

**For discussion on  
14 May 2001**

**LegCo Panel on Welfare Services  
Positioning Social Welfare Department for Greater Challenges**

**PROBLEM**

The current three-tiered headquarters, regional and district structure of the Social Welfare Department (SWD) is no longer conducive to meeting operational requirements and new challenges arising from changing welfare needs of the community. Moreover, the Department needs to strengthen its planning capability and human resources management.

**PROPOSAL**

*Summary*

*District level*

2. At the district level, it is proposed that -
  - (a) the five Regional Offices each headed by a Principal Social Work Officer (PSWO) (D1) be disbanded. The delayering will facilitate the streamlining of administrative and operational practices and improve the decision-making process in response to district matters;
  - (b) upon the disbandment of the five Regional Offices, the 13 District Offices be maintained<sup>1</sup> and enhanced to be responsible for and accountable to the Headquarters in the following aspects:
    - (i) planning welfare services on a district basis to meet community needs;

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<sup>1</sup> In the deliberations, we had given consideration to whether the SWD district boundaries should be re-aligned to follow those of district administration. This would mean splitting up those DSWOs which currently oversee two HAD districts. We have decided against this for the time being so as not to complicate this re-organisation exercise. We will re-visit this in a few years' time taking account of the then population growth and distribution.

- (ii) collaborating with District Councils, related Government departments and district organizations to facilitate the implementation of social welfare policies in the district;
- (iii) co-ordinating with Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) in the district in respect of delivery of services in meeting the welfare needs of local community;
- (iv) establishing a more proactive social outreaching network in the district to help the needy and the disadvantaged; and
- (v) administering and managing centralized operational units.

Encl. 1 The strengthened role of District Social Welfare Officers (DSWO) is further elaborated in Enclosure 1.

Encl. 2 3. Commensurate with the added responsibilities and accountability, we propose to upgrade the 13 DSWOs from Chief Social Work Officer (MPS 45-49) to Principal Social Welfare Officer (D1). A proposed Job Description of the post is at Enclosure 2.

*Headquarters level*

4. It is proposed that -

- (a) the Subventions, Finance and Project Planning Branches be re-organized into two Branches of Finance, and Subventions and Performance Monitoring to achieve efficiency and to fit in the new mode of subvention system in the delivery of services;
- (b) the Service Branches each of which is responsible for specific programme areas be strengthened in respect of policy review, planning and developing new services and projects, rationalizing existing services, setting service standards, performance indicators and benchmarks;
- (c) new set-ups to be put in place to meet new and urgent demands in respect of human resource management, and planning and research and in due course, information technology upon funding approval of Phase II of the Department's Information Systems Strategy;

- (d) the Licensing Office of Residential Care Homes for the Elderly, Child Care Centre Advisory Inspectorate, Licensing Office of Drug Dependants Treatment Centres be amalgamated into a Licensing Office to deal with all licensing matters that come under the purview of the department;
- (e) a dedicated office be set up, to be headed by a Chief Social Work Officer to be responsible for the development of professional knowledge and skills and enhancement of performance in specialized service to tackle domestic violence such as child abuse, elderly abuse, etc; and
- (f) a small Corporate Affairs Office be established to support the senior directorate to co-ordinate planning, research and statistics, the information and public relations strategies, customer services and other external affairs.

## **JUSTIFICATION**

### *District Level*

5. Currently, SWD is serving the entire territory through 13 District Offices (each headed by a DSWO of CSWO rank) under the supervision of five Regional Officers (ROs) (PSWO) who head the five regions respectively. Over the years, the major roles and functions of ROs have changed. For example -

- most of the general administrative and routine duties are adequately covered by the 13 DSWOs;
- departmental representation in District Councils and District Management Committees has been taken up by the 13 DSWOs; and
- the administration of subvention is no longer carried out at the regional / district level, since the monitoring of subvented services is gradually taken over centrally by the Headquarters with the introduction of the Service Performance Monitoring System.

6. In recent years, increasing emphasis has been placed on the district as an entity in planning and delivering welfare services. With rising community expectations and welfare services being human services, it is no

longer adequate to rely solely on population-based planning standards across-the-board according to the Hong Kong Planning Standard and Guidelines. There is clearly a need for a more strategic assessment of local needs and characteristics to facilitate district-based planning of welfare services. Moreover, with rapid expansion in welfare services in the past decade, planning welfare services on a facility-driven approach and an incremental manner is probably not cost-effective. There is a need for better co-ordination between different service providers and greater integration by a single service operator to ensure optimal use of resources and serving clients in a more holistic manner.

7. Recent initiatives such as the Fundamental Expenditure Review on youth services, the Special Job Attachment Programme for the CSSA recipients and the enhanced home and community care for the elders all have a strong district focus. Both the Consultancy Studies on the Review of Day Services for the Elderly and the Family Services Review have pointed to the direction of planning of integrated services to meet the needs of the local community.

8. As mentioned in the CE's 2000 Policy Address, there is an imminent need to enhance outreaching services for those hard-to-reach target groups and to build up social networks to support the disadvantaged, i.e. the elderly, families and youth at risk, single parents and new arrivals, etc. who have critical needs for services. Such outreaching networking work could best be done at the district level. With all these developments, it is necessary to strengthen capacity at the district level, to empower the DSWOs and to devolve to them greater responsibility / authority so that they may map out co-ordinated strategies to address proactively the welfare needs of the community.

9. To meet the growing demand for a more open, accountable and responsive government and to promote public participation in district affairs, close consultation and collaboration between Government departments and District Councils are essential. The DSWOs are playing an important role in explaining social welfare policies and proposals to the District Councils (DCs) and the local community, as well as lobbying support for new initiatives and service projects in the district. As district departmental representatives, the DSWOs should be senior and experienced officers who are able to adopt a wide perspective in discussing issues with and answering questions raised by DC members authoritatively.

10. The main features of the proposed District Structure are:

- (a) each district will be headed by a DSWO of D1 rank (upgraded from CSWO rank to PSWO rank). They will be responsible for and accountable to DSW through the two Deputy Directors. The DSWOs will have direct access to the Headquarters Service

Branches and be involved actively in the planning and co-ordination of welfare services at district level. The DSWO will be supported by one to three ADSWO (Assistant District Social Welfare Officer) at SSWO (Senior Social Work Officer) rank overseeing various departmental social work service units, as well as one SSSO (Senior Social Security Officer) who supervises Social Security Field Units in two districts;

- (b) the DSWOs also oversee the centralized service units which are mainly of operational in nature (including those decentralized from Headquarters) headed by a SSWO such as the regional Standardized Care Need Assessment Management Office (Elderly Services), the regional specialized professional team of Family and Child Protective Services Unit (FCPSU) and Child Custody Services Unit (CCSU) and Central Office for Volunteer Service (COVS);
- (c) SWOs and ASWOs currently in the Youth Office (YO) and Rehabilitation and Elderly Office (REO) within the district office will be pooled to become members of a Planning and Co-ordination Team (PCT) in the district. In addition to carrying out YO and REO duties in a more flexible and integrated manner, the PCT will carry out district-wide liaison, district-based planning, networking and collaborating duties;
- (d) an outreaching team will be formed as an executive arm of the PCT. It will be manned by pooling the Social Work Assistants (SWAs) of YO and REO. The team may be based in the existing Group Work Unit of SWD within community centres and estate community centres. This will tie in with the re-focusing of the Group Work Units to carry out the Policy Address initiative on reaching out to vulnerable groups and build up a mutual support network for early identification of problems and timely assistance and to strengthen the networking and outreaching services;
- (e) each District Office will be supported by an Executive Officer (EOII) as District Secretary responsible for executive duties and providing secretarial support to various district committees. All supporting staff will be pooled and flexibly deployed under the new structure.

