

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

Date: 28 October 2024 (Monday)

Time: 2:30 p.m. to 4:05 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

Co-opted Members: Mr WU Kin-keung, Calvin
Ms TAM Kam-lin, MH

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

In Attendance

Mr LAU Hiu-lap, Frederick Senior Liaison Officer 4,
Yuen Long District Office
Ms WAN Yee-man, Fion Assistant District Social Welfare Officer
(Yuen Long) 2, Social Welfare Department
Miss LUI Wing-man, Vivian Labour Officer (Employment Services)
(Yuen Long), Labour Department

Item II

Ms POON Hau-yuk Senior Social Work Officer (Corrections)2,
Social Welfare Department

Items III to V

Ms LING Wai-yu Social Work Officer 2 (Planning &
Coordinating), Social Welfare Department

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Opening Remarks

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

Item I: Confirmation of minutes of the fourth meeting of SWLC in 2024 held on 26 August 2024

2. Members confirmed the minutes of the fourth meeting of the SWLC in 2024 held on 26 August 2024.

Discussion Item:

Item II: Briefing on the Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged (SWLC Paper No. 23/2024)

3. The Chairman referred Members to Paper No. 23 and welcomed Ms POON Hau-yuk, Senior Social Work Officer (Corrections)² of Social Welfare Department (“SWD”), to the meeting.

4. After discussion, Members’ views and enquiries were summarised as follows:

- (1) An enquiry was made as to whether family members of non-Hong Kong residents could benefit from the Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged (“PFD”), as well as the assistance provided by the PFD to ethnic minority residents and working women;
- (2) An enquiry was made as to whether applicant organisations that had received grants from other government departments for the provision of other social welfare services were required to declare interests to the PFD. An enquiry was also made about the matters to be considered when submitting applications; and
- (3) It was noted that, as some grassroots people needed long-term support, the SWD should not limit the number of times that the grantee could benefit from the PFD.

5. A consolidated reply provided by Ms POON Hau-yuk of the SWD was follows:

- (1) As required by the PFD, a project under consideration would be delivered in Hong Kong and would contribute to the direct benefit of the underprivileged persons/groups in Hong Kong;
- (2) If the applicant organisation had already applied to other government funding schemes for the proposed project, or if the proposed project resembled existing services subsidised by the SWD, the PFD Secretariat would request an explanation and information for consideration before determining the approval of the application;
- (3) The PFD would also be accepting applications annually. The next round of applications was tentatively due to be opened in December this year, with a closing date of October next year. If all the documents and information were in order, the Secretariat would spend three or four months examining the applications and then forward them to the Advisory Committee of the Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged for approval;

- (4) The PFD Secretariat imposed no restrictions on eligible beneficiaries participating repeatedly in activities, but would instead expect operating organisations to proactively reach out to underprivileged persons/groups who might have needs but had not yet had the opportunity to participate in relevant activities. This would help to broaden the range of beneficiary sectors, thereby ensuring that a greater number of underprivileged persons/groups benefitted; and
- (5) The PFD was committed to supporting disadvantaged communities, and ethnic minorities were one of the targeted beneficiary groups. A number of approved projects were aimed at organising activities to proactively reach out to and provide support for ethnic minorities. Several PFD-approved projects were in place to deliver specific services and support for working women from disadvantaged backgrounds.

6. In conclusion, the Chairman thanked the SWD for providing such detailed information on the PFD and invited the Members to assist with its promotion.

Questions raised by Members:

**Item III: Mr YIU Kwok-wai proposed a discussion on ‘Implementation of the “Community Care Service Voucher Scheme for the Elderly” in Yuen Long District’
(SWLC Paper No. 19/2024)**

7. The Chairman referred Members to Paper No. 19 and a written reply from the SWD, and welcomed Ms LING Wai-yu, Social Work Officer 2 (Planning and Coordinating) of the SWD, to the meeting.

