

**Notes of the 204th Meeting of the Advisory Committee on
Social Work Training and Manpower Planning (Advisory Committee)
held on Monday, 4 May 2026 at 3:00 p.m.
at Room 918, 9/F., Wu Chung House, 213 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai**

Present:

Prof MOK Ka-ho	(Chairman)
Ms Catherine WONG Pui-yee	
Ms CHAN Siu-lai [#]	
Dr Jess LEUNG Lam-ming	
Miss Mandy YAU Tze-man	
Miss CHU Lai-ling, M.H.	
Ms Joyce LEE Yuen-sum, M.H.	
Miss Tiffin CHUNG Tin-kwan	
Mr Jasper POON Jia-jun	
Mr Joseph HUNG Hin-ching	
Prof NG Siu-man	The University of Hong Kong (representing Prof Amy CHOW Yin-man)
Dr Moon LAW Yee-man	The Chinese University of Hong Kong (representing Prof DAI Haijing)
Prof Cherry TAM Hau-lin	City University of Hong Kong (representing Prof Matthew Garnet MANNING)
Dr YAM Kong	The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (representing Prof Eric CHUI Wing-hong)
Prof Steve FONG Fu-fai	Hong Kong Shue Yan University
Dr CHENG Kam-yuen	UOW College Hong Kong
Mr Dennis CHING Chung-cham	Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB)
Ms Jerry JI Sang	Education Bureau (EDB)
Mr Roland LEUNG Kam-ming	Social Welfare Department (SWD) (Secretary)

[#] Attended the meeting via Zoom

In attendance:

Ms Coby CHAN Mei-yi	SWD
Mr Joseph CHAN Tat-kuen	SWD
Miss Wendy MAK Wing-yan	SWD
Mr Jimmy LIN Kwok-leung	SWD
Mr Henry NGAI Yu-tin	SWD

Absent with apologies:

Hon Grace CHAN Man-yee	
Prof Bessie CHONG Pui-san	
Prof Shirley HUNG Suet-lin	Hong Kong Baptist University
Mr Bernard KAN Tze-yeung	SWD

Item 1: Matters arising

Support measures for non-governmental organisations (NGOs) operating subvented welfare services to facilitate their implementation of the Productivity Enhancement Programme (PEP)

1. SWD representative recapped that in the 2025-26 Budget, the Financial Secretary introduced measures to step up PEP with a cumulative reduction of 7% in recurrent government expenditure by the year 2027-28. Further to the sharing at the 202nd meeting held on 20 June 2025 about the support measures introduced by LWB/SWD in 2025 for NGOs receiving subvention to facilitate their implementation of PEP, another round of support measures had been put forward to assist NGOs in PEP implementation with effective from 1 April 2026 with details as follows –

(a) *Simplified arrangement for cost apportionment*

To further enhance synergy in the utilisation of resources and reduce administrative work, SWD extended the scope of cost-apportionment exemption to (i) welfare services / projects funded by the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust and The Community Chest of Hong Kong that met SWD's specified conditions, and (ii) additional three government funds / subsidy schemes, bringing the total items from 38 to 41.

(b) *Enhancement for Service Quality Standards (SQSs)*

To enhance overall operational and implementation efficiency of SQSs, SWD streamlined the provisions of 16 SQSs through (i) removal of duplicated or verbose expressions, inapplicable contents and procedural requirements, and simplifying / merging relevant clauses, (ii) enriching the existing standards / provisions as appropriate to keep pace with service development and evolving needs, and (iii) optimising the assessment arrangements.

(c) *Relaxation of financial thresholds and utilisation of Block Grant (BG) provided under the Lotteries Fund*

To offer a greater degree of flexibility in the use of BG and reduce administrative workload, SWD (i) increased the financial ceiling for each minor capital works project and each furniture and equipment (F&E) item, (ii) expanded the BG ambit to cover implementation of information technology projects, conversion of the existing premises and ad-hoc F&E requirements, and (iii) streamlined the annual BG application procedure.

2. On top the above, LWB/SWD afforded NGOs with more flexibility in using their reserves, streamlined cost apportionment procedures and various workflows so as to enhance their financial flexibility, improve operational efficiency and reduce administrative workload.

3. The Chairman thanked SWD representative for her sharing, and encouraged the welfare sector to make use of the opportunity to further enhance operational efficiency in serving the needy.