Encl. 3 11. The proposed structure of a District Office (DO) is at Enclosure 3. The numbers of staff will vary from one DO to another, reflecting the span of control and the number of departmental service units, regional specialised professional teams and centralized operational units under the DO's purview, in particular when some DOs will support two District Councils. For instance, the number of ADOs will range from one to three. Likewise, in determining

the number of other professional and supporting staff, due regard will be given to the span of control of the DSWO and the number and scale of centralized operational units placed under the DSWO's supervision.

### Headquarters Level

12. In the light of the rapid social changes, complexity of the social problems and higher expectation on welfare services in both quantity and quality, there have been growing demands on Headquarters in strategic and evidence-based planning, service review, developing new approaches and methods to cope with the changing demands. Also, as a multi-discipline department with over 5,200 staff, we need strengthened capacity in the Headquarters for human resources management and development. The subvention reform and the shifting from input control to outcome evaluation have placed new demands on the Headquarters in developing service benchmarks and assessing performance of service providers. We have therefore taken the opportunity of re-organization to strengthen certain areas of work in the Headquarters to meet these increasing demands. The strengthening of Headquarters in these identified areas is made possible by resources released from the much streamlined work procedure in the new Lump Sum Grant (LSG) environment, the more efficient payment system and the revamping of Lotteries Fund procedures.

13. The main features of the proposed changes to the Headquarters are:

- (a) the Service Branches overseeing family and child welfare, elderly, youth, rehabilitation and medical social services will largely remain intact. They will, however, resume their project (facilities) planning role transferred from the Project Planning Branch which will be disbanded to enhance productivity and efficiency and to ensure greater integration between the planning of facilities and the planning of services. They will be re-positioned to play a more strategic role in service rationalization and in setting service and performance standards. The Youth Branch will be also relieved of its role over Human Resource Management (HRM) so that it may concentrate on taking forward the many funded initiatives to help youth at risk as announced in the 2001 Budget;
- (b) the Licensing Office function of various services (i.e. elderly, child and drug treatment) will be amalgamated into a central Licensing Office. This will ensure optimal utilization of existing resources in terms of fire and building safety expertise to achieve greater efficiency and productivity;

(c) a HRM Branch will be formed to make dedicated efforts in building up a highly committed, resilient, competent, versatile and skilled workforce in the department. With a workforce of 51 grades, 94 ranks and 5,247 staff of which 3,259 are departmental staff (2,109 in social work stream and 1,150 in social security stream) tasked to deliver human services, we need to adopt a proactive and integrated approach to managing human resources effectively. Our staff clearly need more skills than what they have been trained pre-service. HRM is expected to play a more active role in equipping SWD to meet challenges. There is general staff feedback that more effort is needed in respect of empowering line managers in their role as HRM manager and formulating clearer HRM policies, in particular those related to career development and posting, and have these policies practised faithfully. The proposed HRM Branch shall put in place a comprehensive and dedicated system and structure to address the HR issues such as manpower planning, recruitment, training and development, performance management, posting and succession planning. The proposed organization structure of the HRM Branch is at Enclosure 4. As the department is a multi-discipline department, overseeing a total of 28 departmental/common/MOD I grades and 44 ranks and considering the magnitude and complexity of the human resource management as well as the expertise required, it is proposed to have a Principal Executive Officer (PEO) (D1) to head the HRM Branch. The proposed Job Description of the post is at Enclosure 5. The proposed creation of the PEO post (D1) will be offset by the deletion of one post of Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2) of the Project Planning Branch upon the latter's disbandment as mentioned in para.13(a) above;

Encl. 4

Encl. 5

(d) to establish within a small Corporate Affairs Office a core Planning Unit, which together with an expanded Research and Statistics Unit, will support the senior directorate and to co-ordinate departmental efforts in strategic planning of welfare services. In this respect, much groundwork has been laid by the Health and Welfare Bureau (HWB) in the process to formulate annual and medium term plans to achieve policy objectives. This unit will be responsible for close co-ordination with HWB, the stakeholders, NGOs, other Government departments as well as within different sections of SWD. Service planning needs to be backed up by more systematic and evidence-based evaluation and research. The new set-up will also liaise and co-ordinate with concerned parties in the compilation and analysis of data, development of indices, local and overseas researches and benchmarking, etc.;

(e) to note the need to strengthen the current Information System and Technology Branch as we progress with the strategy for the

development of IT in the welfare sector, which was discussed and endorsed by Members at the meeting of the LegCo Welfare Panel on 12 February 2001. There is as yet unrealized potential in the use of IT in planning and delivering welfare services. In the whole welfare sector, involving NGOs and SWD, the use of IT is lagging behind as compared with other sectors. It is necessary to enhance IT application to enable welfare services to be delivered more efficiently and effectively. We are already taking action to implement the strategy. In SWD, we have completed Phase I of our Information Systems Strategy (ISS) with the launch of the Computerized Social Security System in October 2000. The Phase II of ISS will focus on strengthening the architecture of the IT system with a view to enhancing productivity and developing a Client Information System. We propose to consider strengthening the IT setup within SWD in the context of Phase II of ISS;

- (f) to re-engineer the existing Subventions Branch into a Subventions and Performance Monitoring Branch with emphasis being put on assisting NGOs to meet the challenge of the LSG (through the newly established Help Centre), maintaining close liaison with NGOs, undertaking the service evaluation and contract management role and overseeing the various central support units to Service Branches, such as the Lotteries Fund Section, the Project Planning Section and the Architectural Section; and
- (g) in addition to the Clinical psychology Service, to consider developing service specialty in the work related to domestic violence under a CSWO. The service covers the integrated approach on child abuse, elderly abuse, suicides and violence both inside and outside the family. This proposal may see the beginning of specialization among social work practitioners, which should be beneficial to the development of specialised services and the social work profession. However, we need to map out the strategy and division of labour to ensure no duplication in resources and clear lines of responsibility. We may not be able to complete these deliberations in the current exercise.