8. Members’ views and enquiries on the item were summarised as follows:

- (1) Members had received recurring enquiries from the public regarding services for the elderly, including escort services for medical consultations and domestic cleaning. They anticipated that the SWD would provide further information about the Community Care Service Voucher (“CCSV”) Scheme for the Elderly as well as key points for consideration to facilitate the promotion of the Scheme within the community;
- (2) An enquiry was made regarding the criteria for distribution by the SWD of CCSVs;
- (3) An enquiry was made regarding the channels available for the elderly to participate in the CCSV Scheme. It was anticipated that the SWD would provide enhanced support for the elderly living in rural areas; and
- (4) An enquiry was made regarding whether services provided by Day Care Centres for the Elderly were also included in the services covered by the CCSV Scheme.

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

- (1) Through the Standardised Care Need Assessment Mechanism for Elderly Services, the SWD would assess the abilities of elderly persons in performing activities of daily living, cognition and communication, emotion and behaviour, physical

functioning, health conditions, social support and the living environment. The purpose of the assessments was to identify their long-term care (“LTC”) needs and match them with appropriate LTC services. Frail elderly persons who had been assessed by the SCNAMES as suitable candidates for Community Care Services (“CCS”) or Residential Care Services (“RCS”) were eligible to apply for the subsidised CCS and opt to join the CCSV Scheme as long as they were on the Central Waiting List (“CWL”) for subsidised LTC services without any kind of RCS or subsidised CCS being received. Currently, eligible frail elders were not required to wait and might use CCSVs to receive subsidised CCS. Additionally, elderly persons applying for the CCSV Scheme would be subject to asset tests, under which their co-payment category was determined based on their average monthly income and specified household members residing with them (i.e. parents, children and spouse residing with them in Hong Kong) in the preceding three months prior to the date of submission of the application;

- (2) The SWD would send invitation letters to eligible elderly persons who had recently completed the registration process on the CWL to apply for CCSVs. They could download the application form from the SWD website or submit it via the Voucher Information System for the Elderly. If any elderly person receiving CCSVs opt out of the Scheme, the CCSVs would be re-allocated to other applicants in need. In general, the CCSV Office would complete the vetting and approval process and issue the vouchers within two to four weeks upon receipt of applications;
- (3) Elderly persons in need of subsidised LTC services could apply at the Medical Social Services Units under the SWD or the Hospital Authority, the Integrated Family Service Centres located in their respective districts, or the elderly service units. An assessment would then be conducted by social workers. Those who fulfilled the eligibility criteria would receive an invitation letter from the SWD inviting them to participate in the CCSV Scheme; and
- (4) The CCSV Scheme was delivered in three service modes: “centre-based” services, “home-based” services and the “mixed mode” of “centre-based” and “home-based” services. Eligible elderly persons could freely choose Recognised Service Providers (“RSPs”) under the Scheme, service items, combinations and service volumes that suited their needs. In the case of “centre-based” services, these included personal care, meal services and rehabilitation exercises (including physiotherapy). Some service units also provided escort services for elderly persons living in rural areas. As far as “home-based” services were concerned, these included the rehabilitation exercise and meal services mentioned above, as well as nursing care, home visits and domestic services. Some service units also provided grocery shopping and companionship services for the elderly. Elderly persons were advised to make more comparisons when choosing a service, given the variation in service modes, items and prices among RSPs.

10. In conclusion, the Chairman thanked the SWD for the detailed presentation of the CCSV Scheme and asked the SWD and Members to do more to publicise the Scheme to help the needy elderly.

