

Panel on Welfare Services

List of outstanding items for discussion
(position as at 5 December 2006)

Proposed timing for discussion

1. Review of Domestic Violence Ordinance

The Administration would like to consult the Panel on the final package of proposed legislative amendments to the Domestic Violence Ordinance before introducing the amendment bill to the Legislative Council.

January 2007

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

Item proposed by Hon CHAN Yuen-han.

1st quarter of 2007

3. Child protection

Discussions were held at the Panel meeting on 29 June 2006. The Panel agreed to follow up the views and recommendations of the members and deputations and a number of reports of the Law Reform Commission relating to child protection.

1st quarter of 2007

The Administration was requested to brief members on the details of its proposed death review mechanism for fatal child abuse cases before implementation and the outcome of the review on the pilot Comprehensive Child Development Scheme, both of which are expected to be available in the 4th quarter of 2006.

At members' request, the Research and Library Services Division of the Legislative Council Secretariat is conducting a research study on child protection policies and measures in England, Ontario and New South Wales. The research report which will be completed by the end of 2006 and submitted to the Panel for consideration.

Proposed timing for discussion

4. 2005 Rehabilitation Programme Plan Review

Item proposed by the Administration.

1st quarter of 2007

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 was 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.

The Rehabilitation Programme Plan Review Working Group did not see the need of setting up a Mental Health Council, but agreed that mental health is an important issue which must be addressed.

The Administration has, in August 2006, set up a Working Group on Mental Health Services to map out the development of future services.

The Panel may wish to follow up the above subject matter when the Administration reverts to the Panel on the review results.

5. A project for residential homes for people with disabilities

Item proposed by the Administration.

1st quarter of 2007

Proposed timing for discussion

6. Licensing of rehabilitation homes for people with disabilities

Item proposed by the Administration.

2nd quarter of 2007

7. Progress of the Community Investment and Inclusion Fund

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

2nd quarter of 2007

8. 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 by the end of the year.

2nd quarter of 2007

9. 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.

2nd quarter of 2007

Proposed timing for discussion

10. 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 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.

11. Infirmary care in non-hospital setting

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

2nd/^{3rd} quarter of 2007

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

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

3rd 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.

Proposed timing for discussion

13. 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

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 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

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 Panel on Manpower was briefed on the results of the review on temporary jobs in the public sector on 16 November 2006. SWD proposed to retain 3 073 out of 3 836 temporary jobs. Of these, 1 383 posts would be regularised while 1 690 positions would be extended in 2007-08.

16. 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

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

Item proposed by Hon Mrs Sophie LEUNG.

To be decided

Proposed timing for discussion

18. Services for victims of family violence to be provided by 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.

To be decided

19. Retirement protection

Item proposed by Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG.

To be decided

20. 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.

To be decided

The Reference Guide on Best Practices for Charitable Fund-raising Activities has been promulgated in November 2004.

Proposed timing for discussion

21. 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

22. Support services for juvenile 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

The Panel on Security has tentatively scheduled to discuss the latest drug abuse situation and anti-drug strategies at its meeting in February 2007.