

Panel on Welfare Services

List of outstanding items for discussion
(position as at 8 June 2006)

Proposed timing for discussion

1. Social welfare planning mechanism

At the Panel meeting on 8 May 2006, members were briefed on the Administration's present social welfare planning mechanism, including annual consultation and district planning. Nothing that the first annual consultation session for 2006 would be held in June 2006, members agreed that the Administration should report to the Panel on the discussions in the June consultation session, and further discuss with the Panel on future long-term planning for welfare services, in July 2006.

July 2006

2. Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged

The Administration would like to report the progress of this Fund.

3rd quarter of 2006

3. 2005 Rehabilitation Programme Plan Review

Item proposed by the Administration.

3rd/4th quarter of 2006

4. 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 2006

The Reference Guide on Best Practices for Charitable Fund-raising Activities has been promulgated in November 2004. The Administration is conducting a review.

Proposed timing for discussion

5. Infirmiry care in non-hospital setting

The Administration consulted the Panel in December 2004 on a proposal to launch a trial scheme to provide infirmiry care places for medically stable elders in a non-hospital setting. In the light of feedback from the Panel and the sector during the consultation process, the Administration is considering the best way to bring forward the proposal.

4th quarter of 2006

6. Progress report on the pilot implementation of the Comprehensive Child Development Service

The Administration wishes to report progress of the implementation of this pilot scheme.

4th quarter of 2006

7. 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.

4th quarter of 2006

The Report on Custody and Access by the Subcommittee on Guardianship and Custody of the Law Reform Commission was released on 7 March 2005. The Administration is studying the recommendations carefully and will consider how to take forward the relevant recommendations together with the recommendations made in the other two earlier reports, namely, the Report on Guardianship of Children and Report on International Parental Child Abduction.

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

Item proposed by Hon CHAN Yuen-han.

4th quarter of 2006

Proposed timing for discussion

9. 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 quarter of 2007

The Administration has advised that transformation of all existing Family Services Centres/counselling units into 61 Integrated Family Services Centres was completed in March 2005. A review on the implementation of the aforesaid transformation would take place after one year.

10. Retirement protection

Item proposed by Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG. 1st quarter of 2007

11. Social security assistance for needy elderly in Hong Kong

Discussions were held at the Panel meeting on 13 June 2005. The Administration was requested to brief the Panel about its thinking on how better to provide retirement protection to the current and future generation of older persons by the end of the year. 1st quarter of 2007

12. Subsidy arrangements for residential care services for frail elders

The Administration aims to report progress on the work relating to the feasibility of developing the proposed 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 2007

13. Lump sum grant subventions system

At the special meeting on 30 March 2006, members agreed that the Panel should follow-up on the validity of the 9.3% reduction from the Benchmark Salary of non-governmental organisations on lump sum grant. To be decided

Proposed timing for discussion

14. 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 has raised this with the Ministry of Civil Affairs (MCA). The Central People's Government (CPG) has already put in place legislation and mechanism to handle adoption of Mainland children by Hong Kong people. As regards adoption of children in Hong Kong by Mainlanders, the CPG does not see an urgent need for it at the moment because there is little demand, according to the MCA. The CPG may however consider adoption by close relatives on a case-by-case basis. The Administration will continue to liaise with the CPG.

15. Incorporating the posts of programme assistant, youth ambassador, peer counsellor and other similar temporary frontline posts into the staff establishment of the subvented organisations providing welfare services

The Panel was requested by Duty Roster Members to follow up the matter with the Administration.

To be decided

The Administration's position on the issue had been sent to the Panel vide LC Paper No. CB(2)1022/04-05(01) on 8 March 2005 (Chinese version only).

The Manpower Panel was briefed on the Administration's proposal to retain the existing 11 600 temporary jobs in the public sector, including 3 836 jobs in the Social Welfare Department, at its meeting on 19 January 2006.

16. Rehab buses for disabled persons

Referred for follow-up by the Panel at a special meeting of the Finance Committee held on 13 April 2005.

To be decided

Proposed timing for discussion

17. Setting up of a refuge centre for abused men

Referred for follow-up by Duty Roster Members following their meeting with a deputation on 13 June 2005. To be decided

18. Developing strategy and measures to promote a self/mutual help culture in the community

Item proposed by Hon Mrs Sophie LEUNG. To be decided

19. Establishment of a mental health council

Referred by the Panel on Home Affairs for follow-up. To be decided

During the discussion on the concluding observations adopted by the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the Second Report of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights by the Panel on Home Affairs on 21 June 2005, the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) recommended that a mental health council should be established to coordinate policy formulation, programme delivery, research and public education in the area of mental health, and to safeguard the rights of people with mental illness.

At the Panel on Home Affairs meeting of 10 March 2006, EOC noted the Government's position that there is no strong need for the establishment of a Mental Health Council. EOC therefore urged the Government to formulate a more comprehensive strategy on mental health in consultation with stakeholders under the current Review of Hong Kong Rehabilitation Programme Plan.