Item IV: Mr SZE TO Chun-hin, Ms WONG Wai-ling, Ms CHIU Sau-han, Ms Fennie LAI and Ms LAM Wai-ming proposed a discussion on “Concerns over cases of domestic violence and child maltreatment in Yuen Long District” (SWLC Paper No. 20/2024)

11. The Chairman referred Members to Paper No. 20 and the written replies from the SWD and Yuen Long Police District.

12. Members' views and enquiries on the item were summarised as follows:

- (1) An enquiry was made regarding the metrics used to calculate the number of child abuse cases, as stated in the written replies of the SWD and the Police;
- (2) Regarding the SWD's reply that a multi-disciplinary cooperation approach would be used to jointly handle cases, an enquiry was made as to whether counsellors currently working in universities would be included in the cooperation mechanism;
- (3) The question was raised as to whether children in general had the cognitive capacity to protect themselves, based on the observations from the school talks conducted by the SWD. It was hoped that the SWD could enhance children's awareness of protecting their own rights and interests; and
- (4) The SWD was advised to allocate further resources to family education and enhance collaboration with schools and Parent-Teacher Associations in order to step up efforts to protect children.

13. A consolidated reply provided by Ms Fion WAN and Ms LING Wai-yu of the SWD was as follows:

- (1) Investigative social workers dealing with cases of suspected child abuse were required to hold a recognised degree in social work. For each suspected child abuse case, the Government would convene a Multi-disciplinary Case Conference on Protection of Child with Suspected Maltreatment ("MDCC"). Members of an MDCC should have first-hand knowledge of the child and his/her family, and should have a major role in the handling and investigation of the suspected child abuse case. If they were not involved in the investigation, they should be able to provide particular information about the child or his/her family, or professional advice. Depending on the circumstances of the case, MDCC members could include medical practitioners, teachers, social workers, police officers, clinical psychologists and other professionals. During the MDCC, members would share and analyse information gathered during the investigation. This would allow them to evaluate the level of current and future risk and needs of the child and any other children in the family, and then to decide whether the case constituted a child protection case and whether a follow-up plan was required. Information on child protection investigations into suspected child abuse cases would be registered in the Child Protection Registry. The 113 cases of child protection stated in the written reply from the SWD covered both substantiated and high-risk child abuse cases. As not all cases of suspected child abuse had been reported to the Police and as there was no direct correlation between SWD investigations and police investigations, nor any indication as to whether the Police would prosecute the alleged perpetrator, there might be a discrepancy between the number of cases of child abuse registered by the SWD and the number of cases registered by the Police; and
- (2) The SWD considered family relationships and parental education played an important role in children protection. To this end, the SWD had been providing

various training programmes in child protection for front-line professionals on a regular basis. The training would enhance the knowledge and skills of the professionals, enabling them to assist parents in addressing their children's emotional and behavioural issues at various developmental stages. In addition, the SWD/NGOs had periodically conducted awareness activities in schools to enhance communication between children and their families and to promote family harmony. Through the activities, children were encouraged to talk to trusted persons, such as social workers, teachers and peers, about their difficulties to help them protect themselves. This allowed relevant professionals to identify cases at an early stage and intervene to provide further follow-up services.

14. In summary, the Chairman requested that the SWD enhance its publicity and education efforts and show more concern about child abuse cases, in order to reduce such cases.

Item V: Mr TAM Tak-hoi, Mr WONG Hiu-shan, Mr SZE TO Chun-hin, Ms HO Hiu-man, Mr TSUI Wai-ngoi, Mr CHEUNG Wai-sum, Mr WONG Siu-chung and Mr Allan WONG proposed a discussion on “Preventive measures against youth crime and drug abuse” (SWLC Paper No. 21/2024)

15. The Chairman referred Members to Paper No. 21 and the written replies tabled at the meeting by the SWD and the Narcotics Division of the Security Bureau.

16. Members' views and enquiries on the item were summarised as follows:

- (1) In view of the significant increase in the number of young people abusing drugs, an enquiry was made as to whether the SWD would develop more specific proposals to address youth crime and drug abuse;
- (2) An enquiry was made regarding the number of services provided by the Counselling Centres for Psychotropic Substance Abusers (“CCPSAs”) over the past year, as well as the success rates achieved in cases handled through their daytime and overnight outreach services;
- (3) In addition to the issue of drug abuse among young people, there had also been a notable surge in drug trafficking and delivery by young people in Yuen Long District. Furthermore, there had been an emerging trend of individuals being involved in these activities being younger in age. It was recommended that the SWD collaborate with the Police to address this situation;
- (4) Members were delighted with the SWD's proactive approach in assuming a connector role and organising sporting activities for youth engagement. They suggested that the SWD should organise more relevant activities in the future and enhancing their promotional efforts. For example, sports events could be organised to commemorate the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and National Day, with the participation of disciplined forces. This would provide young people with increased opportunities to interact with disciplined forces, thereby enhancing their law-abiding and anti-drug awareness;