Hong Kong Social Work Teaching Staff Exploring the Motherland tours

4. SWD representative reported that LWB, SWD and Connecting Hearts Limited had co-organised the second tour of Hong Kong Social Work Teaching Staff Exploring the Motherland

from 28 to 30 April 2026, which sought to enhance understanding of social work teaching staff of the latest development of social welfare and social work training in the Chinese Mainland and national affairs. A total of 43 social work teaching staff from 16 local Training Institutions (TIs) currently offering social work programmes joined the tour. Highlights of the tour were shown to Members during the meeting.

5. Another SWD representative reported that the tour was well-received by participants, and provided a unique opportunity for deepening academic and educational collaboration and exchange in various social work training issues between Hong Kong and the Chinese Mainland. Further tour of this kind was under planning with details to be announced in due course.

6. The Chairman shared that it was an invaluable opportunity for teaching staff of social work programmes to get together and embark on a learning journey to the Mainland. TI representatives were encouraged to actively participate in and nominate their teaching staff to join future tours.

Implementation of the digitised Social Work Manpower Requirements System (SWMRS)

7. SWD representative recapped that the digitised SWMRS was rolled out smoothly on 25 September 2025. The development of the System, including the internal system for reports generation, was completed in January 2026. As at 30 April 2026, 885 participating organisations had registered user accounts in the System for the 2025 round of annual updating exercise (2025 round exercise) and no issues of concern / irregularities were identified. Details of the 2025 round exercise would be discussed in the ensuing agenda item.

Item 2 : Social Work Manpower Requirements System (SWMRS) - Findings of the 2025 round exercise [Paper ACSWTMP/1/2026]

1. SWD representative walked members through the major findings of the manpower situation in 2024-25 and the projected manpower requirements for social work posts in 2025-26 and 2026-27, as compiled in the 2025 round exercise.

2. Members shared the following views / observations on the findings –

- (a) While noting the projected surplus of diploma graduates in 2025-26 and 2026-27, NGOs encountered difficulties in recruiting suitable diploma graduates to fill the social work assistant posts. Besides, it was observed that a number of diploma graduates had pursued further studies to attain degree qualification before joining the social work field. Members enquired whether those degree graduates who were formerly graduated with diploma qualification might be double-counted in the (i) estimated strength of Diploma Posts and Degree Posts as well as (ii) graduates potentially available for joining social work field for Diploma Posts and Degree Posts.
- (b) Noting that welfare projects sponsored by different charitable organisations might create additional demand for social work manpower, consideration might be given to inviting those organisations to join the annual updating exercises for better projection purpose.

- (c) Noting that the annual SWMRS updating exercise did not collect information on service areas of the jobs available which could serve as good reference for TIs to facilitate planning of their training programmes, consideration might be given for collecting those information in future updating exercises.

3. In response, SWD representatives shared the following –

- (a) The estimated strength in the projection years was calculated based on the estimated net change of social work posts reported by participating organisations and the strength at the end of preceding years. In other words, the estimated strength would not be affected by the amount of graduate supply. For the number of graduates potentially available for joining social work field for Diploma Posts and Degree Posts in the projection years, the calculation was performed separately for each type of posts, and had taken into account that some graduates would not enter the social work field deliberately in the projection years (i.e. non-entrants) due to various reasons such as pursuing further studies, availability of non-social work jobs in the labour market, changes in career aspiration, etc.
- (b) To ensure comprehensive coverage and to capture the latest manpower situation in the social work field, the list of participating organisations was reviewed and updated annually before commencement of the updating exercise. SWD would invite organisations which were considered to have employed / would employ social work personnel (SWP) to participate in the updating exercise accordingly.
- (c) There existed operational difficulty to collect the information on service areas of each social work post in the annual updating exercise. Nevertheless, to facilitate TIs to arrange their training programmes, SWD had published the breakdown of new degree and diploma posts by service areas in both SWD and SWD-subsidised sector in NGOs in two projection years in the Annual Report of SWMRS since the 2022 round exercise in which major projects under each service area were listed out.

