

Panel on Welfare Services

List of outstanding items for discussion
(position as at 8 June 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 review"). 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 has submitted the review report to the Administration. The Panel will discuss the findings and recommendations of the review report and the follow up actions taken / to be taken by the Administration on 14 June 2010. A special meeting of the Panel will be held on 26 June 2010 to receive views from deputations on the subject.

14 and 26 June 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.

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. Various options are being explored, including upgrading some of the places in subvented residential care homes for the elderly to provide infirmary care. The Administration will 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

The Panel was briefed on the progress of the preparation of the Residential Care Homes (Persons with Disabilities) Bill at the meeting on 12 April 2010 and received views from deputations at the special meeting on 24 April 2010.

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

2nd quarter of 2010

At the meeting on 8 February 2010, the Panel was briefed on the framework of the proposed pilot Bought Place Scheme ("BPS") for private RCHDs which will be introduced prior to the implementation of the statutory licensing system. At the meeting on 13 March 2010, the Panel received views from deputations on and further discussed with the Administration the pilot BPS for private RCHDs.

The Subcommittee on Residential and Community Care Services for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly discussed the long-term strategy for increasing the provision of subsidised RCHD places on 29 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. 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

Proposed timing for discussion

8. 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.

To be decided

Hon WONG Kwok-hing raised an oral question on DA 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)).

As there is an on-going judicial review against the decision of the Administration in respect of a former applicant's eligibility for DA, the Administration would like to put on hold the Panel discussion for the time being.

9. 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 Panel released its first Report in January 2010. The Administration would revert to the Panel on the findings and recommendations of the Review Panel in due course.

1st quarter of 2011

Proposed timing for discussion

10. 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 ("SWAC") to take forward the study. SWAC was conducting a consultation with the sector and relevant stakeholders on the long-term planning of social welfare development in Hong Kong with a view to working out concrete proposals. The Panel held a special meeting on 5 June 2010 to receive views from deputations on the subject matter. The Panel will hold another special meeting on 26 June 2010.

26 June 2010

11. 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.

To be decided

12. 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. A joint meeting of the two Panels will be held on 29 June 2010.

29 June 2010