

**Notes of the
Sixteenth Meeting of the Commission on Children**

Date : 16 March 2023
Time : 3:00 p.m.
Venue : Conference Hall, West Wing,
Central Government Offices, Tamar

Present

Chairperson

Mr KK Chan Chief Secretary for Administration (CS)

Vice-chairperson

Mr Chris Sun Secretary for Labour and Welfare (SLW)

Ex-officio Members

Miss Alice Mak	Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs
Dr Libby Lee	Acting Secretary for Health
Mr Jeff Sze	Acting Secretary for Education
Mr Raistlin Lau	Under Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism (for Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism)
Mr Raymond Siu	Commissioner of Police (CP)
Mrs Alice Cheung	Director of Home Affairs
Miss Charmaine Lee	Director of Social Welfare (DSW)
Dr Teresa Li	Deputy Director of Health (for Director for Health)
Ms Melissa Kaye Pang	Chairperson of Family Council
Ms Chan Yuen-han	Chairperson of Women's Commission

Non-official Members

Ms Karin Ann
Mr Peter Au Yeung Wai-hong
Mr Chan Kin-ping
Miss Anna May Chan Mei-lan
Miss Kelly Cheng Hui-kiu
Mr Winson Chow Wai-chung
Ms Kathy Chung Lai-kam
Ms Heidi Hui Sim-kiu
Dr Patrick Ip
Dr Sanly Kam Shau-wan

Ms Joyce Lee Yuen-sum
Ms Shalini Mahtani
Mr Kenny Ng Kwan-lim
Ms Cindy Pun Siu-fung
Dr Tang Chun-pan
Dr Sandra Tsang Kit-man
Dr Rizwan Ullah
Mr Gary Wong Chi-him
Ms Donna Wong Chui-ling
Dr Lilian Wong Hiu-lei
Miss Koby Wong Lok-yin
Ms May Wong May-kwan

Secretary

Ms Jeanne Cheng Principal Assistant Secretary for
Labour and Welfare (Children)

In attendance

Chief Secretary for Administration's Private Office

Mr Sammy Leung Administrative Assistant to
Chief Secretary for Administration
Mr Nicky Ng Press Secretary to Chief Secretary for Administration
Ms Joyce Li Political Assistant to Chief Secretary for Administration

Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB)

Ms Alice Lau Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Mr David Leung Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)¹
Ms Terry Cheung Chief Executive Officer (Children)

Home and Youth Affairs Bureau

Miss Mandy Wong Principal Assistant Secretary (Home Affairs)¹

Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF)

Ms Yolanda Yu Chief Superintendent of Police
(Crime Support)(Crime Wing)
(CSP (Crime Support)(Crime Wing))

Department of Health (DH)

Dr Thomas Chung	Consultant Community Medicine (Family and Student Health)
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Department of Justice (DoJ)

Mr Vernon Loh	Senior Assistant Solicitor General (Human Rights) (SASG(HR))
Mrs Annie Williams	Senior Government Counsel

Social Welfare Department (SWD)

[For item 4 only]

Ms Wendy Chau	Assistant Director (Family & Child Welfare) (AD(FCW))
Ms Tammy Yu	Chief Social Work Officer (Family & Child Welfare)2

Others (Service Contractor – Jervois One (Hong Kong) Limited)

[For item 3 only]

Mr Law Wing Chung	Managing Partner and Co-founder
Ms Ireen Hung	Consultant
Ms Stephanie Chow	Senior Associate
Ms Yung Yeung	Business Development Team Head

CS welcomed the new members for joining the meeting for the first time and remarked that he looked forward to the close collaboration with all members in jointly safeguarding the well-being of children and building a pro-child and inclusive community.

Item 1: Confirmation of the Notes of the Fifteenth Meeting held on 21 November 2022

2. The draft notes of the fifteenth meeting were circulated to members on 23 February 2023 and no comment was received. The notes were confirmed without any amendment.

Item 2: Matters Arising

3. There was no matter arising from the last meeting.

Item 3: Public Relations Strategy and Implementation Plan for the Commission on Children [Paper No. 1/2023]

4. On CS' invitation, Mr Gary Wong, Convenor of the Working Group on Promotion of Children's Rights and Development, Public Education and Engagement (WG on Promotion and Engagement), and Mr Law Wing Chung of Jervois One (Hong Kong) Limited briefed members on the proposed public relations (PR) strategy for the Commission on Children (CoC) and how to implement it. After that, CP and CSP(Crime Support)(Crime Wing) shared the experience of HKPF in organising the large scale educational and promotional activities of "Let's T.A.L.K." Child Protection Campaign.

5. Members supported the proposed PR strategy and implementation plan and expressed appreciation for the efforts of the Government in promoting the importance of child protection. Their views and suggestions were summarised as follows –

(a) PR Strategy

- (i) CoC could consider making use of existing platforms of the Education Bureau and DH to communicate with the

public and promote the work of the Commission.

