

**Notes of the 199th Meeting of the Advisory Committee on
Social Work Training and Manpower Planning (Advisory Committee)
held on Friday, 5 May 2023 at 3:30 p.m.
at Room 920, 9/F., Revenue Tower, 5 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai**

Present:

Professor Chetwyn CHAN Che-hin	(Chairman)
Ms Queenie CHAN Lai-kwan, MH	
Dr Eva DUNN Lai-wah, MH	
Ms Michelle IP Mei-ho	
Dr Bessie CHONG Pui-san	
Professor MOK Ka-ho	
Mr Wilson CHAN Man-ho	Hong Kong Social Workers Association (HKSWA)
Professor Steven NGAI Sek-yum	The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK)
Dr Cherry TAM Hau-lin	City University of Hong Kong (CityU)
Professor Eric CHUI Wing-hong	The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU)
Dr Steve FONG Fu-fai	Hong Kong Shue Yan University (HKSYU)
Mr Ivan WONG Yun-tat	UOW College Hong Kong (UOWCHK)
Mr Tony YIP Ka-sing	Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB)
Mr Derek LAI Chi-kin	Education Bureau (EDB)
Miss Shirley CHUNG Yuk-fong	Social Welfare Department (SWD)
Mr Roland LEUNG Kam-ming	SWD (<i>Secretary</i>)

In attendance:

Ms Coby CHAN Mei-yi	SWD
Mr Edmund TAM Yuen-sheung	SWD
Miss Annette YAU Cheuk-hei	SWD
Mr Andrew KWAN Kai-ming	SWD
Mr CHAN Yiu-ming	SWD

Absent with apologies:

Mr LO Kin-tak	
Ms Catherine WONG Pui-yee	
Mr Raymond LAI Kwan-ho	The Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS)
Dr Celia CHAN Hoi-yan	The University of Hong Kong (HKU)
Professor Shirley HUNG Suet-lin	Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU)

Item 1: Matters arising from the 198th meeting held on 18 July 2022

Review on the meeting schedule of the Advisory Committee

1. SWD representative reported that after a thorough review on the meeting schedule of the Advisory Committee with a view to narrowing the time gap between the data collection and the release of projection findings and facilitating social work manpower planning in an earlier stage, the meeting date was advanced from July to early May to share the major findings of the Social Work Manpower Requirements System (SWMRS) annual updating exercises with Members. Notwithstanding, the schedule of the annual updating exercises remained unchanged and sufficient time would be allowed for participating organisations to submit their returns to the SWMRS Office.
2. The Chairman appreciated the efforts of SWD in compressing the work schedule for an earlier sharing of the SWMRS major findings with the Advisory Committee.

Supply of the University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded first-year-first-degree (FYFD) social work training places

3. SWD representative recapitulated Members' concern over the decrease of the UGC-funded FYFD social work training places in the last meeting. LWB and SWD would continue to consider the manpower projections provided in the SWMRS Annual Reports and the deliberations at the Advisory Committee meetings to provide general manpower remarks for social work discipline under the existing triennial planning exercises. In addition, to sustain the supply of social work degree graduates from the UGC sector, letters to the Presidents of the five UGC-funded universities providing social work training programmes were issued by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on 5 January 2023. The universities were appealed to increase the number of FYFD social work training places for the remainder of the 2022/23 to 2024/25 triennium and the 2025/26 to 2027/28 triennium for a stable supply of graduates in view of the projected increasing demand for social work manpower. The letters were copied to Members for information vide the email on 12 January 2023.
4. A Member shared that the afore-mentioned letter was acknowledged by the senior management of the UGC-funded universities as an additional reference to understand the demand for social work manpower on top of the SWMRS Annual Reports. The universities were currently preparing the proposal of FYFD training places for the 2025/26 to 2027/28 triennium and the number of training places for social work discipline might be further reduced since it was not one of the professions with specific manpower requirements. The social work discipline was rather attractive for local

students and hoped that the Presidents of the UGC-funded universities after having perused the letters could reconsider the allocation of FYFD to the social work discipline as the universities had the flexibility to reallocate the training places under institutional autonomy. Nevertheless, it would be most advantageous to reinstate the specific manpower requirements for the social work discipline in the long run to secure a stable supply of social work manpower from the UGC sector.

