

Panel on Welfare Services

List of outstanding items for discussion
(position as at 8 February 2011)

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

The Administration plans to brief the Panel on the Guardianship of Minors (Amendment) Bill 2011 in March 2011.

March 2011

2. Infirmity care in non-hospital setting

The Administration consulted the Panel in December 2004 on a proposal to launch a trial scheme to provide infirmity 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 infirmity care. The Administration will report progress in due course.

To be decided

Proposed timing for discussion

3. 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

The Panel discussed and received views from deputations on the subject of universal retirement protection at the special meeting on 18 December 2010. The Panel passed a motion urging the Government to immediately set up an inter-departmental task force to study the implementation of universal retirement protection, and the Panel to form a subcommittee to follow up the subject. At the meeting on 10 January 2011, the Panel decided to appoint a subcommittee to study issues relating to retirement protection.

The House Committee approved at its meeting on 21 January 2011 for the activation of the Subcommittee on Retirement Protection in about three months' time.

4. 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.

5. Review of absence limits for Old Age Allowance ("OAA")

In his Policy Address 2010-2011, CE announced that the absence limit for OAA would be relaxed from 240 days to 305 days a year.

To be decided

At the meeting on 8 November 2010, the Administration advised that as its existing policy on residence requirements under the Social Security Assistance ("SSA") Scheme was being challenged by way of judicial review ("JR"), it would consider the way forward on such restrictions when the situation became clearer. The Administration will revert to the Panel in due course.

6. Review of the system for processing applications for Disability Allowance ("DA") under the SSA 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)).

Pending the completion of court proceedings of a JR lodged by a former applicant against the decision of the Administration in respect of his eligibility for DA, the Administration would like to put on hold the Panel discussion.

7. 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 the Social Welfare Department ("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.

14 February 2011

At the meeting on 12 July 2010, the Panel was briefed on the progress of the Pilot Project on Child Fatality Review ("Pilot Project"). The Administration advised that the final report with the evaluation of the Pilot Project would be available in early 2011 and a report would be made to the Panel thereafter. Members agreed that representatives of relevant departments and deputations would be invited to give views when the subject was discussed.

8. 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.

2nd quarter of 2011

Proposed timing for discussion

The Panel held two special meetings on 5 and 26 June 2010 to receive views from deputations on the subject matter. SWAC advised that it would conduct two further consultations in July 2010 to receive views from the sector and relevant stakeholders. The Administration would revert to the Panel on how it would take forward the recommendations of SWAC in due course.

9. Development of social enterprises ("SEs")

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 SEs in due course.

April 2011

At the informal meeting on 4 November 2010, it was agreed that deputations be invited to express views on the Enhancing Self-Reliance Through District Partnership Programme.

14 February 2011

10. Review of the one-year-continuous-residence requirement under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ("CSSA") Scheme and SSA Scheme

At the meeting on 12 July 2010, Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung expressed concern about the recent High Court ruling on JR of the one-year-continuous-residence requirement under the CSSA Scheme and proposed to follow up the matter as well as the residence requirement for OAA applicants. Members were advised that SWD had shelved, with immediate effect, the one-year-continuous-residence requirement in handling applications for CSSA. The OAA applications were processed in accordance with the existing arrangement.

To be decided

In anticipation of the appeal proceedings, members agreed to revisit the need to discuss the matter in due course. Meanwhile, two failed OAA applicants have been granted leave to apply for JR of the one-year-continuous-residence requirement for OAA.

Proposed timing for discussion

11. Provision of barrier free access and facilities for persons with disabilities ("PWDs")

At the meeting on 13 December 2010, members were briefed on the Government's response to and proposed follow-up action on the Equal Opportunities Commission's Formal Investigation Report on Accessibility in Publicly Accessible Premises ("EOC Report"). At the meeting on 10 January 2011, the Panel decided to appoint a subcommittee to monitor the Government's follow-up action on the 23 recommendations in the EOC Report and to study issues relating to the provision of barrier free access and facilities for PWDs. The subcommittee is currently on the waiting list for activation.

To be decided

The Panel further discussed and received views from deputations on the subject at the special meeting on 22 January 2011. Members agreed that special meeting(s) would be held to discuss the implementation progress of the retrofitting programme if necessary.

12. Setting up of a New Integrated Rehabilitation Services Centre for PWDs at Kau Wah Keng, Kwai Chung (i.e. the site of Ex-O Pui Shan Boys' Home)

At the informal meeting on 25 October 2010, the Administration proposed to brief the Panel on the proposal to set up a New Integrated Rehabilitation Services Centre for PWDs at Kau Wah Keng, Kwai Chung.

March 2011

Proposed timing for discussion

13. Implementation of Financial Assistance Scheme ("FAS") for private RCHDs

At the informal meeting on 25 October 2010, the Administration proposed to brief the Panel on the implementation details of FAS for private RCHDs.

2nd quarter of 2011

14. Injection to the SARS Trust Fund to provide long-term financial assistance to the recovered SARS patients

At the informal meeting on 25 October 2010, the Administration proposed to brief the Panel on the plan to further inject to the SARS Trust Fund to provide long-term financial assistance to the recovered SARS patients.

2nd quarter of 2011

15. Extension of Integrated Discharge Support Trial Programme for elderly patients

At the informal meeting on 25 October 2010, the Administration proposed to brief the Panel on its plan to extend Integrated Discharge Support Trial Programme for elderly patients.

2nd quarter of 2011

16. Elderly Commission ("EC")'s consultancy study on community care services for the elderly

At the informal meeting on 25 October 2010, the Administration proposed to brief the Panel on the findings of EC's consultancy study on community care services for the elderly.

2nd quarter of 2011

Proposed timing for discussion

17. Progress report on the Child Development Fund ("CDF")

At the meeting of 14 May 2010, the Administration undertook to revert to the Panel when more information about the personal development plans ("PDPs") of the participating children was available. As the participating children will draw up their PDPs by March/April 2011, the Administration proposes to brief the Panel on the progress of CDF projects in the 2nd quarter of 2011.

2nd quarter of 2011

18. Progress report on Task Force on Poverty ("TFP")

At the meeting on 13 June 2009, members were briefed on the work progress of the TFP. The Administration proposes to brief the Panel on the latest position in the 2nd quarter of 2011.

2nd quarter of 2011

19. Progress of implementation of recommendations of the Review on the Implementation of the Integrated Family Service Centre ("IFSC") Service Mode ("the Review")

At the meeting on 14 June 2010, members were briefed on the major findings and recommendations of the Review, as well as the Administration's responses to the recommendations made in the Review. A special meeting was held on 26 June 2010 to receive views from deputations on the Review.

2nd/3rd quarter of 2011

At the informal meeting on 25 October 2010, the Chairman proposed that the Administration should brief the Panel on the progress of implementation of the recommendations of the Review.

Proposed timing for discussion

20. Progress of implementation of recommendations of the Lump Sum Grant Independent Review Committee ("LSGIRC")

At the meeting on 14 May 2010, members were briefed on the implementation of the recommendations of LSGIRC.

2nd quarter of 2011

At the informal meeting on 25 October 2010, the Chairman proposed that the Administration should brief members on the progress of implementation of recommendations of LSGIRC.

21. Work Progress of the Family Council

At the informal meeting on 4 November 2010, the Administration agreed to brief the Panel on the findings of the four thematic studies being conducted by the Family Council.

To be decided

22. Tackling domestic violence

Item proposed by Hon WONG Sing-chi vide his letter dated 17 January 2011 (LC Paper No. CB(2)843/10-11(01)).

To be decided