- (ii) The delivery of the core values of CoC's work in the thematic campaign should be sustainable with appropriate monitoring benchmarks.
- (iii) CoC should adopt an activity-oriented approach in the promotion of the theme "Fun" to attract the participation of children. As for "Health" and "Harmony", a family-based approach, with reference to peer relationship, was recommended.
- (iv) Public education and promotion of the theme "Protection" should focus on the grave consequences of child abuse and practical knowledge of how to handle parental stress, seek help and make use of community resources.

(b) Branding and Logo Design

- (i) A member suggested that the logo should bring out the message that parents/ carers played a supportive role in the development path of their children.
- (ii) A member was concerned about the similarity of the proposed name of the thematic campaign with a fund-raising activity of another organisation.

[Post-meeting Note: The Secretariat conducted a search through the online public search system of the Intellectual Property Department which confirmed that the proposed name of the thematic campaign “童行有你” (Walk with Kids) had not been registered on its patents/designs/trademark registration record.]

(c) Promotional Materials and Media Engagement

- (i) Cultural sensitivity and diversity should be taken into account when formulating the implementation plan and producing publicity materials. Promotional materials should be available in different ethnic minority languages, and disseminated through different networks including

mosques, temples and church groups.

- (ii) The message of the promotional materials should be concise, precise and catchy. They should also contain information on how to seek help and support when necessary.

(d) Engagement Activities and Events

- (i) Members generally welcomed the proposal of a year-end event to summarise the work and showcase the achievements of the Commission. In terms of the format, a member suggested organising a summit or conference by inviting experts, local and/or overseas, to share experiences on various child-related topics, such as children's mental health and child protection, data/findings of child-related surveys/studies.
- (ii) Consideration might be given to the topics of improving mental health and rebuilding social relationship in the post-pandemic era.
- (iii) A member proposed cultural diversity as a theme for future engagement activities.

(e) Collaboration within Government

- (i) Members generally supported the proposal for CoC to leverage on collaboration with different bureaux/departments (B/Ds) regarding their respective publicity initiatives under the thematic campaign to achieve synergy effect.
- (ii) A member suggested that the Government should formulate a holistic PR plan to coordinate the PR initiatives under different B/Ds in a systematic manner to achieve greater impact.
- (iii) A member suggested enhancing collaboration with HKPF in light of their successful experience in organising PR events and campaigns related to child protection with more

participation by CoC non-official members.

6. Mr Law Wing Chung said that it was expected that the branding “Walk with Kids” could facilitate CoC to synergise the efforts of different B/Ds by packaging all child-related initiatives, programmes and activities under its umbrella. Upon the conclusion of the first year thematic campaign, CoC might continue to launch other new PR initiatives under the branding of “Walk with Kids” to consolidate the publicity impact.

7. Mr Gary Wong said that the WG would follow up on the arrangements of the various initiatives as proposed under the PR strategy and implementation plan with a view to working out more detailed proposals, including stakeholder engagement tentatively scheduled for June 2023 in collaboration with HKPF and SWD. The WG would also incorporate the inclusion of diversity and cultural sensitivity in the promotional initiatives of the thematic campaign as far as practicable.

8. CP made the following responses –

- (a) In 2022, a total of 663 cases of the Offences against the Person Ordinance were found to have involved children victims, of which 489 cases (70%) were committed by family members. As family members had a critical role in child protection, HKPF would consider enhancing the engagement of family members in future activities.
- (b) To sustain the effort of different initiatives related to child protection, it was important to enhance the communication between stakeholders and the Government. Referring to the experience of the HKPF in working with other groups and organisations, they had used instant messaging platform, in addition to regular meetings, to facilitate communication on a continued basis.

9. CS thanked members for their views and assured them that the Government would suitably take into account their suggestions and follow up as appropriate. In response to a member’s enquiry, CS said that the Government attached utmost importance to children’s well-being and would ensure that suitably ranked officer(s) would be assigned to handle children matters.

Item 4: Report of Second Phase Review of Residential Child Care and Related Services [Paper No. 2/2023]

10. On CS' invitation, DSW and AD(FCW) briefed members on the Report of the Second Phase Review of Residential Child Care and Related Services (the Report).

11. The meeting noted that Dr Sanly Kam, Mr Peter Au Yeung, Dr Patrick Ip and Ms Donna Wong were serving as members of the Committee on Review of Residential Child Care and Related Services (the Review Committee).

12. Members appreciated SWD's efforts in conducting a comprehensive review on residential child care and related services. Their suggestions and views were as follows –

(a) Foster Care and Adoption Service

- (i) A member considered that if the biological parents of a child using residential child care service (RCCS) had not visited the child for a long period of time, the Government should review and assess if the child was considered as being abandoned and discuss the possibility of arranging adoption for the child with the family concerned.
- (ii) A member suggested that the Government should review the existing rules that forbade foster parents to take their foster child for outbound travel and to designate a child to adopt.
- (iii) Foster care service could be promoted through the Parent-teacher Associations of schools, hotline, etc.
- (iv) Members suggested that SWD could consider providing respite service for children with disabilities so as to relieve the stress of foster parents.

