

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

Date : 25 May 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

Mr Kevin Yeung	Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism
Dr Christine Choi	Secretary for Education
Dr Libby Lee	Under Secretary for Health (for Secretary for Health)
Mr Clarence Leung	Under Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs (for Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs)
Mr Raymond Siu	Commissioner of Police (CP)
Miss Charmaine Lee	Director of Social Welfare (DSW)
Dr Ronald Lam	Director for Health
Mr Te Chi Wang	Deputy Director of Home Affairs (2) (for Director of Home Affairs)
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
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
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)

Department of Justice (DoJ)

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

Education Bureau (EDB)

[For item 4 only]

Ms Mandy Ho Principal Assistant Secretary (Special Education)
(PAS(SE))
Dr Verena Lau Principal Assistant Secretary (School Development)
(PAS(SD))
Ms Michelle Chan Senior Specialist
(Educational Psychology Service/Kowloon 1)

Ms Isabel Wong Senior Education Officer
(School Development /Central Team)3

Health Bureau

[For item 4 only]

Mr Chris Fung Principal Assistant Secretary for Health 3

Home and Youth Affairs Bureau

[For item 3 only]

Miss Tori Chan Principal Assistant Secretary (Youth 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) (ConCM(F&SH))

Social Welfare Department (SWD)

[For item 4 only]

Ms Wendy Chau Assistant Director (Family & Child Welfare)
(AD(FCW))

Members absent with apologies

Non-official Members

Mr Chan Kin-ping
Dr Rizwan Ullah

Item 1: Confirmation of the Notes of the Sixteenth Meeting held on 16 March 2023

The draft notes of the sixteenth meeting were circulated to members on 18 May 2023 and no comment was received. The notes were confirmed without any amendment.

Item 2: Matters Arising

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

Item 3: Youth Development Blueprint [Paper No. 7/2023]

3. On CS' invitation, USHYA briefed members on the key content of the Youth Development Blueprint (the Blueprint).

4. Members supported the overall vision and guiding principles of youth development work outlined in the Blueprint and expressed appreciation for the efforts of the Government in promoting long-term youth development. Their views and suggestions were summarised as follows –

- (a) On Nurturing Young People with an Affection for the Country and Hong Kong
 - (i) As youths might be exposed to misinformation and biased information related to the country and the community, it was necessary to strengthen their media literacy and internet ethics. The Government should step up effort in improving the visibility of reliable websites and sources of information through search engine optimisation.
 - (ii) Internship opportunities for youths in the business and industrial sectors in the Mainland were recommended.
 - (iii) The design of the exchange programmes should enable an in-depth and quality exchange of views between youths of Hong Kong and the Mainland. Youths should be engaged in the planning of the exchange programmes as far as possible.

- (iv) The Government should attract more youths from the Mainland and overseas countries to come to Hong Kong for exchange and internship programmes, for the dual purposes of sharing their experience with local youths and attracting overseas talents.
 - (v) The “Exploration” chapter of the Blueprint should cover strategies of integrating Hong Kong youths into the overall development of the country.
 - (vi) The Government should consider working in collaboration with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and professional bodies in the organisation of various events to enrich the youths’ knowledge on the prevailing laws (such as Basic Law, National Security Law).
- (b) On Resilience Building and Whole-person Development of Youths
- (i) While pursuing academic achievement was the dominant value in society, the Government should take forward measures to facilitate multiple development pathways with a view to promoting diversified development of youths with different talents.
 - (ii) To offer opportunities to youths with different talents and strengths, diversified selection criteria should be adopted for selection of youths to participate in exchange/ community programmes instead of solely based on academic performance.
 - (iii) The Government should step up efforts to improve the mental health of youths and promote positive development. Some Members suggested encouraging youth participation in arts and sports activities by the provision of more venues and platforms. In the school setting, it was proposed to promote the School Physical Fitness Award Scheme and implement school reading programmes. Elements of positive training should be included in the activities of youth uniformed groups.

