

Family Council
Minutes of 51st Meeting held on 13 October 2022

Date: 13 October 2022 (Thursday)

Time: 3:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Venue: Conference Room 6, G/F., Central Government Offices, Tamar

Attendance

Chairman

Ms PANG, Melissa Kaye

Ex-officio Members

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

Dr LI Kwok-tung, Donald, Chairperson of the Elderly Commission

Mr LEUNG Yuk-wai, Kenneth, Vice-Chairman of the Youth Development
Commission

Non-official Members

Ms CHAN Suk-mei, May

Prof. CHEN Yu-hai, Eric

Ms CHEUNG Lai-chu

Mr CHEUNG Pok-man, Boris

Mr FONG Yick-jin, Eugene

Dr LAM Chi-yan, Convenor, Sub-committee on Family Support

Prof. Albert LEE

Mr LUK Hua, Warren

Mr WONG Bing-kin, Solomon

Mrs WONG NG Kit-wah, Cecilia

Mr YOUNG Chit-on, Jeremy

Official Members

Miss Alice MAK, Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs

Ms Alice LAU, Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare
(attending on behalf of Secretary for Labour and Welfare)

Ms Teresa CHAN, Deputy Secretary for Education (4)
(attending on behalf of Secretary for Education)

Secretary

Miss Mandy WONG, Principal Assistant Secretary for Home and Youth
Affairs (Home Affairs)1

In Attendance

Ms Shirley LAM, Permanent Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs

Mr Nick AU YEUNG, Deputy Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs
(Home Affairs)

Ms Adia LAM, Chief Executive Officer (Home Affairs)(1)1

(For agenda item 3)

Mr David LEUNG, Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)1,
Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB)

Dr Verena LAU, Principal Assistant Secretary (School Administration),
Education Bureau (EDB)

Mr Chris FUNG, Principal Assistant Secretary for Health 3, Health Bureau
(HHB)

Ms Dora LEE, Chief Social Work Officer (Domestic Violence), Social
Welfare Department (SWD)

(For agenda item 4)

Dr WAN Yuen-kong, Occupational Health Consultant (1), Labour Department (LD)

Mr Gary WONG, Senior Labour Officer (Special Duties) 1, Labour Department (LD)

Absent with apologies

Mr CHAN Kwan-yeung, Arnold

Ms CHEUNG Wang-yim, Lavender, Deputy Convenor, Sub-committee on the Promotion of Family Core Values and Family Education

Ms PUN Siu-fung, Cindy

Ms YIP Yun-wan, Amarantha, Convenor, Sub-committee on the Promotion of Family Core Values and Family Education

Welcome Remarks

The Chairman welcomed all to the 51st meeting of the Family Council (the Council), in particular Miss Alice MAK, Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs, Dr Donald LI, Chairman of the Elderly Commission, Mr Kenneth LEUNG, Vice-Chairman of the Youth Development Commission, Ms Teresa CHAN, Deputy Secretary for Education (4) and Miss Mandy WONG, Principal Assistant Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs (Home Affairs)¹ who attended the Council meeting for the first time.

Item 1 – Confirmation of Minutes of the 50th Meeting of the Family Council

2. The minutes of the 50th meeting were confirmed without amendment.

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 invited Chief Executive Officer (Home Affairs)(1)1 (CEO(HA)(1)1) to brief Members on the report. In respect of the application of the Family Impact Assessment (FIA) checklist, CEO(HA)(1)1 reported that the FIA had been applied to 898 Legislative Council briefs as at 30 September 2022. Besides, the Council Secretariat received the first draft of the final report of the Family Survey 2021 from the research team in September 2022 and was in the course of vetting the report.

4. As regards the Scheme on Thematic Sponsorship to Support Family-related Initiatives (the Scheme), CEO(HA)(1)1 reported that with the support of the Sub-committee on Family Support (Support Sub-committee) and the Council's endorsement to launch a new round of the Scheme in the fourth quarter of 2022, the Council Secretariat was following up on the related arrangements. CEO(HA)(1)1 also informed the meeting that as at 30 September 2022, the Council's Facebook page had attracted over 29 870 "likes" and the average number of "Reaction", "Comments" and "Sharing" per post was about 334. For the collaboration with the Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK), a tailored-made pre-recorded event entitled 「家 • 凝聚愛」特輯 was launched on 4 August 2022 at the Council's Facebook page and the thematic webpage to promote the theme of the Council's 2022-23 Publicity Campaign, i.e. "Strengthening Family Cohesion and Solidarity". Besides, thematic segments were premiered in three popular radio programmes of RTHK Radio 2 between May and July 2022. In addition, the promotional video which was produced in collaboration with the Women's Commission and of the title "「家 • 凝聚愛」之雙職媽媽" was launched on 29 July 2022.

