

Panel on Welfare Services

List of outstanding items for discussion
(position as at 9 May 2008)

		Proposed timing for discussion
1.	Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged	
	The Administration would like to report on the progress of the Fund.	June 2008
2.	Work progress of the Family Council	
	The item was last discussed at the meeting on 14 February 2008. The Administration was requested to revert to the Panel on the work progress of the Family Council in April/May 2008.	To be advised
3.	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. The latest plan of the Administration is to upgrade some of the places in subvented residential care homes for the elderly to provide infirmary care. The Administration is in discussion with the sector on various requirements in relation to the upgrading exercise (e.g. staffing requirements) and aims to report progress in the 2nd/3rd quarter of 2008.	2 nd /3 rd quarter of 2008

Proposed timing for discussion

4. 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.

3rd quarter of 2008

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.

5. Provision of family services at Integrated Family Service Centres

The Administration proposes to discuss the matter in the fourth quarter of 2008.

4th quarter of 2008

6. 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 2008

The Administration has advised that transformation of all existing Family Services Centres/counselling units into 61 IFSCs was completed in March 2005. A review on the implementation of the aforesaid transformation will take place in 2008.

The Administration has subsequently advised that since the invitation of proposal for the review of IFSCs conducted between August and October 2007 has to be re-tendered, the earliest time to report progress to the Panel will be in fourth quarter of 2008.

Proposed timing for discussion

7. 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.

To be decided

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 due course. The Government will consider the findings of the study in deciding the future course of action.

At the meeting on 17 March 2008, members expressed grave concern about the slow progress of the study. Members agreed that the Panel should write to the Chief Executive (CE) enquiring about the latest position of the study.

CE's Office has replied on 24 April 2008 vide LC Paper No. CB(2)1766/07-08(01).

8. Subsidy arrangements for residential care services for frail elders

The subject was discussed at the Panel meeting on 12 May 2003. The Administration was requested to report work progress to the Panel taking into account members' views and suggestions.

To be decided

The Subcommittee on Elderly Services discussed with the Administration on residential care services for the elderly at the meetings on 22 January and 19 February 2008. Another meeting was held on 11 April 2008 to follow up the views expressed by the Subcommittee on, among other things, the subsidy arrangement for residential care services for frail elders.

Proposed timing for discussion

9. 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

10. Retirement protection

Item proposed by Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG.

To be decided

11. 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

12. The disregarded earnings arrangement under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (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.

To be decided

Proposed timing for discussion

13. Public dental care services for the needy

At the meeting of the Subcommittee on Review of the CSSA 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. The Panel on Health Services discussed the health care services for the elderly on 12 November 2007.

Dr KWOK Ka-ki has separately proposed to discuss the provision of dental grant for the CSSA recipients (LC Paper No. CB(2)1047/07-08 issued on 12 February 2008).

14. Charitable fund-raising activities

The existing framework for the monitoring of charitable fund-raising activities was discussed at the meeting on 11 June 2007. Members agreed to further discuss the matter in the 2007-2008 session, especially the monitoring of the use of income generated from public charitable fund-raising activities.

To be decided

The Administration has advised that the subject matter involved various bureaux, namely the Home Affairs Bureau, the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau and the Labour and Welfare Bureau. As the Law Reform Commission is now studying this subject, the Administration has suggested deferring Panel discussion to after the completion of the study.

Proposed timing for discussion

15. A solution-focused approach in the provision of welfare services

Item proposed by Mrs Sophie LEUNG at the Panel meeting on 9 July 2007.

To be decided

16. Annual adjustment of standard payment rates under the CSSA Scheme and the Social Security Allowance Scheme

At the Panel meetings on 12 November and 10 December 2007, members raised concern that under the existing adjustment mechanism for CSSA which took into account the SSAIP movements in the past 12 months, CSSA recipients had to catch up with past inflation. They urged the Administration to review the adjustment mechanism for social security payments. A motion was passed at the meeting on 12 November 2007 in this regard. Members agreed to follow up the matter at a future meeting.

To be decided

At the meeting on 17 March 2008, the Administration advised that it proposed to adjust the CSSA standard payment rates in accordance with the existing mechanism ahead of the normal schedule this year.

17. Child Development Fund

At the Panel meetings on 14 January and 14 February 2008, the Administration's proposal to set up a \$300 million Child Development Fund (CDF) was discussed. While members expressed general support for the establishment of CDF, they were concerned about the implementation details and the way forward. The Administration was requested to revert to the Panel on the progress of the pioneer projects under CDF six months after implementation.

To be decided

Proposed timing for discussion

18. Staff turnover in Special Child Care Centres

Referred for follow up by the Subcommittee to Study Issues Relating to the Provision of Boarding Places, Senior Secondary Education and Employment Opportunities for Children with Special Education Needs.

To be decided

When the subject of "Impact of the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme on Special Child Care Centres" was discussed at the Subcommittee meeting on 3 April 2008, members expressed concern about the high turnover rate of staff working in Special Child Care Centres (SCCCs). According to the deputations attending the meeting, the staff turnover rate in SCCC was as high as 32%. The Subcommittee agreed that the subject should be referred to the Panel on Welfare Services for follow up.

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

Item proposed by Hon Mrs Sophie LEUNG.

At the Panel meeting on 10 December 2007, members discussed with the Administration various initiatives to promote self/mutual help in the community through the Community Investment and Inclusion Fund.

20. Support services for young drug abusers

At the Panel meeting on 11 October 2007, Dr KWOK Ka-ki suggested that a joint meeting be held with the Panel on Security to further discuss the support services for young drug abusers, given that the Chief Executive announced in the Policy Address 2007-2008 the establishment of a high-level inter-departmental task force headed by the Secretary for Justice to combat juvenile drug abuse. At the meeting on 14 January 2008, Dr KWOK suggested that the joint meeting should be held by late February/early March 2008 so as to follow up the new measures drawn up by the Task Force. At the meeting on 14 February 2008, members noted that the Administration would brief the Panel on Security on the work progress of the Task Force on 10 April 2008, and members of the Panel on Welfare Services would be invited to attend the meeting.

The Panel on Security discussed the problem of juvenile drug abuse at its special meeting on 30 October 2007 and has decided to hold a follow up discussion around Budget time. As the issue of drug abuses is under the policy purview of the Security Bureau, the Administration has suggested that the subject should be followed up by the Panel on Security.

The Panel on Security then discussed again in the meeting held on 10 April 2008 on the issues relating to youth drug abuse and the work of the Task Force on Youth Drug Abuse chaired by the Secretary for Justice vide LC Paper No. CB(2)1495/07-08(04). The Panel on Security noted the information and recommendations contained therein and instructed the issue be reported again to Panel in the next legislative year.