

立法會
Legislative Council

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(These minutes have been
seen by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/WS

Panel on Welfare Services

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 8 March 2021, at 10:45 am
in Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex

Members present : Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, SBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon YIU Si-wing, BBS (Deputy Chairman)
Hon KWOK Wai-keung, JP
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH
Hon Holden CHOW Ho-ding
Hon Wilson OR Chong-shing, MH
Dr Hon Pierre CHAN
Hon LUK Chung-hung, JP
Hon LAU Kwok-fan, MH
Dr Hon CHENG Chung-tai
Hon Vincent CHENG Wing-shun, MH, JP

Members absent : Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, SBS, JP
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, SBS, MH, JP

Public Officers attending : Items III and IV

Mr HO Kai-ming, JP
Under Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Ms PANG Kit-ling
Assistant Director (Family and Child Welfare)
Social Welfare Department

Clerk in attendance : Ms Maisie LAM
Chief Council Secretary (2) 3

Staff in attendance : Ms Catherina YU
Senior Council Secretary (2) 3

Mr Roger CHUNG
Council Secretary (2) 3

Miss Alison HUI
Legislative Assistant (2) 3

Action

I. Information paper(s) issued since the last meeting
[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)842/20-21(01) and CB(2)843/20-21(01)]

Members noted that the following papers had been issued since the last meeting:

- (a) referral memorandum from the Public Accounts Committee concerning the provision of long-term care services for the elderly; and
- (b) letter from Dr Priscilla LEUNG requesting the Panel to discuss the manpower shortage of residential care homes for persons with disabilities and review of the Residential Care Homes (Persons with Disabilities) Ordinance (Cap. 613).

II. Items for discussion at the next meeting
[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)832/20-21(01) and (02)]

2. Members agreed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting of the Panel scheduled for 19 April 2021 at 10:45 am:

- (a) One-off extra allowance to recipients of social security payments, Working Family Allowance and Individual-based Work Incentive Transport Subsidy;
- (b) Annual briefing on welfare facility projects funded by the Lotteries Fund; and
- (c) Injection into the Lotteries Fund.

3. Mr Wilson OR urged the Administration to brief the Panel as early as possible on the progress of building age-friendly community and disabled-friendly community (i.e. item 12 of the Panel's list of outstanding items for discussion), and the latest statistics relating to street sleepers and the support measures which should cover, among others, the recent increase in the number of young street sleepers.

4. In the light of the deteriorating labour market, Mr Vincent CHENG suggested that the Panel should discuss food assistance services for the needy to look into whether the services were adequate for the needy.

III. Long-term planning for provision of child care services

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)832/20-21(03) and (04)]

5. Members noted the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(2)832/20-21(03)) which set out the follow-up work with regard to the Final Report of the Consultancy Study on the Long-term Development of Child Care Services ("Consultancy Study") and the updated background brief on the subject under discussion prepared by the Legislative Council ("LegCo") Secretariat (LC Paper No. CB(2)832/20-21(04)).

Day child care services

6. Mr Holden CHOW enquired whether the Administration would reserve lower floors of new public rental housing ("PRH") for child care centres ("CCCs") which members had long called for to facilitate the meeting of the planning ratio in respect of aided CCC places recently stipulated in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines ("HKPSG"). Mr LUK Chung-hung said that a research conducted by the Research Office of the LegCo Secretariat in 2019 revealed that the labour force participation rate ("LFPR") of local women having children aged 0 to 14 was 56.6% and the overall LFPR of local women was 50.8%, which was far below that of the Mainland and some member countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. Pointing out that many women who wished to join the workforce were unable to do so because of the severe shortfall in day child care services, he held the view that the planning ratio in respect of aided CCC places in HKPSG could not address the inadequate provision of such services in districts with more young families. The Administration should formulate provision plans for CCCs on a district basis according to population profile. The Chairman expressed a similar view.

