

**Minutes of the Third Meeting of
Social Welfare and Labour Committee
under Yuen Long District Council in 2024**

Date: 24 June 2024 (Monday)

Time: 2:30 p.m. to 4:25 p.m.

Venue: Conference Room, Yuen Long District Council, 13/F., Yuen Long
Government Offices, 2 Kiu Lok Square, Yuen Long

Present

Chairman : Mr CHONG Kin-shing, MH, JP

Vice Chairman : Mr SZE TO Chun-hin

Members : Mr WONG Hiu-shan

Ms HO Hiu-man

Ms LI Ching-yee

Ms LAM Wai-ming

Mr YIU Kwok-wai, MH

Mr TSUI Wai-ngoi

Ms YUEN Man-yee, MH

Ms MA Shuk-yin

Mr CHEUNG Wai-sum

Mr LEUNG Ming-kin

Mr CHAN Ka-fai

Ms CHAN Yin-kwan, Yankie

Mr WONG Siu-chung

Ms WONG Wai-ling

Mr WONG Wing-ho, Allan

Ms CHIU Sau-han, MH

Ms LAI Yuet-kwan, Fennie

Mr TAM Tak-hoi

Secretary : Mr YU Cheuk-yin, Executive Officer (District Council) 6,
Victor Yuen Long District Council

In Attendance Mr CHUI Kwan-siu
Mr LAU Hiu-lap, Senior Liaison Officer (4),
Frederick Yuen Long District Office
Ms WAN Yee-man, Fion Assistant District Social Welfare Officer

Miss LUI Wing-man, Vivian	(Yuen Long)2, Social Welfare Department Labour Officer (Employment Services) (Yuen Long), Labour Department
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Item 2

Ms KWONG Yuet-sum	Chairman Tin Shui Wai Women Association Limited
Miss WONG Ching-lui	Social Worker Tin Shui Wai Women Association Limited

Items 3 to 5

Mr MAN Cho-wai	Social Work Officer 1 (Planning & Coordinating) Social Welfare Department
Ms CHU Yi-ting	Social Work Officer 3 (Planning & Coordinating) Social Welfare Department
Mr YEUNG Wing-hong	Assistant Social Work Officer 1 (Planning & Coordinating) Social Welfare Department

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Opening Remarks

The Chairman welcomed Members and department representatives to the third meeting of the Social Welfare and Labour Committee (“SWLC”) of the Yuen Long District Council (“YLDC”) in 2024.

Item 1: Confirmation of minutes of the second meeting of Social Welfare and Labour Committee (“SWLC”) in 2024 held on 29 April 2024

2. Members confirmed the minutes of the second meeting of SWLC in 2024 held on 29 April 2024.

Discussion Items:

**Item 2: Social work service for pre-primary institutions
(SWLC Paper No. 6/2024)**

3. The Chairman referred Members to Paper No. 6 and welcomed Senior Service Manager of St. James Settlement (SJS) Ms FUNG Wing-yi to attend the meeting.

4. Upon discussion, Members' views and enquiries were summarised as follows:

- (1) Members were pleased to see that social work teams operated by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) would provide social work service for pre-primary children, further strengthening support for early identification of emotional problems or special learning needs of students;
- (2) Members enquired whether social work service for pre-primary institutions would cover all the kindergartens in the district. As kindergartens in the district were to be divided into five service areas based on their locations, Members enquired how social work service for pre-primary institutions would be integrated with services provided by the Integrated Family Service Centres if the school and the residence of a student in need were in different service areas;
- (3) Members suggested that the operating organisations should strengthen cooperation with local individuals or groups, such as DC members, "Care Teams", the Area Committees, the District Fight Crime Committees and the District Fire Safety Committees (collectively referred as "the three committees"), rural committees and local organisations; and Members also enquired about how individuals or organisations in the district could assist in referring students in need to operating organisations;
- (4) Members enquired about the provision of services in rural areas or other areas without kindergartens, and suggested providing childcare services in village offices or other suitable places;
- (5) Members were concerned about the manpower arrangements of relevant operating organisations, and pointed out that some staff members of organisations providing after-school care services for pre-primary children might not have sufficient knowledge of serving children with special learning needs. And Members enquired about the support and training provided by the Social Welfare Department (SWD) regarding this aspect;