5. In respect of the "Further Study on the Phenomenon of Divorce in Hong Kong" (the Divorce Study), CEO(HA)(1)1 reported that upon

receipt of comments from relevant bureaux/departments on the draft final report submitted by the research team, the Council Secretariat was in the course of consolidating such comments so as to facilitate a more thorough consideration by the Working Group (WG) at its next meeting tentatively scheduled for late October 2022. Upon the WG's deliberation on the draft final report, the research team would brief the Council on the findings and recommendations of the Divorce Study.

Item 3 – Proposal on the Mandatory Reporting Requirement for Suspected Child Abuse Cases (Paper FC 12/2022)

6. The Chairman invited Mr David LEUNG of LWB, Dr Verena LAU of EDB, Mr Chris FUNG of HHB and Ms Dora LEE of SWD, to brief Members on the implementation details of the proposed mandatory reporting requirement (MRR) for suspected child abuse cases. The salient points of the briefing were summarised as follows –

- (a) the Government announced in the Chief Executive's 2021 Policy Address that it would take forward the MRR legislation with the target of introducing a bill into the Legislative Council in the first half of 2023 with a view to facilitating early identification of and effective intervention into child abuse/neglect cases;
- (b) the proposed implementation details of MRR included
 - (i) defining children as persons aged below 18;
 - (ii) covering practitioners who had frequent contacts with children and whose professions or work were currently subject to some form of regulation;
 - (iii) requiring mandated reporters to make a report if they had reasonable grounds to suspect that a child “has suffered serious harm” or “is at an imminent risk of suffering serious harm” during their course of work;
 - (iv) setting the penalty of a three months' imprisonment and a fine at level 5 for failure on the part of mandated reporters to report child

abuse cases; and (v) incorporating the confidentiality and safeguard provisions conferring mandated reporters with immunity from any civil or criminal liability arising from a report made in good faith;

- (c) SWD would set up an e-learning platform for the mandated reporters to receive appropriate training to enhance their capacity for early identification and handling of suspected child abuse/neglect cases; and
- (d) the Government would continue its efforts in strengthening the existing support measures, including regularisation of the Pilot Scheme on Social Work Service for Pre-primary Institutions, strengthening parental support and education and public education programmes.

7. Members' views and questions were summarised as follows –

- (a) a Member commented that the definition of children under the proposed MRR legislation was too wide and consideration should be given to the variations in the level of judgement and analysis of children of different age groups. Sufficient support, in particular psychological support, should be provided to the child abuse victims, so as to better meet their individual needs and help them face the challenges ahead;
- (b) a Member reckoned that employers and supervisors of the designated mandated reporters should also be included in the list of mandated reporters of suspected child abuse/neglect cases because they should also have the responsibility and liability for reporting such cases. Besides, as the number of reported cases would likely be increased significantly after the implementation of the proposed MRR, it was recommended to

put in place a monitoring mechanism to follow up on the progress of the reported cases;

- (c) a Member stated that apart from the practitioners of specific sectors as included in the list of mandated reporters, the inclusion of parents and relatives of children in the list would provide a greater protection to children and a higher chance of discovering cases;
- (d) a Member was of the view that a clearer definition of the term “suspected child abuse” should be adopted so as to avoid any confusion in reporting such suspected cases, especially for cases involving psychological abuse which was normally hard to be detected; and
- (e) a Member opined that consideration should be given to include the practical guidance on the operation of MRR in the Guide on Teachers’ Professional Conduct which was being prepared by EDB. All teachers should be required to attend training to enhance their capacity for early identification and handling of suspect child abuse/neglect cases.

8. The Chairman thanked Mr Leung for the briefing, and asked if the mandated reporter had to inform his/her employer or supervisor before making a report since the interest of the mandated reporter had to be protected. Mr Leung thanked Members for their comments and replied that a mandated reporter would be personally liable for failure to meet the MRR. All reports made by mandated reporters would be handled strictly in accordance with the confidentiality and safeguard provisions in the proposed legislation. Mr Leung said that parents would not be included as mandated reporters, because non-reporting of suspected child abuse cases involving parents or family members living under the same roof with the child concerned could be handled under the common law system in light of the

court case in April 2021 on the death of a five-year-old girl in 2018 due to abuse by her parents. Mr Leung said that the Government would take into account Members' views on the needs of children of different age groups during the drafting of the proposed MRR legislation.

