

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)1216/10-11(06)

Ref : CB2/PL/WS

Panel on Welfare Services

**Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 14 March 2011**

**Vocational rehabilitation services and residential services
for persons with disabilities**

Purpose

This paper provides an account of the discussions of the Panel on Welfare Services ("the Panel") on the provision of integrated vocational rehabilitation services and residential services for persons with disabilities ("PWDs").

Background

2. According to the Administration, the overall objective of the rehabilitation policy is to support the full integration of PWDs into the community. A series of rehabilitation services, community support and training are provided to facilitate PWDs to live independently, and/or to live with their families and friends in the community. For those who cannot live on their own and cannot be adequately cared for by their families, a three-pronged approach has been adopted in accordance with the 2007 Rehabilitation Programme Plan to implement the following measures –

- (a) to regulate the residential care homes for PWDs so as to ensure their service quality on the one hand while helping the market to develop residential care homes of different types and operational modes on the other;

- (b) to support non-governmental organizations ("NGOs") to develop self-financing homes; and
- (c) to continue to steadily increase the number of subsidised residential care home places.

Integrated Rehabilitation Vocational Services Centres

3. According to the Administration, in pursuing the direction in paragraph 2(c) above, the Social Welfare Department ("SWD") adopted as far as possible an integrated service mode for the provision of day and residential services for PWDs.

Pilot integrated vocational rehabilitation services

4. At the meeting on 10 February 2003, the Panel was briefed on the Administration's future service direction to support PWDs. The Administration informed the Panel that based on the findings of an internal value for money audit study conducted by SWD on sheltered workshops and supported employment services in 2002, it was recommended that in the long run, integrated service delivery model comprising sheltered workshop, supported employment, skills centres, On the Job Training Programme and Small Enterprise Project in vocational rehabilitation services should be adopted. An integrated vocational centre could better meet the vocational needs of PWDs and address the problems of compartmentalization in service delivery. Under the proposed new service delivery mode, trainees could have access to vocational rehabilitation services at one single service point.

5. The Administration briefed the Panel about a pilot scheme on 20 April 2005. The Administration advised that it had invited NGOs in August 2003 to re-engineer their subvented vocational rehabilitation services to form integrated rehabilitation vocational services centres ("IRVSCs") on a pilot basis. SWD had approved the formation of 14 IRVSCs through pooling of subventions of 2 043 places of 14 sheltered workshops and 485 supported employment places on 1 April 2004. Taking into account the conversion of two sheltered workshops operated by SWD to IRVSCs after their hiving off to NGOs in April 2004, and a new IRVSC which commenced operation in October 2004, there were 17 IRVSCs in April 2005 providing a total of 2 889 training places.

6. The Administration further advised that a Working Group comprising representatives of SWD, NGO operators, parents of PWDs was

formed in June 2004 to review the implementation of IRVSCs and advise on the future development of the service. The Working Group generally recognized that IRVSCs would have many advantages over the traditional sheltered workshops and sheltered employment services. An integrated vocational centre would provide a holistic approach to meet the needs of PWDs by offering a greater variety of training programmes, and allowing flexibility in service delivery and deployment of staff and resources.

7. Members expressed support for providing PWDs with one-stop integrated and seamless vocational services so as to better accommodate the limitations arising from their disabilities. Some members enquired about the timetable for conversion of the existing 36 sheltered workshops into IRVSCs. The Administration responded that it had no fixed timetable for the conversion. It had deliberately not made the re-engineering exercise compulsory, as the success of the exercise must depend on the support of parents of PWDs and the staff concerned. As regards staff members, they would need to undergo special training programmes in order to meet the challenges arising from the implementation of the new service delivery mode.

8. The Administration added that PWDs would continue to be given the choice to join the sheltered workshops, sheltered employment or IRVSC services.

Setting up of new Integrated Rehabilitation Service Centres for PWDs ("IRSCs")

9. At the meeting on 11 May 2009, the Panel was briefed on the proposal to set up two IRSCs in Kwai Chung and Ho Man Tin. Members were advised that through setting up the two new IRSCs, 490 subvented residential care places together with 450 day training/vocational rehabilitation services places would be provided in 2010. While expressing support for the proposal to set up two new IRSCs, members expressed grave concern about the long waiting time for residential care services for PWDs - the average waiting time for Hostel for Severely Physically Handicapped Persons in 2008 was as long as 106.8 months. Noting that only 490 subvented places would be provided in 2010 through setting up the two new IRSCs, members urged the Administration to set a pledge for shortening the waiting time.