- (iv) As the mental health status of youths might be related to their families, more resources should be deployed to support those families at risk. In particular, support should be provided to strengthen family functioning and improve the communication and relationship between parents and youths.
 - (v) The Government was suggested to provide more support to Hong Kong youths studying abroad or in the Mainland, for example, by setting up of local youth support teams.
 - (vi) The Government should enhance the support for discharged youth offenders to help them reintegrate into society.
 - (vii) Support should be provided to help youths handle challenges of different developmental stages, including puberty, marriage and parenthood.
- (c) On Youth Engagement and Contribution To Society
- (i) Members welcomed the establishment of a new youth network for enhancing youth engagement.
 - (ii) There should be an open and well-established ladder for youth participation in public affairs to facilitate and motivate youth participation in public policy discussions and community work. It was also suggested that more opportunities should be provided for youths of ethnic minorities (EM) and youths with disabilities to take part in public affairs.
 - (iii) The Government should consider revitalising the community facilities and vacant premises or sites to provide space for youth development activities, with a view to fostering their sense of belonging and sustainability of society. Based on the unique features of individual districts, an innovative, open-minded and diversified approach should be adopted in reaching out to youths in the community.

- (iv) A Member suggested that the Member Self-recommendation Scheme for Youth (MSSY) should cover more advisory and statutory bodies with a diversified spectrum of policy areas. The age requirement of MSSY should also be lowered so that younger youths could participate in public affairs.
- (d) On Development of Youths with Specific Needs
- (i) In light of the ascending population of youths with different special needs in Hong Kong, their needs for development should be addressed in the Blueprint.
 - (ii) The Government should step up effort in reaching out to EM youths and disadvantaged youths (including those with special needs and those with disabilities). They should be visually represented on the different materials and publications of the Blueprint to show that they were accepted and included by society.
 - (iii) To facilitate the development of national identity, EM youths should be given equal opportunities as local youths in the participation of sports and cultural activities in the community regardless of their Chinese language proficiency.
 - (iv) To facilitate youths with special needs to fit in their workplace, support should be provided to employers to help them understand and communicate effectively with staff having special needs.
 - (v) A Member proposed to expand the Student Mental Health Support Scheme to cover more schools. Considering the manpower requirements arising from expansion, the Government might collaborate with NGOs and private sector, and adopt the model of “Pilot Scheme on New Service Protocol for Child and Adolescent with ADHD+” in delivering the services.

- (e) On the Implementation Plan of the Blueprint
- (i) Cross-departmental and cross-sectoral collaboration should be enhanced to facilitate effective implementation of the Blueprint.
 - (ii) It was important to evaluate the effectiveness and outcomes of the youth development work and support measures outlined in the Blueprint, for example, by setting key performance indicators.
 - (iii) The mobile application being developed should provide an integrated digital platform for the youths to manage their participation in activities and programmes provided by the Government.
 - (iv) The strategies and contents of the Blueprint should be regularly reviewed and updated from time to time to address the changing needs of youths.

5. USHYA took note of Members' views and suggestions and made the following responses –

- (a) The Government had conducted a series of engagement sessions to gauge the views of youths from various backgrounds to understand their needs in formulating the Blueprint. The Blueprint aimed to address the diversified needs of all youths (including youths with mental health issues, youths with special needs/disabilities, and EM youths) in Hong Kong.
- (b) The Government considered it important to communicate with the youths and adopted different means to promote the Blueprint to youths, including social media, TV Announcements in the Public Interest (APIs), and school talks.
- (c) The Government attached utmost importance to youth development work and would closely monitor the implementation progress of the Blueprint. The detailed actions and specific policy measures of the Government, as well as the indicators for specified tasks were set out in Annex 1 and Annex 2 of the Blueprint respectively.

- (d) The Blueprint aimed to provide diversified opportunities and platforms for the youths to explore different possibilities, identify their interests and empower them to pursue their dreams through introducing a variety of measures and programmes in collaboration with different sectors.
- (e) There were many activities and opportunities available for EM youths. For example, the annual Yau Tsim Mong District Youth Network Programme attracted many EM youths to participate. The Support Service Centres for Ethnic Minorities under the Home Affairs Department also provided various tailor-made support services and activities for EM youths.
- (f) HYAB was working on the design and development of the mobile app, and would take into account Members' suggestions.

6. CP informed the meeting that HKPF had been interviewing individuals (mostly young persons, including children aged under 18) involved in the social unrest in 2019, to understand the reasons of these persons in participating in the social unrest. He offered to share HKPF's insights from these interviews with Members at the next CoC meeting, in particular, on the emotional and psychological state of these children/young persons who required support through, for example, strengthening the family relationship.