- (6) As social workers only stationed at schools for two days a week, Members enquired whether kindergartens could arrange for social workers to strengthen their stationing services on a self-financing basis to closely monitor the situation of students;
 - (7) Members hoped that the relevant service would help boost the self-confidence of students and suggested that operating organisations should consider launching regular activities to help students explore their interests and potential; and
 - (8) Members enquired to which coordinating committee under the Yuen Long District Welfare Office the service belonged.
5. A consolidated reply provided by Ms FUNG Wing-yi of the SJS was as follows:
- (1) The service would cover subsidised kindergartens in Yuen Long District that participated in social work service for pre-primary institutions. She hoped that Members could assist in promoting the relevant service, and when it was found that any pre-primary children or their families needed attention, they could be encouraged to contact social workers in corresponding kindergartens first. Social workers in kindergartens were familiar with community resources and could refer families in need to appropriate services and provide support for students;
 - (2) The service was based on kindergartens, providing tier 1 support for students in need. If a student's family needed parenting or family relationship services, the corresponding operating organisation would collaborate with the Integrated Family Service Centre that provided services covering the residential address of the student, and referred the relevant case to it for follow-up. Based on the trial experience of the past five years, the relevant service had seen positive feedback;
 - (3) Regarding Members' concern about the possibility of strengthening stationing services, based on past experience, the current social work service, which was provided two days a week to kindergartens, was sufficient. Besides, kindergartens served by the same social workers were located closely to each other. If an emergency case occurred in one of the kindergartens, the principals of other kindergartens were willing to adjust

the duty hours of the social workers to allow them to handle the emergency case first;

- (4) In the past, the responsible organisations of social work service for pre-primary institutions were relatively scattered, and due to geographical limitations, the management personnel of social work service for pre-primary institutions might have difficulty providing immediate support for emergency cases. The current practice of providing service through district teams would help various organisations strengthen their support for social workers; and
- (5) Social work service for pre-primary students focused on protecting children, so the manpower and support of operating organisations would be concentrated on early identification of families in need or families with parenting problems, thereby reducing the occurrence of domestic violence and improper care.

6. Ms Fion WAN of the SWD said that some parents might resist letting schools know about their family conditions, so they might not be willing to contact school social workers. She suggested that Members or members of “Care Teams” should pay attention to the intention of families involved while handling family cases in need of assistance, and if necessary, relevant cases could be referred to Integrated Family Service Centres for follow-up.

7. The Chairman concluded that Members were pleased to note the concern and support of operating organisations and the SWD to pre-primary children and families. Members hoped that the Department would ramp up its publicity to provide appropriate support to more families in need.

Item 3: Annual work plan of Yuen Long District Social Welfare Office in 2024-25
(SWLC Paper No. 7/2024)

