

# 立法會

## *Legislative Council*

LC Paper No. CB(2)2212/10-11

Ref : CB2/PL/WS

### **Report of the Panel on Welfare Services for submission to the Legislative Council**

#### **Purpose**

This report gives an account of the work of the Panel on Welfare Services during the 2010-2011 Legislative Council ("LegCo") session. It will be tabled at the Council meeting of 6 July 2011 in accordance with Rule 77(14) of the Rules of Procedure.

#### **The Panel**

2. The Panel was formed by a resolution of the Council on 8 July 1998 and as amended on 20 December 2000, 9 October 2002, 11 July 2007 and 2 July 2008 for the purpose of monitoring and examining Government policies and issues of public concern relating to welfare (including women welfare) and rehabilitation services, poverty, social enterprise and the Family Council. The terms of reference of the Panel are in **Appendix I**.

3. The Panel comprises 18 members, with Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che and Hon WONG Sing-chi elected as its Chairman and Deputy Chairman respectively. The membership list of the Panel is in **Appendix II**.

#### **Major work**

##### Long-term social welfare planning

4. To follow up on the discussions in the last session, the Panel requested the Administration to update members twice on the progress of the study by the Social Welfare Advisory Committee ("SWAC") on the long-term social welfare planning in Hong Kong. Members were given to understand that following the release of the consultation paper entitled "Long-term Social Welfare Planning in

Hong Kong" by SWAC in mid-April 2010, SWAC was finalising the report on its analyses and recommendations. According to the Administration, SWAC's report was expected to be completed by the second quarter of 2011. It would thoroughly analyse and study the recommendations upon receipt of SWAC's report and then report to the Panel.

5. Members considered it unacceptable for the Government to task an advisory body to study the subject of long-term social welfare planning which should be spearheaded by the Government. Members noted the Administration's explanation that it was not uncommon for an advisory body like SWAC be tasked to conduct consultation and gauge the views of the public on policy issues. Pointing out that the Chief Executive had undertaken in his Policy Address to study the long-term development planning for social welfare, members urged the Administration to honour the pledge. The Administration had undertaken to provide its response to SWAC's report within the current term of the Government.

6. The Administration subsequently advised the Panel that the SWAC's report was due for release in July 2011. Members have requested the Administration to make public the SWAC report. The Panel will discuss the report at its regular meeting in July 2011 and is considering the need to hold a special meeting in late August 2011 to receive views from the stakeholders.

#### Adjustment of social security payments

7. As part of the annual adjustment exercise for the standard payment rates of the Comprehensive and Social Security Assistance ("CSSA") and rates of allowances under the Social Security Allowance ("SSA") Scheme, the Panel had examined the latest 12-month moving average of the Social Security Assistance Index of Prices ("SSAIP") which was compiled by the Census and Statistics Department to measure inflation according to the expenditure pattern of CSSA households. Under the existing adjustment mechanism, the CSSA and SSA rates were adjusted annually according to the movement of SSAIP. Members noted that the latest SSAIP registered an accumulative increase of 3%. Members were concerned that an increase of 3% in the standard payment rates of CSSA was immaterial in nominal term, especially in the face of a rapid increase of food prices and rentals. To maintain the purchasing power of the CSSA recipients, members strongly called on the Administration to put in place a mechanism to adjust the standard rates of CSSA ahead of the annual adjustment cycle if there was persistently high inflation.

8. According to the Administration, the proposed increase in the standard rates of the CSSA Scheme and rates of allowance under the SSA Scheme was

made in accordance with the established mechanism. The Administration acknowledged the need to monitor closely the SSAIP movements. It would consider seeking approval for any inflationary adjustments to the standard payment rates ahead of the annual adjustment cycle if movements of SSAIP and other economic indicators pointed to persistently high inflation.