7. CS thanked CP for the sharing, and the meeting noted that HKPF would arrange a briefing on their insights at the upcoming CoC meeting.

Item 4: Support for Children in Resumption of Normalcy after the COVID-19 Pandemic [Paper No. 8/2023]

8. On CS' invitation, Ms Kathy Chung, the Convenor of the Working Group (WG) on Children Protection briefed Members on the participants' views collected in the CoC Stakeholder Engagement Session, entitled "The Challenges Faced by Children after Resuming of Normal School Life in Post-Coved Era", conducted on 5 May 2023. After that, PAS(SE)/EDB, PAS(SD)/EDB, ConCM(F&SH)/DH and AD(FCW)/SWD briefed Members on the support measures for children taken by the Government in resumption of normalcy after the COVID-19 pandemic.

9. Members' suggestions and views were as follows –

(a) Education

- (i) Schools should not focus only on the academic support to students. A comprehensive support to them was important.
- (ii) Some schools set different learning targets and arranged many school activities for students. Students felt exhausted by these arrangement.
- (iii) Some students experienced emotional distress and could not adapt to normal school life due to the high turnover rate of teachers. On the other hand, teachers and teaching staff should be appreciated for their efforts in supporting students during the pandemic as well as resuming to normal school life.
- (iv) The social development of students was significantly affected as they had less opportunities to socialise with others during the pandemic and had problems in getting along with classmates after resuming of normal school life. In particular, students undergoing puberty might get troubled by the interaction with the opposite sex. Support on social skills and sex education should be provided to students to address their developmental needs.
- (v) Majority of students continued to wear masks in schools, which affected children's social, emotional and language development. EDB and schools should provide more guidance to help students cope with no-mask anxiety.
- (vi) Support to schools should be strengthened to address the mental health needs of students, parents, as well as teaching staff after the resumption of normalcy.
- (vii) EDB should collaborate with SWD in supporting persistent absentees, who were absent from schools due to different reasons such as mental health issues, school/

cyber bullying, etc..

- (viii) As some international and private schools were not accommodating the needs of students with special educational needs (SEN) who experienced developmental regression due to the pandemic, EDB should provide advice and guidelines to these schools.
- (ix) EDB should get prepared for the challenges and impacts to students brought by the rising trend of using electronic devices in teaching and learning, such as online sex abuse, cyber bullying, abuse of artificial intelligence, etc. Besides, schools should communicate better with parents about the use of e-learning to facilitate parents to monitor their children on the use of internet.
- (x) Students lost interest in reading books due to the increasing screen time. Schools should step up effort in promoting reading culture in schools.
- (xi) There was concern about the mental health issues of cross-border students, as well as the cross-border and cross-departmental collaboration in providing support to those families in needs. Support should also be provided to schools to handle student suicide cases.
- (xii) The learning progress of EM students in the Chinese subjects dropped significantly during the pandemic and it was hard for them to pick up even after the resuming of normal school life.
- (xiii) Some EM students had conflicts with their families over their addiction to electronic devices and addiction to online pornography. There was a pressing need of sex education for instilling the right values of sex in EM students.

(b) Health

- (i) Enhanced multi-disciplinary collaboration was necessary to support students' recovery from the impacts of the pandemic on their physical and mental health, and their

development in different areas.

- (ii) The physical health problems of worsening eyesight, overweight and deteriorated physical fitness among children due to frequent use of electronic devices and lack of exercises during the pandemic were alarming. The Government could consider launching large scale territory-wide campaign to raise public awareness on eye protection and promotion of physical exercises.

(c) Social Welfare

- (i) The Government should further strengthen the support to grass-root families and at-risk families which were comparatively less resourceful in coping with challenges.
- (ii) Noting that the Integrated Family Service Centres under SWD were providing support services for individuals with mental health problems, a Member was concerned about the relevant caseload, its effectiveness and resources deployment after the pandemic.
- (iii) With their children resuming normal school life, parents might have experienced more stress (such as conflicts with their children over school work) and would be more prone to child abuse.
- (iv) The Government should strive to provide timely assessment, intervention and support services for children with SEN.

