

Panel on Welfare Services

List of outstanding items for discussion
(position as at 7 June 2007)

Proposed timing for discussion

1. 2005 Rehabilitation Programme Plan Review

At past Panel meetings, members were informed that the Administration was conducting a review of Rehabilitation Programme Plan. The Administration undertook to submit the Plan to the Panel once the drafting and the necessary consultation process were completed.

July 2007

2. Services of the new Multi-purpose Crisis Intervention and Support Centre

At its meeting on 31 July 2006, the Subcommittee on Strategy and Measures to Tackle Family Violence passed a motion urging the Administration to conduct further consultation on the proposed new service model for victims of sexual violence and to suspend the bidding procedure for operating the new Multi-purpose Crisis Intervention and Support Centre in August 2006. The Subcommittee agreed at its meeting on 20 September 2006 that the Panel be requested to follow up the matter with the Administration.

July 2007

3. 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 on its thinking on how better to provide retirement protection to the current and future generation of older persons.

3rd quarter of 2007

The Administration has advised that the Government has launched a study on "Sustainability of the Three Pillars of Retirement Protection in Hong Kong", which is expected to be completed in 2007. The Government will consider the findings of the study in deciding the future course of action.

Proposed timing for discussion

4. Progress of the Community Investment and Inclusion Fund

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

3rd quarter of 2007

5. A project for residential homes for people with disabilities

Item proposed by the Administration.

3rd quarter of 2007

6. Infirmity care in non-hospital setting

The Administration consulted the Panel in December 2004 on a proposal to launch a trial scheme to provide infirmity 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.

3rd/4th quarter of 2007

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 2007

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.

Proposed timing for discussion

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

Item proposed by Hon Albert CHAN at the Panel meeting on 12 October 2004.

4th 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 in 2007-2008.

9. Proposed establishment of the Family Commission

At the Panel meeting on 13 October 2006, the Panel was advised that the Administration would study the feasibility of setting up a Family Commission. At the Panel on Home Affairs meeting of 8 December 2006 when the proposal to discuss the establishment of a Commission on Children was raised, members agreed with the Administration's suggestion that the issue should be followed up by the Panel on Welfare Services in the context of the proposed establishment of a Family Commission. Members of the Panel on Home Affairs will be invited to the future meeting of the Panel if the issue is discussed.

To be decided

The subject had originally been scheduled for discussion by the Panel at the meeting in April 2007. At the request of the Administration, discussion on the item would be deferred to a future meeting. The Administration has advised that a steering committee has been formed to take forward the initiative set out in the 2006-2007 Policy Address to study whether a Family Commission should be set up. The study is still in progress and no conclusion has been reached.

Proposed timing for discussion

10. 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.

To be decided

11. 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 Panels 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.

Proposed timing for discussion

12. 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).

In 2007-2008, 3 073 out of 3 836 temporary jobs under SWD's schedule are retained. Of these, 1 383 posts are regularised while 1 690 positions are extended for one year.

13. 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

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

Item proposed by Hon Mrs Sophie LEUNG.

To be decided

15. Retirement protection

Item proposed by Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG.

To be decided

16. Residential care homes and private homes for the elderly and mentally disabled

Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki has proposed to discuss measures to enhance the services of residential care homes and private homes for the elderly and mentally disabled.

To be decided

Proposed timing for discussion

17. The disregarded earnings arrangement under the CSSA Scheme and other measures to encourage and assist CSSA recipients to move towards self-reliance

When the review of disregarded earnings (DE) under the CSSA Scheme was discussed at the Panel meeting on 12 April 2007, members raised concern about the effectiveness of the DE arrangements and other measures introduced to encourage and assist CSSA recipients to move towards self-reliance. Members agreed that as the subject of DE arrangements was related to the employment of CSSA recipients, a joint meeting could be held with the Panel on Manpower to discuss the subject and that the meeting would be arranged after the institutional structure to deal with policies concerning employment and welfare services had been decided.

To be decided

18. Public dental care services for the needy

At the meeting of the Subcommittee on Review of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme on 2 April 2007, the provision of public dental care services for the needy, including CSSA recipients, was discussed.

To be decided

As the subject of public dental care services for the needy was beyond its purview, the Subcommittee agreed that the matter should be referred to the Panel on Welfare Services and the Panel on Health Services for follow-up, and a joint meeting of the two Panels could be held as appropriate.

Proposed timing for discussion

19. Support services for young drug abusers

Item proposed by Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki at the meeting on 12 October 2006. Dr KWOK suggested that deputations, particularly frontline social workers, should be invited to give views to the Panel when the matter was discussed.

To be decided

At the Panel meeting on 12 February 2007, members noted that the Panel on Security had discussed the latest drug abuse situation and anti-drug strategies at its meeting on 6 February 2007 and members of the Panel on Welfare Services had been invited to join the discussion. However, in view of the problem of cross-border drug abuse involving young abusers was becoming serious, members considered that the Panel should discuss the matter further focusing on the support and services provided by Social Welfare Department (SWD) and social welfare agencies for young abusers.

The Administration has advised that while the issue of drug abuses is under the policy purview of the Security Bureau (SB), SWD works for SB to provide preventive and rehabilitative services dedicated to drug abusers through non-medical voluntary drug treatment and rehabilitation centres (DTRCs), counselling centres for psychotropic substance abusers, social clubs and halfway houses for discharges from DTRCs. On the other hand, SWD works for the Health, Welfare and Food Bureau for general welfare services to all needy youth, including drug abusers, through for example services at the Integrated Children and Youth Services Centres, outreaching work for youth at risks and probation services for offenders.

At the Panel meeting on 14 May 2007, members agreed that a joint meeting should be held with the Panel on Security to discuss support services for young drug abusers, subject to the views of the Panel on Security.

**Proposed timing for
discussion**

20. Child protection and pilot project on child fatality review

At the meeting on 14 May 2007, members discussed the framework for child protection and the proposed pilot project on child fatality review. The Panel passed a motion urging the Administration to establish an independent statutory Commission on Children and to make improvements to the pilot project. The Administration was requested to follow up on the motion and revert to the Panel in July 2007.

Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG moved a motion debate on the establishment of a Commission on Children at the Council meeting of 6 June 2007. The Secretary for Home Affairs has provided a response to the motion at the meeting.

21. 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. The subject matter was discussed by the Subcommittee to Study the Transport Needs of and Provision of Concessionary Public Transport Fares for Persons with Disabilities at its meeting on 22 May 2007.