8. The Chairman referred Members to Paper No. 7.

9. Upon discussion, Members’ views and enquiries were summarised as follows:

- (1) Regarding recent cases of communication misunderstandings between carers and NGOs on the services of carers, Members enquired whether the SWD had any coordination mechanism or mediation platform to provide carers with mediation and emotional support if they encountered similar situations;
 - (2) Members enquired about the contact information of urban-rural integration service teams for facilitating collaboration and communication between Members and the teams to better support residents;
 - (3) Members enquired about the details and arrangements of the “Love & Care Medical Transfer and Escorting Service Programme”;
 - (4) Members were once informed that social welfare organisations enquired “Care Teams” about wheelchair borrowing service, so they hoped that the SWD could strengthen cooperation among social welfare organisations, DC members and “Care Teams” to jointly provide services to residents; and
 - (5) Recently, Members received a request for assistance from a student about transferring to another school, in which mental health problems were involved. The student had sought help from social workers but reported that the assistance provided by them was limited. Members also once contacted the Education Bureau (EDB) regarding this case, but the Bureau only provided relevant school information. Members enquired whether the SWD could provide relevant support.
10. A consolidated reply provided by Ms Fion WAN of the SWD was as follows:
- (1) In addition to the current subvented services, Hong Kong Love & Care Charity Foundation Ltd. fully subsidised the Support Teams for the Elderly of Yuen Long District and service users who had financial difficulties and received Integrated Home Care Services / Enhanced Home and Community Care Services to take taxis to and from medical institutions for follow-up or handling personal welfare matters with the “Love & Care Medical Transfer and Escorting Service Programme”;
 - (2) Regarding the communication misunderstandings between carers and NGOs, Members could contact the SWD for coordination;

- (3) The SWD noted the wheelchair borrowing service provided by Members and Care Teams, and it would share relevant information with relevant NGOs and representatives of the six heungs on the collaboration platform of six heungs established by the Yuen Long District Welfare Office; and
- (4) Regarding the handling and follow-up of individual cases with mental health problems, Members might contact the Yuen Long District Welfare Office for coordination after the meeting.

11. The Chairman concluded that Members noted the work plan of the Yuen Long District Welfare Office and hoped that the Department could continue to provide appropriate services to residents in need.

Questions raised by Members:

Item 4: Mr WONG Hiu-shan, Mr WONG Wing-ho, Allan, Mr TAM Tak-hoi and Ms CHAN Yin-kwan, Yankie proposed a discussion on ‘Promoting the “AgeWell Academy” (「齡活學堂」) educational programme for the elderly in Yuen Long District’ (SWLC Paper No. 8/2024)

12. The Chairman referred Members to Paper No. 8 and the written reply from the SWD.

(Post-meeting note: The Secretariat forwarded the written reply submitted by the Health Bureau to the SWLC on 20 August 2024.)

13. Members’ views and enquiries on the issue were summarised as follows:
- (1) Members suggested promoting the “AgeWell Academy” educational programme for the elderly in Yuen Long District, offering them with different types of training so that they could continue learning, showcase their talents and serve as “life coaches” that could provide educational services to other elderly in Yuen Long and Tin Shui Wai with their acquired knowledge and experience;
 - (2) Members suggested that the SWD should establish a credit mechanism for the relevant programme, allowing the elderly to obtain corresponding

qualifications or mentor qualifications after receiving training. Elderly people could also become spokespersons for the programme, making a difference in their lives;

- (3) Members believed that the current programmes such as the “Opportunities for the Elderly Project” and the “Elder Academy Scheme” focused excessively on theoretical aspects, and therefore suggested providing practical training for the elderly through the “AgeWell Academy”, such as emotional management, the use of applications and electronic payment methods, and so on. Besides, elderly people should also be recognised for the theories and skills they had learned, allowing them to subsequently volunteer in the community;
- (4) Hong Kong was one of the places that had the longest life expectancy in the world, facing an ageing society. And the community was also concerned about the lives of the elderly. Elderly people had accumulated years of life experience, and if they could serve as life coaches during their golden ages to pass on culture to young people, it would be helpful in promoting the development of community culture to a certain extent;
- (5) Members noted that the SWD also provided similar practical training programmes, and suggested that the Department should strengthen the publicity of the courses, so that interested elderly people could obtain course information from other channels other than the Internet. In addition, Members noted that many elderly people were interested in the “Enriched ICT Training Programme for the Elderly” implemented by the Digital Policy Office. However, as the relevant information was only available on online platforms, elderly people might not have access to it. Therefore, it was suggested that the government could promote elderly training or programmes to residents with the help of DC members in the future;
- (6) There were also elderly groups in the Tin Shui Wai Community, which allowed the elderly to care about the community together and interact with DC members, demonstrating the purpose of the proposed “AgeWell Academy”;
- (7) Members suggested that the SWD should invite more Members who were concerned about elderly welfare to join the “Yuen Long District Coordinating Committee on Elderly Services” to strengthen the exchange of service information and opinions; and

- (8) Members believed that other government departments (for example, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department) could also promote elderly education and community services to broaden the nature of relevant activities.