Encl. 6 14. The current and proposed structures of the Department are at Enclosures 6 and 7.

Encl. 7

## **FINANCIAL AND STAFFING IMPLICATIONS**

15. At the outset of consulting staff on the proposals, we have made it clear that -

- (a) the re-organization exercise should by and large be cost-neutral;
- (b) the resources freed up from disbandment of the Regional Office level should be redeployed back to the Districts to strengthen DSWOs to undertake the new duties. This means that the Headquarters will have to identify their own resources for redeployment to new set-ups in the Headquarters. In addition, we have obtained new resources to implement the new initiatives in the 2000 Policy Address and 2001 Budget which have a strong district focus, i.e. outreaching work to the disadvantaged and strengthened district co-ordination on youth work; and
- (c) the re-organization should not give rise to staff redundancies.

16. We have generally met the above objectives. With the disbandment of the five Regional Offices, resources therein (\$17.03 million in Notional Annual Mid-point Salaries (NAMS)) arising from the deletion of 44 posts) are redeployed to the 13 Districts as a priority to strengthen district support. The 13 Districts will have a net creation of 47 posts (including the addition of three non-directorate posts which have already been created under delegated power through the temporary redeployment of resources) at a total NAMS value of 16.87 million. As for the Headquarters, there will be a net reduction of 20 posts at a NAMS value of \$1.12 million, rising to a net reduction of 27 posts at a NAMS value of \$3.36 million upon full implementation.

17. In sum, the total notional annual salary cost of the proposal at MID-POINT is -

<b>New Permanent Posts</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>No. of Posts</b>
PSWO	15,771,600	13
PEO	1,213,200	1
Non-directorate posts (net)	17,962,440	45
Less AOSGC	1,443,000	1
PSWO	6,066,000	5
Non-directorate posts (net)	30,959,340	80
<b>Savings</b>	<u>3,521,100</u>	<u>27</u>

The full annual staff savings arising from the proposal, including salaries and staff on-costs, is \$7,080,948. No additional cost is envisaged.

18. To contain the size of the civil service, the proposed new structure is well within the establishment ceiling of the Department for 2001-02. It will not give rise to any staff redundancy. The establishment changes in departmental grades will not give rise to any surplus staff. As for general and common grades, the implementation of the service-wide Voluntary Retirement Scheme will take care of any surplus staff that may arise as a result.

Encl. 8 19. The approved establishment (position as at 1.2.2001) and the proposed establishment upon implementation of the proposal are summarised at Enclosure 8. The proposed changes to establishment in respect of individual grades being affected in this exercise are at Enclosure 9.

## **CONSULTATION**

20. Staff of the Department have been consulted widely through briefings, branch/unit meetings and focus groups since the issue of an internal consultation paper on 12 December 2000. Staff associations have been briefed on the re-positioning exercise. Altogether 12 briefing sessions and

more than 50 focus groups had been conducted from December 2000 to February 2001. The general feedback was positive and supportive of the re-organization. The final package has taken on board views and comments from staff expressed during those internal consultation. When we briefed supervisory staff and staff associations on 24 April 2001, the finalized re-organization package was well accepted by both groups. Their comments are by and large confined to the technicalities and the timing and pace of implementation.

21. Senior management staff have already started to brief all staff on the details of the re-organization package to prepare and involve them in mapping out the requisite changes to ensure that the pace of implementation will suit the readiness of individual districts and branches resulting in a more seamless transition. Staff associations are also assured that an effective two-way dialogue will be maintained to address any concerns and technicalities.

22. The Social Welfare Advisory Committee was consulted on 3 May 2001. Members responded very positively to the Department's re-positioning proposal. They agreed that the adoption of a flatter management structure, the establishment of a HRM office, the strengthened role and functions of the District Social Welfare Officer were timely changes in the right direction to enhance efficiency and productivity, particularly in meeting the rapidly changing needs in the community. Their advice is focused on alerting the Department to take appropriate steps to prepare and empower staff for the change, to deal with possible concerns arising from the implementation process, and to keep partners in the welfare field informed of the changes.

23. We have taken the opportunity of DSW briefing 18 District Councils on development of social welfare services to consult District Councils on the proposal to eliminate the Regional Office level and strengthen the DSWOs, including the proposal to pitch the DSWOs at D1 level. The general response from the 14 DCs we have consulted so far is positive and supportive. A summary of comments on our proposal is at Enclosure 10. We will consult the remaining DCs in the coming two months.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

24. The Social Welfare Department was last re-organized in 1979 when four Regional Offices and 11 District Offices were established. The regionalized structure was reviewed in 1980 and again in 1987 to cope with the rapid expansion of social welfare services, after which, splitting of two districts were implemented to make up a total of 13 District Offices. In 1989, the New Territories Region was further split into the NT East and NT West Regions.

The regional (five regions) and district (13 districts) structure remains unchanged since then.

25. Over the last two decades, there has been a substantial and rapid growth in the scope, volume and complexity of the social welfare services undertaken by the department and the NGOs. In the past ten years, total welfare expenditure had increased from \$7.1 billion in 1992-93 to \$29.7 billion in the 2001-02 Estimates (+318%). The departmental establishment had also increased from 3,955 posts in the 1992-93 Estimates to 5,247 posts as at 1 April 2001 (+32.67%). In addition to departmental service units, over 180 Non-governmental Organization (NGOs) are operating 3,000 units under subventions administered by SWD. For 2001-02, total welfare subventions amount to \$7.2 billion.

26. With the passage of time and the rapid expansion in social welfare services, the roles and functions of the Regional Offices have changed. A typical set-up of a Regional Office now consists of only eight or nine posts, headed by a Regional Officer (RO) ranked at PSWO (D1). Whilst they continue to perform oversight in relation to the work of District Offices, disseminate policy intent from the Headquarters to the districts, undertake certain personnel functions on a regional basis and exercise certain authority delegated only to RO level, they no longer have much essential operational work. In the present day demand for greater responsiveness and with improved electronic communication between Headquarters Officers and District Officers, it is doubtful whether a three-tiered structure of headquarters, region and district is still appropriate.

27. We need to re-position SWD to increase our responsiveness to meet community needs, to enhance efficiency and productivity and to meet new challenges in the planning and co-ordination of welfare services. There are two strands to our proposals: first, to streamline the three-tiered headquarters, regional and district structure into a two-tiered one and secondly, to create capacity in the Headquarters to deal with areas of work which had not been adequately developed hitherto.

#### **ADVICE SOUGHT**

28. Members are invited to comment on the above proposals. Subject to Members' advice and support, we plan to approach the Establishment

Subcommittee of the Finance Committee in its meeting in June to effect the necessary changes involving directorate posts.

