

SLW visits Social Welfare Department (with photos)

The Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, visited the Social Welfare Department (SWD) Headquarters this morning (August 14) to take a closer look at its work. The Under Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Caspar Tsui, also joined the visit.

Accompanied by the Director of Social Welfare, Ms Carol Yip, Dr Law first met with the directorate staff to get an update on the SWD's services, including family and child welfare services, elderly services, social security and rehabilitation services. He said that colleagues' dedication and contribution were crucial to the smooth implementation of various new social welfare policy initiatives. He encouraged colleagues to uphold professionalism and continue to provide people-oriented services for the public.

Dr Law then visited the Rehabilitation and Medical Social Services Branch to learn more about the latest service provision to support different kinds of persons with disabilities. Among the services, the Pilot Scheme on On-site Pre-school Rehabilitation Services will be regularised from the new 2018/19 school year and the number of service places will be increased from about 3 000 to 7 000 in two years. He said he was glad to note that the enhancement of the SWD's Central Referral System for Rehabilitation Services (Disabled Pre-Schoolers) was near completion for more efficient service placement.

He also visited the Information Systems and Technology Branch and was briefed on how the SWD established the next-generation information technology infrastructure (ITI) to improve service efficiency. The new ITI not only supports 238 SWD offices over the territory, but also serves as the backbone information system supporting the disbursement of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance and various social security allowances to over 1.25 million recipients. It also provides an electronic platform to enhance the SWD's communications with welfare service providers. He reminded SWD colleagues to better utilise information technology and strengthen data analysis to provide modernised quality services.

In addition, Dr Law went to the Subventions Branch and was updated on its work on monitoring subvented services of non-governmental organisations under the social welfare subvention system. He was also briefed on the latest developments of projects under the Special Scheme on Privately Owned Sites for Welfare Uses to increase residential care places and day care places for the elderly and persons with disabilities as well as other measures, including redevelopment and conversion projects of welfare buildings led by the SWD, public and private housing development projects, redevelopment projects of the Urban Renewal Authority and development projects of government buildings.

He pointed out that, in response to an ageing population, increasing demand for elderly services and severe shortage of rehabilitation service facilities, the Government must continue to maximise land use and expedite land identification for building residential care homes and hardware for community support, and improve long-term planning in parallel. He said he was pleased to know the redevelopment works at the site of the ex-Kai Nang Sheltered Workshop and Hostel in Kwun Tong and those of the former Siu Lam Hospital in Tuen Mun, both led and steered by the SWD, were under way as scheduled. Both projects will provide a total of 2 210 residential and day rehabilitation service places and are expected to complete by the first quarter of 2019 and the third quarter of 2020 respectively to run services in the third quarter of 2019 and the second quarter in 2021 respectively.