7. Under Secretary for Labour and Welfare ("USLW") advised that as announced in the Chief Executive's 2020 Policy Address, the Government would invite the Hong Kong Housing Authority and Hong Kong Housing Society to, in planning for future public housing projects, reserve about 5% of the total gross floor area in future public housing developments exclusively for welfare uses (including CCCs). Through the \$20 billion allocation for the purchase of premises for the provision of welfare facilities, which was a short-term approach adopted by the Administration to address the acute shortfall of welfare facilities, the Government Property Agency was assisting the Social Welfare Department ("SWD") in identifying suitable non-domestic premises for the provision of CCCs from 2021-2024 in phases. The above apart, 10 CCCs had been planned for provision in the coming three to four years through various development projects ("the 10 planned CCCs"). Assistant Director (Family and Child Welfare), SWD ("AD(FCW)") supplemented that in the long-term planning for child care services in new development areas, the Administration would take into account the number of population and the proportion of children population in the areas concerned. SWD would work with the Planning Department and other relevant government departments in the planning process.

8. The Chairman asked whether the Administration had analyzed the age distribution of the population in each district to facilitate the planning for the provision of CCC places. AD(FCW) advised that where necessary, such analysis could only be conducted based on the information collected during the population census every 10 years and the population by-census which took place in the middle of the intercensal period. The Chairman remarked that the Administration should strive to collect the information for better planning of child care services, and suggested that the Panel could arrange a visit to CCCs for members to better understand the services provided.

9. Mr POON Siu-ping expressed concern about whether the coronavirus disease 2019 ("COVID-19") epidemic had affected the progress of the provision of the 900 places by the 10 planned CCCs and the 1 000 long full day child care service places under the purchase of premises exercise. Mr Wilson OR enquired in how many phases the latter service places would commence service. Mr Vincent CHENG asked whether any premises had been purchased for accommodating CCCs. The Deputy Chairman sought information on the locations of the 10 planned CCCs.

10. Replying in the negative to Mr POON Siu-ping's question, USLW and AD(FCW) advised that the progress of the purchase exercise was hinged more on the availability of suitable premises in the market. On the location of the premises for accommodating CCCs, views of the Women's Commission

Action

and some women groups were that they should be in the vicinity of residential areas and be easily accessible. The requirements on the premises to be purchased for accommodating welfare facilities including CCCs were made available on SWD's website. The Administration's plan was to provide at least one additional CCC in each district, while those districts with more young families might have more CCCs. The purchase exercise would last over some three years. The Administration would assess the sale proposals received through open invitations and survey the market to identify suitable premises. The Chairman opined that CCCs should be located near MTR stations for the convenience of working parents.

Admin

11. The Deputy Chairman considered that there was a need for day child care service in view of the increasing number of dual working parents. Noting that it was projected in the Final Report of the Consultancy Study published in 2018 that the demand for child care services in 2031 would be 80 aided CCC places per 20 000 general population, he requested the Administration to advise in writing the respective existing numbers and service places of aided and private CCCs, with a breakdown by district; the projected demand for aided CCC places in 2031, with a breakdown by district; and the concrete plan for meeting the demand.

12. Noting that the manning ratios for qualified child care workers serving in aided and residential CCCs had been enhanced to 1:6 for children aged 0 to below two and 1:11 for children aged two to below three with effect from September 2019, Mr POON Siu-ping expressed concern about whether the existing manpower of CCCs had attained the above manning ratios and the implementation of the Subsidy for Further Manpower Enhancement, which was introduced in 2019-2020, had already raised the subsidy level of aided standalone CCCs from 20% to 34%. AD(FCW) advised that the new level of subsidy had been disbursed to the CCCs concerned such that the full costs incurred by these CCCs in enhancing the manning ratios were borne by the Administration but not transferred to parents using the services. On this front, direct subsidies had been provided to parents since February 2020 to cover part of the service fees of aided CCCs at the ceiling of \$600 per child each month, making the average percentage of subsidies provided by SWD out of the operating costs of aided standalone CCCs reached the level of 40% in 2020-2021.

Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project

13. Mr POON Siu-ping noted from paragraph 8 of the Administration's paper that a number of measures had been implemented to enhance the service quality of the Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project ("NSCCP"). He

was particularly concerned about whether the raising of the level of incentive payment for home-based child carers to a standard level of \$25 per hour had encouraged more volunteers to serve as child carers. Mr Vincent CHENG enquired whether the demand for NSCCP service could be fully met. Mr KWOK Wai-keung asked about the short-term measures to address the gap between the supply of and demand for the service. Mr LUK Chung-hung opined that the service places under NSCCP for each district should be set according to the demographic structure and profile of the district.

14. AD(FCW) advised that there was a team of home-based child carers under an NSCCP operator in each of the 18 districts. The service operators were required to provide at least 53 service places in each district, which could be in the form of home-based child care service or centre-based care group, and they could flexibly increase the number of service places on top of the minimum requirement so as to meet the actual service demand. Extra subsidies corresponding to the higher service utilization districts would be provided for the service operators. For instance, extra subsidies were provided to Yuen Long, Shatin and Tuen Mun districts where the service utilization was high. That said, whether a particular service demand could be met depended on the actual number of home-based child carers in the district concerned and the service session under request. The Chairman and Mr Vincent CHENG urged the Administration to increase the service places under NSCCP. Mr POON Siu-ping requested the Administration to provide the number of service places, children served and the service demand under NSCCP in 2020-2021, with a breakdown by district.

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15. The Deputy Chairman enquired about the role of home-based child carers under NSCCP, whom served as volunteers, in day child care services and whether the Administration would consider setting up dedicated teams of full-time home-based child carers to supplement the shortage in aided CCC places. Mr Holden CHOW sought elaboration on how far the service quality of NSCCP had been enhanced following the implementation of the measures set out in paragraph 8 of the Administration's paper. Mr Wilson OR asked whether the Administration would conduct a comprehensive review of the level of incentive payment making reference to the statutory minimum wage rate, mode of employment and training for home-based child carers. Mr Vincent CHENG enquired whether the Administration would create temporary posts for home-based child carers under the Job Creation Scheme.

16. USLW advised that there were divided views among women groups about changing the voluntary nature of home-based child carers. The above apart, employment of home-based child carers as employees of the service

operators would involve the consideration of various issues such as contributions under the Mandatory Provident Fund Scheme. AD(FCW) supplemented that according to the feedback provided by service providers under NSCCP, the majority of the serving home-based child carers preferred to continue with their volunteer status. The Administration had also consulted home-based child carers when raising the hourly rate of incentive payment from \$20 to \$25. Most of the carers were satisfied with the rate of increase. It should also be noted that NSCCP did not seek to replace CCCs, which provided regular services, but aimed to provide a flexible form of day child care services to needy parents. Service operators would recruit and train carers in the neighbourhood to take care of children in the service centres run by the operators or at the carers' homes. To enhance the service quality of NSCCP, SWD had provided additional provision to the service operators to increase professional and supporting staff to strengthen the training and monitoring of home-based child carers since January 2020. Mr Wilson OR remarked that the way the questions were asked would affect the feedbacks given by respondents on the level of incentive payment. In his view, the Administration should further increase the level of incentive payment to attract more people to serve as home-based carers, in particular when the labour market remained under pressure under the epidemic.

17. In response to Mr Vincent CHENG's enquiry about the difference between the amount of the service fee, which was as low as \$18 per hour in some districts, and the amount of incentive payment for home-based child carers, AD(FCW) explained that the amount of fee payable by the service users was determined by individual service operators. The hourly rate of the additional incentive payment received by the carers was \$25 irrespective of the former.

Re-engineering of Mutual Help Child Care Centres

18. Noting that the implementation of the re-engineering of the 19 Mutual Help Child Care Centres ("MHCCCs") through additional provision of social workers and supporting staff to further meet the child care needs in the community had been affected by the COVID-19 epidemic, Mr POON Siu-ping enquired whether additional resources had still been provided for MHCCCs. Mr Wilson OR sought elaboration about in how many phases the re-engineering would be completed. Holding the view that the self-financing mode had made MHCCC operators difficult to engage neighbours or parents to provide ad hoc child care services on a voluntary basis, Mr LUK Chung-hung was concerned about the re-engineering direction for MHCCCs.

