

**Minutes of the 49th Meeting of
The Committee on Services for Youth at Risk (CSYR)**

Date : 2 September 2024 (Monday)
Time : 3:00 p.m.
Venue: Conference Room 918, 9/F, Wu Chung House,
213 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai, Hong Kong

Present

Miss Charmaine LEE, JP (Chairperson)
Social Welfare Department

Ms SO Yuen-yi, Louise (Vice-chairperson)
Education Bureau

Ms SZE Sin-yu, Cecilia
Home and Youth Affairs Bureau

Miss KWOK Ting, Tiffany
Security Bureau

Ms KWONG Hoi-ying, Rachel
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Dr CHUANG Shuk-kwan, JP
Department of Health

Ms YOUNG Hoi-yan, Jennifer
Education Bureau

Mr LEUNG Chung-man
Hong Kong Police Force

Hon. LEUNG Yuk-wai, Kenneth, JP
Youth Development Commission

Mr CHAN Wing-kin, MH
Action Committee Against Narcotics

Mr FONG Yick-jin, Eugene
Committee on Home-School Co-operation

Professor CHUI Wing-hong, Eric
Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Ms HO Ka-yan
Hong Kong Subsidized Secondary Schools Council

Ms LEE Yuen-sum, Joyce
Hong Kong Children and Youth Services

Ms HSU Siu-man, Helen
Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups

Ms YIU Kit-ling, Karen
The Hong Kong Council of Social Service

Miss NGAN Tsz-ching, Bridget
Youth Representative

Miss CHAN Lai-chu, Joe
Social Welfare Department

Miss CHOW Yuet-ming, Mina
Social Welfare Department

Ms AU Ka-lai, JoePHY (Secretary)
Social Welfare Department

In-attendance

Ms TAM Kit-ling, Joanne
Social Welfare Department

Ms CHUNG Wai-yee, Polly
Social Welfare Department

Ms LO Choi-ling, Fanny
Social Welfare Department

Ms TANG Sze-wai, May
Social Welfare Department

Absent with apologies

Mr YAU Siu-hung, MH

Welcoming Remarks

The Chairperson welcomed all members to join the meeting, and in particular those who joined the meeting for the first time. She also took the opportunity to extend appreciation to the outgoing CSYR members for their contribution in the past years, including:

- Mr TO Wing-hang, Edward, JP;
- Ms CHUI Shih-yen, Joceline;
- Mr LEUNG Ka-lok, Sammy;
- Ms WONG Siu-ping, Ivy;
- Ms TSANG Shuk-yin, Karen;
- Mr TSO Tat-ming;
- Mr CHEUNG Tat-cheong;
- Ms HUI Wah-ying, Joelle;
- Mr WONG Kwok-chun, Alex; and
- Mr CHUN Wai-kwong, Ricky.

2. As there are quite a number of new members, the Chairperson invited Miss Joe CHAN to brief members on the terms of reference of CYSR which was tabled.

Confirmation of Minutes of the Last Meeting

3. The minutes of the last meeting were issued to Members via email on 21 March 2023 with proposed amendments from Members incorporated. With no other views received, the minutes of the last meeting were confirmed.

Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Last Meeting

Re: Paras. 4-5 Review of Integrated Children and Youth Services Centres (ICYSCs)

4. The Chairperson highlighted that the review of ICYSCs at paras. 4 to 5 of the minutes of last meeting would be discussed under agenda item 4 (CSYR Paper 2/2024) and there were no particular matters arising to be raised for discussion.

“Promoting Youth Mental Wellness through Community Support” (CSYR Paper 1/2024)

5. As invited by the Chairperson, Ms JoePHY AU presented the paper of “Promoting Youth Mental Wellness through Community Support” (CSYR Paper 1/2024). The Chairperson remarked that this Paper focused on existing community-based welfare services subvented by the Social Welfare Department (SWD) and key collaboration projects implemented in subvented service units supporting and promoting youth mental wellness. She invited official Members to share related measures for promoting youth mental wellness in their bureaux/ departments.

