
Chapter 3

Investing for a Caring Society

Preamble

As Hong Kong's economy develops steadily, the public are increasingly concerned about the wealth gap, housing and the issues of retirement protection and elderly support associated with our ageing population. As announced last year, the Government set up the Community Care Fund (CCF) to provide assistance to those who are facing economic difficulties through collaboration among the Government, the business sector and other sectors of the community. The work of the CCF has started with the implementation of a number of programmes providing direct assistance to the underprivileged and families in need.

To address the wealth gap and working poverty, the statutory minimum wage has come into force, which can safeguard the well-being of low-income workers. The Government will also continue to do its utmost to help the underprivileged gain employment. In view of the ageing population, we are promoting community care services for the elderly, and enhancing residential care services for elderly people in need.

New Initiatives

We will:

- Promote the adoption of accessibility design in both public and private websites to facilitate access to online information by persons with disabilities.
- Strengthen the coordination of educational services for non-Chinese speaking students and students with special educational needs; and extend progressively school-based educational psychology service for supporting students with special educational needs to all publicly funded primary and secondary schools.
- Provide a top-up student guidance service grant for public sector primary schools to enhance their student guidance service.
- Extend the support services for ethnic minorities to further facilitate their early integration into the community through setting up an additional support service centre and two sub-centres and providing additional radio programmes.
- Launch through the Family Council in partnership with the Commission on Youth, the Elderly Commission and the Women’s Commission the “Sharing family responsibilities in love and filial piety” campaign to promote harmonious family relationship.

- Adopt “family engagement”, “preventive strategy” and “community-based family support strategy” as new policy directions in combating social problems, pursuant to the finding from four research studies on juvenile drug abuse, youth prostitution, neglect of the elderly and child abuse.
- Promote the pro bono culture amongst legal professionals with the launching of a scheme for recognising provision of pro bono legal services.
- Plan for a pilot scheme on community care service voucher for elders.
- Increase subsidised community care places for the elderly.
- Increase subsidised residential care places for the elderly which provide nursing and a continuum of care.
- Upgrade the quality of subsidised residential care places for the elderly and increase the supply of higher-quality places under the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme.
- Make preparation for a new scheme for the provision of Old Age Allowance to Hong Kong elders who choose to move to Guangdong.
- Provide additional places for pre-school, day and residential rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities.
- Regularise the pilot Transitional Care and Support Centre for Tetraplegic Patients for continued enhancement of the support for persons with severe physical disabilities.

- Enhance the services of the integrated community centres for mental wellness to provide better support for persons with mental health problems.
- Provide employment support to employees with disabilities through subsidy to employers for procurement of assistive rehabilitation device and workplace modifications to facilitate employees with disabilities to enhance their work efficiency.
- Inject additional funding into the “Enhancing Employment of People with Disabilities through Small Enterprise” Project to create more job opportunities for persons with disabilities.
- Further enhance the support and protection for children and families in need by –
 - (a) increasing in phases the number of residential child care places; and
 - (b) raising the foster care allowance, including the maintenance grant for foster children and incentive payment for foster parents.
- Further enhance support services for youths at risk by setting up additional youth outreaching teams.
- Further extend as needed to March 2013 the 3,000 temporary work opportunities created in the 2007 Policy Address for young people aged between 15 and 29 to allow them more time to equip themselves for the labour market and for welfare service units to make the necessary adjustments.

- Turn the Capacity Building Mileage Programme into a recurrent project to enhance support for women in pursuit of continuous life-long learning.
- Review various employment assistance programmes under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme to help CSSA employable recipients achieve self-reliance with a view to achieving better integration and effectiveness.
- Introduce a bill into the Legislative Council to improve the existing arrangement on replacement holiday should a Lunar New Year holiday or the day following the Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival fall on a Sunday.
- Intensify systematic preventive and enforcement measures in construction safety in view of the commencement of major infrastructure projects and expected rapid growth in building renovation and maintenance works.
- Consult stakeholders and the public on the way forward in introducing community-based drug testing.

On-going Initiatives

We are:

- Co-ordinating cross-bureau efforts in taking forward and completing HKSAR's post-quake reconstruction support work in Sichuan. Following Legislative Council's approval to inject \$9 billion into the Trust Fund in Support of Reconstruction in the Sichuan Earthquake Stricken Areas (the Trust Fund), the HKSAR Government has in three stages undertaken 151 reconstruction support projects in Sichuan. These projects cover education, medical and rehabilitation, social welfare, highway infrastructure and reconstruction of the Wolong Nature Reserve. The Trust Fund has also provided funding to Hong Kong non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to undertake reconstruction support projects in Sichuan.
- Continuing our work on the promotion of human rights.
- Continuing to monitor the implementation of the Administrative Guidelines on Promotion of Racial Equality.
- Taking forward legislative proposals to strengthen protection of personal data privacy.
- Preparing for the launch of public consultation on the proposed way forward on the recommendations of the Law Reform Commission on stalking.

