



Policy Address

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Cherishing Family Values

45. Cherishing the family is a core value of our community. Family harmony is the foundation of social harmony. The Government will continue to enhance family cohesion with effective policies. Our tax system provides allowances for taxpayers taking care of their children, parents and grandparents. Concessions are also given to single parents and carers of family members, especially disabled family members, who face special difficulties. Our public housing allocation policy gives special consideration to tenants looking after elderly family members.

46. Like many other places, families in Hong Kong bear the brunt of social and economic changes. Divorced and single-parent families are on the rise. Cross-border employment separates families. An ageing population means more elderly people need health care and other forms of attention. Many parents of dual income families have to juggle their jobs and family life. As a caring Government, we actively provide support, counselling and a variety of other social services to such families. At the same time, we will remind all family members of their respective responsibilities to help them build a healthy family relationship.

47. Family education is very important. We will allocate new resources to strengthen and extend family education. We will promote the values, ethics and individual responsibility needed for family harmony through various channels such as media publicity and district activities.

48. The Government does not tolerate domestic violence. We provide protection to victims of domestic violence, in particular women and children. We will also pursue the perpetrators of violence and bring them to justice. Since last year, we have taken special measures and devoted more resources to support families in need and to resolve family crises. These include more social service staff, enhancing co-operation among the Police, Social Welfare Department and non-government organisations, improving the planning and co-ordination systems in districts, and increasing publicity and education as well as staff training. In the coming year, we will launch a pilot scheme to provide counselling to domestic violence offenders. We will also help victims of domestic violence understand their rights, the protection afforded by law and the support services rendered by the Government, and encourage them to seek help as early as possible. We will allocate additional resources and utilise community capital to set up community support networks, and will reach out to families that have not sought help to address their problems at an early stage.

49. In future, the Government will allocate resources according to the different situations in each district. We will strengthen district welfare planning and co-ordination to optimise our care for families. For instance in Tin Shui Wai, we have added a Family and Child Protective Services Unit and will build an integrated children and youth services centre.

50. The Government will seek partnership with the business community and social service agencies to create a family-friendly and community environment in

workplace. Relevant government departments, in collaboration with some private sector employers and social service agencies, have established the Employee Assistance Programme to provide employees with professional personal advice and counselling services to help manage stress and emotional problems. Some companies also provide staff with child care services to meet the needs of working parents. We will continue to explore ways to help working parents achieve a better family-work balance so they can upgrade the quality of their family life.

51. Elderly people will enjoy better physical and mental health if they live in the community and maintain a normal social life. To take forward our vision of "ageing in place", we need to provide a better interface between medical and elderly services in the development of community-based elderly care services. This will allow the elderly to receive appropriate medical and nursing care in the community and avoid their premature admission into elderly homes. The Health, Welfare and Food Bureau will work with the Elderly Commission in this regard. We will continue to improve the facilities in elderly homes in order that they may provide a continuum of care.

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