

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
PANEL ON WELFARE SERVICES**

Residential Care Homes (Persons with Disabilities) Bill

Purpose

This paper updates Members on the progress of the Residential Care Homes (Persons with Disabilities) Bill (the Bill) to be introduced by the Administration.

Background

2. As indicated in the 2008-09 Legislative Programme submitted to the Legislative Council (LegCo) on 22 October 2008, the Administration plans to introduce the Bill into LegCo in the second half of the current legislative session (i.e. between March to July 2009) to implement a statutory licensing scheme to regulate the operation of residential care homes for persons with disabilities (RCHDs), so as to ensure that a reasonable standard of service is provided to service users of RCHDs.

3. The Administration briefed the LegCo Panel on Welfare Services at its meeting on 12 January 2009 and its special meeting on 25 February 2009 on the progress of the implementation of the licensing scheme, including the preparation of a draft Code of Practice for RCHDs and drafting of the Bill.

Latest Development

4. Given that the Bill will comprise a large number of provisions and entail consequential amendments to other ordinances, thereby necessitating the deliberation of related policy issues, a recent review of the work progress reveals that we would not be able to introduce the Bill within the current legislative session as originally scheduled. The

Administration would continue to make proactive efforts to resolve the related policy issues and expedite the law drafting work, and aim to introduce the Bill into LegCo as early as possible within the 2009-10 legislative session.

5. In tandem, the Administration will closely monitor the operation of RCHDs. We are also studying the feasibility of related complementary measures with a view to minimising as far as possible the impact on service users of RCHDs and providing more service options for persons with disabilities, while ensuring that a reasonable standard of service will be provided by RCHDs.

6. The Social Welfare Department will also continue to reinforce its monitoring of the service quality of private RCHDs, including conducting inspections, organising fire-safety talks cum evacuation drills, as well as training courses on drug management, physical restraints and infection control in order to provide support to these RCHDs in enhancing their service quality and enriching their knowledge and skills.

Advice Sought

7. Members are invited to note the latest progress regarding introduction of the Bill.

Labour and Welfare Bureau
March 2009