

Commission on Children convenes seventh meeting

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, chaired the seventh meeting of the Commission on Children today (May 25). At the meeting, members were briefed on the cross-departmental measures taken to address the problem of juvenile gangs and the support measures for children and their families during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) epidemic. Members also discussed the progress and outlook of the Commission's work.

The Commission noted the recent increase in the number of juveniles and young persons arrested for criminal offences and the cross-departmental measures taken by the Education Bureau, the Police and the Social Welfare Department to address the problem of juvenile gangs. Members discussed room for improvements in prevention, intervention and rehabilitation services.

In addition, members were briefed on the Government's anti-epidemic efforts and support measures for children and their families (especially those with children with special needs) amid disruption of child care services and class suspensions owing to the epidemic.

The meeting also reviewed the Commission's work since its establishment in June 2018, and discussed work priorities in the coming two years.

The Commission has been focusing on important children-related policies and programmes, and has been monitoring their implementation, including regularising and enhancing rehabilitation service for pre-school children, strengthening the long-term development of child care services, introducing new concepts into play areas for children, promoting children's mental health and catering for the education needs of ethnic minority children.

Moreover, a consultancy study on the feasibility of developing a central databank on children is ongoing. The consultant will collect and consolidate relevant data and explore the feasibility of formulating policy directions and enhancing services for the well-being of children.

The Commission has also been committed to promoting the importance of children's well-being and development. A territory-wide "Caring for Our Kids" Campaign was launched in November 2019, including a cross-discipline stakeholder engagement session followed by educational and publicity activities. In 2020-21, the campaign will focus on promoting a healthy life of children as well as respecting and better understanding their thoughts and feelings.

The Funding Scheme for Children's Well-being and Development launched in April 2019 met with an enthusiastic response and received over 60 applications from non-governmental organisations, schools and child concern groups on promotional and public educational projects for children, parents

and teachers. The second round of the Scheme is now open for applications until end-July 2020.