14. Ms Fion WAN of the SWD thanked Members for their concerns to elderly educational programmes and their suggestions regarding the “AgeWell Academy”. She would forward relevant opinions to the “Yuen Long District Coordinating Committee on Elderly Services” for its reference while formulating plans.

15. The Chairman concluded that Members hoped to provide more opportunities for elderly people to continue learning and participate in voluntary work, which could also promote family harmony.

Item 5: Mr WONG Hiu-shan, Mr TAM Tak-hoi, Mr WONG Wing-ho, Allan, Ms CHAN Yin-kwan, Yankie and Mr TSUI Wai-ngoi proposed a discussion on ‘Request for the Social Welfare Department to prioritise the installation and implementation of the indoor emergency alarm system (commonly known as “Safety Bell”) for vulnerable elderly and persons with disabilities in Yuen Long District’ (SWLC Paper No. 9/2024)

16. The Chairman referred Members to Paper No. 9 and the written reply from the SWD.

17. Members’ views and enquiries on the issue were summarised as follows:

- (1) Hong Kong had an ageing population, with many elderly people living in public housing estates and rural areas. When an accident occurred to elderly singletons or doubleton households, rescue operations would race against time. Members reported that many residents and even security personnel had pointed out the strong demand of the elderly for the installation of the indoor emergency alarm system (“Safety Bell”);
- (2) Members suggested that the SWD, in response to the situation and actual needs of Yuen Long District, should add services related to the installation

of “Safety Bell” for the elderly in the district, especially for elderly residents in public housing estates, in the work plan of the next year to ensure their household safety;

- (3) Members enquired about the information of elderly households in Yuen Long District who had installed the “Safety Bell”, including users who were recipients of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme; and
- (4) Members suggested organising health consultation days for the elderly to provide residents with information about health and the “Safety Bell”. Members suggested that the SWD should coordinate with various Neighbourhood Elderly Centres or other social welfare organisations to attend events together.

18. A consolidated reply provided by Ms Fion WAN of the SWD was as follows:

- (1) The “District Services & Community Care Teams – Pilot Scheme on Supporting Elderly & Carers” was launched in Tsuen Wan and Southern District at the end of March 2024 with a trial period of 12 months. The government would review the actual operation and service effectiveness of the pilot scheme upon its completion;
- (2) As of the end of May 2024, in Yuen Long District, there were a total of 2,033 beneficiaries who received special allowances under the CSSA Scheme to install and use the “Safety Bell”. Other eligible elderly residents could apply for a “Safety Bell” installation allowance from the Housing Department or the Hong Kong Housing Society;
- (3) As pointed out by Members, there were many elderly people living in rural areas in Yuen Long District who needed the support of “Safety Bell” services. The SWD noted Members’ opinions and would forward them to relevant service departments for their consideration while extending the scheme;
- (4) When Members or “Care Teams” visited the elderly, if it was identified that some elderly people needed “Safety Bell” services, they could refer relevant cases to the SWD or the Integrated Family Service Centres of NGOs for follow-up;

- (5) There were more than 10 organisations providing “Safety Bell” services, and the SWD could provide information on service providers for service users to make their own decisions; and
- (6) The SWD had always supported various activities and occasionally set up info desks to introduce the services of Integrated Family Service Centres and promote their activities. Regarding Members’ intention to organise health consultation days for the elderly, the Yuen Long District Welfare Office was willing to contact Integrated Family Service Centres and relevant elderly service organisations to explore relevant cooperation. Meanwhile, Members were suggested to collaborate with the District Health Centre and encourage residents to register as centre members and participate in health education activities.