19. AD(FCW) advised that MHCCCs would be re-engineered to provide aided after-school care services for pre-primary children and social workers and supporting staff would be provided for MHCCC operators after the revamp so as to better meet the child care needs in the community. The existing MHCCC operators would continue with the services at their premises after the revamp. The original plan of SWD was to re-engineer MHCCCs in five years' time from 2019-2020 onwards. Since the service of MHCCCs and some other child care services had once been suspended owing to the epidemic, SWD was discussing with MHCCC operators on whether a more compressed re-engineering timetable could be adopted. Subject to the epidemic situation, the Administration aimed to commence the exercise in the 2021-2022 financial year.

Timetable and manpower supply for provision of child care services

20. The Deputy Chairman, Mr Wilson OR and Mr Vincent CHENG criticized that the two-and-a-half-page Administration's paper was too flimsy, failing to provide concrete plans and timetables for the long-term provision of child care services to address the acute shortage in this regard. Mr Vincent CHENG added that the Administration's paper did not provide concrete responses to the recommendations of the Consultancy Study. Mr KWOK Wai-keung opined that the paper provided by the Administration only set out brief information on the piecemeal measures to enhance but not a long-term plan for the provision of child care services. USLW advised that the Government accepted in principle the recommendations on the long-term development of child care services of the Consultancy Study and had initiated a series of measures to enhance child care services. The Administration's paper had set out those new measures implemented since 2019-2020. At the request of the Chairman, USLW undertook to advise in writing statistics on the current demand and supply of aided child care services (with a tabulated breakdown by service type and district) and the concrete plan of the Administration to address the shortfall, if any, in the next five years.

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21. Expressing dissatisfaction that there were no concrete details in the Administration's paper in respect of those measures that would be implemented in phases, Mr Wilson OR requested the Administration to provide (a) a breakdown by year and district of the 900 CCC places to be provided in the 10 planned CCCs in the coming three to four years; (b) a breakdown by phase and district of the 1 000 additional long full day child care service places to be provided in phases from 2021-2022 through the purchase of premises; (c) the detailed implementation timetable for the re-engineering of the 19 MHCCCs by phases; and (d) a Strength-Weakness-Opportunity-Threat Analysis in relation to the long-term planning for the provision of child care services.

Admin

22. Dr CHENG Chung-tai said that there would be less demand for child care services during the COVID-19 epidemic due to the fact that some women would look after their children because they had lost their job for the time being and some had quitted their job in order to take care of their children due to suspension of classes. He urged the Administration to take the above into account when making reference to the service utilization data of this period to draw up long-term plans for provision of child care services to avoid under-estimation of the service demand. In addition, the Administration should assist the affected grass-root women in re-entering the labour force in the future by providing them with re-training subsidy for receiving training in relation to child caring so as to provide a potential pool of manpower for the newly set up CCCs. To this end, the Administration should take the opportunity of the 2021 population census to collect statistics on the retraining and re-employment of women. The Chairman remarked that it was important to strengthen training for child carers as they played a vital role in early childhood development for the children under care, and home-based child caring services was an emerging industry which would provide job opportunities for women. Mr LUK Chung-hung opined that creating job opportunities in child care services could unleash women labour force, which was beneficial to the development of local economy.

23. USLW advised that the Administration would keep abreast of the parents' aspirations for child care services in the new age and study how provision of child care services in the new age could be better supported through relevant training for women in the community. Dr CHENG Chung-tai said that in addition to early childhood educators, the Administration should engage academics who were specialized in women study in formulating policies on child care services.