4. Members further shared the following views / observations –

- (a) Although the social work discipline did not meet the manpower-planned criteria in full, the University Grants Committee (UGC) had deemed social work as manpower-planned programme (MPP) on an exceptional one-off basis for the 2025-28 triennium, with the subject matter to be reviewed in the 2028-31 triennium. Members expressed their full support to the continual retention of MPP status for the social work discipline. While some members considered the findings of the 2025 round exercise of SWMRS, which was scheduled for release in Q3 2026, might shed a positive light on the consideration of the aforementioned matter, the projected surplus of degree graduates in 2025-26 and 2026-27 as reflected from the 2025 round exercise had suggested otherwise.
- (b) With reference to past experiences of the social work discipline being a non-MPP, resources allocated to social work departments in UGC-funded teaching institutions would likely be reduced if the former could not retain its MPP status in the 2028-31 triennium. The number of social work graduates from UGC-funded universities would

also decrease.

- (c) In view of the increasing complexity of social issues, there was a need to strengthen specialised training to social work students on specific service areas. Interdisciplinary collaboration should be further promoted so that social workers could handle difficult cases more effectively.

5. In response, EDB representative shared that EDB would seek bureaux/departments' input to the manpower requirements in the specific sectors and professions to facilitate planning for the provision of publicly-funded student places of the UGC-funded universities in the 2028-31 triennium later this year, during which the MPPs would be reviewed. LWB/SWD would be invited to provide comment on the manpower planned status of the social work discipline. Apart from the training places from UGC-funded universities, the self-financing sector were offering training places in the social work disciplines to meet manpower demand. It was in line with EDB's policy to promote parallel development of the publicly-funded and self-financing post-secondary sectors.

6. Noting Members' concerns on the MPP status of the social work discipline, SWD representative reported that SWD would convey the comments of the Advisory Committee to EDB, together with the findings of the latest SWMRS annual updating exercise, during the conduct of the planning exercise for the 2028-31 triennium.

7. The Chairman remarked that it was important for SWD to convey the comments of the Advisory Committee on supporting the MPP status of the social work discipline to EDB for consideration, with a view to ensuring a stable supply of social work manpower from UGC-funded universities.

8. A member added that specialised training for social work students should be strengthened in order to meet the changing needs of the society. While, another member supplemented that TIs had been providing both general and specialised training to undergraduate social work students, with a view to preparing and developing them for meeting service needs. Registered social workers would attend further professional training in specific service areas after graduation.

Item 3: Welfare initiatives in the Budget 2026-27

1. SWD representative shared with Members on the latest welfare initiatives in the Budget 2026-27. In 2026-27, government's recurrent spending on social welfare was estimated to be \$135.9 billion, accounting for 22.7% of the total recurrent government expenditure of the financial year. Compared with the revised estimate for 2025-26, there was an increase of about 9.9%. Highlights of the latest welfare initiatives were as follows –

(a) *Elderly Services*

Starting from 2026-27, the number of Community Care Service Vouchers for the Elderly would increase by 4 000 to a total of 16 000, and the number of Residential Care Service Vouchers for the Elderly by 1 000 to a total of 7 000.

(b) *Cash Assistance*

A one-off extra one-month allowance would be provided to eligible recipients of

social security payments. To further facilitate cross-border retirement for elderly persons, the 2025 Policy Address announced the improvement of disbursement arrangements for portable cash assistance so that Hong Kong elderly beneficiaries retiring in Guangdong and Fujian Provinces might opt to receive government cash assistance directly through their accounts with designated Mainland banks. The new service would be launched in mid-2026.

(c) Support for Persons with Disabilities

Two major measures to enhance rehabilitation services would be introduced, namely the provision of (i) about 450 additional spaces for day, residential and pre-school services in financial year 2026-27; and (ii) bridging and support services for children with special needs receiving Onsite Pre-school Rehabilitation Services during their first term in primary school starting from the 2026/27 school year.

(d) Assist Working Families in Childbearing

15 new aided standalone child care centres would be set up to assist working families over the next three years starting from 2026-27, almost doubling the existing number of service places.

(e) Child Protection

The Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse Ordinance came into effect on 20 January 2026. To strengthen the prevention of child abuse at source, the Government would set up four Community Parents and Children Centres on a pilot basis, promoting parent-child interaction through play-based services and instilling positive parenting skills in parents.

Date of next meeting

1. The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for Q3 2026, with the meeting date to be announced in due course. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:56 p.m.

**Advisory Committee Secretariat
October 2026**