19. The Chairman concluded that Members noted that Tsuen Wan District and Southern District were currently implementing a pilot scheme and “Care Teams” helped to identify elderly people in need in the districts. It was hoped that the Department could extend the scheme to Yuen Long District as soon as possible.

**Item 6: Mr WONG Hiu-shan, Mr WONG Wing-ho, Allan and Mr TAM Tak-hoi proposed a discussion on “Proposed provision of an occupational health clinic in Yuen Long”
(SWLC Paper No. 10/2024)**

20. The Chairman referred Members to Paper No. 10 and the written reply from the LD.

21. Members’ views and enquiries on the issue were summarised as follows:

- (1) Yuen Long had a large population and the residents had different types of occupations. Currently, when residents encountered work-related injuries, they needed to travel to North District or Kwun Tong District to seek treatment at occupational health clinics. Moreover, the operating hours of these clinics were limited, making it inconvenient for residents to seek treatment. Therefore, Members suggested establishing occupational health clinics in the district to provide services for residents in need and promote occupational safety and health;

- (2) Members thought that the current waiting time of two to three weeks was relatively long and enquired about the reasons for only having two occupational health clinics in Hong Kong, as well as the figures on the usage of these clinics. In response to the reply of the Labour Department (LD) that the total number of consultations of the two clinics in 2022 was 9,177, Members said that the public had a strong demand and suggested establishing a clinic in Yuen Long;
- (3) Members believed that prevention was better than cure, and hoped that the LD would strengthen its promotion work, enhance the occupational safety awareness of employers and employees and even prevent industrial accidents by supervision and law enforcement;
- (4) Members suggested setting up a single window in the service centre of the LD to integrate multiple services, making it easier for residents to use these services; and
- (5) In addition to the occupational health problems of civilian staff members, Members were also very concerned about industrial accidents involving non-civilian staff members, such as sudden deaths, falls from heights, lifting accidents and electric shocks, and enquired about the relevant work of the LD.

22. A consolidated reply provided by Miss Vivian LUI of the LD was as follows:

- (1) She thanked Members for their attention to occupational safety and health. Currently, the two occupational health clinics were located in Kwun Tong Community Health Centre Building and Fanling Health Centre. If employees suspected that they were suffering from work-related illnesses, they could make an appointment by phone for diagnosis and treatment without a doctor's referral. Doctors at these occupational health clinics would learn of patients' medical histories in detail, employment histories, work situations, physical conditions and related daily habits. They would also conduct physical examinations and arrange relevant laboratory tests for patients. When necessary, they would visit patients' workplaces to investigate whether there was any risk factor related to the illnesses in their work environment, and then make appropriate diagnosis and conduct

treatment. At present, the waiting time for new cases at the two occupational health clinics at Kwun Tong and Fanling was less than two to three weeks. In 2022, the number of consultations provided was 9,177;

- (2) The LD would make the best use of existing resources so that residents could be provided with services in a more convenient manner. For example, occupational health clinics would also open on Saturday mornings to facilitate employees who needed to work on weekdays to seek medical treatment;
- (3) The LD would closely monitor the use of occupational health clinics and conduct reviews from time to time to evaluate whether there was a need to open a third clinic;
- (4) Regarding the promotion of occupational safety and health, the LD had been conducted active promotion through various channels, including publications, promotional videos and exhibition boards, to convey occupational safety and health information to the public, employers and employees. In addition, the LD had also held various occupational safety and health courses and workshops; and
- (5) The LD also provided codes of practices for various professions. The existing codes of practices included the Code of Practice for Bamboo Scaffolding Safety, Code of Practice for Safe Use and Operation of Suspended Working Platforms, and Code of Practice: Safety and Health at Work in Confined Spaces, etc.