- (5) A question was raised concerning the use of emerging drugs among young people in Yuen Long District; and
- (6) In light of the growing number of young people turning to drug abuse due to family issues and a lack of family care, Members said that they wished to extend invitations to staff members of the Enlighten Centre of the Evangelical Lutheran Church Social Service – Hong Kong (“ELCSS-HK”) and other relevant social welfare organisations to share information and to help enhance their understanding of the family issues confronted by young people. Furthermore, Members recommended increased cooperation between youth services and integrated family services organisations so as to introduce more support services for young people.

17. A consolidated reply provided by Ms Fion WAN and Ms LING Wai-yu of the SWD was as follows:

- (1) The Enlighten Centre of the ELCSS-HK was responsible for operating the CCPSA in Yuen Long District. The Centre and the SWD had signed a Funding and Service Agreement that stipulated the objectives, details, volumes and outcomes of the services. While the SWD was unable to provide the number of relevant cases or details of service outcomes at the meeting, it would provide this information afterwards;
- (2) The SWD had collaborated with 11 social service units in the district to form the “Project D - Love Ourselves More” working group. The Working Group, comprising the CCPSA, outreach youth service teams and school social workers, had been working to enhance cross-service information exchange and collaboration in order to address the issue of drug abuse among young people in the district. This year had also seen the Working Group raise concerns about the emergence of a new drug known as “space oil”. To tackle the issue, information cards would be produced for distribution in areas where young people tended to congregate, such as around industrial buildings. The aim was to raise awareness among young people about the harmful effects of emerging drugs; and
- (3) Members were thanked for their opinions and suggestions. They were also encouraged to engage in case-studies collaboratively and exchange information. The SWD would invite the Enlighten Centre to provide an overview of its services, and to share its experience with Members, with a view to enhancing communication and collaboration.

18. Mr Frederick LAU of the Yuen Long District Office said that the District Fight Crime Committee (Yuen Long District) would be organising the Yuen Long District Anti-Crime, Anti-Drug, Anti-Deception and Rehabilitation Carnival at On Hing Playground on 22 December this year, with a view to spreading positivity within the community.

19. The Chairman concluded that family relationships had a significant impact on young people, and recommended their participation in the Yuen Long Junior Police Call to foster positive values.

Reports of government departments

**Item VI: Statistics on Comprehensive Social Security Assistance caseload and domestic violence reports in Yuen Long District
(SWLC Paper No. 22/2024)**

20. Members noted the above paper.

Item VII: Any other business

Item VIII: Date of next meeting

21. Ms Fion WAN of the SWD said that the SWD had been implementing a three-year “Care the Carers Campaign” since 2023-24. The objective of the campaign was to strengthen support for caregivers, to promote mutual assistance within the community and to develop a carer-friendly community. The highlight of the year would be an event to be held at the VTC Youth College (Tin Shui Wai) on 23 November, and the Chairman of the SWLC was invited to attend and officiate the event. In line with the event’s theme of “Chill Out for a Day”(「 Chill 自悠的一天」), a range of activities had been planned for caregivers to enjoy a pleasant day. These included performances, leisure activities, arts experiences and new sports, organised by various service units. The SWD extended an invitation to Members to assist in promoting the event to the residents in the district.

22. The Chairman said that the next meeting of the SWLC would be held in the Conference Room of the YLDC at 2:30 p.m. on 23 December 2024.

23. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4:05 p.m.

Yuen Long District Council Secretariat
December 2024