6. Ms Louise SO, the Vice-Chairperson, shared about the implementation of the “4Rs Mental Health Charter” (the Charter) in schools, which highlighted Rest, Relaxation, Relationship and Resilience as the four essential elements in fostering the mental health of students. Schools signing the Charter should also join the “Whole School Health Programme” and “Mental Health Workplace Charter” to provide a mental health-friendly environment on campus in a holistic manner. The Education Bureau (EDB) provided over 40 additional workshops for teachers and school guidance personnel in the 2023/24 school year, with intense focus on enhancing their knowledge and skills in identifying and caring for students with mental health needs. EDB would launch the “Mental Health Literacy” resource packages for students at different learning stages in phases and encourage schools to promote mental health literacy in a systematic manner. Moreover, EDB provided the “One-off Grant for Mental Health at School” to assist them in organising activities or procuring services or materials related to the promotion of students’ mental health. EDB continued to collaborate with other bureaux / departments and NGOs to provide more services, activities and programmes for schools.

7. Dr CHUANG Shuk-kwan echoed the collaboration with EDB on the promotion of mental health at the schools through the “Whole School Health Programme”. The Programme covered four health themes, namely mental health, physical activity, healthy eating and social well-being. In terms of mental health, the Department of Health (DH) promulgated mental health information to participating schools and organised related activities such as talks for parents and workshops on mental health for teachers, with a view to encouraging schools and parents to join hand in taking care of students’ emotional, mental and psychosocial well-being. She also shared that the Student Health Service Centres (the Centres) of DH provided annual health assessment services for all primary and secondary day school students, which included assessment of the student’s psychosocial well-being. If students were found to have psychosocial and behavioural problems, the Centres would provide them with immediate risk assessment and support, and also refer them to specialist services or other organisations as

appropriate for further assessment and management.

8. Ms Cecilia SZE briefed the meeting on the measures of the Home and Youth Affairs Bureau (HYAB) in promoting youth wellness. She shared that the Youth Development Blueprint promulgated the vision and guiding principle of nurturing a new generation of youth equipped with global perspectives, aspiring and positive thinking mindset as well as improving their physical and mental well-being, team spirit and resilience. HYAB and Youth Development Commission (YDC) jointly launched the Funding Scheme for Youth Positive Thinking Activities and the Funding Scheme for Youth Adventure Training Activities in late 2022, with the aim of nurturing positive thinking and values among young people, thereby enabling them to become a new generation with a sense of ownership and responsibility, and an aspiration and willingness to contribute to the development of our country and Hong Kong.

9. Hon. Kenneth LEUNG, Vice-Chairman of YDC, shared about his experiences in taking part in different projects and funding schemes of YDC relating to promotion of youth mental health. He considered that adventure training activities were effective in building up the problem-solving abilities of the youth and foster their positive thinking and resilience.

10. Ms HO Ka-yan responded that the Charter implemented by EDB was useful to schools with clear guidelines for teachers to disseminate the four health themes at schools. Also, it facilitated communication with students who were sensitive and might easily resort to “non-attendance” when they encountered problems.

11. Professor Eric CHUI expressed appreciation to the various measures taken by the bureaux/departments for promoting youth mental wellness. He considered an integrated approach to disseminate all existing services to public could better encourage the needy youth to seek help. Besides, he also shared information on the Hong Kong Association for the Promotion of Mental Health in Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

12. Mr Eugene FONG raised the importance of enhancing the mental health literacy of parents / adults. He elaborated that some parents did not give consent for their children to receive mental health services, as they considered themselves capable of coping with the problems.

13. Ms Joyce LEE shared her work experiences in service collaboration with different schools across districts with different cultures and practices. She observed that some funding bodies required service providers to provide services for different schools in different districts which might create operational difficulties for service providers. The Chairperson remarked that different schools

might have different priorities and therefore, service collaboration in different schools might need to put in extra effort. She suggested that different bureaux/departments might take note of this observation.

14. Ms Helen HSU shared her work experiences in providing mental health services. Regarding the Three-tier School-based Emergency Mechanism (the Mechanism), she appreciated that SWD coordinated the Cyber Youth Support Teams (CYSTs) to set up off-campus support network teams (the Teams) for provision of second-tier services to secondary schools. Nevertheless, she observed that some parents refused to give consent for their children to receive services. Because of parental reservation towards mental health services, the service effectiveness might be undermined.

15. Miss CHAN Lai-chu responded that parental consent was required for making referral to the second-tier services for casework intervention. Having said that, the Teams would also engage students via group / programmes delivered at schools. While the Mechanism had been extended to end-December, it would be reviewed in due course.

