

**Family Council**  
**Minutes of 38<sup>th</sup> Meeting held on 2 August 2018**

Date: 2 August 2018 (Thursday)  
Time: 9:30 - 11:15 a.m.  
Venue: Conference Room 4, G/F, Central Government Offices,  
2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong

Attendance

Chairman

Prof. SHEK Tan-lei, Daniel

Ex-officio Members

Ms CHAN Yuen-han, Chairperson of the Women's Commission

Non-official Members

Ms CHENG Chi-man, Sonia

Ms CHEUNG Lai-chu

Prof. LAM Tai-hing, Deputy Convenor, Sub-committee on Family Support

Prof. LEUNG Seung-ming, Alvin

Dr TSUI Luen-on, Gordon

Mrs WONG NG Kit-wah, Cecilia

Miss WONG Siu-ling, Gabriella

Mr WOO Kin-man, Clement

Ms YIP Lai-wa, Emily

Official Members

Mr Patrick LI, Acting Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs (*attending on behalf of Secretary for Home Affairs*)

Ms CHANG King-yiu, Permanent Secretary for Labour & Welfare  
*(attending on behalf of Secretary for Labour and Welfare)*

Mr WOO Chun-sing, Deputy Secretary for Education (4) *(attending on behalf of Secretary for Education)*

Ms Joyce HO, Deputy Head (3) *(attending on behalf of Head/Policy Innovation and Co-ordination Office)*

Secretary

Miss Iris MA, Acting Principal Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs  
(Civic Affairs) 2

(For agenda item 3)

Miss Leonia TAI, Deputy Secretary for Labour & Welfare (Welfare) 1

Ms Vivian KO, Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour & Welfare  
(Welfare) 1

Ms PANG Kit-ling, Assistant Director (Family & Child Welfare),  
Social Welfare Department (SWD)

Prof. Paul YIP, Chair Professor, Department of Social Work and Social  
Administration, Director of the Hong Kong Jockey Club Centre for  
Suicide Research and Prevention, The University of Hong Kong (HKU)

Ms Cynthia XIONG, Project Manager, The Hong Kong Jockey Club  
Centre for Suicide Research and Prevention, HKU

Absent with apologies

Dr LAM Ching-choi, Chairman of the Elderly Commission

Mr LAU Ming-wai, Vice-Chairperson of the Youth Development  
Commission

Ms CHAN Suk-mei, May

Mrs CHU YEUNG Pak-yu, Patricia, Convenor, Sub-committee on  
Family Support

Mr LEE Luen-fai, Convenor, Sub-committee on the Promotion of

Family Core Values and Family Education

Mr LEE Tsz-king, Dominic

Miss TANG Pui-yee, Phoebe, Deputy Convenor, Sub-committee on the Promotion of Family Core Values and Family Education

Ms YIP Yun-wan, Amarantha

### **Welcome Remarks**

The Chairman welcomed all to the 38<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Family Council (the Council), in particular, Ms Joyce HO, Deputy Head (3) of the Policy Innovation and Co-ordination Office, who attended the Council meeting for the first time.

### **Item 1 – Confirmation of Minutes of the 37<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Family Council**

2. The minutes of the 37<sup>th</sup> meeting were confirmed without amendment.

3. The Chairman informed Members that this meeting was originally scheduled for 18 September 2018 and one of the planned agenda items was the review on child care services conducted by the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB) which, at the request of LWB, would be discussed at this special meeting. In the light of the practical difficulties to re-schedule the meetings of the two sub-committees in such a short period of time, the usual item on the progress of work of the two sub-committees would be omitted today but the Council Secretary

would report on the progress of work under the agenda item of “Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting”.

## **Item 2 – Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting**

4. The Chairman noted that the Council Secretariat had circulated a progress report to Members for information, and invited Chief Executive Officer (Family Council) (CEO(FC)) to brief Members on the progress. CEO(FC) informed the meeting that the adjudication interviews for the 2017/18 Family-Friendly Employers Award Scheme (Award Scheme) were underway. A total of 24 companies/organisations were shortlisted for consideration of “Grand Award” and 23 for the “Outstanding Family-friendly Employment Practices 2017/18”. In addition, the Organising Committee had endorsed to award 3 080 companies/organisations as “Family-friendly Employers” and 132 as “Meritorious Family-friendly Employers”. The number of recommended awardees for “Special Mention (Gold)”, “Special Mention”, and “Award for Breastfeeding Support” was 362, 582 and 594 respectively. A facebook game would be launched in around September 2018 for the public to vote on their favourite family-friendly employment practice so as to arouse public awareness of the good practices. Around 1 000 entry tickets to the Hong Kong Disneyland on the day of award presentation ceremony, i.e. 8 December 2018 (Saturday) were reserved for winners of the facebook games.