(b) Service Provision and Monitoring

- (i) Members generally supported SWD's proposal to

strengthen its monitoring over RCCS to prevent the occurrence of child abuse cases and substandard service performance in RCCS units.

- (ii) A member suggested increasing the service places of Small Group Home for Mildly Mentally Handicapped Children and emergency children residential service in view of the strong demand but limited service capacity.
- (iii) A member suggested reviewing the workload of caseworkers so that they could effectively perform the function of “case manager” for better follow-up of cases.

(c) Manpower Provision and Training

- (i) More training on MRR and child protection should be provided to frontline staff to allay their concerns and enhance their understanding. More communication between enforcement agencies and practitioners in the relevant sectors would enable a better understanding of their obligations and liabilities under the new MRR legislation.
- (ii) It was important to recognise the contribution of frontline staff of RCCS and cultivate their sense of commitment and mission through training. To attract more new blood to join child care services, some members suggested promoting the positive image of RCCS and foster care service through sharing of good stories, and giving merits to the incumbent staff and foster parents. Increasing monetary incentive and allowance might also be considered.
- (iii) To alleviate manpower shortage, a member suggested organising programmes for training young parents or interested persons to serve as foster parents and substitute foster parents. Another member suggested giving flexibility to service operators in hiring part-time staff, making reference to the arrangement of part-time teachers in schools.

(d) Professional Support Services

- (i) On-site medical services were recommended for RCCS units making reference to the Visiting Medical Practitioner Service for Residential Care Homes for elderly and persons with disabilities.
- (ii) A member suggested leveraging the community-based network to provide on-site professional support services to address the special needs of children in RCCS units or foster families and provide professional advice to the RCCS staff or foster parents on taking care of the children.

(e) Implementation Plan

- (i) It was important to ensure that service quality and resources deployment could be sustained in the long run. In light of the numerous recommendations made in the Report, SWD was suggested to prioritise its work and follow up on those recommendations requiring no extra resources in a timely manner, and to strive to bid new resources to implement the remaining recommendations.
- (ii) A member suggested that CoC should continue to monitor the future development of RCCS and implementation progress of the recommendations made in the Report.

13. On CS' invitation, SASG(HR)/DoJ advised that a decision to prosecute would be made on consideration of the evidence available and the public interest, including the severity of the conduct involved and circumstances of individual cases. Prosecutors would carefully examine each case referred by HKPF before making a decision to prosecute, including borderline cases involving unintentional acts of suspected abuse committed by carers or teachers. Besides, all child abuse cases would be handled by the Vulnerable Witness and Child Protection Task Force overseen by a Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions in DoJ. Task Force members had rich experience and professional knowledge in handling child abuse cases, and would help ensure that prosecution would be fair and in the public interest.

14. DSW made the following responses –

- (a) Noting the manpower shortage in RCCS, the Report recommended tertiary institutions offering social work training to cooperate with service operators to introduce RCCS to social work students to nurture their interests in joining the service. SWD also shared members' view on the importance of building the professional image of and public's recognition to RCCS workers.
- (b) Enhancing service monitoring of SWD had been one of the key review areas of the First and Second Phase Review of RCCS. Recommendations for improvement included strengthening inspection and enforcement efforts by incorporating health inspectors in service monitoring as recommended in the First Phase Review and revising the requirements in the Funding and Service Agreements; and imposing a surveillance period for non-compliant operators, etc. Service operators should also be accountable for establishing sound corporate governance to maintain satisfactory performance.
- (c) For on-site professional support service, the Report recommended, subject to the availability of resources, to strengthen the "Agency-based Enhancement of Professional Staff Support Services in Residential Care Homes". Service operators could flexibly deploy resources to engage/employ professional support services (such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy, etc.) based on the special needs and conditions of individual service users.
- (d) A total of 12 recommendations were made in the Report in relation to foster care service. Upon the endorsement on the Report by the Review Committee, SWD would expedite follow-up actions on recommendations which would not involve significant additional resources, such as strengthening the promotion of foster care service and encouraging more families to provide short-term transitional care for children requiring emergency residential care service.

15. CS thanked members for their views and suggestions. He added that the Government was committed to safeguarding the well-being of each

and every child in Hong Kong and would strive to allocate resources to implement the recommendations of the Report, taking into consideration a basket of factors and balancing the needs of different policy areas.

**Item 5: Progress Reports of the Working Groups
[Paper No. 3-6/2023]**

16. The progress reports of WG on Children Protection, WG on Research and Development, WG on Children with Specific Needs and WG on Promotion and Engagement were circulated to members for information prior to the meeting. The Secretariat had not received any view on the reports from members.

Item 6: Any Other Business

17. A member proposed to invite members to propose potential items for discussion at the future meetings of CoC and/or relevant working groups. CS advised members to pass their ideas to the Secretariat for follow-up.

[Post-meeting Note: The Secretariat invited members via email for their suggestions on potential items for discussion on 24 March 2023.]

18. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 5:45 p.m..

**Commission on Children Secretariat
May 2023**