- Preparing legislative amendments for the implementation of legislative proposals to enhance protection for consumers against unfair trade practices. We will continue publicity and education efforts.
- Continuing with the implementation of various digital inclusion initiatives to promote wider ICT adoption among under-privileged groups including the elderly and persons with disabilities to enhance their quality of life.
- Implementing the Internet Learning Support Programme, “i Learn at home”, to assist eligible students to undertake online learning at home.
- Working closely with the Ping Wo Fund Advisory Committee on the use of the Ping Wo Fund to finance public education to prevent gambling-related problems, to provide counselling and support services to pathological gamblers, and to conduct research on studies on gambling-related issues.
- Continuing to work with the Social Enterprise Advisory Committee and other stakeholders on the Social Enterprise (SE) Award Scheme, “Be a Friend to SE” Campaign, SE Training Programme and SE Bazaar, for the further development of social enterprises. We will continue to implement the Enhancing Self-Reliance Through District Partnership Programme.
- Continuing to work with the Family Council to promote pro-family environment; to further promote the importance of family education; and to study and address problems from a family perspective.

- Continuing to work with the Family Council on a territory-wide “Happy Family Campaign” to further promote family core values, with a view to encouraging the community to attach importance to the family, and to foster a culture of loving families.
- Continuing through the Family Council to co-ordinate and liaise with other relevant stakeholders in enriching the “Happy Family Info Hub”, to promote family core values, introduce family education and support services for the family.
- Continuing our work in enhancing access to legal aid and free legal advice service to benefit more people who cannot afford private legal fees.
- Working on the legislative amendments to expand the scope of Supplementary Legal Aid Scheme to cover more types of cases and to benefit more needy in the middle class.
- Co-ordinating cross-bureaux efforts to support the Steering Committee on the Community Care Fund in mapping out and implementing programmes to provide assistance to people facing economic difficulties, in particular those who fall outside the social safety net or those within the net but have special circumstances that are not covered.
- Continuing our work on facilitating ethnic minorities and new arrivals from the Mainland to integrate into the community, including sponsoring NGOs to operate support service centres and other support services for ethnic minorities and new arrivals from the Mainland.

- Continuing with the preparatory work for setting up a pioneer one-stop employment and training centre in Tin Shui Wai to streamline, integrate and enhance the existing employment and training/retraining services of the Labour Department, Social Welfare Department and Employees Retraining Board.
- Preparing legislative proposal, in consultation with stakeholders and after securing their consensus, to empower the Labour Tribunal to make a compulsory order for reinstatement or re-engagement of an employee who has been dismissed unreasonably and unlawfully, and to require the employer to pay a further sum to the employee for failing to comply with such an order.
- Undertaking a review of the definition of continuous employment under the Employment Ordinance with reference to the statistical data collected on employees engaged under employment contracts with short duration or working hours, and continuing to consult relevant stakeholders in the process.
- Continuing to promote family-friendly employment practices to the general public and encourage a wider adoption of such practices by employers, as well as to conduct a study on legislating for paternity leave.
- Continuing to adopt an integrated approach to promote the awareness of employers and employees on how to differentiate between an employee and a self-employed person with a view to protecting employees' rights and benefits.

- Continuing enforcement action against wage offences, including breaches of the statutory minimum wage provisions, and offences of wilful defaults of Labour Tribunal or Minor Employment Claims Adjudication Board awards.
- Continuing with intelligence-based and proactive strategy in combating illegal employment.
- Continuing to launch public education and publicity campaigns to promote understanding of the minimum wage legislation among employers and employees, and to forestall employers' wilful defaults of Labour Tribunal or Minor Employment Claims Adjudication Board awards.
- Continuing to implement and improve short-term food assistance services.
- Continuing to co-ordinate efforts across the Government in poverty alleviation through the Task Force on Poverty.
- Monitoring the implementation of the Work Incentive Transport Subsidy Scheme, and conducting a mid-term review one year after implementation.
- Monitoring the implementation of Child Development Fund (CDF) projects, and considering the long-term model of CDF for promoting child development in Hong Kong.
- Providing support to the Women's Commission in promoting the interests and well-being of women through the provision of an enabling environment, empowerment of women, including the Capacity Building Mileage Programme, and public education.

- Continuing to apply the Gender Mainstreaming Checklist or the concept in different policy areas progressively, and working with the Women's Commission to further promote gender mainstreaming.
- Taking forward recommendations made by the Social Welfare Advisory Committee in its study report on long-term social welfare planning.
- Continuing to implement the Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project and extend the Comprehensive Child Development Service to cover all districts to enhance support for children and families in need.
- Continuing to implement the pilot Cyber Youth Outreaching Projects to address the changing needs of youths, in particular the youths at risk and hidden youths.
- Continuing to implement and further develop the batterer intervention programme; and continuing to implement the anti-violence programme for abusers as provided under the Domestic and Cohabitation Relationships Violence Ordinance.
- Continuing to prevent and tackle domestic violence through public education and enhanced training for related professionals.
- Continuing to review child death cases through the setting up of a standing Child Fatality Review Panel based on the successful experience of the Pilot Project on Child Fatality Review.

