

Commission on Children convenes tenth meeting

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, chaired the tenth meeting of the Commission on Children today (May 7).

At the meeting, members were briefed on the key analyses of the Hong Kong Poverty Situation Report 2019 and the child poverty situation. Members noted that the existing support measures, including recurrent cash measures, non-recurrent cash measures and means-tested in-kind benefits, helped improve the livelihood of poor families with children.

Members also noted the array of measures in place to support families with children, such as the Working Family Allowance Scheme which has been enhanced continuously in recent years to provide better support for low income families, including its one-year time-limited special arrangement to relax the working hour requirements for non-single-parent households scheduled to take effect from the claim month of June 2021. Members also offered views on how to further ease intergenerational poverty.

Members were briefed on the parent education and family support provided by the Government for parents and children. Members noted that various family support measures had been stepped up to support at-risk families and families having children with special needs in particular, including the launch of a pilot project to provide training and consultation services for children awaiting assessment and those assessed as having only mild developmental problems, the setting up of co-parenting support centres to support divorced families, and the enhancement of the social work service in pre-primary institutions as well as primary and secondary schools.

The Commission noted that the Law Reform Commission (LRC) released a consultation paper in 2019 proposing a new offence of failure to protect the child from death or serious harm. The Government would seriously consider the final report and recommendations to be announced by the LRC, and take appropriate follow up action.

The Commission took note of the work progress of its working groups, including the public engagement session on child abuse conducted online on April 14; the public engagement exercise on developing a central databank on children scheduled to be completed by end-May; and the next public engagement session on children's healthy development to be conducted in July tentatively. The Commission also noted that a number of projects funded by the 2019-20 Funding Scheme for Children's Well-being and Development had been completed, and that the next round of application would commence in mid-May.