23. The Chairman concluded that although both Yuen Long and Fanling were districts in the New Territories, they were relatively far apart. It was hoped that the LD could actively consider opening an occupational health clinic in Yuen Long to facilitate local residents in seeking medical treatment.

Item 7: Ms YUEN Man-yee and Ms LI Ching-yee proposed a discussion on “Proposed implementation of a campus peer-counselling ambassador pilot scheme for primary and secondary schools” (SWLC Paper No. 11/2024)

24. The Chairman referred Members to Paper No. 11, the written replies from the SWD and the EDB, and the written reply submitted by the Health Bureau at the

meeting.

25. Members' views and enquiries on the issue were summarised as follows:

- (1) Members were concerned about the emotional problems of young people in the district and pointed out that there were three cases of student suicide in early 2024, two of which were related to academic pressure, and the third one was related to emotional problems. Members also added that students would also be affected by physiological and psychological changes in adolescence, family factors, and school environment;
- (2) According to information, the majority of students tended to confide in their peers rather than to social workers or teachers, making it difficult for school social workers to promptly detect abnormal situations among students. Members believed that providing appropriate training to students could help identify those in need of emotional support early on. Therefore, Members suggested piloting the campus peer-counselling ambassador scheme in Yuen Long District first;
- (3) The scheme could be applied to secondary schools in the district as a first tier diversion. According to the data, the suicide rates of Secondary 2, Secondary 3, Secondary 5 and Secondary 6 students were relatively high. Members suggested arranging NGOs that provided emotional support services to provide training courses to Secondary 4 students so that they could provide emotional support to junior secondary students, which would also be helpful for them to cope with environmental changes when they got into university in the future;
- (4) Although many secondary schools had implemented the "two social workers for each secondary school" measure, the number of student suicides had increased instead of decreased in recent years. It was believed that this showed that increasing the number of social workers might not be the most effective solution. Regarding the number of schools participating in the "gatekeeper" training under the Peer Power Student Gatekeeper Training Programme mentioned by the EDB in its written reply, Members suggested that the EDB should make good use of social resources and enhance related services, for example, implementing the campus peer-counselling ambassador scheme, to strengthen its effectiveness;

- (5) Members enquired which government departments were mainly responsible for peer support and suggested that relevant departments should introduce information on similar schemes held in the past to Members. In addition, Members believed that DC members and members of “the three committees” and “Care Teams” could also assist in promoting the relevant work;
- (6) Members suggested piloting the scheme in one school first and hoped that relevant departments could assist in establishing a support network, so that peer counsellors could not only seek help from social workers but also obtain support through other channels while encountering difficulties to avoid the recurrence of unfortunate incidents;
- (7) Members suggested that the Youth Development Commission should take the lead in implementing the scheme in the district to benefit local youth;
- (8) Currently, each school could only send 20 to 30 students to participate in the Peer Power Student Gatekeeper Training Programme. As there was an increase in unfortunate incidents, Members thought that the relevant programme should be reviewed and optimised by promoting participation of students at all levels and increasing the number of counsellors in each school; and
- (9) Members enquired about the number of cases after the implementation of the “two social workers for each secondary school” measure.

26. A consolidated reply provided by Ms Fion WAN of the SWD was as follows:

- (1) The Yuen Long District Welfare Office and the Local Committee on Services for Young People under its regulation understood that peers were very important to young people. When young people encountered difficulties, they were more inclined to confide in their peers. Therefore, they launched the Peer Power Student Gatekeeper Training Programme with the aim of cultivating young people who participated in the programme to become gatekeepers for their peers;
- (2) School social workers not only handled individual cases, but also provided support to young people with mental health needs and their peers through

various types of education and group activities;

- (3) The Yuen Long District Welfare Office had also established the Working Group on Yuen Long District Concern for Development of Adolescent, hoping to promote diverse education and development activities by contacting youth service units in the district and making good use of peer networks. Young people could encourage their friends in need of the services to participate in activities planned by the working group. In addition, if social workers identified young people in need of the services, they would provide appropriate support or referrals; and
- (4) The number of cases that had received services from school social workers would be provided after the meeting.

