

Family Council
Minutes of 27th Meeting held on 26 November 2015

Date: 26 November 2015 (Thursday)

Time: 2:30 – 4:05 p.m.

Venue: Conference Room 2, G/F, Central Government Offices,
2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong

Attendance

Chairman

Prof. SHEK Tan-lei, Daniel

Ex-officio Members

Mrs LAU KUN Lai-kuen, Stella, Chairperson of the Women's
Commission

Non-official Members

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

Mr LEE Luen-fai, Deputy Convenor, Sub-committee on the Promotion
of Family Core Values and Family Education

Prof. LEUNG Seung-ming, Alvin

Ms LOO Shirley Marie Therese, Convenor, Sub-committee on the
Promotion of Family Core Values and Family Education

Miss TANG Pui-yee, Phoebe

Dr TSUI Luen-on, Gordon

Miss WONG Siu-ling, Gabriella

Ms YAU Oi-yuen, Irene

Ms YIP Lai-wa, Emily

Mr YIU Tze-leung, Ivan

Official Members

Miss Annie TAM, Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare
(*attended on behalf of Secretary for Labour and Welfare*)

Mr Laurie LO, Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (1) (*attended on behalf of Secretary for Home Affairs*)

Mrs Lydia LEUNG, Chief School Development Officer (Home-school Cooperation), Education Bureau
(*attended on behalf of Secretary for Education*)

Prof WONG Chack-kie, Member (2)/Central Policy Unit (*attended on behalf of Head/Central Policy Unit*)

Secretary

Ms Aubrey FUNG, Principal Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs (Civic Affairs) 2

In attendance

Mr Kenneth CHENG, Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)1, Labour and Welfare Bureau

Ms Jessica CHENG, Chief Executive Officer (Family Council)

Dr Florence FONG, Senior Researcher (5), Central Policy Unit

(For agenda item 3 only)

Mr David LEUNG, Commissioner for Rehabilitation, Labour and Welfare Bureau

Mr FONG Kai-leung, Assistant Director (Rehabilitation & Medical Social Services), Social Welfare Department

(For agenda item 4 only)

Mr FUNG Man-chung, Assistant Director (Family and Child Welfare), Social Welfare Department

Absent with apologies

Prof. CHAN Cheung-ming, Alfred, Chairman of the Elderly Commission

Mr LAU Ming-wai, Chairman of the Commission on Youth

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

Ms LAW Suk-kwan, Lilian

Dr LI Sau-hung, Eddy

Miss WONG Pik-kiu, Peggy

Welcome Remarks

The Chairman welcomed all to the 27th meeting of the Family Council (the Council).

Item 1 – Confirmation of Minutes of the 26th meeting of the Family Council

2. The minutes of the 26th meeting were confirmed without amendments.

Item 2 – Matters Arising from the previous meeting

3. The Chairman noted that the Council Secretariat had circulated a progress report to Members for information and consideration. As Members had no further comments, the progress report was endorsed.

Item 3 – Pilot Scheme on On-site Pre-school Rehabilitation Services (Papers FC 21/2015 and FC 22/2015)

4. The Chairman briefed the meeting that the Chief Secretary

for Administration (CS) had written to the Council on 6 November 2015 regarding the rehabilitation services for pre-school children, particularly on the Pilot Scheme on On-site Pre-school Rehabilitation Services (the Pilot Scheme) in response to our letter dated 27 May 2014 setting out the views of the Council on pre-school rehabilitation services. Both letters were included in the background paper FC 21/2015.

5. The Chairman introduced the background and invited Mr David Leung, the Commissioner for Rehabilitation (C for R) and Mr Fong Kai-leung, Assistant Director (Rehabilitation & Medical Social Services) of the Social Welfare Department (SWD) to give an overview of the Pilot Scheme.

6. C for R briefed the meeting on the salient features of a two-year pilot scheme to provide on-site rehabilitation services for children with special needs studying in kindergartens (KGs) or kindergarten-cum-child care centres (KG-cum-CCCs) as set out in paper FC 22/2015. He advised that 16 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) were allocated a total of 29.25 inter-disciplinary teams comprising occupational therapists, physiotherapists, speech therapists, clinical/educational psychologists, social workers and special child care workers to provide 2 925 children service places.

