

**For discussion on
12 November 2007**

LC Paper No. CB(2)254/07-08(06)

Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services

Creation of posts to provide support to the work of poverty alleviation in the Labour and Welfare Bureau

Purpose

This paper briefs members on our proposal to create one supernumerary post of Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (AOSGC) (D2) in the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB) for a period of three years with effect from 10 March 2008 to provide support to the work on poverty alleviation.

Justification

Policy Commitment

2. Poverty alleviation is a priority of the Administration in the next five years, as stated in the Policy Address delivered by the Chief Executive on 10 October 2007. LWB has since 1 July 2007 been responsible for overseeing and coordinating poverty alleviation matters. With the conclusion of the work of the Commission of Poverty (CoP), the Chief Executive announced the establishment of an inter-bureau/departmental Task Force on Poverty (the Task Force), headed by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare (SLW), to coordinate efforts across the Government in poverty alleviation and monitor their overall progress, including taking forward the recommendations of the CoP. We need dedicated directorate staff in LWB to provide support for the work on poverty alleviation.

Responsibilities of the Proposed Post

3. The proposed AOSGC post, designated as Principal Assistant Secretary (Poverty) [PAS(P)] will serve as the secretary to the Task Force, which comprises senior officials at the Director of Bureau/Permanent Secretary/Head of Department level, to take forward the work on poverty alleviation. The terms of reference of the Task Force are as follows –

- (a) to monitor the progress on implementing the recommendations of the CoP;
- (b) to coordinate the Government's efforts in tackling poverty, in particular poverty-related issues which have cross policy implications;
- (c) to promote community engagement to tackle poverty and promote self-reliance; and
- (d) to consider studies, researches and analyses for enhancing the understanding of poverty, assessing the impact of poverty alleviation measures and providing input for policy formulation.

4. The Task Force will report regularly to the Chief Secretary for Administration. Bureaux/departments on the Task Force will consult stakeholders in implementing the recommendations under their auspices. LWB will also make regular report to the Legislative Council on the work of the Task Force and organise, where necessary, targeted seminars/forums/focus groups to solicit views on various poverty alleviation issues. The proposed PAS(P) will serve as the secretary to the Task Force, including preparing policy papers, liaising with relevant bureaux/departments, preparing reports on the work of the Task Force and so on.

5. Apart from providing support to work of the Task Force as stated above, the proposed PAS(P) also plays a key role in overseeing the following –

- (a) the establishment and implementation of the Child Development Fund (CDF), which is a key new initiative on poverty alleviation. A total of \$300 million has been earmarked for the establishment of CDF, which seeks to encourage children from a disadvantaged background to plan for the future and cultivate positive attitudes with a view to reducing inter-generational poverty; and
- (b) the study on how best to put in place a “one-stop” employment service through streamlining, integrating and enhancing existing employment and training/retraining services of the Labour Department, Social Welfare Department and Employees Retraining Board and the pilot to try out the “one-stop” model. The aim is to better assist the unemployed and realize the objective of “from welfare to self-reliance”.

6. The proposed PAS(P) post will be supported by four non-directorate staff namely, one Administrative Officer, one Executive Officer I, one Personal Secretary I, and one Assistant Clerical Officer.

Encls. 1 to 3

7. The job description of the proposed PAS(P) is at Enclosure 1. The proposed organisation chart of the Poverty Team (PT) is at Enclosure 2, whereas the proposed organisation chart of LWB after the creation of the PT is at Enclosure 3.

8. Given the complexity and multi-faceted nature of poverty alleviation work and the need to coordinate efforts across the Government, a dedicated officer at AOSGC level is required. To provide timely support before the longer term staffing arrangement (i.e. the proposal set out in this paper) is put in place, we have created under delegated authority one supernumerary post at the level of AOSGC for six months with effect from 10 September 2007. This supernumerary post will lapse on 10 March 2008. We propose to retain this supernumerary post

for three years with effect from 10 March 2008. We will review the continued need for this post in the light of the progress of the work on poverty alleviation.