Purchase of premises for accommodating welfare facilities

24. Mr Vincent CHENG pointed out that as announced in the 2019-2020 Budget, the making use of the \$20 billion allocated to implement the proposal to purchase premises for the provision of around 160 welfare facilities would span some three years. He sought information on the number of premises purchased and the money involved in these purchases since the Finance Committee approved the funding in June 2020. USLW advised that it was not suitable for the Administration to disclose the status at this stage to avoid affecting the transactions under consideration. The Administration would brief the Panel on the progress of the purchase exercise at an appropriate time. Mr Wilson OR said that the Administration could provide information on the progress without disclosing sensitive information. The Chairman requested the Administration to revert to the Panel in October 2021.

25. The Chairman opined that the number of premises the Administration could rent would be much greater than that it could purchase with the \$20 billion allocation amidst the economic downturn and the drop in rental market of non-domestic premises. She called on the Administration to reconsider the use of the \$20 billion allocation. While taking note of the Chairman's view, AD(FCW) advised that the Administration needed to carry out fitting-out works in order for the premises to meet the requirements for welfare facilities. If the landlord refused to renew the tenancy or raise the rental to an unreasonable level, the Administration had to look for other premises which rendered the public money spent on the fitting-out works not worth the while. The Chairman did not subscribe to the Administration's view and pointed out that the costs incurred for the fitting-out works of CCCs should not be substantial. In addition, many landlords would welcome long-term leases for more than 10 years with the Government.

IV. Support for victims of domestic violence and sexual violence
[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)832/20-21(05) and (06)]

26. At the invitation of the Chairman, USLW briefed members on the support services provided for victims of domestic violence and sexual violence by SWD, details of which were set out in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(2)832/20-21(05)).

27. Members noted the updated background brief prepared by the LegCo Secretariat on the subject under discussion (LC Paper No. CB(2)832/20-21(06)).

Statistics on domestic violence and sexual violence cases

28. The Chairman, Mr POON Siu-ping and Mr Wilson OR noted that while there was an increase in the number of calls received by hotlines of non-governmental organizations ("NGOs") providing support for victims of domestic violence under the COVID-19 epidemic, the number of calls received by SWD's 24-hour hotline had decreased during the same period. They expressed concern that the statistics of the Administration might have failed to present a full picture of the problem of domestic violence under the epidemic. Mr Wilson OR remarked that the above figures might reflect that individuals and families in need considered that SWD's hotline could not provide them with appropriate support and advice. He asked whether the Administration had commissioned an independent third party to assess the effectiveness of SWD's hotline service, with a view to improving the service. Mr Vincent CHENG urged the Administration to examine its statistical

figures to better understand the trend of domestic violence at different stages of the epidemic. Since not all victims were willing or able to seek help, efforts should be made to request the subvented service units to proactively contact or reach out their members during the epidemic to understand whether any assistance was necessary.

29. AD(FCW) advised that SWD's hotline was run in a one-stop mode to provide services not only for persons with risk of domestic violence but also for persons with other welfare needs. The Administration did not have a breakdown by case type of the number of calls received by SWD's one-stop hotline. Outside the operating hours of SWD's hotline (including public holidays), callers could choose to transfer their calls to the Hotline and Outreaching Service Team operated by Tung Wah Group of Hospitals funded by SWD for assistance from social workers. She added that SWD and NGOs were in close collaboration to provide services to persons in need. Calls received by those NGOs providing support for victims of domestic violence would be referred to relevant service units of SWD for follow up as appropriate, subject to the willingness of the callers. Separately, SWD had requested NGOs to proactively reach out to persons in need.

30. In response to the Chairman's enquiry about the number of cases referred by the Hong Kong Police Force ("the Police") to SWD, USLW and AD(FCW) advised that the number of cases referred by the Police had decreased by about 10% during the epidemic. When comparing the number of cases reported by different parties (including the Police) in 2020 as captured by SWD's central information systems with that of 2019, the number of newly reported spouse or cohabitant battering cases had decreased by 11% to 2 601 cases and the number of newly registered child protection cases had decreased by 7% to 940 cases. The Administration would examine the reasons why there was a decrease in the above figures while information from NGOs showed that enquiries in relation to domestic violence had been on the rise under the epidemic. The social distancing measures might have also resulted in school personnel, neighbours, relatives and friends having less contact with the victims concerned and hence less reporting. In light of the social distancing under the epidemic, SWD had stepped up publicity on awareness of domestic violence and had requested NGOs to proactively reach out to persons in need.