Social Welfare Department

May 2001

**Strengthened Role of DSWO in the New SWD Structure**

The DSWO is currently responsible for the delivery of welfare services in the district through overseeing the departmental service units, co-ordinating services provided by the NGOs, identifying and addressing district needs and attending / interfacing with the respective District Council. However, because of centralisation of planning functions in the Headquarters, less prompt and direct access to Headquarters and insufficient support, their work tends to be more activity-based, focusing on an individual's or target group's welfare needs rather than the needs of the community.

2. In the new SWD structure, the DSWOs will strengthen their role as a district welfare planner and service co-ordinator, working with increased district input from District Council members, NGO service providers, users and local personalities. They are expected to advocate welfare needs on behalf of their district and ensure that such needs are effectively reflected to Headquarters. They should come up with feasible options to address those needs and mobilise existing resources available to meet those needs. The DSWO will chair District Co-ordinating Committees (DCC) or Local Committees on Family and Child Welfare Services, Services for Young People, Elderly Services, Rehabilitation Services, Volunteer Movement and other topical issues as needed. These DCCs are instrumental in developing and formulating strategies in planning and co-ordinating welfare services and pioneering projects to meet particular needs of the district and timely response to rising public expectations. They also provide a valuable forum for interaction and co-operation among service providers, professionals in related disciplines, Government departments and local organizations.

3. Based on some current activities of our District Offices, we wish to illustrate how the DSWO can facilitate *inter-sectoral collaboration* and undertake *co-ordination* of welfare programmes aimed at building a caring community in the district -

(a) the DSWO will, working through the DCC on Family and Child Welfare, take a lead in ensuring co-operation amongst various disciplines, Government departments and NGOs in the:

- prevention of domestic violence by involving the hospital, Department of Health, the Police and schools in the district to undertake studies and surveys on how children perceive corporal punishment and to address the concerns found; and by organising a series of promotional and educational multi-disciplinary workshops for teachers, social workers and para-medical staff on identification and early intervention of various abuses; and

- promotion of harmonious family relationship and responsible parenting by developing training package on parenting, holding training sessions, and open talks and interactive drama shows;
- (b) the DSWO will through the District Local Committee on Services for Young People strengthen collaboration with the education sector, co-ordinating with staff and students of local schools, youth service workers and parents to equip parents with parenting skills, and develop a more co-ordinated strategy to strengthen multi-disciplinary collaboration and support service for young people in the district. At the same time, there will be close collaboration with Government departments such as ED, HAD, local Police and fight crime committee to train police officers as volunteers giving guidance to youth-at-risk;
  - (c) the DSWO can press ahead with work on healthy ageing by mobilising and co-ordinating efforts of NGOs, psychiatrists, geriatric medical officers in hospital, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department in launching health talks, district wide activities to publicise healthy ageing;
  - (d) the DCC on Rehabilitation will organise local students to participate in seminars and workshop on mental health, visits to rehabilitation service units to promote local community's understanding and acceptance of the disabled and support for integration of people with disabilities in the community, especially when such projects are to be set up within the district;
  - (e) the DSWOs are well positioned to promote Volunteer Movement in the district by launching promotional and publicity campaigns to recruit, train and mobilise local volunteers, advocating the building of a caring community and encouraging proactive participation of local people to help those in need; and
  - (f) through networking by the DSWO, DCC representatives and DC members can join hands in forming support groups to provide assistance to residents affected by clearance and estate re-development programs, as well as on-going support and tailor-made assistance to move the able-bodied unemployed towards self-reliance and work.

4. On *planning* work, the DSWO will take reference from the population characteristics of the district to propose welfare services that best meet the needs of the community. In the coming years, we envisage that the DSWO will play an instrumental role in commissioning new pilot projects on more integrated care services for the elders, in liaising with NGOs and schools in implementing the Understanding Adolescent Project in secondary schools, in expediting the formation of integrated teams in youth services and in taking forward recommendations arising from the family services review.

5. There is one particular area that we believe the strengthened DSWOs are best placed to further develop and that is, ***outreaching*** to vulnerable groups such as new arrivals, single parent families, elders living alone and street sleepers to ensure they have access to community support services. In this respect, we propose to pool SWAs in the Youth Office and Rehabilitation and Elderly Office of DSWO to form an outreaching team under the District Planning and Co-ordinating Team. The outreaching team will work closely with the District's Group Work Units (based in community centres and estate community centres) to identify and offer services to vulnerable families in the community. They would mobilise and network these reached target families to become volunteers to reach out to other vulnerable families. We hope that through a strong and effective outreaching network, we would be able to promote neighbourhood support and community solidarity, leading to a more harmonious society.

Social Welfare Department

April 2001

**Proposed Job Description for  
District Social Welfare Officer**

**Rank: Principal Social Work Officer (D1)**

**Office: 13 Districts Social Welfare Office<sup>1</sup>**

**Responsible to: Two Deputy Directors of Social Welfare**

**Description of main duties:**

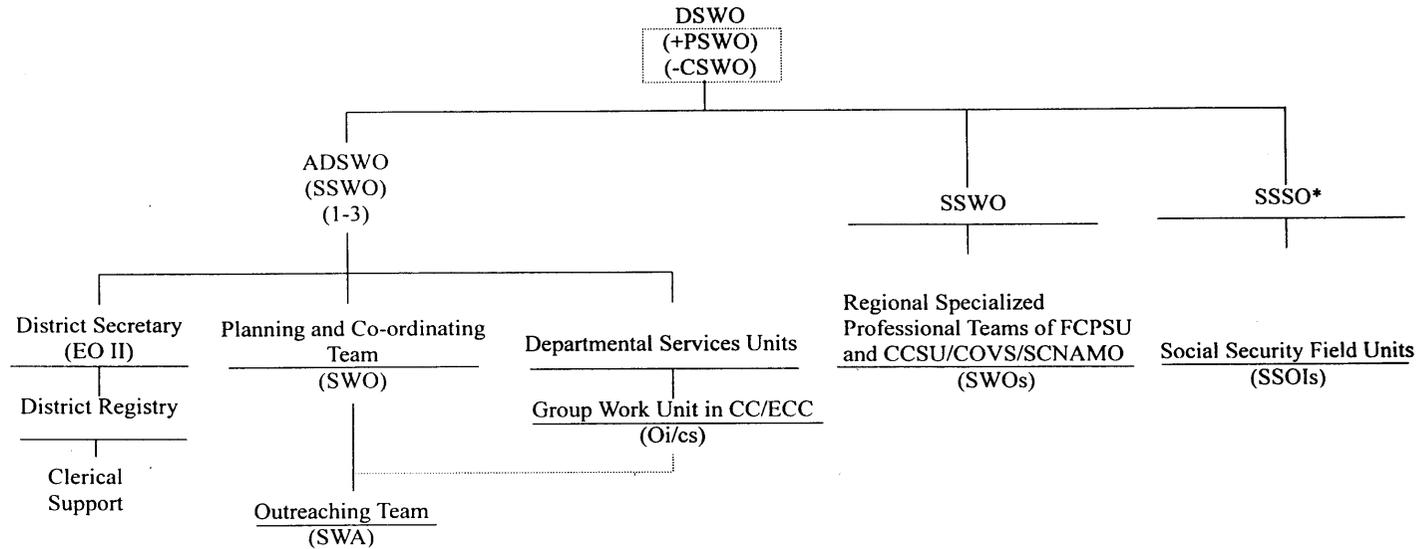
- (1) As district welfare planner and service co-ordinator working with increased district input from District Council members, NGO service providers, users and local personalities, to develop and formulate strategies in the planning and co-ordinating the delivery of welfare services in the district, to identify and assess social welfare needs of the district and to respond timely to rising public expectation;
- (2) to review and make recommendations on how departmental objectives, policies and operational procedures might be developed and improved at the district level;
- (3) to facilitate inter-sectoral collaboration and undertake co-ordination of welfare programmes aimed at building a caring community in the district with the NGOs, schools and community leaders;
- (4) to represent the department on District Council, District Management Committee, inter-departmental committees, working groups, etc., to explain and promote welfare policies in the district;
- (5) to provide information and views to Service Branches on district needs, specific features, complexities and local political dynamics on planned projects to facilitate service planning;
- (6) to administer and co-ordinate the operation of all the departmental service units in the district, to oversee the mode of service delivery and programmes design, and to recommend measures to improve efficiency in management and operation to meet departmental objectives;