5. A Member echoed the views that the social work discipline was competitive to other disciplines with students having relatively high admission scores which might be favourable to appeal for more FYFD training places. The letters to the Presidents of the UGC-funded universities served as a useful reference for the universities to justify the need to increase the social work manpower supply. To achieve a sustainable growth of FYFD training places for the social work discipline, the overall resources allocated to the publicly-funded training places should be increased.
6. The Chairman viewed that while it was crucial to sustain the social work manpower supply from the UGC sector, the role of the self-financing training institutions (TIs) in training and supplying social work manpower was also very salient.

Item 2: SWMRS - Findings of the 2022 annual updating exercise

(Paper ACSWTMP/1/2023)

1. SWD representative briefed Members on the projection parameters and major findings of the 2022 round annual updating exercise (“2022 round exercise”).
2. The Chairman noted that upsurges in the wastage rates for Degree, Diploma and All Social Work Posts were recorded in 2021-22, reaching all-time high of 8.5%, 16.7% and 7.3% respectively. The high wastage rate for All Social Work Post, rising from 2.7% in 2020-21 to 7.3% in 2021-22 suggested that the number of social work personnel (SWP) leaving the social work sector was increasing. This was in line with Members’ observations shared in the last meeting that the “emigration tide” emerged in 2021-22 could be one of the reasons for the significant increase.
3. The Chairman also highlighted that some degree graduates might not join the social work field during the first year after graduation but might do so a few years later when opportunities arose. Hence it was essential to consider the number of degree graduates potentially available for joining the social work field. A Member shared that the employment situation for the graduates of the UGC-funded universities might be slightly different as vast majority of them would choose to enter the social work field soon after graduation.

4. A Member shared that it became very difficult for the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to hire suitable candidates for the Diploma Posts in recent years. It was observed that many social work diploma graduates chose to pursue further studies right after graduation to improve their academic qualifications to degree level before joining the social work field. Besides, the “emigration tide” was substantially affecting the social work manpower supply, in particular the social workers aged from 30 to 40 with five to ten years of working experiences. A surge in early retirement was also observed with a rather significant number of social workers leaving the field three to eight years earlier than their normal retirement ages.
5. A Member furthered that the quality of the graduates from the UGC-funded universities tended to be more stable, in contrast the quality of the graduates from the self-financing TIs varied. It was of utmost importance to provide high quality social work training to maintain the leading role of Hong Kong and uphold the professional standards in the region, contribute to the social work development in the Mainland and cater for the increasingly complex service demand in the society.
6. The Chairman remarked that though the quality of social work training programmes was outside the Advisory Committee’s purview, the job mismatch issue, i.e. degree graduates occupying Diploma Posts was noteworthy. It was observed that the job requirements for certain Diploma Posts were beyond the capabilities of diploma graduates and hence degree graduates were hired for these Diploma Posts. Besides, he was also concerned about the situation that TIs might not be able to train specialised social work graduates to meet the specific job requirements.
7. A Member noted that oversupply was projected for All Social Work Posts from 2022-23 to 2026-27 in the 2022 round exercise and enquired about its compilation methodology. SWD representative replied that some SWPs for Degree and Diploma Posts would be discounted when the overall manpower requirements for All Social Work Posts were considered. On the supply side, graduates of part-time degree programmes which required social work academic qualification (such as diploma / higher diploma / associate degree in social work) and / or Registered Social Worker (RSW) qualification for admission would be discounted from the overall new supply to avoid double-counting. On the demand side, when calculating the replacement for wastage, cases involving inter-grade movement, i.e. cases switching from Diploma Posts to Degree Posts and vice versa would be discounted as they were not regarded as new demand created for the whole sector.
8. In response to a Member’s enquiry on the methodology of compiling the staff wastage,

SWD representative replied that during the SWMRS annual updating exercises, only the aggregated number of wastage cases would be collected by the SWMRS Office. The replacement for wastage was estimated by using the projected wastage rate, i.e. the weighted average of staff wastage rate in the most recent three years. It was stressed that the high wastage rate recorded in 2021-22 was also factored in to estimate the new demand arising from replacement for staff wastage from 2022-23 to 2026-27 in the 2022 round exercise.