31. In response to the Chairman's enquiry about whether there was a decreasing trend in the age of victims of sexual violence, AD(FCW) advised that statistics of the Child Protection Registry showed that child victims of sexual violence were mainly in the age of 12 to 14. To her understanding, the age of child victims of sexual violence had not been on a decreasing trend.

However, it was noteworthy that there was an increase in the reported cases of sexual violence cases without physical contact, including threats with nude chats online. In the light of the above, SWD had joined hands with the Police to strengthen the detection and encourage the reporting of such cases. SWD had also provided training for school social workers and parents to remind them to pay attention to online behaviour of children in the light of the latest "Protecting Children from Maltreatment — Procedural Guide for Multi-disciplinary Co-operation" which provided a guide for detecting and handling cases of sexual grooming.

Support for persons with risk of domestic violence

Service provision during the epidemic

32. Mr POON Siu-ping pointed out that many families were facing unemployment and financial hardship as the epidemic had dealt a heavy blow to the economy and the labour market. This apart, parents confined at home to take care of their children all day long under the suspension of classes faced tremendous pressure. Pointing out that UN Women and UNICEF had both called on governments to take steps to combat domestic violence during the pandemic, he enquired the measures put in place by the Administration in this regard. Mr LUK Chung-hung urged the Administration to plan ahead to deal with a rise in domestic violence cases during economic downturn. He remarked that the fact that the number of domestic violence cases had remained stable in the past few years perhaps revealed that there was no improvement in the problem of domestic violence, or many hidden cases had yet been identified.

33. AD(FCW) advised that the 24-hour temporary accommodation and support services operated by SWD-subsented NGOs for individuals and families in need had maintained normal operation during the epidemic. Social workers of Family and Child Protective Services Units ("FCPSUs") and Integrated Family Service Centres ("IFSCs") had maintained contact with victims of domestic violence depending on their needs through various means, including contact through telephone calls and video conferencing. With the epidemic situation being stabilized, all service units had gradually resumed services in strict accordance with the social distancing requirements, including the provision of therapeutic and mutual support groups. Information on the support services for victims of domestic violence was also made available on SWD's website. As regards support for students, school social workers had continued to maintain contacts with students and pay home visits to students in need during suspension of face-to-face classes, with a view to preventing and stopping domestic violence.

Services provided by Family and Child Protective Services Units

34. Mr POON Siu-ping enquired about the establishment, caseload and duty hours of the 11 FCPSUs set up by SWD to handle cases involving child protection and spouse/cohabitant battering. AD(FCW) advised that depending on the number of cases and the coverage of the catchment districts, the establishment of each FCPSU ranged from 14 to 28 staff members. With an increase in manpower of FCPSUs in recent years, the caseload per frontline social worker had reduced to an average of about 20 cases so that more comprehensive support could be provided to each case.

Refuge service

35. Mr POON Siu-ping was concerned about whether the existing capacity of refuge service was adequate to meet the demand from individuals or families facing domestic violence or in crisis, in particular during the epidemic. Mr LUK Chung-hung asked whether there had been an increase in the number of short-term residential places over the past decade. AD(FCW) advised that the five Refuge Centres for Women ("RCs") set up by SWD currently had a total capacity of 268 short-term residential places. Separately, the Family Crisis Support Centre ("FCSC") and the CEASE Crisis Centre provided 50 and 80 short-term residential places for individuals or families in need. In respect of the five RCs, there was a coordination mechanism for case referral when an RC had reached its full capacity. While the occupancy rate of certain RCs had once been high during the epidemic, the overall occupancy rate had remained stable during the later period. To address the concern of some victims of domestic violence over the risk of infection if stayed at RCs, special arrangement had been made by referring the cases concerned to social workers to assist these persons to rent a short-term accommodation.