(Post-meeting note: The Secretariat forwarded the follow-up reply submitted by the SWD to the SWLC on 12 July 2024.)

27. The Chairman concluded that Members hoped that the SWD would continue to actively follow up on the mental health problems of students.

Item 8: Ms LAM Wai-ming and Mr YIU Kwok-wai proposed a discussion on “Inspection of work in confined spaces in Yuen Long District and measures to enhance the safety awareness of workers” (SWLC Paper No. 12/2024)

28. The Chairman referred Members to Paper No. 12 and the written reply from the LD.
29. Members’ views and enquiries on the issue were summarised as follows:
 - (1) Serious industrial accidents occurred in Hong Kong every year, such as accidents involving confined spaces and falling objects from heights. As there were multiple construction sites in Yuen Long District currently, Members were concerned about industrial safety in the district;
 - (2) Members believed that most industrial accidents were related to human negligence, for example, wearing insufficient safety equipment or even wearing no protective clothing. Although workers must be trained before

entering manholes for work, they had relatively weak safety awareness;

- (3) Members thought that the revised code of practice for work in confined spaces by the LD in May 2024, which required recording the entire work process at the entrances and exits of confined spaces, was effective. However, there was still a need to strengthen the education of workers' safety awareness, for example, referring to the Fire Services Department's slogan "three useful items when you escape". Members also suggested conducting safety education in accommodations provided for imported workers;
- (4) There were regulations in Hong Kong regarding working in confined spaces, including requiring individuals to obtain qualifications of "Certified Worker" or "Competent Person". Although there were strict regulations, accidents still occurred due to improper supervision;
- (5) Members believed that enhancing workers' safety awareness was the most effective way in preventing industrial accidents and suggested increasing relevant penalties and strengthening daily inspections to urge contractors and workers to consciously abide by the rules and not to leave things to chance. Along with the progress of multiple development projects in Yuen Long, Members hoped that the LD would pay attention to the safety conditions of construction sites in Yuen Long and Northern Metropolis;
- (6) Members estimated that there would be hundreds of construction sites in Yuen Long and Northern Metropolis. Therefore, they hoped that the LD could analyse the number of workers who had obtained relevant qualifications and the overall number of construction sites in Hong Kong to evaluate whether there was sufficient qualified manpower for the works;
- (7) Once an industrial accident occurred, it not only affected the safety of relevant workers, but also affected the income of their families and the growth of their children, which would have an impact on society;
- (8) Members suggested adding content about working in confined spaces to Mandatory Basic Safety Training Courses (i.e., "Green Card");
- (9) Members suggested categorising confined spaces, for example, marking high-risk manholes in red and requiring site foremen or safety officers to prepare risk assessment reports; for simpler processes, for example, cleaning

water tanks, risk assessment reports could be prepared by safety supervisors or “competent persons”; and

- (10) There were multiple recycling sites in Yuen Long District, but many workers had weak safety awareness, and some recycling sites were unregistered and constructed in non-compliant areas. As some recycling sites refused to allow the LD to enter for inspection, Members suggested that the LD should carry out inspection and law enforcement work by drones and other methods.

