The Hong Kong Council of Social Service
Standing Committee on Service Development & Liaison
Progress Report (January – February 2009)

1. **Press Conference on Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme Influence Towards the Low-income Families**

A Press Conference was held with Council of Non-profit Making Organizations for Pre-Primary Education (CNOPE) on 21st February 2009 t to release the survey findings of "Survey Study on Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme Influence towards Low-income Families", conducted from December 2008 to January 2009.

Survey results found that 5,269 students from low-income and CSSA families were affected by the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme (PEVS), most of them need to pay extra school fee $2,845 or even near $5,000 per year. Since the average school fee of full-day Kindergarten-cum-Child Care Centres was $28,245 in 08-09, which was more than the fixed 5-year ceiling $25,400 in the Kindergarten Fee Remission Scheme (KFGRS).

3 being influenced low-income families also shared their stories. Recommendations from NGOs and Pre-primary Schools were highlighted: Relief the ceiling of KFGRS to a reasonable amount and revise the calculation of KFGRS.

2. **Community Network Approach on Child Care Services Conference**

A Community Network Approach on Child Care Services Conference was held on 22th January 2009 for 53 participants. 7 speakers from SWD, NGOs and Social Enterprise were invited to share their practice wisdom on various Child Care Services Models in the Community.

Over 92% participants found this Conference was practical and could facilitate mutual sharing atmosphere among the child care services providers. Many participants appreciated the sharing of the Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project and Pilot Stationing Social Work Services in Pre-primary School. They suggested Council could organize more similar Conference and help channel the fields' concerns to SWD.

3. **Recruitment and Retention of Foster Homes on Foster Care Service (FCS) with the operation of Neighborhood Support Child Care Project (NSCCP)**

On the Special Meeting of Foster Care Service Operating Agencies on 16.1.2009, all operating agencies have strong reservations on Department do not impose any administrative rule at this stage on the registration on NSCCP and FCS. All operating agencies have expressed their concerns on the unbearable risk factors faced by the

children when the foster parent provides service to unrelated children, such as from NSCCP. A letter reiterates the view of service sector will send to Department and prepare to have direct discussion with Mrs. Anna Mak, SWD.

4. **Review on Residential Child Care Service**

In response to the changing needs of the family and child care needs, the Network of Residential Child Care Service proposed to have a review on the residential child care service. This proposal had been discussed in the 51st Residential Child Care Service Development Committee meeting (RCCSDC) with Department and is welcomed by Department for having some suggestions to further discuss in the RCCSDC. According to the children welfare needs, 3 working groups according to the age of children (Below 6 years old, 6-18years old and Children with behavioral problems) will be formulated.

5. **IFSC Review**

4 working group meetings had been held in the past two months in order to work on the details for implementation of the review. Meanwhile, operators' views on the centre report template, questionnaire design and criterion of case selection had been consolidated and channeled to the Working Group and HKU consultants. According to the work schedule, data collection has been started in early March.

6. **Revision of Procedural Guidelines for Handling Battered Spouse Cases (2004)**

Among all of the proposed amendments, the most concern for the sector is about the case referral procedure between SWD Family and Child Protection Service Units (FCPSUs) and NGO service units. Views of members have been consolidated and channeled to SWD by writing in. The concern had been further elaborated and discussed in the task group meeting under SWD on February 19.

7. **"Your Health Our Concern" Kick Off Ceremony**

The ceremony was officiated by Commissioner for Narcotics on February 13 in Tai Po Counseling Centre for Psychotropic Substance Abuser (CCPSA). This pilot project had be officially launched in March 2009 for one year. 24 local doctors have consented to join the programme by means of displaying substance abuse information and making referrals to welfare agencies. Besides, 5 doctors would work closely with social workers and district hospital to follow up substance abuse cases.

8. **Community Development Forum**

The CD Forum was held on February 18. Issues including the modernization of Community Centres and allocation of CD resources were discussed. In particular, the

guiding principles for resource allocation such as transparency, service continuity and evaluation had been highlighted by the members. It is confirmed that the CD Forum is a crucial platform for discussing issues relating to CD among NGOs and government, and is agreed that the next Forum meeting will be held not later than September 2009.

9. District-based Scheme on Carer Training

The Government and the Elderly Commission (EC) launched the "District-based Trial Scheme on Carer Training" in October 2007. The Trial Scheme was launched as a pilot in three of the administration districts according to the Social Welfare Department's district boundaries, namely Eastern and Wan Chai, Wong Tai Sin and Sai Kung, and Kowloon City and Yau Tsim Mong. A total of 11 District Elderly Community Centres (DECCs) participated in the Trial Scheme. They were invited to submit proposals to apply for one-off seed money of $50,000 each for organising elderly care training programmes and providing carer services in collaboration with the community organisations in their respective districts. In view of the response to the Trial Scheme, the Chief Executive announced in his 2008 Policy Address that the Trial Scheme would be extended to cover the remaining districts. In December 2008, the Social Welfare Department invited the remaining DECCs to join. A total of 22 DECCs responded, i.e. 73% of the all the DECCs involved. The newly joined DECCs will launch the scheme in March 2009.

10. The 2009-2010 Budget (Elderly)

Regarding the budget speech, it is clarified that in 2009-10, the government will increase recurrent funding by $55 million to increase the supply of subsidized residential care places, including $ 17 million for providing about 150 additional subsidized residential care places in two newly built contract Residential Care Home for the Elderly (RCHEs); and $38 million for increasing 500 subsidized resdiential care places through the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme. About $37 millions are recurremt funding for enhancing care for the infirmed and demented elders in residential homes. This sum can be applied by both NGO subsidized homes and private homes under EBPS.

11. Seminar on Public Education and Enhancing Employment of Visually Impaired Persons

To enhance the sector's knowledge and skills in promoting public education and employment opportunities for visually impaired persons, the captioned event was held on February 21 with over 60 participants from non-government organizations, self-help groups, special schools and the Education Bureau. Representatives of organizations providing services for visually impaired people and the service users were invited to

share their views and experiences on the aforementioned topics and positive feedbacks were received.

12. Progress on the Introduction of a Licensing Scheme for Residential Care Homes for Persons with Disabilities

The Council was invited to make a presentation at the Legco's Welfare Panel which was held on February 25 to reflect the sector's concerns on the captioned issue. In view of the prolonged waiting time for subvented residential hostels for people with disabilities, the government was suggested to consider purchasing places from private homes with reference to the "Enhanced Bought Place Scheme" of the elderly sector, and to enhance the social work services for the residents in private homes.