7. Deliberations of the meeting were summarised as follows –

- (a) the implementation of the Pilot Scheme would provide valuable experience and insights in formulating future mode of delivery of pre-school rehabilitation services. Noting that a consultant would be engaged to evaluate the Pilot Scheme, a Member suggested that a scientific framework should be devised to assess the effectiveness of the Pilot Scheme;
- (b) in view of the shortage of allied health professionals in the welfare sector and increasing demand for pre-school

rehabilitation services, it was important for the Government to devise a long-term manpower plan;

- (c) empowerment of parents and teachers were considered important in the context of rehabilitation services for pre-school children. Through empowerment of parents, better home-based support could be provided to families of children with special needs. Empowerment of teachers would also enhance their understanding and capabilities in catering for learning diversity. This notwithstanding, the Government should, at the same time, explore how to strengthen education to general public to avoid discrimination and labelling effect; and
- (d) while fully recognising the need of formulating a long-term manpower plan, Members considered that it was essential to change the mindset of the health professionals, so that they would be more ready to share their knowledge and experience with parents and other stakeholders.

8. In response to Members' views, Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare (PSLW) and C for R made the following remarks –

- (a) given that on-site rehabilitation services was a new concept, the evaluation would assess the Pilot Scheme in terms of the cost-effectiveness and operability of the projects under the Pilot Scheme, so as to help the Government consider the service model(s) and essential output indicators to be adopted if the Pilot Scheme was to be regularised;
- (b) with a view to alleviating the manpower shortage of allied health professionals in the welfare sector, SWD had been working closely with a tertiary institution and relevant stakeholders in developing relevant blister programmes. The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) had launched two cohorts of two-year Master in Physiotherapy programme and Occupational Therapy programme

respectively since January 2012 on a self-financing basis. To encourage graduates from these two programmes to join the welfare sector, SWD at the same time implemented a Training Sponsorship Scheme to provide funding support for NGOs to sponsor the tuition fees of students enrolled in these two programmes with undertaking to serve the sponsoring NGOs for no less than two consecutive years immediately after graduation. SWD was now negotiating with PolyU to run the third programme in 2016;

- (c) the Steering Committee on Strategic Review on Healthcare Manpower Planning and Professional Development, chaired by the Secretary for Food and Health, was conducting a strategic review of healthcare manpower planning and professional development in Hong Kong;
- (d) to avoid duplication of services, children with special needs receiving services from Early Education and Training Centres (EETC) or training subsidies under the Training Subsidy Programme (TSP) would be allowed to join the Pilot Scheme if they withdrew from the EETC or TSP. If children receiving services from the Pilot Scheme were selected for entry to EETC, Integrated Programme in Kindergarten-cum-Child-Care-Centres (IP) or Special Child Care Centres (SCCC), their parents might choose for their children to remain in the Pilot Scheme or to opt for EETC, IP or SCCC; and
- (e) recognising the need of empowerment of parents and teachers, the inter-disciplinary teams would strengthen their professional support for parents and teachers through consultation, demonstrations, workshops, talks and seminars.

9. Member (2) of the Central Policy Unit (CPU) supplemented that LWB could enlist the support of CPU in the course of evaluation if

deemed necessary.

10. The Chairman thanked representatives of the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB) and SWD for their presentation and Members for their comments. He concluded that it was of paramount importance for LWB and SWD to devise a long-term manpower plan with a view to addressing the manpower shortage of allied health professionals in the long run. The Chairman also remarked that the views of Members were very useful for the Government to work out the parameters of the Pilot Scheme and showed appreciation of LWB's readiness to embrace challenges in providing services to children with special needs and their families.

Items 4 – Pilot Project on Child Care Training for Grandparents

11. Upon invitation of the Chairman, Mr Fung Man-chung, Assistant Director (Family and Child Welfare) of SWD briefed Members on the background as well as parameters of the Pilot Project on Child Care Training for Grandparents (Pilot Project) as follows -

- (a) SWD would launch a pilot project to reinforce support for nuclear families by making grandparents well-trained carers in a home setting;
- (b) the target participants were grandparents of children aged from birth to under six or grandparents-to-be;
- (c) the proposed training programmes would adapt from the child care course organised by the Employees Retraining Board (ERB). Part of the training contents would cover family-related topics, including preparation for grandparenthood, strengthening relationship between generations; and
- (d) SWD would seek funding support from the Lotteries Fund in due course.