Alternatives Considered

9. The level and complexity of the responsibilities of the proposed PAS(P) post call for dedicated attention and input at directorate level. We have critically examined the possible redeployment of existing directorate posts to take on the work of the proposed PAS(P) post. As all the other Principal Assistant Secretaries are fully engaged in their own schedule of duties, it is operationally not possible for them to take up the tasks without adversely affecting the discharge of their current duties.

Financial Implications

10. The additional notional annual salary cost of the proposed AOSGC (D2) post at mid-point is \$1,428,000. The full annual average staff cost, including salaries and staff on-cost, is \$2,038,244. We will absorb the additional expenditure from within the existing provision in 2007-08 and will include the necessary provision in the 2008-09 draft Estimates to meet the cost of this proposal and the supporting staff in paragraph 6 above.

Way Forward

11. Subject to Members' comments, we plan to submit the proposal to the Establishment Subcommittee of the Finance Committee for consideration at its meeting on 12 December 2007.

Labour and Welfare Bureau
November 2007

Job Description
Principal Assistant Secretary (Poverty)

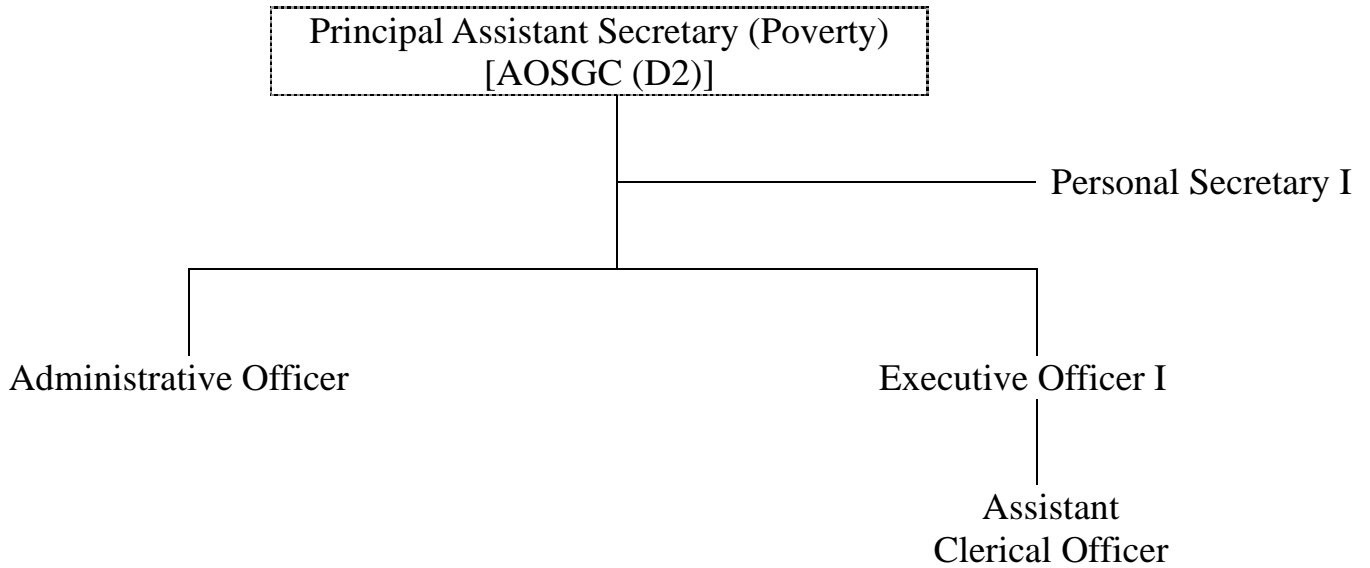
Rank : Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2)

Responsible to : Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 2

Main Duties and Responsibilities –

1. To liaise with relevant bureaux and departments on policies and measures that address the needs of the poor, in particular on areas which cut across different policy bureaux, and identify areas for improving interface and efficiency.
2. To oversee and provide policy input for the establishment of the Child Development Fund, and consider the longer-term model to promote development of children from a disadvantaged background taking into account experience in implementing the pilot projects.
3. To oversee the study on how best to put in place a “one-stop” employment service and the pilot to try out the “one-stop” model.
4. To monitor the overall progress in implementing the recommendations of the Commission on Poverty.
5. To serve as the secretary to the Task Force on Poverty.