9. Some Members observed that the current wastage of the social work field reached more than 20% but such situation was not yet fully reflected in the 2022 round exercise due to the lead time for conducting the SWMRS annual updating exercises. The new demand derived from the replacement for staff wastage should be higher than the projected results for the coming years. A review of the SWMRS methodology for a more comprehensive coverage of factors was advocated for a better reflection of the actual manpower situation in the sector. The Chairman remarked that the high wastage rate emerged in recent year was exceptional fluctuation and the longer-term projections under the existing methodology of the SWMRS might not be able to reflect this short-term situation.
10. A Member opined that putting aside the projection results of the 2022 round exercise, severe social work manpower shortage among the NGOs was observed due to the “emigration tide” and rising work pressure for social workers. Employers were facing recruitment difficulties for the vacant Degree Posts since the degree graduates currently occupying Diploma Posts might be reluctant to take up new challenges. For Diploma Posts, the rising expectations for the services provided, such as rehabilitation services, also added difficulties to hire suitable candidates. In light of the above, the actual wastage of the social work field should be anticipated higher than the projected results of the 2022 round exercise.
11. A Member was also concerned about the job mismatch issue and advocated for a better utilisation of human resources to match degree graduates with the Degree Posts and social work graduates should be able to take up Degree Posts immediately after graduation similar to other professions (e.g. medical). In view of the rising complexity of service requirements, a review in the job requirements of existing Diploma Posts was urged to upgrade them to Degree Posts so as to provide better career prospects to SWPs in the long run. SWD representative shared the systematic service reviews for the Lump Sum Grant Subvention System (LSGSS) with focus on reviewing the service nature and notional staffing establishments for various types of social services. Having discussed with the social work sector, SWD had worked out the implementation schedule of the service reviews, including giving high priority to services not yet been

reviewed for years, services involving substantial number of service units or services with notable developmental needs. The service reviews had been commenced in phases from 2022-23 and the first stage of review involved Residential Child Care Services, Sheltered Workshop, Integrated Vocational Rehabilitation Services Centre and Integrated Home Care Services (Ordinary Cases). SWD would continue to conduct service reviews on other service aspects and keep in view any manpower implications arising from the relevant service reviews to be timely reflected in the annual updating exercises.

12. A Member shared that the numbers of FYFD social work training places and senior year intake places of the UGC-funded universities were substantially reduced subsequent to the abolition of the specific manpower requirements for the social work discipline. In the recent accreditation exercise conducted by the Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB), SWRB also expressed concern over the number of training places provided by the UGC-funded universities. Although the letters issued to the Presidents in January 2023 could alert the senior management of the acute situation for social work manpower, the picture of oversupply of manpower in All Social Work Posts projected in the 2022 round exercise seemed to be contradictory to the actual situation and it was unfavourable for the social work discipline to strive for an increase in training places.
13. A Member shared that the employment situation of fresh diploma graduates in recent years was promising that employers proactively organised recruitment talks at the TIs to hire suitable candidates. According to Member's observations, while the vast majority of the part-time diploma graduates would enter the social work field after their graduation, around 60% of the full-time diploma graduates would choose to pursue further studies instead of joining the workforce immediately. Coupled with the effect of the "emigration tide", it was opined that the actual supply of diploma graduates was fewer than the estimation and hence manpower shortage became acute for Diploma Posts. The admission scores for the diploma programmes were decreasing and the students admitted might barely possess the attributes and capabilities to be social workers. This could further limit the supply of quality diploma graduates to the market. To increase the manpower supply, the training places of the part-time diploma training programmes and part-time degree conversion programmes should be increased since their graduates were usually more mature to join the social work field, and the lead time of three years would be required to train up a SWP. In the long run, an uplift of RSW qualification to degree level was advocated to ensure manpower quality and sufficient training provided to the social work students.
14. SWD representative reminded that apart from the projected new demand and new supply, Members should take note of the previous years' remaining graduates of local

TIs who were also potentially available to join the social work field to understand the overall manpower situation in the sector. Furthermore, the quality of the SWPs was outside the purview of the SWMRS.