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<sup>1</sup> 13 Districts, namely, Central & Western/Islands, Eastern & Wanchai, Southern, Kwun Tong, Wong Tai Sin & Sai Kung, Yau Tsim Mong, Sham Shui Po, Kowloon City, Shatin, Tai Po & North, Yuen Long, Tsuen Wan & Kwai Tsing and Tuen Mun

- (7) to promote volunteer movement in the district by launching promotional and publicity campaigns to recruit, train and mobilise local volunteers, advocating the building of a caring community and encouraging participation of local people to help those in need;
- (8) to provide assistance to vulnerable groups such as new arrivals, single parent families, elders living alone and street sleepers to ensure they have access to community support services through networking and outreaching services and provide assistance to those able-bodied unemployed towards self-reliance and re-integrated into the workforce and community;
- (9) without duplicating or conflicting the role of the Human Resource Management Branch in the headquarters, to assume the role of Human Resource Manager in the district, ensuring that HR policies and procedures are practised down to frontline level staff; to supervise, develop and manage staff under his charge, and to maximize the utilization of available resources; and
- (10) to perform any other duties as assigned by the senior directorate.

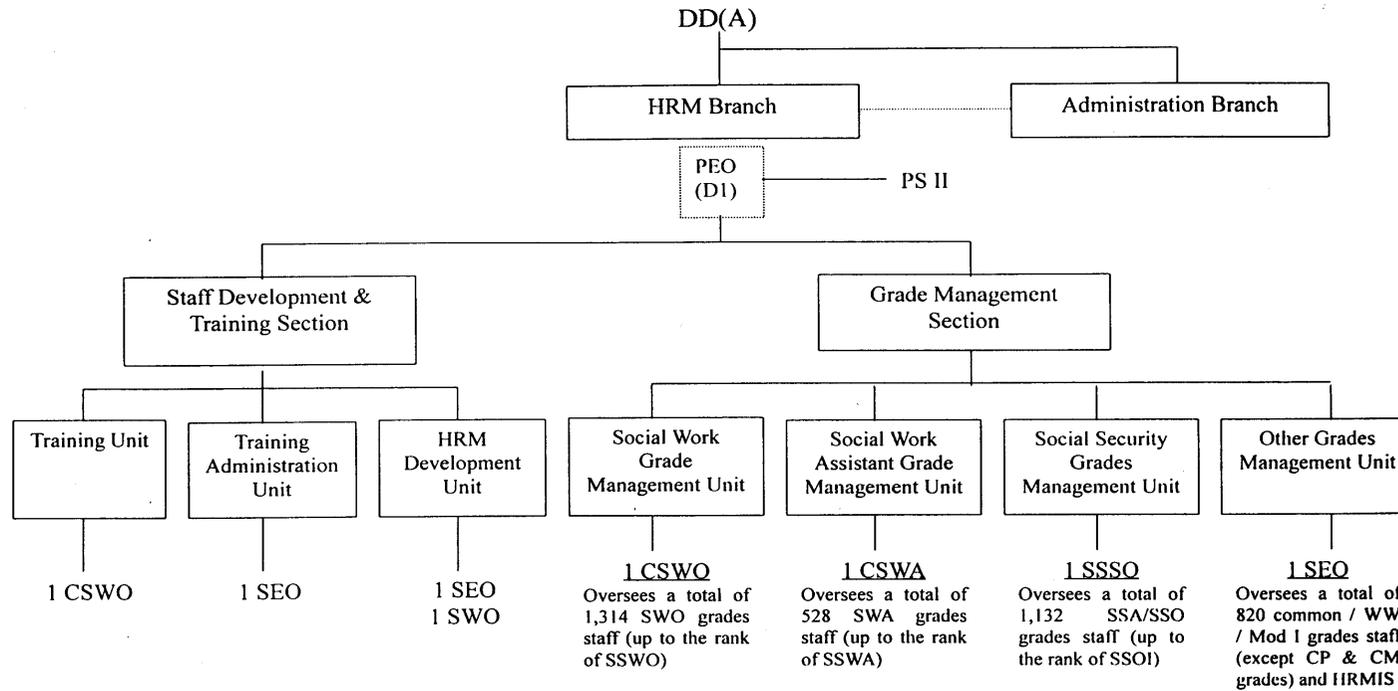
**Proposed Structure of a Typical District Social Welfare Office**



- PSWO : Principal Social Work Officer (D1)
- CSWO : Chief Social Work Officer (MPS 45-49)
- SSWO : Senior Social Work Officer (MPS 40-44)
- SWO : Social Work Officer (MPS 34-39)
- SSSO : Senior Social Security Officer (MPS 34-44)
- SSOI : Social Security Officer I (MPS 28-33)
- SWA : Social Work Assistant (MPS 7-22)
- EO II : Executive Officer II (MPS 12-27)

- \* A total of 7 SSSOs to oversee FUs in 13 Districts
- Proposed upgrading of CSWO to PSWO

**Proposed Structure of HRM Branch**



DD(A) : Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Administration) (D3)  
 PEO : Principal Executive Officer (D1)  
 CSWO : Chief Social Work Officer (MPS 45-49)  
 CSWA : Chief Social Work Assistant (MPS 30-33)

SSSO : Senior Social Security Officer (MPS 34-44)  
 SEO : Senior Executive Officer (MPS 34-44)  
 SWO : Social Work Officer (MPS 34-39)  
 PS II : Personal Secretary II (MPS 3-15)