9. To help ease the pressure of inflation and rising prices on people's livelihood, the Administration subsequently proposed to provide an extra allowance to CSSA recipients equal to one month of the standard rates of CSSA, and an extra allowance to Old Age Allowance ("OAA") and Disability Allowance ("DA") recipients equal to one month of the allowances. The funding proposal was approved by the Finance Committee ("FC") on 10 June 2011. Members were supportive of the funding proposal of providing additional payments to the CSSA and SSA recipients. However, members were gravely concerned that the commodities and services covered under SSAIP were incompatible with the present needs and therefore could not fully reflect the actual expenditure patterns of CSSA households. Members strongly urged the Administration to conduct expeditiously a comprehensive review on the adequacy of the CSSA standard payment rates.

#### Review of the rent allowance under the CSSA Scheme

10. Members received views from deputations on the impact of inflation and upsurging rentals on the CSSA households and the proposal for reviewing the adjustment mechanism for rental allowance under the CSSA Scheme. Members noted with concern that the actual rentals of around 55% of CSSA households living in private housing were higher than the maximum level of rent allowance ("MRA") under the CSSA Scheme in the past three consecutive years. Notwithstanding this, the Administration advised that there remained room for a downward adjustment of MRA by 0.2%. Members questioned the rationale for the observation.

11. The Administration explained that MRA was adjusted annually in accordance with the movement of Consumer Price Index (A) ("CPI(A)") rent index for private housing. The MRA was last adjusted in June 2003. Although CPI(A) rent index for private housing indicated room for downward adjustment of the rates in the following years, the Administration had frozen MRA at the 2003 level having regard to the state of economy. As at November 2010, there was still room for downward adjustment of MRA by 0.2%. The Administration would monitor closely the latest rental movements, and would adjust MRA in accordance with the established mechanism when necessary.

12. Members expressed disappointment at the Administration's explanation.

They stressed that the existing level of MRA was lagging behind the prevailing market rentals. Members requested the Administration to review the adjustment mechanism and provide additional subsidy for CSSA households whose actual rent exceeded MRA for the time being.

#### Permissible absence limit for OAA

13. After following up on the subject of permissible limit of absence from Hong Kong ("absence limit") for OAA for many years, the Panel was pleased to note that the Administration proposed to relax the annual absence limit from 240 days to 305 days and reduce correspondingly the minimum residence period in a year from 90 to 60 days. The new arrangement would also apply to recipients of DA.

14. While welcoming the proposed relaxation of the absence limit, members remained of the view that the Administration should remove all restrictions on absence from Hong Kong for OAA. Members pointed out that in the absence of a universal retirement protection scheme, some elders had to rely on OAA and retire on the Mainland for lower cost of living. Members noted with concern that nearly half of the 90 000 elders currently staying on the Mainland had not applied for OAA, because they could not meet the one-year-continuous-residence requirement before the application for OAA. Members considered it unfair to impose a residence requirement on OAA recipients who were permanent Hong Kong residents.

15. The Administration advised that it was mindful of the calls from Members and the community for removing the absence limit for OAA. However, as the existing policy on residence requirements under the SSA Scheme was under judicial review, it would consider the way forward when the situation became clearer. The Administration assured members that the proposal to further increase the absence limit would be looked into after the relevant judicial review was concluded.

#### Universal retirement protection

16. In the light of an ageing population, the Panel was gravely concerned about the subject of financial security in old age. The Panel had held two meetings to receive views from deputations and discuss with the Administration the adequacy of the current retirement protection regime in Hong Kong. According to the Administration, Hong Kong adopted a three-pillar model for retirement protection, i.e. the non-contributory social security system, the Mandatory Provident Funds Scheme and voluntary private savings.

17. Members shared the concerns of the deputations that the three-pillar model was inadequate for protecting the retirement life of all people, in particular the needy elderly, the low-income earners and the non-economically active labour force such as housewives. Given the shortcomings of the three-pillar model for retirement protection and the ageing population trend, members expressed support for the implementation of a universal retirement protection scheme and strongly urged the Administration to kick start the study on the matter without further delay.

