

WOMEN'S COMMISSION
Notes of the Meeting held on 28 May 2020

<u>Present:</u>	Ms CHAN Yuen-han	(Chairperson)
	Ms CHANG King-yiu	Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Vice-Chairperson)
	Professor Cecilia CHAN	
	Ms Susanna CHIU	
	Ms Mary HUEN	
	Mrs Emily LAM HO	
	Dr Kevin LAU	
	Ms Elaine LO	
	Professor LUI Yu-hon	
	Ms Winnie NG	
	Miss Yolanda NG	
	Ms Melissa PANG	
	Dr Loletta SO	
	Miss Sherry TSAI	
	Mr Walter TSUI	
	Mrs Viola WONG HO	
	Ms Yvonne YEUNG	
	Ms Judy CHUNG	Principal Assistant Secretary (Constitutional & Mainland Affairs)5, Constitutional & Mainland Affairs Bureau
	Ms PANG Kit-ling	Representative of the Director of Social Welfare/Assistant Director(Family & Child Welfare), Social Welfare Department
<u>Absent with</u>	Ms Melaine LEE	
<u>Apologies:</u>	Ms Scarlett PONG	
	Ms Rigam RAI	
	Ms WONG Siu-wah	
	Dr Kitty WU	
<u>In attendance:</u>	Mr David LEUNG	Deputy Secretary for Labour & Welfare (Welfare)1/Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB)
	Ms Veronica WONG	Principal Assistant Secretary (Welfare)2/ LWB

	Mr Huggin TANG	Assistant Secretary (Welfare)2A/LWB (Secretary)
	Mrs Annie CHAN	Chief Executive Officer (Welfare)2/LWB
For Agenda Item 1:	Mrs CHANG LAM Sook-ye	Senior Social Work Officer, Family & Child Protective Services (Special Duty), Social Welfare Department
For Agenda Item 2:	Mr Dominic CHOW	Administrative Assistant to Secretary for Labour & Welfare/LWB
	Dr Florence FONG	Senior Researcher (1)/LWB

Confirmation of Notes of Last Meeting

1.1 The Chairperson and Members confirmed the draft notes of the last meeting held on 14 November 2019 without any amendment.

Item 1: Protecting Children from Maltreatment – Procedural Guide for Multi-disciplinary Co-operation (Revised 2020) (WoC 01/20)

1.2 With the aid of a powerpoint presentation, Mrs CHANG LAM Sook-ye, Senior Social Work Officer, Family & Child Protective Services (Special Duty) (SSWO) of the Social Welfare Department (SWD) briefed Members on the background information and latest revision of the Protecting Children from Maltreatment – Procedural Guide for Multi-disciplinary Co-operation (Procedural Guide). The Procedural Guide served as a reference for necessary actions to be taken by different professionals in handling suspected child maltreatment cases. Such professionals included personnel engaged in social services, health services, education services and law enforcement, as well as those whose work involved close contact with children. The latest revision of the Procedural Guide

was completed in December 2019. The revised Procedural Guide was formally adopted on 1 April 2020 after SWD had briefed relevant personnel on the amendments in the first quarter of 2020.

1.3 Noting that the Procedural Guide was intended to serve as a reference for personnel who were in close contact with children, a Member opined that the Government should also raise the awareness of the general public on protecting children from maltreatment, especially when community networks beyond schools had become more important during school suspension as a result of COVID-19. In response, Ms PANG Kit-ling, Representative of the Director of Social Welfare / Assistant Director (Family and Child Welfare), SWD (the Assistant Director) briefed Members on a new round of SWD's Publicity Campaign on "Strengthening Families and Combating Violence". The publicity campaign aimed at enhancing public awareness on domestic violence prevention and child protection through a series of territory-wide and district-based publicity programmes, highlighting the fact that family love would be strong support for people in adversities and that mutual help at the neighbourhood level would be important, with a view to encouraging those in need to seek early assistance. In February 2020, SWD launched on television, radio and the Internet an Announcement of Public Interest entitled "For your child's happiness, don't fight please talk" featuring a famous actor. It would continue to disseminate messages on domestic violence prevention and child protection through various channels. As regards support for individuals/families during the COVID-19 epidemic, various service units of SWD had been providing immediate counselling, support and advice as well as arranging appropriate follow-up services for individuals/families in need. The public might also report or refer cases in crisis situations to SWD through its 24-hour hotline. Social workers would initiate telephone contact with service users and, where necessary, provide immediate outreaching and

follow-up services. The above-mentioned services had been provided as usual during the epidemic. Despite the suspension of classes, school social workers would maintain close liaison with teaching staff and provide counselling services for students in need by telephone or other means in a timely manner. Youth service providers would also maintain their outreaching services.

1.4 In response to a Member's enquiry about the provision of residential child care service for children-at-risk, the Assistant Director said that SWD had a child protection mechanism in place to provide children in urgent need with emergency residential child care service and to determine the long-term care arrangement for them as soon as possible. On the other hand, SWD would continue to adopt a multi-pronged approach in increasing residential child care service places, such as including the identification of suitable sites for small group homes in its new development plans and enhancing the recruitment of foster homes.