Item 4 – Pilot Rehabilitation Programme for Employees Injured at Work (Paper FC 13/2022)

9. To facilitate discussion of this agenda item, the Chairman invited Dr WAN Yuen-kong and Mr Gary WONG of LD to brief Members on the Pilot Rehabilitation Programme for Employees Injured at Work (the Pilot Programme) which was launched on 23 September 2022. The salient points of the presentation were summarised as follows –

- (a) the Government committed in the Chief Executive's 2019 Policy Address to introduce a three-year Pilot Programme targeting injured construction employees to facilitate their early recovery, return to work and resumption of normal life;
- (b) the Pilot Programme engaged medical practitioners, physiotherapists and occupational therapists in providing private out-patient rehabilitation treatment services. Imaging examination and electro-diagnostic testing services were covered. Each case would also be followed up by a dedicated case manager; and
- (c) subject to the outcome of the Pilot Programme, LD would explore its extension to cover other injured employees and financing of the programme by employers after consultation with relevant stakeholders.

10. Members' views and questions were summarised as follows –

- (a) a Member welcomed the launch of the Pilot Programme and suggested that more scientific and comprehensive assessment of the recovery of the injured employees should be put in place to facilitate their early return to work;
- (b) a Member commented that for monitoring purposes, a mechanism was recommended to be set up to collect and evaluate the views of the injured employees on their experience of receiving treatment and rehabilitation services under the Pilot Programme;
- (c) a Member considered that it was important to involve different medical professionals such as psychologists in the Pilot Programme so as to provide more complete services to the injured employees. The background and experience of the case managers would also be crucial to meet the objectives of providing speedy services to the injured employees and facilitating their early recovery; and
- (d) a Member was of the view that a better cooperation between the medical practitioners in the public sector and those in the private sector would help increase the service capacity of the Pilot Programme.

11. The Chairman thanked Dr Wan for his presentation and Members for their comments. She inquired about the reasons for choosing the construction sector for the Pilot Programme and the Government's plan to extend it to other sectors. Dr Wan responded that construction employees, owing to the nature of their work, were more prone to musculoskeletal injuries which could easily turn into chronic conditions in the absence of timely and coordinated rehabilitation. Besides, according to the statistics of work injury cases in recent years, the percentages of injured construction employees involving prolonged sick leave were the highest among all

industries. In light of the manpower situation in the private medical sector, the programme therefore targeted construction employees on a pilot basis. The Government would closely monitor the operation of the Pilot Programme and duly explore its extension to other sectors having regard to its effectiveness and the experience gained.

Item 5 – Progress of Work of the Sub-committees under the Family Council (Paper FC 14/2022)

12. The Chairman invited CEO(HA)(1)1 to report the work of the Sub-committee on the Promotion of Family Core Values and Family Education (Promotion Sub-committee). CEO(HA)(1) reported that the Promotion Sub-committee agreed to stage a roving drama series on the theme of the Council’s 2022-23 publicity campaign, i.e. “Strengthening Family Cohesion and Solidarity”, and provided comments on the related arrangements. Initially, the roving drama series would be kicked off by a premiere in January/February 2023, to be followed by 40 drama performances in different secondary schools across the territory from February to July 2023. Furthermore, the Council Secretariat had started producing a new series of short videos on strengthening family cohesion and solidarity which comprised eight episodes of around four minutes each, featuring persons from different walks of life to share their family experiences, difficulties they had encountered, little tips to get through hard times, etc. in the form of interviews. While four videos had been uploaded onto the Council’s website and YouTube Channel in August 2022, production of the remaining four videos were underway and would be launched by phases from September to December 2022.

(Action: Promotion Sub-committee)

13. The Chairman invited Dr Kay LAM, the Convenor of the Support Sub-committee, to report on the work progress of the Support Sub-committee. Dr Lam reported that the Support Sub-committee noted,

through the presentations made by two sponsored organisations under the Thematic Sponsorship Scheme to Support Family-related Initiatives, namely the Society for Truth and Light (STL) and DADs Network Limited that their projects were successfully completed in February 2022 with very positive responses and feedback. The Support Sub-committee considered that for the project of STL, the online resources platform and production of a manual for reference by other service practitioners providing counselling services to people preparing for remarriage could help sustain the impact of the project. As regards the project of DADs Network Limited, the Support Sub-committee reckoned that the tailor-made board game proved to be a good means of promoting the communication and conflict handling skills of family members. The research results on the effectiveness of the two projects also showed that the workshops did create positive impact on the participants.

(Action: Support Sub-committee)

Item 6 – Any Other Business

14. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m. The next meeting would be held on 20 December 2022 (Tuesday) tentatively.

**Family Council Secretariat
November 2022**