1:5.

12. Centre-in-charge of the YCHYTYSFLICDC responded that the YCHYTYSFLICDC would purchase insurance for the HCCs annually together with the Centre’s block insurance. In addition, the difficulty in launching the Project lay in the recruitment of HCCs, but the situation had been improved after the recent increase in the incentive payment. The YCHYTYSFLICDC encouraged Members to assist in promoting the relevant services in the community. Besides, the YCHYTYSFLICDC had also encountered difficulties in identifying suitable locations for the provision of services.

13. ADSWO(TW/KwT)3 of the SWD responded that the SWD understood that different social service units might encounter certain difficulties in locating suitable venues for their operation, and co-ordination on various fronts was required. Moreover, the HCCs provided services in the capacity of volunteers, and the incentive payment for HCCs under the Project had been increased since April 2024. The SWD encouraged Members to assist in promoting the home-based child care service in the community.

14. The views and enquiries of Members were further summarised as follows:

- (1) a Member opined that 14 hours of basic training for HCCs might not be adequate, and enquired whether the entry requirements of being a HCC included having experience in taking care of children;
- (2) a Member enquired whether the fees charged by the service operator concerned would be used to cover the incentive payment for HCCs;
- (3) a Member said that there were only dozens of HCCs providing services in Tsuen Wan district, which was unable to meet the local demand. The Member therefore suggested increasing the service quotas of HCCs;
- (4) a Member enquired whether HCCs would be additionally requested to receive influenza and COVID-19 vaccinations;
- (5) a Member suggested that retraining programmes should be provided to HCCs annually to pass on to them the latest skills and information, along with messages on the prevention of child abuse;
- (6) a Member expressed concern over the issue of child safety, and enquired about the handling approach and reporting mechanism for emergencies encountered by the HCCs;
- (7) a Member held that HCCs should be developed into a professional role instead of simply volunteering. The Member suggested providing HCCs with professional training on aspects such as child care and first aid so as to enhance public confidence in HCCs and facilitate women's employment;
- (8) a Member enquired whether the service operator concerned would consider cooperating with other non-governmental organisations for the provision of additional child care centres to serve families in different areas;
- (9) a Member opined that families living in sub-divided units (SDUs) had a keen demand for child care services, yet the cramped living space of their dwellings was not suitable for HCCs to provide such services. On the other hand, since the child care centre located in Fuk Loi Estate was rather distant to and inconvenient for most families living in SDUs, the Member suggested setting up child care centres at upper floor shops with cheaper rents in old areas;
- (10) a Member enquired whether the Government would conduct inspections to child care services outside schools; and
- (11) a Member enquired whether the insurance for the Scheme was paid by the school or the service operator.

15. ADSWO(TW/KwT)3 of the SWD responded as follows:
- (1) the home-based child care services under the Project were provided at either the residence of the HCCs or other suitable locations recognised by the service operators, but not at the residence of the children themselves;
 - (2) the service targets of the Project mainly included dual-income families and families with difficulties in taking care of children;
 - (3) the SWD noted Member's views on raising the incentive payment for HCCs;
 - (4) service users with social needs and economic hardship could approach the service operators to apply for fee waiving or remission;
 - (5) after a HCC had completed the 14-hour basic training and passed the assessment, the service operator would provide on-the-job training for the HCC continuously and conduct surprised home visits. Feedback on the service performance of the HCC would also be provided;
 - (6) the content of the basic training for HCCs included home safety and hygiene, and handling of accidents and special incidents, etc. Whenever a special incident occurred while caring for the children, the HCC must report such incident to the service operator, who was also required to submit an incident report to the SWD at the same time;
 - (7) the SWD did not make it mandatory for HCCs to receive influenza vaccinations. Yet, the SWD suggested that service operators should, subject to the epidemic situation of the disease concerned, encourage HCCs to receive relevant vaccinations so as to safeguard the health of children and HCCs; and
 - (8) since 2021-2022, the SWD had provided subsidies to non-governmental organisations to operate the After School Care Programme for Pre-primary Children. Families in need could apply for such service by making an application to the service operators concerned.

(Post-meeting note: The SWD would conduct random sampling investigations on individual beneficiary cases followed up by the recognised service operators under the Scheme. The service content and quality would be verified by the SWD for service monitoring.)

16. Centre-in-charge of the YCHYTYSFLICDC responded as follows:
- (1) the charge for the home-based child care service under the Project was \$28 per hour. It was used to cover a part of the incentive payment for the HCC and was not an income of the service operator. The charge for the centre-based care group was \$20 per hour and was collected by the operating centre concerned; and
 - (2) although the incentive payment for taking care of each child was \$40 per hour, the HCC could take care of up to three children at the same time, by that the incentive payment might be as high as \$120 per hour.
17. The views and enquiries of Members were further summarised as follows:
- (1) a Member asked, after deducting the \$28 paid by the service user from the \$40 incentive payment for the HCC, whether the remaining \$12 was paid by

- the Government; and
- (2) a Member enquired whether the insurance for the Scheme was purchased by the school, the service operator or the SWD.

18. ADSWO(TW/KwT)3 of the SWD responded as follows:

- (1) the SWD provided subsidies to the recognised service operators under the Scheme, and required such service operators to purchase sufficient insurance (including third party liability insurance) for the activities organised by them; and
- (2) the SWD would supplement the revenue and expenditure arrangements in regard to HCCs after the meeting.

(Post-meeting note: the SWD had set aside a fund for service operators to cover the difference between service charges and incentive payments for HCCs.)

V Item 4: Any Other Business

19. The Chairman said that the SWD invited Members to join the Service Quality Group for Residential Child Care Centres (RCCCs)/Residential Special Child Care Centres (RSCCCs) for 2024-2026 to offer views on the services and facilities of the aforementioned centres.

20. After consulting Members, the Chairman decided to submit the name of Mr MOK Yuen-kwan to the Chairman of the TWDC for the nomination to serve on the Service Quality Group for RCCCs/RSCCCs.

VI Adjournment of Meeting

21. The Chairman reminded Members that the next meeting was scheduled for 4 November 2024 (Monday) and the deadline for submission of papers was 18 October 2024 (Friday).

Tsuen Wan District Council Secretariat

26 September 2024