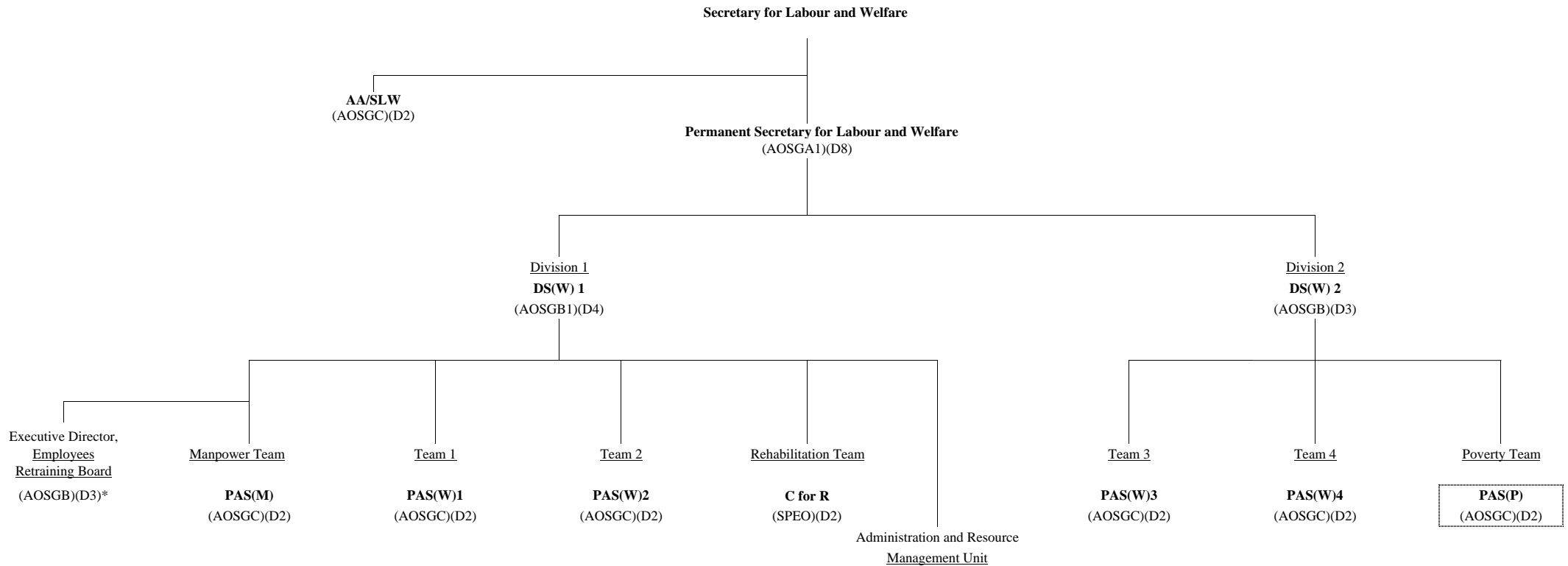
**Proposed Organisation Chart of the
Poverty Team**



Legend

- AOSGC Administrative Officer Staff Grade C
- Supernumerary directorate post proposed to be created

Proposed Organisation Chart of the Labour and Welfare Bureau



Legend

- | | | | |
|---------|---------------------------------------|---|----------|
| AA | Administrative Assistant | M | Manpower |
| C for R | Commissioner for Rehabilitation | P | Poverty |
| DS | Deputy Secretary | W | Welfare |
| PAS | Principal Assistant Secretary | | |
| AOSGA1 | Administrative Officer Staff Grade A1 | | |
| AOSGB1 | Administrative Officer Staff Grade B1 | | |
| AOSGB | Administrative Officer Staff Grade B | | |
| AOSGC | Administrative Officer Staff Grade C | | |
| SPEO | Senior Principal Executive Officer | | |

* Supernumerary post created with LegCo's approval to enable the secondment of a civil servant to the Employees Retraining Board

PAS(P) Supernumerary AOSGC post proposed to be created for three years from 10 March 2008