5. In respect of the Study on Family Impact Assessment (FIA), CEO(FC) reported that the draft checklist had been applied to 226 papers as at 27 July 2018. The Council Secretariat was working

with the Civil Service Bureau to upload the FIA checklist, user manual as well as case examples onto the Cyber Learning Centre Plus in August 2018. For the various studies in the pipeline, CEO(FC) reported that the research team appointed to conduct the Further Study on the Phenomenon of Divorce in Hong Kong (Divorce Study) had submitted the inception report on 19 July 2018. The survey team for the Family Survey 2017 would present its progress and findings to the Sub-committee on Family Support (Support Sub-committee) at its next meeting scheduled for 4 September 2018.

6. CEO(FC) then updated Members that the Council's facebook had attracted over 8 100 likes as at 27 July 2018 and the average number of "Reaction", "Comments" and "Sharing" per post was about 145. New service contractors for revamping the Council's Happy Family Info Hub, production of new education package and management of the Council's facebook were appointed. They would present workplan to the Sub-committee on the Promotion of family Core Values and Family Education (Promotion Sub-committee) at its next meeting scheduled for 14 August 2018. For the Pilot Scheme on Thematic Sponsorship to Support Family-related Initiatives, final reports of the four approved projects under 2016-17 Scheme were being examined by the Council Secretariat.

7. CEO(FC) also informed the meeting that a press conference for the Asian Family Summit (AFS) would be held on 5 August 2018. The Chief Executive would be the Guest of Honour of the opening ceremony to be held in the Grand Hall, Centennial Campus of HKU on 20 August 2018 (Monday) morning. An updated event programme

was tabled for Members' reference. Members who wished to enroll for any session(s) were welcomed to contact the Council Secretariat. As part of the AFS, a Family Well-Being Expo would be held on 19 August 2018 (Sunday) and the Council would assist to distribute the tickets to public through facebook games.

8. The Chairman then invited Members to watch the video produced by LWB on the four strategic directions and 20 key recommendations of the "Elderly Services Programme Plan" (ESPP), which were previously discussed by the Council at its 34<sup>th</sup> meeting on 19 September 2017. The Chairman suggested that LWB should later be invited for discussion with the Council to explore ways for strengthening family's role in achieving the mission.

9. After the video show, Members had the following comments –

- (a) the general directions of ESPP were supported and the Government was expected to provide resources for implementation of the recommendations;
- (b) the strategic directions were more on the "remedial" side and a more proactive approach covering preventive education should be considered; and
- (c) there was no mentioning of "family" in the video and the mental health issue of elderly persons was also not covered.

10. Permanent Secretary for Labour & Welfare responded that the video aimed to present the ESPP in a concise manner. LWB would consider producing an abridged version later for publicity use. The

Government had undertaken to implement the ESPP in five to ten years as appropriate. Collaboration with various government bureaux and departments as well as other organisations was required for taking forth the recommendations of the ESPP. LWB would brief the Council again on the details as and when appropriate.

**Item 3 – Consultancy Study on the Long-term Development of Child Care Services (Paper FC 10/2018)**

11. The Chairman invited Miss Leonia TAI, Deputy Secretary (Welfare) 1, Ms Vivian KO, Principal Assistant Secretary (Welfare) 1 of LWB, Ms PANG Kit-ling, Assistant Director (Family and Child Welfare) of SWD, Prof. Paul YIP and Ms Cynthia XIONG of HKU to brief Members on the progress of the Consultancy Study on “Long-term Development of Child Care Services” (the Study).

12. Prof. YIP briefed the meeting of the interim findings and observations of the Study. Salient points of his presentation included

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- (a) the Study aimed to review the philosophy and policy objectives of day child care services in Hong Kong, take stock of the operation modes and positioning of day child care services, identify service gaps and explore a systematic and workable service planning mechanism;
- (b) a comparison of Hong Kong day child care services with four overseas jurisdictions including Singapore, South

Korea, Australia and Finland was conducted. It was observed that while Hong Kong's child care service focused more on "care" element, the global trend was to integrate "care" and "education" elements for the interest of child development. Also, the manning ratio for one child care worker to children in child care centres in Hong Kong was generally higher than that of other jurisdictions, and the training and qualification requirement of staff was lower;

- (c) the female labour participation rate remained at high level across different age groups in Australia and Finland but featured with a drop in specific age range in Asian countries. Family-friendly work policies, especially child care policies, would be an important factor of this phenomenon;
- (d) notwithstanding the rising expenditure on pre-primary services since 2013-14, Hong Kong's spending in terms of percentage of GDP was lower than that of other jurisdictions under the study while noting that Hong Kong had the lowest tax rate among these jurisdictions;
- (e) with regard to the population projection figures and application of the geo-spatial technique, an analysis of the supply of day child care services in different districts was conducted. The provision of day child care services, especially for children aged under two, was insufficient in general and the situation was more serious in some districts;
- (f) as observed from the questionnaire-based survey, "parents have to work" was the common reason for arranging

children to receive child care services. For those not using the services, “grandparents help out” and “don’t know there is child care service” were the most commonly quoted reasons;