16. Ms Karen YIU echoed the prevalence of youth mental health issues observed that there was a rapid turnover of frontline workers who needed to be equipped with handy information on various mental health services. While youth in need might not actively seek help but spent long hours in internet surfing, the services of CYSTs were considered to have provided a good alternative for connecting with them. Besides, she shared that some NGOs had collaborated with traditional Chinese medicine practitioners to help manage the sleeping problems of youth and it demonstrated to be a good entry point to engage them with less labelling effect.

17. Miss Bridget NGAN highlighted that “Threads” recently became a popular social media among youth where they would share their problems and seek advice. She was worried that the opinions offered in the social media might not be professional or correct. She suggested services of CYSTs to cover this platform and reach out to youth in need. Ms HSU assured that CYSTs would provide online outreaching services through various platforms commonly used by youth, including Threads.

18. Ms SO introduced a new mechanism to support the students of attempted suicide cases setting up through close inter-departmental collaboration among the Police, EDB and SWD. The Police would seek parental consent to refer these cases to SWD or schools concerned for follow-up. If parental consent could not be obtained, the Police would help deliver the information leaflets to the youth and the parents for seeking help in case of need.

19. Mr LEUNG Chung-man supplemented the Police's service collaboration with EDB and NGOs. He added that the Police would share with schools the crisis handling regarding suicidal incidents while the Police Negotiation Cadre would also share related knowledge and experiences with teachers. The aforementioned services would be provided continuously.

20. In conclusion, the Chairperson reiterated the significance of preventive work and measures in tackling youth mental health issues. Bureaux/departments would continue to promote positive messages and positive thinking for not only students but also their parents, who needed to understand the complexity of challenges faced by youth nowadays. Adequate training and relevant knowledge on youth mental health issues for the frontline social workers would also be required.

“Service Review of Integrated Children and Youth Services Centres (ICYSCs)” (CSYR Paper 2/2024)

21. As invited by the Chairperson, Miss Mina CHOW presented the paper of “Service Review of Integrated Children and Youth Services Centres (ICYSCs)” (CSYR Paper 2/2024). The Chairperson invited Members to give views on the proposed areas of review of ICYSCs. Professor CHUI supported the five areas of review and considered that there were rooms for further development of the services of ICYSCs. He opined that the 139 ICYSCs in the community could form an accessible platform to reach out the deprived children and youth including those receiving residential child care services or foster care services.

22. Mr FONG shared that the “Youth Work Explorer” Programme (Y-WE) operated by Child Development Initiative Alliance (CDIA) was very effective in mobilising resources from the business sector to support grassroots youths. He considered ICYSCs could be an effective network to reach out the deprived youth and enhance their career and life planning.

23. Ms HSU proposed to review the output standards for ICYSCs, in particular the attendance of programmes if there would be a shift to provide targeted support for at-risk and disadvantaged children and youth, in particular on their mental wellness. She also proposed to expand the age range of service targets to cover those aged 25 to 29 as young people over the age of 24 might not have completed their education and still have needs for mental health support services.

24. Ms LEE agreed to the proposed direction to enhance the training and development of youth workers to equip them with updated and specialised knowledge, skills and technology in various service areas. She also opined that

the Funding and Service Agreement (FSA) of ICYSCs might need to be reviewed if more requirements were to be put on casework services.

25. Ms YIU supported the five proposed areas for service review, in particular the training and development of youth workers. She considered new skill sets would be required in face of the changing needs of youth, who did not prefer face to face contacts nowadays.

26. Miss NGAN shared her experience in collaboration with schools to provide career and life planning to S4 students. She highlighted that career planning might better be provided to S3 students before they chose their elective subjects for senior secondary education. She opined that ICYSCs could organise programmes on career and life planning for targeted youth in future.

27. With no other view from Members, the Chairperson thanked Members for their views given on enhancing the career and life planning for targeted youth and lower form students at schools. SWD would conduct meetings with the Service Operators of ICYSCs and relevant stakeholders in the coming six months to collect their views on the proposed areas of review and enhancements, including the possibility of extending the age range of the target group. The FSA of the ICYSCs will be reviewed correspondingly to reflect the latest updates as appropriate. In response to the changing needs of youth who spent more time on social media with more mental health issues, youth workers would need to be equipped with relevant training and knowledge accordingly.

Any Other Business

28. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

Date of Next Meeting

29. The Chairperson proposed the next meeting to be held in about six months to report the progress of the service review of ICYSCs. Members were welcome to propose agenda items and would be informed of the date of the 50th meeting in due course.

Social Welfare Department
January 2025