15. The Chairman suggested that the quality of social work training programmes provided by the self-financing TIs should be upheld while the Government might consider including social work discipline in the Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions / Sectors (SSSDP) under EDB to demonstrate its support to nurture talents for the social work industry and attract students with strong capabilities to join social work sector. A Member echoed that considering the ageing population and mental health issues in the society, optimising the use of government resources to secure a stable supply of social workers to provide quality welfare services was vitally important.
16. A Member opined that the result of the 2022 round exercise was one of the key factors in considering the number of FYFD training places allocated to the social work discipline in the 2025/26 to 2027/28 triennium. Special attention should be drawn to the exceptionally high wastage rate emerged in recent year. Should the recent situation be reflected in the projection results, FYFD training places would likely be stabilised in the next triennium. The planning for the social work training places should be conducted in a prudent manner to avoid further manpower shortage in the coming years since the NGOs, in particular the small and medium-sized ones, were already facing severe recruitment difficulties. A Member echoed the views and expressed the concerns about the lead time for sharing the analysis at the Advisory Committee meetings despite the meeting schedule had been advanced this year. In view of the exceptional factor that could possibly affect the manpower requirements, the figures of the 2022 round exercise should be reviewed as necessary for a better reflection of the manpower situation.
17. A Member suggested that the SWMRS Office could present different scenarios for the 2022 round exercise to capture any exceptional factors that might affect the manpower requirements. Such scenarios would serve as additional references for Members and TIs to consider the manpower projections on top of the analysis conducted under the existing methodology. The Chairman reminded that the SWMRS was under the purview of the Joint Committee on Social Work Manpower Requirements (JCSWMR) and all recommendations proposed by the Advisory Committee would have to be relayed to the JCSWMR for their consideration. It was the optimal time to review the methodology of the SWMRS which was first established in 1987 to keep pace with the evolving mindsets and behaviours of SWPs.

[Post-meeting notes: In anticipation that the exceptionally high wastage rates recorded

for Degree, Diploma and All Social Work Posts in 2021-22 might persist in the coming year, an additional analysis was conducted by the SWMRS Office for the 2022 round exercise with the assumption that the high wastage rates remained unchanged at 8.5%, 16.7% and 7.3% for Degree, Diploma and All Social Work Posts respectively in 2022-23 to examine the possible manpower implications. Subsequent to the endorsement of both JCSWMR and Advisory Committee Members, the additional analysis had been included at Part V of the SWMRS Annual Report 2022 which was published on 27 December 2023.]

18. The Chairman shared that the supply of social work training places in the self-financing sector also played a key role for assessing the sufficiency of FYFD training places in the UGC sector. Since the number of social work degree training places provided by self-financing TIs had already surpassed those provided by the UGC-funded universities, the Government might rely on the self-financing sector to increase training places in response to any fluctuations in the market. A Member supplemented that the self-financing TIs were under the regulation of the SWRB and any changes in the number of training places provided had to comply with the respective criteria and standards. In addition, self-financing TIs faced difficulties in recruiting additional teaching staff due to severe wastage and the less attractive salary offered when compared with the UGC-funded universities. Without the complementary measures to support admission of additional number of students, the increase in training places might impair the quality of the social work graduates. A Member supplemented that for the self-financing TIs established before the enactment of the Social Workers Registration Ordinance in 1997, the number of training places provided was not subject to the quota imposed by the SWRB.

19. A Member echoed the limitations faced by the self-financing TIs to increase their training places as the SWRB had established a set of principles to examine the number of training places provided and staff-to-student ratio for all accredited social work training programmes. The social work profession was fundamental to the livelihoods and well-being of the society and hence public resources should be secured to ensure a stable supply of social work graduates from the UGC sector. With the subsidy provided by the UGC, students could enjoy a more affordable tuition fees to pursue their study in the social work field. The Chairman opined that in view of the limitations for self-financing TIs to supply social work graduates to the sector, the Advisory Committee might suggest the concerned authority to reinstate the specific manpower requirements for the social work discipline under the triennial planning exercise for the UGC-funded universities.

20. EDB representative shared that the triennial planning exercise for the UGC-funded FYFD training places in the 2025/26 to 2027/28 triennium would commence around July 2023. Under the triennial planning exercise, EDB would collect advice on specific manpower requirements and general manpower remarks for a number of disciplines from respective Government bureaux / departments. Such advice would serve as a guide for the UGC-funded universities to prepare their planning exercise proposals, together with their own observations of the manpower trend, for the UGC's overall consideration and formulation of its funding recommendations to be submitted to the Chief Executive in Council (CE-in-C) for endorsement. SWD representative reiterated that as an established practice, LWB and SWD would consider the projections of the SWMRS annual updating exercises and the deliberations of the Advisory Committee to provide the general manpower remarks for the social work discipline to EDB.
21. To address the possible manpower implications brought by the exceptionally high wastage rate emerged in recent year, the Chairman suggested that the Advisory Committee could issue a set of letters to all UGC-funded universities and self-financing TIs to highlight such observation on top of the projections conducted by the existing methodology to facilitate their planning of training places. The relatively low percentage of degree graduates potentially available for joining the social work field projected in the coming years could also be reflected in the letters to alert for any necessary actions. Considering the increasing constraints faced by the SWMRS Office to collect manpower data for the updating exercises, he suggested that a more effective approach should be adopted to uphold the creditability of the manpower projection in the long run.
22. After deliberations, the Chairman concluded Members' views as follows –
- (a) In view of the exceptionally high wastage rate in 2021-22 and a lower percentage of degree graduates potentially available for joining the social work field, the Advisory Committee would issue a letter to all UGC-funded universities and self-financing TIs to highlight such observation to supplement the manpower projections in the Annual Report to facilitate resource planning of the TIs;