36. Mr LUK Chung-hung expressed concern that some victims of domestic violence had refused to use the refuge service as the Centres were at remote locations which were far away from schools of their children. There were also concerns about the lack of privacy of some RCs. AD(FCW) advised that apart from FCSC, the addresses of RCs and the CEASE Crisis Centre were kept confidential to ensure the safety of service users. Victims of domestic violence would usually be admitted to RCs not located in the vicinity of their residential districts to prevent perpetrators from approaching the victims. Due to the communal living design, more than one individual or family would live in the same dormitory of RCs in some cases. It should be noted that the residential places were of a short-term nature and individuals or families facing domestic violence or in crisis could decide on

their own whether to receive the refuge service according to their situations.

37. Holding the view that the 65 IFSCs across the territory provided the most convenient point for victims of domestic violence to seek immediate assistance, Mr LUK Chung-hung was concerned that IFSCs did not provide round-the-clock service and SWD's 24-hour hotline was not commonly known to members of the public. He urged the Administration to put in place measures to facilitate individuals or families facing domestic violence or in crisis to seek refuge service during non-office hours. AD(FCW) advised that IFSCs currently operated till 8:00 pm on specific weekdays and during daytime on Saturdays. Outside the operating hours of IFSCs, appropriate follow-up or outreaching to individuals or families in need could be arranged through SWD's 24-hour hotline.

Effectiveness of the efforts to combat domestic violence and sexual violence

Admin

38. Mr Wilson OR noted that the current legal framework dealing with domestic violence and sexual violence was made up of various pieces of legislation, which imposed criminal sanctions on acts of violence and provided civil remedies to victims of domestic violence and sexual violence. He sought information on the enforcement actions taken in 2019 and 2020 against domestic violence and sexual violence cases, including the numbers of prosecution instituted and successful prosecution made. AD(FCW) undertook to communicate with the Police to provide the requisite information.

Admin

39. Mr Wilson OR urged the Administration to commission an independent third party to conduct a survey on the effectiveness and user friendliness of SWD's preventive, supportive and specialized services to combat domestic violence. AD(FCW) advised that SWD had collected feedback from service users on whether the services were helpful to them. At the request of Mr Wilson OR, the Administration undertook to provide in writing information on the feedback received from service users in this regard.

(At 12:43 pm, the Chairman informed members of her decision to extend the meeting beyond its appointed ending time until all members who were waiting to speak were given an opportunity to do so.)

Mechanisms for liaison among different sectors and disciplines

40. Given that PRH had accommodated a large population, Mr Wilson OR was concerned about whether there were representatives from the Housing Department in the Committee on Child Abuse and the Working Group on Combating Intimate Partner Violence and Adult Sexual Violence which

were tasked to map out at the central level strategies to tackle the problems of child maltreatment, domestic violence and adult sexual violence. In his view, membership of the Committee and the Working Group should also comprise of LegCo Members.

41. AD(FCW) advised that the Housing Department ("HD") was represented in the Working Group. At district level, the District Coordinating Committee on Family and Child Welfare and District Liaison Group on Family Violence set up under each of the 11 SWD Districts comprised of representatives from various government departments (including HD), NGOs, local organizations, community leaders, etc., to coordinate the provision of support services for victims of domestic violence and to consolidate effort in combating domestic violence at district level.

The Administration's papers for and the attendance of public officers at the meeting

42. The Chairman, Mr Wilson OR and Mr Vincent CHENG expressed dissatisfaction that same as that provided for the previous agenda item, the paper provided by the Administration for this agenda item was too brief and failed to address the concerns of the community. The Chairman and Mr Vincent CHENG were dissatisfied with the non-attendance of Secretary for Labour and Welfare at the meeting and the failure of those public officers attending the meeting to provide concrete responses to questions raised by members.

43. USLW stressed that representatives attending the meeting were part of the Government team and would endeavour to answer members' questions as far as practicable. However, there would unavoidably be cases that information requested by member was not on hand. He assured members that the Administration would provide the supplementary information requested by members after the meeting.

V. Any other business

44. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:55 pm.