12. Deliberations of the meeting on the Pilot Project were summarised below –

- (a) Members commended the efforts of the Government in promoting active ageing of grandparents and reinforcing family support between generations through launching of the Pilot Project;
- (b) noting that the target participants were grandparents of children aged from birth to under six, Members raised the concerns that a one-size-fits-all training content would not be desirable as the focus of newborn babies and children of three to six years old would be very different;
- (c) some Members considered that the training might appear to be too intensive as participating grandparents were encouraged to attend all sessions of the training programme, bearing in mind that quite a number of grandparents were pre-occupied with their daily activities. In formulating the training content, it was desirable to take into account the social conditions of the grandparents;
- (d) noting that 540 training places would be provided in two years with an average class size of 20 trainees, Members suggested that SWD might consider expanding the scope by providing general training to more grandparents so that more grandparents would be able to acquire basic knowledge and skills on child care as quite a number of grandparents were only occasional child-carers. Provision of online training and module-based courses through Elderly Academy were some options worth exploring; and
- (e) apart from practical skill and knowledge, it was equally important to instill family core values in the training materials. On evaluation, randomized controlled trial

was worth adopting in assessing the effectiveness of the Pilot Project.

13. PSLW thanked Members for their comments and made the following remarks –

- (a) Members were assured that the NGOs would make suitable adaptation from the child care courses under the purview of the ERB. As far as the training content was concerned, it would be customised to suit the needs of children of different ages. Besides, elements of family would be suitably incorporated into the training content as one of the primary objectives of the Pilot Project was to reinforce family support between generations; and
- (b) taking Members' views into account, SWD would consider exploring the possibility of organising some short courses to meet different needs of the grandparents in the light of the evaluation of the Pilot Project.

14. The Chairman concluded that the Council supported the implementation of the Pilot Project and proposed that the Government might consider the following suggestions in refining the parameters of the Pilot Project –

- (a) the content of the training programme should be more focused to meet the needs of grandparents;
- (b) family and inter-generational perspectives should be suitably incorporated into the programme; and
- (c) assessment of the effectiveness of the Pilot Project should be conducted.

Item 5 – Progress of Work of the Sub-committees under the Family Council (Paper FC 23/2015)

15. The Chairman invited the Convenor of the Sub-committee on the Promotion of Family Core Values and Family Education (the Promotion Sub-committee) and Deputy Convenor of the Sub-committee on Family Support (the Support Sub-committee) to report work progress.

16. On the work of the Promotion Sub-committee, Ms Shirley Loo reported that the Promotion Sub-committee had deliberated on the progress of the “2015/16 Family-Friendly Employers Award Scheme”, particularly the implementation details and the publicity strategies. The Promotion Sub-committee had also brainstormed ideas on how to take forward the publicity campaign in 2016/17. The Promotion Sub-committee agreed that, apart from promoting family core values in the community, it was equally important to enhance resilience of family. The Promotion Sub-committee would discuss in details the strategy and slogan of the campaign in the coming meetings.

17. Prof. Lam Tai-hing reported that the Support Sub-committee had endorsed the consultancy brief for the study on “Family Impact Assessment in Hong Kong”. On the setting up of the “Family Development Fund”, the Support Sub-committee agreed that a three-pronged approach should be adopted before deciding on the way forward –

- (a) expanding the scope of study topics to cover family-related issues in the Public Policy Research Funding Scheme currently administered by CPU;
- (b) supporting new family-related initiatives by granting thematic sponsorship on theme(s) to be selected by the Council from 2016-17 on a pilot basis; and
- (c) keeping in view the stocktaking study to be commissioned by CPU on existing family studies in Hong Kong.

18. The Chairman welcomed the three-pronged approach in supporting family-related researches and initiatives and considered that it was advisable to conduct an interim review to assess the effectiveness and consider the way forward as appropriate. The meeting noted the progress reports made by the Convenor and Deputy Convenor of the two Sub-committees.

Item 6 – Any Other Business

19. The Chairman informed Members that LWB had launched a four-month consultation on the “Proposed Legislation to Implement the Recommendations of the Law Reform Commission Report on Child Custody and Access” as from 25 November 2015, which would last until 25 March 2016. The public consultation document had been tabled for Members’ information. Meanwhile, LWB had prepared a paper for Members’ reference.

20. Upon invitation by the Chairman, PSLW briefed Members that LWB, in consultation with various bureaux and departments, had prepared the draft Children Proceeding (Parental Responsibility) Bill to implement the Law Reform Commission’s recommendations by legislative means as appropriate. Noting that there were concerns on how the Parental Responsibility Model was to be implemented in practice, the Government would also listen to the views of stakeholders and other interested parties on the support measures during the public consultation exercise.

21. The Chairman thanked PSLW for the brief introduction and invited LWB to consult the Council at the next meeting to be held on 3 March 2016 (Thursday).

22. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:05p.m.. The next meeting would be held on 3 March 2016 (Thursday) at 2:30 p.m..

Family Council Secretariat
January 2016