[Post-meeting notes: Letters to the Presidents of the five UGC-funded universities providing social work training programmes were issued by the Chairman on 19 December 2023 to convey the possible manpower shortage under the high wastage rate and the relatively low level of degree graduates potentially available for taking up Degree Posts. It appealed for the need to increase the UGC-funded FYFD intake places for social work discipline so as to secure stable supply of social work manpower to maintain quality social welfare services. Upon endorsement of Members, the said

letters were copied to the self-financing TIs providing social work training programmes and the remaining three UGC-funded universities not yet providing social work programme for information on 3 January 2024.]

- (b) The social welfare sector encountered severe difficulties in recruiting sufficient SWPs, the Advisory Committee advocated for reinstating the specific manpower requirements for the social work discipline under the triennial planning exercise for the UGC-funded universities to secure a stable supply of quality social workers; and
- (c) It was the optimal time to review the methodology of the SWMRS which was used for over 30 years to keep pace with the evolving mindsets and behaviours of the SWPs and to enhance its effectiveness in manpower projections.

Item 3: Setting up of a Task Force on reviewing data collection methodology of the SWMRS

(Paper ACSWTMP/2/2023)

1. SWD representative shared that the SWMRS Office had been collecting information, including full name and Hong Kong Identity (HKID) Card number of the SWPs for the SWMRS annual updating exercises. With the rising concern over personal data privacy in recent years, it was observed that an increasing number of participating organisations were withholding the HKID Card numbers of their SWPs for the updating exercises. The SWMRS Office had been using the HKID Card numbers to keep track of the movement of each SWP in the social work field, such as by matching the identities of the fresh graduates with the SWPs newly employed by organisations to confirm their employment situation. Without the unique identifier, the SWMRS Office would be unable to confirm the identities of the SWPs and hence, manpower requirements projection might be inaccurate.
2. As advised by the Department of Justice (DoJ), if the provision of data, including the HKID Card numbers, to the SWMRS Office for research and statistics purposes was not consistent with the purpose of data collection, participating organisations might consider applying a relevant exemption under the Section 62 of the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (PD(P)O) in order to provide the data to the SWMRS annual updating exercises in the absence of the prescribed consent of the relevant data subjects. Nevertheless, it was for the organisation to consider and establish whether an exemption would apply given the facts and circumstances in the individual cases. That said, SWD was not empowered to compel any participating organisations to rely on such exemption to provide data for the updating exercises.

3. Taking the experience of establishing the “Task Force on Review of Social Work Manpower Requirements Projection” under the Advisory Committee to review the SWMRS projection in 2014, it was proposed to set up a similar Task Force to conduct a thorough review on the data collection methodology of the SWMRS. The 19th meeting of the JCSWMR held on 17 March 2023 had endorsed the proposal of setting up a Task Force under the Advisory Committee to uphold the creditability of the projection mechanism in the long run. The major objective of the Task Force was to study the feasibility of revamping the data collection methodology of the SWMRS to reduce the sensitive personal information collected without compromising the creditability of the SWMRS mechanism. All Members including appointed members, representatives from TIs and welfare associations were welcome to join the Task Force to provide their valuable advices. Subject to Members’ agreement, SWD would issue invitation email to all Members after this meeting and the first meeting of the Task Force would be held by September 2023 tentatively. The progress and recommendations proposed by the Task Force would also be reported to the JCSWMR and the Advisory Committee on a regular basis.
4. The Chairman remarked that the participation of the SWMRS annual updating exercise was entirely voluntary. In view of the growing concerns over privacy, it appeared that the HKID Card number could hardly be used as the identifier to keep track of the SWPs in the long term. A thorough review was suggested to identify the key information required by the stakeholders and examine whether it was necessary to keep the existing methodology, such as tracing the movement and employment situation of the SWPs, for conducting manpower projections. Furthermore, the SWRB might also assist in collecting manpower data from the SWPs when renewing their registration.
5. SWD representative shared that under the existing system, the HKID Card number had been adopted as the key identifier to keep track the movement of SWPs for projecting the manpower requirements. Since the system would be adversely affected in the long term when more participating organisations withheld their manpower data to the SWMRS Office, it was necessary to reconsider that having regard to the objectives and limitations of the SWMRS, what sort of analysis and statistics should be provided by the updating exercises in the future. The Chairman echoed the views and encouraged Members to join the Task Force for providing their recommendations to enhance the mechanism.
6. A Member proposed that the Registration Number owned by each RSW, which was also a public information maintained by the SWRB, might be adopted as the identifier to conduct the SWMRS updating exercises. SWD representative welcomed Members to propose their suggestions and advised that the meeting of the Task Force should be held