- Continuing to implement the Victim Support Programme for Victims of Family Violence to enhance support services for victims of domestic violence, including those undergoing the judicial process.
- Continuing to monitor the implementation of the Domestic and Cohabitation Relationships Violence Ordinance.
- Enhancing transport services for persons with disabilities through improvements to rebus service, and examining ways of further improving accessibility of transport services.
- Promoting the spirit and core values enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in collaboration with the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee, the rehabilitation sector and the community at large.
- Continuing to implement the Pilot Scheme on Home Care Service for Persons with Severe Disabilities so as to strengthen community support for persons with severe disabilities and their carers.
- Implementing the statutory licensing scheme for residential care homes for persons with disabilities and related complementary measures so as to ensure their service quality.
- Continuing to implement the Pilot Bought Place Scheme for Private Residential Care Homes for Persons with Disabilities to help the market develop more service options for persons with disabilities.
- Continuing to implement the retrofitting programme to upgrade the barrier-free facilities in Government premises and Housing Authority properties.

- Upgrading subsidised residential care places to provide long-term care for frail elders.
- Helping needy elders who live in dilapidated homes improve their home conditions through the Home Environment Improvement Scheme for the Elderly.
- Training additional Enrolled Nurses for the welfare sector.
- Continuing with the pilot scheme to provide residential care homes for the elderly with visiting pharmacist services to strengthen their capability in drug management.
- Continuing with the District-based Scheme on Carer Training to strengthen the support to carers of elders.
- Continuing with the Pilot Scheme on Home Care Services for Frail Elders to provide tailor-made services for elders waiting for nursing home places.
- Implementing the Integrated Discharge Support Programme for Elderly Patients on a territory-wide basis to provide integrated support services to elderly hospital discharges who have difficulties taking care of themselves, and also to their carers.
- Completing the implementation of a series of measures to enhance training and retraining services before the end of 2011-12, in accordance with the recommendations of the strategic review on the future directions of the Employees Retraining Board.

- Continuing the legislative amendment exercise to expand the scope of the Protection of Wages on Insolvency Fund to cover pay for untaken annual leave and untaken statutory holidays under the Employment Ordinance.
- Completing the policy study on standard working hours.
- Continuing to enhance the regulatory system for mandatory safety training courses.
- Continuing to encourage schools to collaborate with NGOs in providing school-based after-school learning and support services for needy students.
- Maintaining supply of public rental housing for low-income households with housing needs with a target of an average waiting time of around three years for general Waiting List applicants.
- Inviting NGOs to organise enhanced partnering functions with Estate Management Advisory Committees to promote community building and neighbourliness in public rental housing estates.
- Implementing a set of enhanced public housing arrangements to promote mutual family support and care for the elderly.
- Continuing to facilitate the implementation of an elderly housing project by the Hong Kong Housing Society on Tanner Road, North Point.
- Installing as far as practicable lifts/escalators connecting common areas in hillside public housing estates and lifts in low-rise public housing blocks without lifts to facilitate access of residents.

- Continuing to take forward feasibility studies for the higher-ranking proposals under the assessment system for the provision of hillside escalator links and elevator systems, and proceeding with the preliminary design of those proposals which are found technically feasible.
- Implementing a series of measures to tackle the youth drug abuse problem, following long-term, holistic and sustainable policies recommended by the Task Force on Youth Drug Abuse led by the Secretary for Justice; and sustaining the enhanced efforts championed by the Chief Executive's Anti-drug Campaign. Major initiatives include –
 - (a) sustaining the territory-wide campaign against youth drug abuse to enhance community awareness and mobilise support from different sectors to tackle the problem;
 - (b) continuing to organise youth anti-drug abuse community programmes in the 18 districts to cultivate positive values amongst youngsters to steer them away from drugs;
 - (c) encouraging a wider use of hair drug testing services in the community;
 - (d) encouraging new and effective models of drug treatment and rehabilitation services;
 - (e) continuing with rigorous law enforcement action, notably against cross-boundary drug abuse and trafficking; and
 - (f) providing funding support to encourage schools to pursue voluntary drug testing as part of the healthy school policy.

- Implementing within 2011 the Law Reform Commission's interim proposals of launching a sexual conviction record check mechanism for child and mentally incapacitated person related work in order to enhance protection for children and mentally incapacitated persons against sexual assault.
- Encouraging young people to develop skills and leadership through participating in group activities and training organised by the Auxiliary Medical Services Cadet Corps.
- Seeking to implement the recommendations put forward by the Working Group on Mediation taking into account the public comments received.