18. Members were given to understand that the Central Policy Unit ("CPU") was studying the sustainability of the existing retirement protection model. Members sought information about the progress of the CPU study and the Administration's stance on the proposal for implementing universal retirement protection. According to the Administration, it did not rule out the feasibility of studying the proposal and was open-minded on any viable and sustainable options. Given that the CPU study was ongoing, it would seriously consider the findings and projections of the study and other pertinent factors such as how to ensure the sustainable development of the social security system, in deciding the future course of action.

19. Members criticized the Administration for resorting to the CPU study as a delaying tactic and an excuse for shirking its responsibility for looking into the problem of inadequate retirement protection for the elderly. Members called on the Administration to make public the findings of the CPU study and consult the public on its way forward on retirement protection for the ageing population in Hong Kong. A motion urging the Administration to establish an inter-departmental task force to follow up the subject of implementing universal retirement protection for all people in Hong Kong was passed by the Panel. As the Administration considered it not necessary to set up an inter-departmental task force, members agreed that the Panel should appoint a subcommittee to follow up the matter. The approval of the House Committee ("HC") was obtained at its meeting on 21 January 2011 for the activation of the Subcommittee on Retirement Protection in late April 2011. The Subcommittee held three meetings between May and June 2011, and will continue its work in the 2011-2012 session. The Subcommittee has requested the Secretariat to conduct a research on the social security systems for retirement protection adopted in overseas countries.

#### Integrated Discharge Support Programme for Elderly Patients

20. Following the announcement of the 2011-2012 Budget, the Panel noted that an additional funding of \$148 million would be allocated to make the Integrated Discharge Support Programme for Elderly Patients ("the Programme")

a regular service and extend its coverage from the current three districts to all districts within 2011-2012. Members noted that the Programme aimed at reducing the risk of unplanned hospital re-admission of elderly patients through better discharge planning and post-discharge support so as to enable these elderly patients to continue to age in place.

21. While welcoming the proposal, members were concerned about the impact of the extended Programme on the manpower of medical and para-medical professionals. Noting concern about the shortage and long work hours of medical staff in the Hospital Authority ("HA") for years, members doubted whether the extension of the Programme would further stretch the existing tight workforce. Concern was also raised about the possibility of the Administration slowing down the provision of subsidised residential care places for the elderly if the Programme was proven to be effective, and, if so, the elderly would be encouraged to age at home.

22. Members were advised by the Administration that the expected service commencement dates of the extended Programme might need to be adjusted slightly having regard to the actual staffing situation of individual participating hospitals. Nonetheless, HA had been actively considering various measures to retain and attract healthcare staff, and the existing staffing situation might be relieved next year. Members were assured that the Programme would not undermine the Government's efforts in providing additional subsidised residential care services.

#### Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project

23. The Panel examined the Administration's proposal to regularise the Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project ("NSCCP") and extend its coverage to all 18 districts, with the aim to provide parents with flexible child care services in addition to the regular ones and promote mutual assistance in the neighbourhood. Members were gravely concerned about the employment status and remuneration of the home-based child carers of NSCCP. They noted the Administration's advice that home-based carers of NSCCP were volunteers and not employees of the service operators; they were provided with incentive payment at an hourly rate of \$18 to \$22.

24. Members did not accept the Administration's advice. They pointed out that although the meaning of employer-employee relationship was clearly spelt out in the Employment Ordinance, the Administration had blurred the distinction between employment and volunteering work by treating home-based child carers under NSCCP as volunteers and giving an hourly rate incentive payment only. As the relationship between the home-based child carers and

the service operators was a de facto employment relationship, members strongly urged the Administration to plug the loopholes of the existing undesirable arrangements.