around once every half-year so as to allow sufficient time for discussing and examining various review proposals.

7. SWD representative shared that the existing data collection methodology of the SWMRS was to collect minimal manpower data from the participating organisations to facilitate their voluntary and swift responses. Yet the Task Force was welcome to re-examine what information should be collected in the future updating exercises that could enhance the effectiveness of the system. All Members, in particular the TIs, were encouraged to participate in the Task Force for giving their valuable views to streamline the SWMRS projections.
8. A Member opined that it was the optimal time to review the SWMRS to keep pace with the changing circumstances of the social work field. Besides reviewing what information to be collected for the updating exercises, the parameters and assumptions of the SWMRS should also be revisited for deducing a more accurate projection and facilitate the manpower planning in the social work field. The Chairman agreed that the Task Force should have the flexibility to conduct a comprehensive review as necessary to enhance the overall effectiveness of the system.
9. After deliberations, all Members agreed to set up a Task Force under the Advisory Committee to review the SWMRS.

[Post-meeting notes: SWD issued invitations to all Members of the Advisory Committee and JCSWMR to join the Task Force on 11 May 2023. The Chairman (Prof Chetwyn CHAN) and seven Members of the Advisory Committee and two Members of JCSWMR joined the Task Force with Prof CHAN serving as the Convenor. The 1st the Task Force meeting was held on 12 December 2023 in which the possible alternate data collection method, parameters and assumptions of SWMRS were discussed.]

Agenda item 4: Any other business

SWMRS Annual Report 2022

1. SWD representative shared that in response to TIs' opinions to enhance the content of the Annual Report, additional information regarding the service areas of the new demand owing to creation of posts in SWD and SWD-subsented sectors would be inserted starting from the Annual Report 2022 to facilitate TIs' arrangement of training programmes. Major projects with substantial new demand created for Degree and Diploma Posts in the two projection years would be summarised under paragraph 3.2.3 of Appendix II (B) of the Annual Report.

[Post-meeting notes: The breakdown of new posts in SWD and the SWD-subvented sector in NGOs in 2022-23 and 2023-24 was tabulated at Paragraph 3.2.3 of Appendix II(B) “Compilation Method” of the SWMRS Annual Report 2022.]

Social welfare initiatives

2. SWD representative remarked that a sharing session would be arranged around September 2023 tentatively to share the new social welfare initiatives introduced in the 2023-24 Budget and the latest development in the social work sector with Members. Teaching and administrative staff from all TIs providing social work training programmes were also welcome to join to facilitate their planning of the social work teaching programmes. SWD representative supplemented that social welfare initiatives with great concerns such as the progress and related training for the mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse cases, and enhanced support for residential child care centres would be presented to enhance communication between SWD and the sector.

[Post-meeting notes: A sharing session on the SWD’s initiatives for representatives from TIs was held on 18 September 2023. 47 participants from 14 TIs providing social work training programmes and SWD attended the session.]

Survey on Employment Situation of Social Work Graduates

3. SWD representative shared that SWD had been conducting the Survey on Employment Situation of Social Work Graduates (Survey) annually since the mid-1990s to understand the employment situation of the fresh graduates in the social work field and the reasons for not entering the sector. The latest response rate of the Survey had been decreasing to around 30% only which created significant non-response bias for the Survey. To facilitate TIs to have a better understanding of the actual supply of manpower, SWD representative sought assistance from TIs to encourage active participation of their social work graduates in the Survey.
4. A Member shared the experience of a TI to assign student helpers to encourage social work graduates to participate in the Survey. SWD representative appreciated the effort of TIs and was looking forward to seeing continual improvement to the response rate in the upcoming Surveys.