

Panel on Welfare Services

List of outstanding items for discussion
(position as at 2 March 2010)

Proposed timing for discussion

1. Report of the Subcommittee on Guardianship and Custody of the Law Reform Commission

At the meeting on 8 February 2010, the Administration briefed the Panel on its position on the recommendations made by the Law Reform Commission in the Report on Guardianship of Children and Report on International Parental Child Abduction.

As for the Report on Custody and Access released on 7 March 2005, the Administration advised that it is studying the recommendations carefully in consultation with relevant stakeholders and will consider whether and how to take forward the relevant recommendations.

To be decided

2. Implementation of the Integrated Family Service Centre (IFSC) service mode

In October 2008, the Administration commissioned a review on the implementation of the IFSC service mode. The Panel discussed and received views from deputations on the implementation of the IFSC service mode on 9 March and 11 May 2009. The Consultant Team will submit the review report to the Administration in the first quarter of 2010. The Administration will report progress to the Panel after examining the review report and recommendations.

2nd quarter of 2010

At the meeting on 14 October 2008, Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung proposed to discuss the merit of re-opening Single Parent Centres to enhance support services for single parents. The Administration was requested to comment on this after completing its review on IFSCs.

Proposed timing for discussion

3. 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 aims to report progress in due course.

To be decided

4. Social security assistance for needy elderly

At the meeting on 14 October 2008, Hon WONG Kwok-hing and Hon WONG Kwok-kin proposed to discuss financial assistance and support for poor elders, including providing income supplement for poor elders and implementing a universal retirement protection scheme.

To be decided

5. Residential care services for persons with disabilities

At the meeting on 12 January 2009, the Panel was briefed on the progress of the preparatory work for introducing a licensing scheme to regulate the operation of residential care homes for persons with disabilities. A special meeting of Panel was held on 25 February 2009 to receive views from deputations on the proposed licensing system. The Administration was requested to make a progress report on the proposed licensing regime in three months' time. The Administration will report the progress at the Panel meeting on 12 April 2010.

12 April 2010

The Administration updated the Panel vide LC Paper No. CB(2)1114/08-09(01) that it would postpone the introduction of the Residential Care Homes (Persons with Disabilities) Bill to the Legislative Council (LegCo) to the 2009-2010 legislative session given that the Bill would comprise a large number of provisions and entail consequential amendments to other ordinances, thereby necessitating the deliberation of related policy issues.

2nd quarter of 2010

The Residential Care Homes (Persons with Disabilities) Bill is in drafting stage. The Administration aims to introduce the Bill to LegCo in the second half of the 2009-2010 legislative session.

At the meeting on 8 February 2010, the Panel was briefed on the framework of the proposed pilot Bought Place Scheme for private residential care homes for persons with disabilities which will be introduced prior to the implementation of the statutory licensing system. The Panel will receive views from deputations on the pilot Scheme on 13 March 2010.

6. 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.

Pending completion of the review by the Law Reform Commission

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.

7. Implementation of the Lump Sum Grant subvention system

The Panel discussed the recommendations made by the Lump Sum Grant Independent Review Committee (LSGIRC) and the Administration's response to the recommendations at the meetings on 19 December 2008, 17 January and 9 February 2009.

2nd quarter of 2010

At the meeting on 9 March 2009, the Panel agreed that the Administration should report regularly on the implementation of the recommendations made by the LSGIRC.

8. Review of Old Age Allowance

CE announced on 24 October 2008 that Old Age Allowance (OAA) would be increased to \$1,000 a month under the existing system, and the proposal of introducing a means test mechanism to OAA would be shelved for the time being. The Panel was briefed on the relevant funding proposal on 10 November 2008. Members were advised that the Administration was conducting a review on the permissible limit of absence from Hong Kong under OAA, which was expected to be completed by end 2008/early 2009. It would revert to the Panel on the findings of the review in due course.

2nd quarter of 2010

9. Review of the system for processing applications for Disability Allowance (DA) under the Social Security Allowance Scheme

Item proposed by Hon WONG Kwok-hing and Hon WONG Kwok-kin at the meeting on 14 October 2008. Members are concerned about the eligibility criteria for DA, system for processing DA application and the appeal mechanism.

2nd quarter of 2010

Hon WONG Kwok-hing raised an oral question on Disability Allowance at the Council meeting on 5 November 2008 and enquired about the timing for discussing the item at the Panel meeting on 11 May 2009.

Hon WONG Kwok-hing requested the Panel to discuss the item vide his letter dated 30 October 2009 (LC Paper No. CB(2)183/09-10(01)).

10. Child fatality review mechanism

At the meeting on 22 October 2009, Hon Albert HO expressed concern about the cases of children who died of non-natural causes. Members were advised that SWD had set up a Review Panel to review child death cases captured by the Coroners' Court in 2006 and 2007 and would publish the first annual report in the last quarter of 2009. The Administration would revert to the Panel on the initial findings and recommendations of the Review Panel in due course.

4th quarter of 2010

Proposed timing for discussion

11. Child Development Fund (CDF)

The Panel was briefed on the implementation progress of first batch of CDF projects on 13 July 2009. At the meeting on 22 October 2009, Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che expressed concern about the Administration's plan for rolling out the second batch of the CDF projects. The Administration was requested to revert to the Panel in due course.

2nd quarter of 2010

12. Long-term social welfare planning

At the meeting on 22 October 2009, Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che enquired about the long-term development planning for social welfare in Hong Kong. The Administration advised that a Task Group on Welfare Planning was formed under the Social Welfare Advisory Committee to take forward the study. Members agreed that the Panel should follow up with the issue.

To be decided

13. Development of social enterprises

The Social Enterprise Advisory Committee was set up on 15 January 2010. The Administration will revert to the Panel on the way forward to promote the development of social enterprises in May/June 2010.

May/June 2010

14. Extension of fare concession for persons with disabilities (PWDs) from railway service to other modes of transport

At the meeting on 8 February 2010, Hon LEE Cheuk-yan suggested and members agreed that the Panel should hold a joint meeting with the Panel on Transport to discuss the extension of fare concession for PWDs from railway service to other modes of transport.

To be decided