**PROPOSED JOB DESCRIPTION**

**Rank : Principal Executive Officer (D1)**

**Office : Head, Human Resource Management Branch**

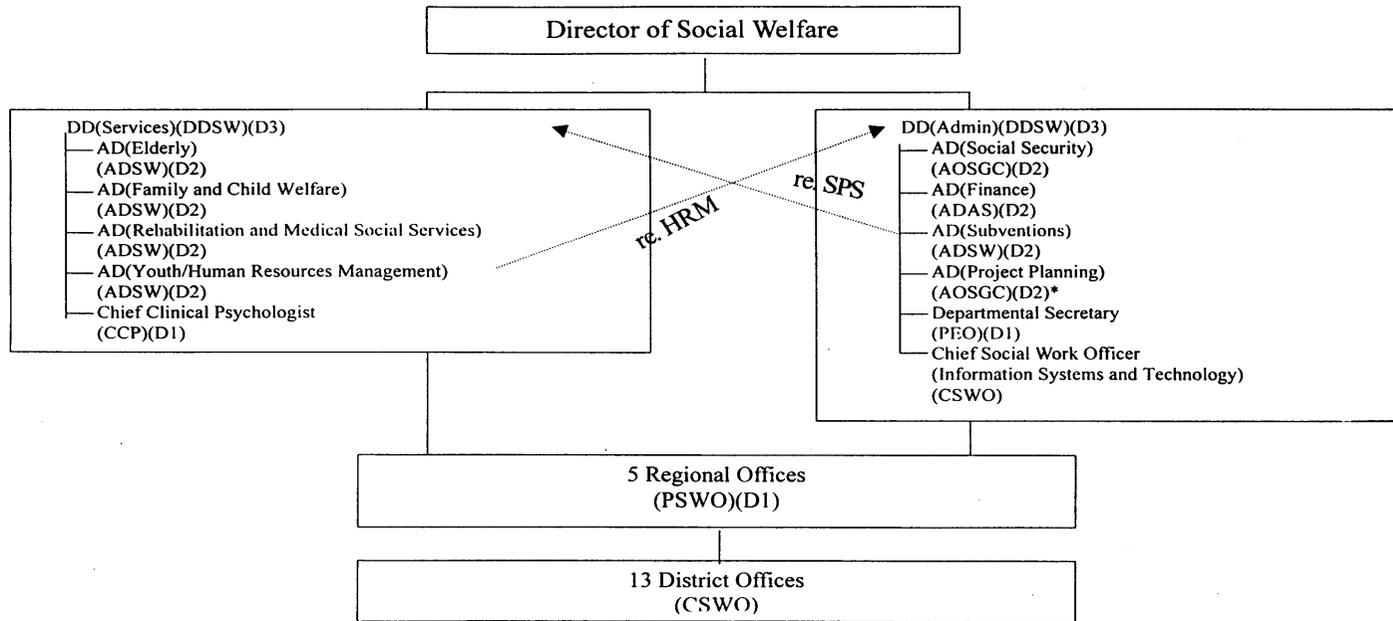
**Responsible to : Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Administration)**

**Description of main duties:**

- (1) Overseeing and supervising the management of, and to draw up manpower plans and to formulate strategic plans and policies relating to the social work officer grade, social work assistant grade, social security officer and assistant grades, welfare worker grade and other common grades / MODI grades to match with the Department's strategic goals and objectives;
- (2) to formulate departmental Human Resource Management (HRM) plans in accordance with the strategic directions set by the HRM Steering Committee, and determine the priorities for implementation;
- (3) to deal personally with grade management matters of all Chief Social Work Officers, Chief Social Welfare Assistants, Chief Social Security Officers, Senior Social Security Officers, and, Senior Executive Officers of HRM Branch in consultation with the Departmental Secretary;
- (4) to administer career development and planning system in respect of grades under Item (1), above deciding on their posting / transfer, regularly reviewing their progress and achievements, including the conduct of career interviews, and providing staff counselling where necessary;
- (5) planning and monitoring the performance management and development system of these grades and be personally involved in respect of those ranks in Item (3);
- (6) administering the competency-based assessment system of these grades;
- (7) advising on discipline / award and extension of service for the ranks of the CSWO, CSWA, CSSO and SSSO ranks and disciplinary cases of other ranks involving serious misconduct;
- (8) identifying training needs vis-a-vis the operational requirements and initiating action to fulfill these needs, including drawing up of training programmes;

- (9) approving passage over probation / trial bars and advising on cases of refusal / deferment of probation / trial bars and stoppage of increments; and
- (10) dealing with staff unions on grade management matters.

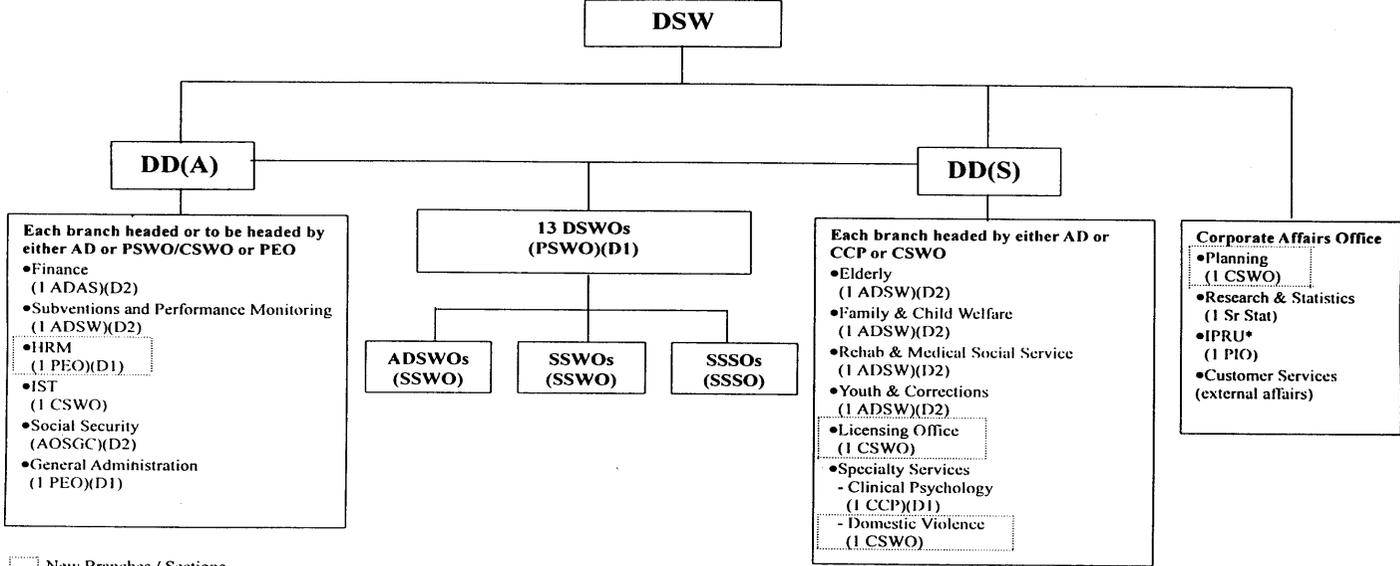
**Current Structure**



- DD(S) : Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Services) (D3)
- DD(A) : Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Administration) (D3)
- AOSGC : Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2)
- ADSW : Assistant Director of Social Welfare (D2)
- ADAS : Assistant Director of Accounting Services (D2)
- \* : Temporarily held against by a PEO post (D1) since April 2001.

