

Panel on Welfare Services

List of issues suggested to be considered
(position as at 13 October 2008)

Proposed timing for discussion

1. 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.

To be confirmed

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 has advised that it 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.

2. 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 confirmed

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. In concluding its deliberations, the Subcommittee proposed a series of recommendations relating to residential care services for the elderly in its report for the Administration's consideration. The Subcommittee recommended that the Panel should follow up the recommendations with the Administration.

Proposed timing for discussion

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

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

To be confirmed

The Administration has advised that transformation of all existing Family Services Centres/counselling units into 61 Integrated Family Service Centres (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, it will report the progress to the Panel in due course.

4. 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. The latest plan of the Administration is to upgrade some of the places in subvented residential care homes for the elderly to provide infirmiry 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 early 2009.

To be confirmed

Proposed timing for discussion

5. Social security assistance for needy elderly

The above item was discussed by the Panel 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. Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG has separately proposed to discuss retirement protection.

To be confirmed

The Administration has advised that the Government has launched two studies on "Household Survey on the Financial Disposition and Retirement Planning of Current and Future Generations of Older Persons" and "Sustainability of the Three Pillars of Retirement Protection in Hong Kong". The Government will consider the findings of the studies in deciding the future course of action.

At the meeting on 17 March 2008, members expressed grave concern about the progress of the studies. Members agreed that the Panel should write to the Chief Executive (CE) enquiring about the latest position of the studies. CE's Office has replied on 24 April 2008 vide LC Paper No. CB(2)1766/07-08(01).

The Subcommittee on Elderly Services had studied, inter alia, financial assistance for the needy elderly, and proposed a number of recommendations, as detailed in its report to the Panel (LC Paper No. CB(2)2163/07-08), for the Administration's consideration.

6. 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 confirmed

Proposed timing for discussion

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

Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki proposed to discuss measures to enhance the services of residential care homes and private homes for the elderly and mentally disabled at the Panel meeting on 12 October 2006.

To be confirmed

Please refer to item 2 above on progress of Panel discussion on residential care services for the elderly.

On licensing of residential care homes for people with disabilities, the Panel discussed the subject on three occasions on 21 March 2006, 11 June 2007 and 8 May 2008. At the meeting on 8 May 2008, the Administration advised that it aimed to introduce a Residential Care Homes (Persons with Disabilities) Bill to the Legislative Council (LegCo) in the 2008-2009 session.

8. Public dental care services for the needy

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

To be confirmed

Dr Hon 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).

Proposed timing for discussion

9. 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 next session, especially the monitoring of the use of income generated from public charitable fund-raising activities.

To be confirmed

The Administration has advised that the subject matter involved various bureaux and departments. As the Law Reform Commission is now conducting a review of the law and regulatory framework relating to charities in Hong Kong, the Administration has suggested deferring Panel discussion to after the completion of the review.

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

At the Panel meeting on 9 July 2007, Hon Mrs Sophie LEUNG pointed out that an increasing number of overseas countries had adopted the solution-focused approach for the provision of welfare services. She suggested that the subject of "a solution-focused approach in the provision of welfare services" should be included in the Panel's list of outstanding items for discussion.

To be confirmed

11. 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 confirmed

Proposed timing for discussion

12. Work progress of the Family Council

The Panel was briefed on the establishment of the Family Council on 14 February 2008. According to the Administration, the Family Council would seek to rationalize the work of the Elderly Commission, Women's Commission and Commission on Youth by March 2009. The Administration was requested to revert to the Panel on the work progress of the Family Council.

To be confirmed

The Administration has subsequently advised that it aims to report progress in the second quarter of 2009.

13. Staff turnover in Special Child Care Centres

The above item was referred 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. 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 discussion.

To be confirmed

14. Implementation of the Lump Sum Grant subvention system

In the last term, the Panel urged the Administration to review the implementation of the Lump Sum Grant (LSG) subvention system. The Administration advised that the LSG Independent Review Committee was established in January 2008 to review the implementation of the LSG subvention system. The Committee was expected to complete the review by the end of the third quarter of 2008 and will report its findings and recommendations to the Secretary for Labour and Welfare. The Panel agreed at its meeting on 16 May 2008 to follow up the matter in the next session.

To be confirmed

Proposed timing for discussion

15. Review of the CSSA Scheme

The Panel and the Subcommittee on Review of the CSSA Scheme had studied the existing arrangements for the CSSA Scheme in the last term. In concluding its deliberations, the Subcommittee made a number of recommendations in its report to the Panel (LC Paper No. CB(2)871/07-08). A motion urging the Administration to take note of the Subcommittee's report was moved at the Council meeting on 20 February 2008. The motion was carried.

To be confirmed

At the Panel meeting on 12 June 2008, members urged the Administration to shorten the interval of each adjustment cycle of CSSA and review the adequacy of the CSSA standard payment rates and items to be included in the Social Security Assistance Index of Prices. The Administration also agreed to see if the preparatory work for the next round of the Household Expenditure Survey on CSSA households could be further advanced.

16. Research report on "Strategies and measures in tackling domestic violence in selected places"

At its meeting on 8 July 2008, the Subcommittee on Strategy and Measures to Tackle Family Violence studied the research report on "Strategies and measures in tackling domestic violence in selected places" prepared by the Research and Library Services Division (RLSD) of the LegCo Secretariat and requested RLSD to provide supplementary information. The Subcommittee recommended that the Panel should follow up with the Administration on the findings of the research report in the next legislative term.

To be confirmed