30. A consolidated reply provided by Ms Vivian LUI of the LD was as follows:

- (1) She thanked Members for their attention to occupational safety and health, and said that the LD promoted occupational safety and health in Hong Kong by inspection, law enforcement, publicity and education, and other means;
- (2) In terms of inspection and law enforcement, the LD not only conducted regular inspections and law enforcement, but also carried out surprise inspections and regional patrols. On 17 June 2024, the LD launched a two-week special inspection operation targeting confined work spaces, including those in Yuen Long District;
- (3) On 31 May 2024, the revised “Code of Conduct for Safety and Health in Confined Space Work” was gazetted by the LD. The main revisions included strengthening the requirements for owners or contractors in supervising work in confined spaces and providing detailed templates for risk assessment forms, etc.;
- (4) In terms of promotion, education and training, according to relevant regulations, “competent persons” and “certified workers” who worked in confined spaces had to receive and complete mandatory training courses recognised by the LD before they started to work;
- (5) In addition, the LD also held training courses and lectures on occupational safety and health legislation, and collaborated with different organisations to co-organise lectures or seminars from time to time to promote information on occupational safety and health; and
- (6) She thanked Members for their attention to occupational safety and health,

and she would forward the relevant opinions to relevant service divisions of the LD for reference and consideration.

31. The Chairman concluded that serious industrial accidents could have negative impacts on the families of workers involved and even the whole society. It was hoped that the LD would strengthen the promotion of occupational safety and health to avoid accidents.

Reports of government departments:

**Item 9: Statistics on Comprehensive Social Security Assistance caseload and domestic violence reports in Yuen Long District
(SWLC Paper No. 13/2024)**

32. Regarding the statistics on Comprehensive Social Security Assistance caseload and domestic violence reports in Yuen Long District, the Chairman asked the SWD to continue to follow up on the relevant cases and refer them to law enforcement departments for follow-up as soon as necessary.

Item 10: Any other business

33. Following up on the concerns raised by Members at the last SWLC meeting regarding the After School Care Service Scheme, Ms Fion WAN of the SWD updated the development of the the School-based After School Care Service Scheme. Currently, there were 9 schools in Yuen Long District participating in the relevant scheme; in response to the positive feedback from the public, after collecting comprehensive information and opinions from various stakeholders, the Department planned to implement a one-year “School-based After School Care Service Scheme (Expanded Programme)” (“Expanded Programme”) in the 2024-2025 school year, which would cover 100 primary schools in all 18 districts of Hong Kong and was expected to serve 6,000 students in need. The Department would hold an online briefing on 26 June 2024 and invite NGOs to submit applications to become recognised service providers. The list of participating schools would be announced after the online briefing.

34. In response to Members’ enquiries about the eligibility of organisations for applying for the “Expanded Programme”, Ms Fion WAN of the SWD added that recognised service organisations had to be NGOs and non-profit making organisations granted tax exemption status under section 88 of the Inland Revenue Ordinance (Cap. 112) and have experience in operating after-school care services. As the “Expanded Programme” required providing services to students in need during school holidays and

class suspension days in local service units, service operators who could make the aforementioned arrangements would be given priority in the consideration.

35. Mr MAN Cho-wai of the SWD stated that the Department was implementing the “Care the Carers Campaign” 2024-25 Short Video Competition, hoping to deepen public understanding of carers, promote family based support and mutual assistance among peer carers, and recognise the contributions of carers. The competition was divided into two categories, namely “Primary and Secondary Category” and “Tertiary and Open Category” with great prizes, including gift vouchers worth up to \$8,000 and \$10,000 respectively. Winning entries would also be uploaded to the website and YouTube channel of the SWD. The Judging Committee comprised Miss Charmaine LEE, JP, Director of the SWD, Prof. CHAN Lai-wan, Cecilia, Emeritus Professor of the University of Hong Kong, and Mr Ho Cheuk-tin, Awardee of Best New Director of the 41st Hong Kong Film Awards. The deadline for submitting works was 15 August 2024, and the SWD hoped that Members could assist in promoting the relevant activity.

Item 11: Date of next meeting

36. The Chairman announced that the next SWLC meeting would be held at the Conference Room of the YLDC at 2:30 p.m. on 26 August 2024.

37. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 5:10 p.m.

Yuen Long District Council Secretariat
August 2024