1.5 Some Members were concerned about the responsibilities to be borne by relevant organisations¹ in handling suspected child maltreatment cases involving their staff as well as how they would handle such cases. One of the Members was of the view that a disciplinary mechanism should be in place for relevant organisations to penalise their offending staff members in order to achieve a deterrent effect. In response, SSWO said that organisations should formulate child protection policies, measures and procedures for handling suspected child maltreatment cases involving their staff, carers and volunteers in

¹ Including government departments, non-governmental organisations and other organisations engaged in social services, health services, education services and law enforcement, as well as those whose work involved close contact with children.

accordance with Chapter 13 of the Procedural Guide, with a view to preventing child maltreatment incidents and handling suspected cases properly, thereby protecting the safety and best interests of children. The Procedural Guide stipulated that organisations should not reach any private agreement of compromise with the staff involved, and should clearly separate child protection investigations from staff disciplinary proceedings. Organisations were also responsible for ensuring that their staff comply with their codes of conduct in delivering services to children, and should report relevant cases to the authorities concerned under the relevant monitoring mechanisms (e.g. schools should report their cases to the Education Bureau under the mechanism).

Item 2: Review of Capacity Building Mileage Programme (CBMP) (WoC 02/20)

2.1 Professor LUI Yu-hon declared at the beginning of the meeting that the institution he worked with was responsible for operating CBMP courses and said that he would withdraw from the meeting to avoid causing suspicion. The two co-convenors of the Steering Committee on the CBMP suggested that Professor LUI stay in the meeting to participate in the discussion and listen to the opinions of other Members. Professor LUI accepted the suggestion.

2.2 Before the start of the discussion on this item, a Member, noting that Professor LUI had agreed to stay in the meeting to participate in the discussion, suggested that he should not offer his views on the matter in view of his declaration of interest. Eventually, the Chairman accepted Professor LUI's decision to withdraw from the discussion of this item. Professor LUI withdrew from the meeting at 12:10 p.m. and did not participate in the discussion of the review report.

2.3 With the aid of a Powerpoint presentation², Dr Florence FONG, Senior Researcher (1)/LWB, briefed Members on the findings and recommendations of the Review of CBMP, including its policy intent, observations and proposals.

2.4 With regard to CBMP's positioning, Members agreed that its original objective should be maintained, i.e. to encourage women of different backgrounds and educational levels to pursue self-development and increase knowledge by taking courses of interest in their preferred time and place, as well as to widen their social circles. CBMP was specially designed to enable women to develop a positive mind set and enhance their inner strength, which would help them deal with challenges in life. As CBMP was neither career-oriented nor designed for attaining academic qualifications, there were no entry requirements and anyone who was interested could apply. According to the experience of the CBMP Student Association, CBMP participants were able to make friends with each other and widen their social circles.

2.5 On course content, Members agreed in principle to the enhancement proposals put forward in the review report, including restructuring and revamping the five learning scopes under CBMP. The restructured learning scopes, namely Personal Skills, Health / Care, Technology and Living, Wisdom of Living as well as Art and Culture, would be richer in course contents so as to meet the learning needs of women of different backgrounds and interests. Members also agreed that more accredited courses should be offered to provide more opportunities for participants to continuing education. Some Members suggested that the course design under each scope should be targeted at meeting women's learning

² In view of the sensitivity of its contents, the Secretariat had provided photocopies of the Powerpoint presentation at the meeting and taken them back when the meeting was adjourned.

needs in playing different roles at different stages of life, such as those of women who were working mothers and carers of children/elders. The proposed themes of the courses included self-understanding, gender roles, relationship between husband and wife, communication within the family, caring skills for children/elders, etc.

2.6 Regarding publicity and enrolment, Members agreed that a more flexible learning mode should be adopted through offering more e-learning courses in order to attract more women to participate in self-arranged learning at a pace, time and place that best suit their individual circumstances. A Member suggested enhancing the dedicated website of CBMP e-learning courses to improve user experience. At the same time, the provision of more Qualifications Framework accredited courses would also attract and encourage more women to pursue continuing education. Members also agreed to enhancing publicity and promotion of CBMP by participants among their peers, as well as encouraging ethnic minority women to enrol in CBMP. Noting that the average age of participants was increasing, a Member suggested enhancing publicity on the social media to induce participation of young women in particular in order to expand the age range of CBMP participants. A Member was of the view that CBMP's logo might better be changed after a decision had been made on whether CBMP should target a particular age group (e.g. whether younger women would have priority over women of other age groups).

2.7 Regarding the review on the effectiveness of CBMP, a Member suggested giving consideration to setting quantitative indicators, such as percentage of behavioural change before and after attending CBMP courses. Some Members suggested evaluating changes in participants' social network, self-confidence and personal skills upon completion of CBMP courses by using questionnaires or other appropriate tools, and examining their reasons for and considerations in enrolling in CBMP courses again. Some Members

suggested that open tendering should be adopted for the coming CBMP contract and bidders should not be limited to universities and tertiary institutions. Some other Members, however, considered that courses run by universities and tertiary institutions would be more attractive and, to a certain extent, their quality could be guaranteed. It was suggested that the contract period should be longer (e.g. no less than 3 years) to allow sufficient time for reviewing the effectiveness of the courses run by the operator under the new requirements.

2.8 Members noted that the funding for CBMP was earmarked for launching programmes related to helping women learn. The Chairperson opined that CBMP should be differentiated from other publicly-funded learning systems or training programmes in terms of positioning and learning scope and there should be no overlapping of resources. She reminded Members that views not related to women's learning needs (such as increasing welfare services) were not within the scope of the review.

Item 3: Secretary's Report (WoC 03/20)

3.1 Members noted the Secretary's report.

Item 4: Any Other Business

4.1 The next meeting would tentatively be held on 13 August 2020. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

**Women's Commission Secretariat
August 2020**