- (g) the opinions collected from focus group meetings indicated discrepancies between parents’ expectation and existing services, as well as the need to review the positioning and operation of various day child care services. There were expectations for development elements to be integrated into day child care services, adjustment in the manning ratio of child care centres, and higher accessibility to day child care services, etc.; and
- (h) based on the findings and observations, the recommendations of the Study would cover areas such as positioning of day child care services to promote the “Early Childhood Education and Care” (ECEC) concept, formulating planning ratio for child care centres to meet the demand, developing a set of quality indicators and enhancing the regulatory and administrative system with a view to improving the quality of service, and establishing a more efficient and cost effective financing mode to cater for the needs of different families.

13. Deliberations of the meeting after the presentation were summarised as follows –

- (a) several members shared their views on the inadequacy of family-friendly measures in Hong Kong to support the working mothers and appraised the efforts of the Consultant team. The relatively short maternity leave ran counter to the Government's efforts in promoting breastfeeding. They saw the need to step up publicity and educational work on this front and looked forward to more concrete implementation plan by the Government covering also the provision of assistance, such as tax incentives, to companies, especially the small and medium enterprises which were suffering from manpower and resources constraints, on implementation of enhanced measures. A member also suggested examining the overseas experience of flexible arrangement of maternity leave;
- (b) a member noted that there was no coverage of the difficulties faced by single-parent families in taking care of their young kids in the Study;
- (c) regarding the planning ratio of day child care services, a member suggested that a flexible approach should be adopted to cater for different demographic features of different districts. Another member considered that the day child care centres should be close to work places. A member noted the survey result that parents were willing to pay more for quality day child care services. She wondered if the survey findings would be disclosed to the private sector for consideration of service provision;

- (d) members noted the latest trend of ECEC but remarked that care should be exercised to caution against pre-mature teaching. Quoting the United Nations' advocate of children's rights, a member considered that young kids should have sufficient time to play. A member echoed the views and suggested adoption of learning through play at child care centres. Another member highlighted the importance of character building at toddler age and suggested formulation of some guidelines in this aspect for integration with kindergarten education. Another member expected the guidelines to be pragmatic and that a monitoring system would be in place. The need to review and enhance the qualification requirements and career advancement of child care/teaching staff in the early childhood education sector was raised by members too;
- (e) a member expected a targeted approach to be adopted in providing resources to child care centres so that children could benefit directly; and
- (f) a member shared her experience and expected the recommendations to be specific and pertinent to the different functions of nursery and education. She considered that while shortage of nursery services might be addressed through proper planning, manpower ratio was a more crucial issue in respect of early childhood education.

14. In response to Members' views, Prof. Yip informed the

meeting that about 28% of single-parent families belonged to low-income category. According to western experience, good child care services could release single parents to join the labour force and hence, reduce public expenditure on other welfare services. Child care services could be improved by enhancing the quality of service providers as well as leveraging on the assistance of grandparents. According to Australian experience, the ECEC concept did not focus on reading and writing but learning in environment such as developing the senses of safety and discipline of the children. The Consultant team would study the overseas experience of providing assistance to companies in adopting family-friendly measures.

15. Miss Tai thanked Members for their comments, and the Consultant team would take into account the comments in the final report of the Study. The Government was committed to improving day child care services with the objective to provide choices to families. On the planning of services, new guidelines on the planning ratio of child care centres would be drawn up. The Government also encouraged the provision of work-based child care centres, and was actively pursuing a proposal of setting up a work-based child care centre in the new government offices in Tseung Kwan O. Ms Pang supplemented that in parallel, the SWD was adopting a proactive approach of including the provision of day child care services in the planning of new development areas.

16. The Chairman thanked Prof. Yip for the presentation and the responses from LWB. He suggested LWB to brief the Council again on the way forward when the final report was available.

#### **Item 4 – Any Other Business**

17. The Chairman informed Members that for the next meeting originally scheduled for 18 September 2018, the Council Secretariat would review the items to be discussed and explore whether the September meeting should be combined with the December meeting to save Members' time. The Council Secretariat would advise members of the decision by mid-August.

18. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

(Post-meeting note : The Council Secretariat, after having consulted the Council Chairman, informed Members on 6 September 2018 that the September meeting would be cancelled and the 39<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Council would be held on 22 November 2018.)

**Family Council Secretariat  
November 2018**