

Panel on Welfare Services

List of outstanding items for discussion
(position as at 4 November 2004)

Proposed timing for discussion

1. Support for vulnerable elders

At the Panel meeting on 10 May 2004, members agreed that should the Panel decide to hold a meeting in July 2004, consideration should be given to further discussing support for vulnerable elders. The discussion should, among others, include the effectiveness of the re-engineering of family service centres (FCSs)/counselling units into integrated family service centres (IFSCs) on providing support for vulnerable elders.

A written response had been sent to the Panel on 9 July 2004
(LC Paper No. CB(2)3028/03-04(01))

Discussion on the matter was not held at the Panel meeting in July 2004. The Administration, however, had provided a paper in July 2004 setting out its responses to various issues/concerns raised by members at the meeting on 10 May 2004 (LC Paper No. CB(2)3028/03-04(01)).

2. Measures to address poverty

At the last legislative session, members agreed that the issue of women and children living in poverty should be followed up by the new Panel in the next legislative session.

The poverty issue has been discussed in the motion debate on 3 November 2004

At the Panel meeting on 12 October 2004, Hon Frederick FUNG proposed to invite the Administration to brief the Panel on the progress made in addressing the poverty problem.

3. Operation of the SARS Trust Fund

At the Panel meeting on 12 October Hon LI Fung-ying proposed and members agreed that the Administration should be invited to update members on the operation of the SARS Trust Fund, including a series of complaints lodged by a deputation against the operation of the Fund which had been referred to the Administration for follow-up in May 2004.

An information note entitled "Third Progress Report on the Trust Fund for Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome" has been submitted to the Panel
(LC Paper No. CB(2)153/04-05(01))

Proposed timing for discussion

4. Provision of infirmary beds in non-hospital settings

In line with the principle of "continuum of care", the Administration will start a pilot project to provide a limited number of subsidised infirmary places in non-hospital setting.

December 2004

5. Support and assistance for paralysed patients living in the community

The above item was discussed by the Panel on two occasions on 10 May 2004 and 19 July 2004. Although members welcomed the Administration's plan to grant a Care and Attention (C&A) Allowance of \$4,296 per month to paralysed patients on CSSA to hire a carer even if the patient had a family carer who was available to provide help at home, they considered that the provision would do little to alleviate the burden of the patient as the amount was not sufficient to hire an overseas domestic helper. A member also suggested allowing paralysed patients to receive the C&A Allowance even if they chose to live in the Mainland. Members agreed that the aforesaid issues should be followed up by the new Panel in the next legislative session.

Early 2005

6. Trust Fund for SARS

An update on the latest cashflow position.

January/February 2005

7. Community Investment and Inclusion Fund

An update on the progress of the Community Investment and Inclusion Fund and its way forward.

January/February 2005

8. Measures to help single parents on CSSA to achieve self-reliance

At the Panel meeting on 9 February 2004, the Administration agreed to revert to the Panel on the improvement measures to help single parents achieve self-reliance, upon completion of the review on the entire issue of single parents on CSSA.

1st quarter of 2005

Proposed timing for discussion

9. Transforming home for the elderly into care and attention home

Item proposed by Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG at the Panel meeting on 12 October 2004.

1st quarter of 2005

10. Portable CSSA Scheme and residence requirements for Old Age Allowance (OAA)

Hon CHOY So-yuk proposed to expand the coverage of the Portable CSSA Scheme to Fukien Province and other provinces and relax the permissible limits of absence from Hong Kong.

1st quarter of 2005

Hon TAM Yiu-chung also proposed to relax the permissible limits of absence from Hong Kong under OAA.

11. Report of the Subcommittee on Guardianship and Custody of the Law Reform Commission

At the meeting held on 11 March 2002, members agreed that the Administration should brief the Panel on the above report when it became available.

2nd quarter of 2005

The Administration understands that the remaining reports on the subject of custody and access should be ready by end 2004.

12. Progress of the formation of Integrated Vocational Rehabilitation Services Centres

Item proposed by Hon WONG Sing-chi at the Panel meeting on 7 July 2003.

May/June 2005

13. Subsidy arrangements for residential care services for frail elders

The Administration undertook to consult members on the finalised Fee Assistance Scheme for residential care services for frail elders, taking into account the suggestion of establishing a separate financial assistance scheme for elders and other views expressed by members on the matter on 12 May 2003.

3rd quarter of 2005

Proposed timing for discussion

14. Evaluation of the re-engineered community support services for elders

Item proposed by Hon CHAN Yuen-han.

4th quarter of 2005

15. Charitable fund-raising activities

The Administration's paper on enhancing the monitoring of charitable fund-raising activities was discussed at the Panel meeting on 19 July 2004. Members agreed that the proposal of regulating funding-raising activities by mail should be followed up by the new Panel in the next legislative session.

4th quarter of 2005

The Reference Guide on Best Practices for Charitable Fund-raising Activities has been promulgated in October 2004. The Administration would review the situation in one year.

16. Review of the implementation of the standardized needs assessment tool for admission to residential homes for people with disabilities

Members agreed at the Panel meeting on 14 June 2004 that the implementation of the standardized needs assessment tool for admission to residential homes for people with disabilities (PWDs) should be followed up by the new Panel in the next legislative session.

1st quarter of 2006

The Administration has pointed out that as the implementation of the assessment tool is set for January 2005, a review of the effectiveness of the assessment tool to identify those PWDs with genuine need for residential services and match them with appropriate types of residential homes would take place one year after.

Proposed timing for discussion

17. Latest situation on the implementation of review of family services

Item proposed by Hon Albert CHAN at the Panel meeting on 12 October 2004. 1st/2nd quarter of 2006

The Administration has advised that transforming all existing FCSs/counselling units into IFSCs is set for completion in 2004-05. A review on the implementation of the aforesaid transformation would take place one year after.

18. Workload of social workers

Item proposed by Hon Mrs Sophie LEUNG at the Panel meeting on 12 October 2004. To be decided

The Administration is now studying the subject and will discuss the issue with members upon completion of the work.

19. Funding for social service in the next financial year

Item proposed by Hon LEE Cheuk-yan at the Panel meeting on 12 October 2004. To be decided

The Administration is now working on the subject and will revert to members when it has a clearer picture on the matter.

20. Establishing formal arrangements on adoption with the Mainland

At the request of the Bills Committee on Adoption (Amendment) Bill 2003, the Administration undertook to study the need to establish formal arrangements on adoption with the Mainland and consult the relevant Panel in due course. To be decided

The Administration will raise this with the Central People's Government and revert to the Panel in due course.

Proposed timing for discussion

21. Social welfare planning mechanism, subvention system for the welfare sector and efficiency savings with regard to the welfare sector in the period from 2005-06 to 2008-09

At the Panel meeting on 8 March 2004, the Administration was requested to brief members in June 2004 on the progress made for implementing the 0-0-X funding proposal for the welfare sector and the development of a blueprint for the social welfare policies, and to respond to the Hong Kong Council of Social Service's requests for reviewing the Lump Sum Grant (LSG) subvention system, in particular the aspect relating to funding of personal emoluments.

To be decided

The Government has an overriding commitment to contain the welfare expenditures. The Administration would continue to work closely with the welfare sector to ease/smooth the efficiency savings exercise, and will render assistance to those non-governmental organisations that have genuine difficulties in meeting the savings targets.

In consultation with the LSG Steering Committee, the Administration has commissioned a consultancy to conduct a survey on the NGOs' needs for financial assistance after the "Tide-over Period". It is targeted that the Survey be completed before end of 2004.