10. The Administration advised that it was gravely concerned about the waitlisting situation and had accorded priority for the provision of new subvented residential care places for PWDs. Specifically, 1 529 new subvented residential care places for PWDs had been provided in the past

five years. In the coming two years, in addition to the 490 residential care places to be provided through the setting up of two new IRSCs, 181 residential care places would also be provided through other projects. The Administration would continue its efforts to bid for more resources to increase the supply of subvented residential places for PWDs. However, the provision of additional residential care homes for PWDs ("RCHDs") would depend on the availability of suitable sites/premises. Nonetheless, SWD had made dedicated efforts to increase the number of subsidised residential care places by the following ways –

- (a) for long-term planning, it would continue to liaise with the relevant authorities in town planning and housing to identify suitable venues for developing rehabilitation facilities for PWDs;
- (b) for medium-term planning, it would continue to liaise with the relevant authorities to identify idle properties such as unused schools and vacant premises in public housing estates with a view to retrofitting and converting these premises into IRSCs or RCHDs; and
- (c) for short-term measures, it would continue to support NGOs operating RCHDs to study the feasibility of further increasing residential care places by insitu-expansion; and actively consider buying places from private RCHDs in the course of introducing a statutory licensing scheme for RCHDs.

11. Members considered that notwithstanding the difficulty in identifying suitable sites for new RCHDs, the Administration should come up with a plan on the target number of additional residential places for PWDs to be provided each year. To address the shortage of suitable premises, the Administration should include the provision of residential care services for PWDs in its town planning.

12. The Administration explained that attempts had been made by SWD to turn vacant premises in public housing estates into residential homes for PWDs, but such proposals were often met with local opposition. As such, SWD had to look for idle properties, such as unused schools and staff quarters, located in the remote areas for constructing homes for PWDs.

13. The Administration responded that it was aware of the problem of inadequate residential care services for PWDs and had accorded priority for the provision of new subvented residential care places for PWDs. Given the increasing demand for residential care services, the Administration

would continue to bid for more resources for RCHDs and improve their quality. Nonetheless, the availability of financial resources and suitable sites were equally important in the provision of additional residential care places for PWDs. On some occasions, the proposed projects could not be proceeded with on account of objection by the local communities. The Administration also pointed out that the turnover rates of subvented residential care places were low as a result of the longer life expectancy and improved healthcare services. This explained for why there was no marked improvement in the shortening of the waiting time for subvented RCHDs.

14. To enhance the provision of residential care places for PWDs, members made a number of suggestions such as converting vacant Government premises and deserted schools into subvented RCHDs, buying places from private RCHDs, etc. The Administration advised that consideration would be given to buying places from private RCHDs to shorten the waiting time for subvented RCHDs after introduction of the licensing scheme for RCHDs. The Administration would continue to identify suitable premises in vacant Government buildings and public housing estates for conversion into the provision of residential care services. For longer term planning, SWD would continue to put in bids for premises in new development projects as appropriate.

Latest development

15. The Administration will seek the Panel's views on a funding proposal relating to the setting up of a new IRSC at Kau Wah Keng, Kwai Chung on 14 March 2011.

Relevant papers

16. A list of relevant papers is in the **Appendix**. Members are invited to access the Legislative Council website at <http://www.legco.gov.hk> for details.

Appendix

Relevant Papers/Documents

<u>Meeting</u>	<u>Meeting Date</u>	<u>Papers</u>
Panel on Welfare Services	10 February 2003	Administration's paper LC Paper No. CB(2)1104/02-03(04) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr02-03/english/panels/ws/papers/ws0210cb2-1104-4e.pdf Minutes of meeting LC Paper No. CB(2)1384/02-03 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr02-03/english/panels/ws/minutes/ws030210.pdf
	5 January 2004	Administration's paper LC Paper No. CB(2)847/03-04(03) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr03-04/english/panels/ws/papers/ws0105cb2-847-3e.pdf Minutes of meeting LC Paper No. CB(2)2261/03-04 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr03-04/english/panels/ws/minutes/ws040105.pdf
	14 June 2004	Administration's paper LC Paper No. CB(2)2695/03-04(03) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr03-04/english/panels/ws/papers/ws0614cb2-2695-3e.pdf Minutes of meeting LC Paper No. CB(2)3160/03-04 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr03-04/english/panels/ws/minutes/ws040614.pdf

<u>Meeting</u>	<u>Meeting Date</u>	<u>Papers</u>
	21 March 2006	<p>Administration's paper LC Paper No. CB(2)1389/05-06(04) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/panels/ws/papers/ws0321cb2-1389-4e.pdf</p> <p>Minutes of meeting LC Paper No. CB(2)1873/05-06 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/panels/ws/minutes/ws060321.pdf</p>
	9 July 2007	<p>Administration's paper LC Paper No. CB(2)2348/06-07(01) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/ws/papers/ws0709cb2-2348-1-e.pdf</p> <p>Minutes of meeting LC Paper No. CB(2)131/07-08 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/ws/minutes/ws070709.pdf</p>
	12 November 2007	<p>Administration's paper LC Paper No. CB(2)254/07-08(04) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/ws/papers/ws1112cb2-254-4-e.pdf</p> <p>Minutes of meeting LC Paper No. CB(2)521/07-08 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/ws/minutes/ws071112.pdf</p>

<u>Meeting</u>	<u>Meeting Date</u>	<u>Papers</u>
	11 May 2009	Administration's paper LC Paper No. CB(2)1451/08-09(03) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr08-09/english/panels/ws/papers/ws0511cb2-1451-3-e.pdf Minutes of meeting LC Paper No. CB(2)1710/08-09 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr08-09/english/panels/ws/minutes/ws20090511.pdf

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
8 March 2011