

# Fifth-term Commission on Poverty convenes fifth meeting and observes operations of School-based After School Care Service Scheme (with photos)

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Chan Kwok-ki, today (March 14) chaired the fifth meeting of the fifth-term Commission on Poverty (CoP) and led members to visit a school participating in the School-based After School Care Service Scheme to observe its operations.

At the meeting, the CoP approved funding under the Community Care Fund for launching three additional three-year Community Living Room projects, in To Kwa Wan, Hung Hom and Nam Cheong respectively, under the Pilot Programme on Community Living Room. They are expected to commence operations gradually within 2024 to provide focused support for subdivided unit (SDU) households (particularly SDU families with children) by providing additional living space and expanding their interpersonal networks, thereby enhancing their living standard and sense of belonging to the community.

As a project of targeted poverty alleviation, the Pilot Programme on Community Living Room is led by the Government, with the venues provided by the business sector and operations conducted by social welfare organisations. The CoP approved funding under the Community Care Fund in 2023 for launching a Community Living Room in Sham Shui Po for three years as the first project under the Pilot Programme. Since its operation at the end of 2023, the Community Living Room has received very positive responses. The Government will continue to encourage the business sector to participate in the Pilot Programme for the launch of more Community Living Rooms in districts clustered with SDU households to benefit more such households.

After the meeting, Mr Chan and members of the CoP visited Tsuen Wan Public Ho Chuen Yiu Memorial Primary School to observe the implementation of the School-based After School Care Service Scheme, another project of targeted poverty alleviation. They were first briefed by the Principal, Ms Chu Wai-man, and the Director of the Hong Kong Children and Youth Services (the operator), Ms Joyce Lee, on the different needs of students participating in the Scheme, including those with special educational needs and those from single-parent families, as well as the services catering for them.

Afterwards, Mr Chan and members of the CoP talked to some participating students and their parents to understand how students finished their homework and revision, and participated in extracurricular activities, under the guidance of instructors before leaving school. They were pleased to learn that the Scheme helped parents alleviate their stress arising from taking

care of their children, and enabled them to join the labour market and enjoy more family time with their children when at home. Accompanied by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun, and other government officials, Mr Chan also joined students in group games and encouraged them to enhance their social skills and relieve stress while studying.

The School-based After School Care Service Scheme is led by the Government, with venues provided by schools and services rendered by non-governmental organisations. It provides targeted support for underprivileged families (especially single-parent families) and is implemented in primary schools from those districts clustered with such target students. As at February 2024, more than 50 primary schools in Kowloon City, Yau Tsim Mong, Sham Shui Po, Kwun Tong, Kwai Tsing, Tsuen Wan and Yuen Long have joined the Scheme, providing a total of about 3 000 service places.

Mr Chan said that the Government, jointly with the CoP, would continue to steadfastly unite the forces of the Government, the business sector and the community in taking forward projects of targeted poverty alleviation to better help such target groups as SDU households and single-parent households, thereby building a more caring and inclusive society.