- PSWO : Principal Social Work Officer (D1)
- CCP : Chief Clinical Psychologist (D1)
- PEO : Principal Executive Officer (D1)
- CSWO : Chief Social Work Officer (MPS 45-49)

**Proposed New Structure**



□ New Branches / Sections  
 \* Staff seconded from ISD

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| DD(A) : Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Administration) (D3) | PEO : Principal Executive Officer (D1)            |
| DD(S) : Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Services) (D3)       | CSWO : Chief Social Work Officer (MPS 45-49)      |
| ADSW : Assistant Director of Social Welfare (D2)                | SSWO : Senior Social Work Officer (MPS 40-44)     |
| AOSGC : Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2) (AOOR)        | SSSO : Senior Social Security Officer (MPS 34-44) |
| ADAS : Assistant Director of Accounting Services (D2)           | Sr Stat. : Senior Statistician (MPS 45-49)        |
| PSWO : Principal Social Welfare Officer (D1)                    | PIO : Principal Information Officer (MPS 40-44)   |
| CCP : Chief Clinical Psychologist (D1)                          |   |

Establishment Changes

<u>Category</u>	<u>Before Re-Organization</u>		<u>After Re-Organization</u>		<u>Difference</u>	
	<u>No. of Posts at 1.2.2001</u>		<u>No. of Posts at 1.9.2001 (Tentatively)</u>			
	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
1. <MPS 16 (including MOD I)	3,674	68.78%	3,655	68.77%	-19	-0.52%
2. MPS 16 - 33	1,143	21.40%	1,144	21.52%	+1	0.09%
3. MPS 34 - 44 (including GDPS(O) Pt.21)	467	8.74%	460	8.66%	-7	-1.50%
4. MPS 45 & above (including Directorate)	58	1.08%	56	1.05%	-2	-3.45%
<b>Total :</b>	<b>5,342</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>5,315</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>-27</b>	<b>-0.51%</b>

**Proposed Changes of Overall Establishment  
brought about by this reorganization exercise**

(Post Implication by Grade and by Rank)

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Establishment (as at 1.2.2001)</b>	<b>Net Increase (+) / Decrease (-) of Establishment in District Level</b>	<b>Net Increase (+) / Decrease (-) of Establishment in HQs Level</b>	<b>Total No.(Net) Increase (+) / Decrease (-) of Establishment</b>	<b>Proposed Establishment</b>	<b>Percentage of Increase / Decrease in Establishment</b>
<b><u>Social Work Officer Grade</u></b>						
Principal Social Work Officer [D1]	5	+8	+0	+8	13	160.00%
Chief Social Work Officer	27	-13	+2	-11	16	-40.74%
Senior Social Work Officer	66	+9	-5	+4	70	6.06%
Social Work Officer	367	-13	-4	-17	350	-4.63%
Assistant Social Work Officer	850	+4	-15	-11	839	-1.29%
Subtotal :	<u>1,315</u>	<u>-5</u>	<u>-22</u>	<u>-27</u>	<u>1,288</u>	<u>-2.05%</u>
<b><u>Social Work Assistant Grade</u></b>						
Chief Social Work Assistant	21	+0	+1	+1	22	4.76%
Senior Social Work Assistant	221	-1	+0	-1	220	-0.45%
Social Work Assistant	307	+0	+5	+5	312	1.63%
Subtotal :	<u>549</u>	<u>-1</u>	<u>+6</u>	<u>+5</u>	<u>554</u>	<u>0.91%</u>

<b><u>Rank</u></b>	<b><u>Establishment (as at 1.2.2001)</u></b>	<b><u>Net Increase (+) / Decrease (-) of Establishment in District Level</u></b>	<b><u>Net Increase (+) / Decrease (-) of Establishment in HQs Level</u></b>	<b><u>Total No.(Net) Increase (+) / Decrease (-) of Establishment</u></b>	<b><u>Proposed Establishment</u></b>	<b><u>Percentage of Increase / Decrease in Establishment</u></b>
<b><u>Social Security Officer Grade</u></b>						
Senior Social Security Officer	14	+2	+0	+2	16	14.29%
Social Security Officer I	57	+0	+0	0	57	0.00%
Social Security Officer II	195	+2	+2	+4	199	2.05%
Subtotal :	<u>266</u>	<u>+4</u>	<u>+2</u>	<u>+6</u>	<u>272</u>	<u>2.26%</u>
<b><u>Administrative Officer Grade</u></b>						
Administrative Officer Staff Grade C [D2]	1	+0	-1	-1	0	-100.00%
Subtotal :	<u>1</u>	<u>+0</u>	<u>-1</u>	<u>-1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>-100.00%</u>
<b><u>Executive Officer Grade</u></b>						
Principal Executive Officer [D1]	1	+0	+1	+1	2	100.00%
Chief Executive Officer	1	+0	+1	+1	2	100.00%
Senior Executive Officer	8	+0	+4	+4	12	50.00%
Executive Officer I	22	-5	+4	-1	21	-4.55%
Executive Officer II	18	+13	-3	+10	28	55.56%
Subtotal :	<u>50</u>	<u>+8</u>	<u>+7</u>	<u>+15</u>	<u>65</u>	<u>30.00%</u>

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Establishment (as at 1.2.2001)</b>	<b><u>Net Increase (+) / Decrease (-) of Establishment in District Level</u></b>	<b><u>Net Increase (+) / Decrease (-) of Establishment in HQs Level</u></b>	<b><u>Total No.(Net) Increase (+) / Decrease (-) of Establishment</u></b>	<b><u>Proposed Establishment</u></b>	<b><u>Percentage of Increase / Decrease in Establishment</u></b>
<b><u>Clerical &amp; Secretarial Grades</u></b>						
Clerical Officer	83	-5	+6	+1	84	1.20%
Assistant Clerical Officer	299	-5	-7	-12	287	-4.01%
Subtotal :	<u>382</u>	<u>-10</u>	<u>-1</u>	<u>-11</u>	<u>371</u>	<u>-2.88%</u>
Clerical Assistant	669	-6	-1	-7	662	-1.05%
Subtotal :	<u>669</u>	<u>-6</u>	<u>-1</u>	<u>-7</u>	<u>662</u>	<u>-1.05%</u>
Personal Secretary I	10	+0	-1	-1	9	-10.00%
Personal Secretary II	11	+8	+1	+9	20	81.82%
Subtotal :	<u>21</u>	<u>+8</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>+8</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>38.10%</u>
Senior Typist	10	+0	-1	-1	9	-10.00%
Typist	41	+0	-4	-4	37	-9.76%
Subtotal :	<u>51</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>-5</u>	<u>-5</u>	<u>46</u>	<u>-9.80%</u>
Office Assistant	61	-4	+0	-4	57	-6.56%
Confidential Assistant	2	+0	+2	+2	4	100.00%
Subtotal :	<u>63</u>	<u>-4</u>	<u>+2</u>	<u>-2</u>	<u>61</u>	<u>-3.17%</u>

