

Panel on Welfare Services

List of outstanding items for discussion
(position as at 3 November 2009)

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.

1st quarter of 2010

The Administration has completed its consideration of 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 and will consider how to take forward the relevant recommendations.

2. Residential care services for the elderly

At the meeting on 14 October 2008, members agreed that the Panel should discuss, as soon as possible, the long-term planning of and subsidy arrangements for residential care services for the elderly and measures to ensure the quality of services in private homes.

1st quarter of 2010

The Administration is studying the long-term planning for subsidised residential care services for the elderly through a consultancy study led by the Elderly Commission (EC). The Administration briefed the Subcommittee on Poverty Alleviation on improvement measures to residential care services for the elderly under the 2009-2010 Budget at the meeting on 6 April 2009.

The consultancy study led by EC is nearing completion. EC will examine the study findings and recommendations, and report progress to the Panel in early 2010.

Proposed timing for discussion

3. 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 which is expected to be completed by the end of 2009. The Panel discussed and received views from deputations on the implementation of the IFSC service mode on 9 March and 11 May 2009. The Administration will report progress to the Panel in due course.

1st 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.

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 aims to report progress in due course.

To be decided

5. 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

Proposed timing for discussion

6. 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.

1st quarter of 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 2009-10 legislative session.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. 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.

1st quarter of 2010

10. 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.

Proposed timing for discussion

11. Provision of additional subsidised residential care places as announced in the Policy Address 2009-2010

At the meeting on 15 October 2009, members agreed that the Panel should follow up on the initiatives announced in the Policy Address 2009-2010 in respect of the provision of additional subsidised residential care places for the elderly and persons with disabilities. The Panel plans to discuss the subject at the December meeting.

December 2009

12. 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

13. Family Council

At the meeting on 22 October 2009, members agreed that the Panel should follow up with the work progress of the Family Council, in particular the concrete measures to achieve a pro-family environment and family friendly employment practices. The Administration advises that it will report the work progress of the Family Council in May/June 2010.

May/June 2010

14. 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.

1st quarter of 2010

Proposed timing for discussion

15. 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