10. PAS(SE) made the following responses –

- (a) EDB made tireless efforts to support parents of specific groups (e.g. parents from grass-root families, parents of students with SEN, and EM students). EDB launched the Positive Parenting Campaign to promote the proper ways and attitudes of nurturing children. The Campaign was able to reach out to wide audience through different promotional activities such as the moving showroom. EDB also introduced the Curriculum Framework on Parent Education for reference of schools and relevant

organisations in the promotion of parent education.

- (b) Schools should follow the Curriculum Guides of EDB to regularly review the policies of assessment and homework, so as to meet the purpose of consolidating students' learning. Assessments should not rely only on examination and tests. Diversified modes of assessment should be adopted.
- (c) Schools were encouraged to create a caring culture and enhance connectedness among students and teachers. Schools could make reference to the circulars and online resources of EDB to help students build a social relationship in schools through, for example, organising group activities and adopting interactive learning mode for them. New teachers should be supported to master the relevant skills and strategies.
- (d) EDB introduced "Information Literacy for Hong Kong Students Learning Framework" to give suggestions on how to develop students' knowledge, skills and attitudes to use information and information technology ethically and effectively. There was a helpline providing support to students, parents and teachers on healthy use of internet.
- (e) Schools maintained contact with and provided continued support to students with SEN during the pandemic. Schools should refer to the Three-tier Intervention Model and adopt the principle of "intervention before assessment" to provide support services to students awaiting for assessment and rehabilitation services. In addition to the Student Support Team and Student Guidance Team of the schools, additional resources were provided to schools to support students with SEN, including school-based educational psychology services and speech therapy services.

11. PAS(SD) noted Members' concerns on the impacts of prolonged mask wearing to children and explained that EDB needed to balance different factors, including the risk of infection and the development of students, in considering appropriate health protection measures. On promotion of reading, the Promotion of Reading Grant had been disbursed to schools by EDB starting from 2018/19 school year to support reading in schools. EDB would continue to work with schools on promotion of reading in schools.

12. SED supplemented that schools had been advised to be supportive to cross-border students. Besides, students' suicidal behaviour was attributed to the interplay of multiple factors and EDB has been working to assist schools to promote protective factors and reduce risk factors of student mental health. Professional staff from EDB would take prompt action and provide immediate on-site support to schools once a suspected student suicide case was reported. School Crisis Management Team of the school would be activated to formulate a crisis management plan and support students, parents and school personnel affected by the suicide case.

13. ConCM(F&SH) said that DH took note of Members' views and suggestions, and would make continued effort to support students and families in need and where appropriate, step up measures to address different health issues of students in collaboration with various units including NGOs and schools, etc..

14. AD(FCW) said that multi-disciplinary collaboration was crucial to facilitate the identification of at-risk families and provision of early intervention. After the pandemic, the district social welfare offices of SWD had jointly organised visitation programmes with community organisations, with a view to mobilising community resources and providing early support to families in need.

15. CSP (Crime Support)(Crime Wing) shared the work of Police on prevention of cyber bullying, including launching a web app under the "Let's T.A.L.K. - Child Protection Campaign" (the Campaign) that provided resources on school and cyber bullying for different target groups (namely children, youths, adults); launching a one-stop website on crime prevention in May 2023 containing a section on cyber bullying and cybercrimes, and relevant teaching resources and information; publishing illustration books that provided suggestions on cyber bullying; as well as organising forums on the topic of cyber bullying with NGOs, etc. A seminar on the topic of cyber bullying would also be conducted in end of 2023.

Item 5: Progress Reports of the Working Groups [Paper No. 9-12/2023]

16. The progress reports of WG on Children Protection, WG on Research and Development, WG on Promotion of Children's Rights, Public Education and Engagement and WG on Children with Specific Needs were

circulated to members for information prior to the meeting. The Secretariat had not received any view on the reports from Members.

17. The Convenor of WG on Research and Development extended her thanks and appreciation to LWB, CoC Secretariat and CoC Members for their efforts, contributions and support to the successful completion of the consultancy study on developing a central databank on children.

Item 6: Any Other Business

18. Members noted the latest progress of the drafting of the Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse Bill (the Bill) and that the Government aimed to introduce the Bill into the Legislative Council in June 2023. A briefing session on the Bill would be arranged for CoC Members separately.

[Post-meeting Note: The briefing session was held on 31 May 2023.]

19. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 6:10 p.m..

**Commission on Children Secretariat
July 2023**