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Establishment (as at 1.2.2001)</u>	<u>Net Increase (+) / Decrease (-) of Establishment in District Level</u>	<u>Net Increase (+) / Decrease (-) of Establishment in HQs Level</u>	<u>Total No.(Net) Increase (+) / Decrease (-) of Establishment</u>	<u>Proposed Establishment</u>	<u>Percentage of Increase / Decrease in Establishment</u>
<b><u>Other Grades</u></b>						
Motor Driver	43	+7	-11	-4	39	-9.30%
Architect	2	+0	+1	+1	3	50.00%
Quantity Surveyor	1	+0	+1	+1	2	100.00%
Assistant Supplies Officer	2	+0	-1	-1	1	-50.00%
Supplies Supervisor II	5	+0	+0	0	5	0.00%
Accounting Officer II	12	+0	-3	-3	9	-25.00%
Statistician	4	+0	+0	0	4	0.00%
Workman II	264	-1	-1	-2	262	-0.76%
Subtotal :	<u>333</u>	<u>+6</u>	<u>-14</u>	<u>-8</u>	<u>325</u>	<u>-2.40%</u>
<b>Total :</b>	<b><u>3,700</u></b>	<b><u>0</u></b>	<b><u>-27</u></b>	<b><u>-27</u></b>	<b><u>3,673</u></b>	<b><u>-0.73%</u></b>

**Consultation with District Councils**

Since January 2001, we have taken the opportunity of DSW briefing individual District Councils (DCs) on social welfare services to consult the DCs on the SWD re-organisation proposal. We discussed with the DCs the necessity of re-structuring SWD to meet future challenges and sought their views towards the plan of eliminating the RO level and strengthening the DSWOs, including the proposal to upgrade the 13 DSWOs to D1 level. So far we have consulted 14 DCs and DSW will meet the remaining four DCs in the coming two months.

2. The overall response from the 14 DCs is positive. They appreciated SWD taking a proactive approach in discussing with them social welfare policies and service provision in their respective districts. Most DC members who had spoken during the DC meetings expressed concrete support to the re-organisation proposal. They anticipated that the delayering of regional offices and strengthening of district offices would improve the communication among the DCs, DSWOs and SWD Headquarters. They shared the views that the enhanced roles and authorities of district offices would make co-ordination work in the districts more effective, and thus facilitate more efficient operation of the DCs in respect of social welfare matters.

3. While welcoming the re-organisation proposals, DC members have also raised the following related concerns:

- a couple of DC members asked if resources would be cut upon SWD re-organisation (which is not our objective);
- some DC members asked if the promotion prospect, workload, work pressure and morale of staff would be affected;
- several DC members reminded us that with enhanced roles responsibilities, DSWOs should also be given sufficient resources to deal with district issues effectively;
- members of Islands, Eastern and Wan Chai DCs suggested putting in more resources to set up a designated welfare office for the districts (at the moment, Central & Western and Islands come under one SWO District; the same exists for Eastern and Wan Chai)

4. In response to the above concerns, DSW explained that it was not feasible at the moment to re-align the SWD districts with the DCs but the span of control would be taken into account in determining the actual resources of individual DSWOs. DSW also assured DC Members that maximum staff buy-in and no staff redundancies were main parameters guiding the re-organisation.

5. Specific views of the DCs are summarised below for reference.

<b>Date</b>	<b>District Council</b>	<b>Specific views / concerns</b>
19 January	Sha Tin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A member was concerned if the re-organisation would affect promotion prospects and staff morale.</li> </ul>
2 February	Islands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three members spoke in support of the proposed re-organisation.</li> <li>• The district office overseeing both CW and Islands districts should have sufficient manpower and there should be sufficient publicity to educate residents.</li> </ul>
8 February	North	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A member complimented that the proposal was proactive.</li> <li>• A member expressed agreement to the streamlining proposal, as DSWOs would be upgraded and empowered to reflect district affairs to HQs.</li> </ul>
22 February	Eastern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A member expressed agreement to the streamlining, as upgrading of DSWOs could empower them with more authority to answer DC members more directly and facilitate the operation of DC.</li> <li>• A member raised that Eastern district was quite different from the Wan Chai district in population characteristics, and suggested giving more resources to set up a designated office for Eastern district.</li> </ul>
1 March	Southern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Altogether six members spoke in support of the streamlining proposal, the 2-tier structure, and the strengthening of the district office and enhancing the role and accountability of DSWOs. They believed that it would be conducive to the co-ordination of district affairs, resulting in more efficient reflection of district views, direct communication with HQs, and better district welfare work.</li> <li>• A member was concerned if more workload would be shifted to lower level staff.</li> </ul>
1 March	Yau Tsim Mong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members supported streamlining SWD structure, as it would enhance work efficiency.</li> <li>• A member suggested keeping original manpower to facilitate changes.</li> <li>• A member concerned if re-organisation was a</li> </ul>

Date	District Council	Specific views / concerns
		<p>Means to cut cost.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two members raised objections to the proposals which would lead to more staff and more senior staff.</li> </ul>
6 March	Tuen Mun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The DC did not discuss the proposals specifically but thanked DSW for the briefing, requested SWD to take the views of the DC in policy making and hoped that such consultation could be conducted annually.</li> </ul>
20 March	Wan Chai	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A member agreed that the streamlining would enhance efficiency and suggested having a designate DSWO for Wan Chai district.</li> </ul>
27 March	Tsuen Wan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A member spoke in support of re-organising district office to improve efficiency and asked for increased resources for Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing districts.</li> <li>A member asked not to cut resources upon re-organisation.</li> <li>A member asked for sight of the new staffing establishment in the restructured Tsuen Wan district office.</li> </ul>
3 April	Wong Tai Sin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Three members spoke in support of the proposal.</li> <li>There was concern whether the changes would affect staff morale and services in the district.</li> </ul>
10 April	Sai Kung	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A member spoke in support of the streamlining but was concerned if it would assert a higher pressure on frontline staff, e.g. staff in Social Security Field Units.</li> <li>A member asked SWD to maintain close co-ordination with local people.</li> </ul>
12 April	Sham Shui Po	<i>Minutes not yet available</i>
17 April	Kwun Tong	
19 April	Kowloon City	