25. Although the Administration had explained that both home-based child carers and service users were covered under the group personal accident insurance and public liability insurance, members remained concerned about the responsibility of parties concerned in the event that the child carer sustained work injuries or the service user was injured under the care of the carer. Members called on the Administration to put the relationship into the right perspective such that home-based child carers under NSCCP would be remunerated according to the statutory minimum wage level and protected with employees' compensation insurance.

#### Child fatality review

26. Members welcomed the Administration's proposal for setting up a standing child fatality review panel under the Social Welfare Department ("SWD"), as recommended by the Review Panel of the Pilot Project on Child Fatality Review. Some members considered that the scope of the review mechanism should be expanded to cover serious injuries cases. According to the Administration, following the commencement of the Pilot Project, the Review Panel had decided to review child death cases involving children who died of non-natural causes.

27. Members noted that all the recommendations in the Review Report were generally supported by the concerned government bureaux/departments, service organisations and stakeholders. To keep members abreast of the improvement measures taken and their progress, the Administration would provide the Panel with the progress made on the recommendations by the standing child fatality review panel as appropriate. Members also requested the Review Panel to analyse the family background of the deceased children with a view to identifying the root causes of each case and formulating specific preventive measures.

#### Child Development Fund

28. Members noted the Administration's plan to roll out the third and fourth batches of Child Development Fund ("CDF") projects in September 2011 and March 2012 respectively to promote the longer-term development of children from a disadvantaged background, with a view to reducing inter-generational poverty. Since the target was to benefit some 13 600 children eventually, members expressed concern about the slow progress in rolling out CDF projects

having regard to the fact that only 2 270 children were recruited to the first and second batches of projects and 5 000 were to be recruited under the third and fourth batches of projects.

29. According to the Administration, the implementation of CDF was largely depended on the recruitment of quality mentors to provide proper guidance to the children. Instead of relying merely on operating non-governmental organisations ("NGOs") to recruit mentors through their established network, members called on the Administration to introduce a central register so as to enlarge the network and facilitate matching of mentors and participating children across the territory. Members pointed out that since mentors were recruited from different walks of life, it was necessary for the operating NGOs to equip mentors with relevant communication and mentorship skills.

30. Members were concerned that a few participating children had not been able to complete the two-year savings programme. Members noted from the preliminary evaluation findings that a majority of these children had quitted the CDF projects because they did not want to continue to participate. Members requested the Administration to examine critically the underlying reasons for their withdrawal and affirm that the primary reason was not because of inability to save. To evaluate the long-term effectiveness of the CDF projects, members also requested the Administration to conduct a 30-year longitudinal study on the participating children.

#### Development of social enterprises

31. The Panel continued to follow up the subject of the development of social enterprises ("SEs"). Together with members of the Social Enterprise Advisory Committee ("SEAC"), the Administration briefed members on the measures adopted to foster the development of SEs. These improvements included extending the funding period and relaxing the eligibility for applying for seed grants under the Enhancing Self-Reliance Through District Partnership ("ESR") Programme; advertising and launching promotional events on SEs and socially responsible consumption; promoting business partnership programmes; and raising the public awareness and acceptance of SE products and services.

32. Members pointed out that the major challenge faced by SEs was a lack of relevant experience and professional knowledge in running a business. Apart from providing SEs with start-up grants, the Administration should introduce facilitating measures from the policy perspective to help SEs sustain their business. Members requested the Administration to award a specified percentage of Government service contracts to SEs, and offer tax concession to SEs. Noting that SEAC had been set up for more than two years, members

enquired about the views of SEAC on how to foster the overall SE development and on the role of the Government and the business sector in further promoting the SE development.

33. Members of SEAC highlighted to members that the focus of SEAC's discussions since its establishment had been on the Government's existing policies and measures for promoting the development of SEs. According to the Administration, the improvement measures were drawn up having regard to the views of SEAC, the ESR Advisory Committee, the SE operators and other relevant stakeholders. The number of Government service contracts awarded to SEs had been increasing in the past few years, and most of them were cleansing service contracts. The Administration would give priority to use SE projects and services as far as practicable if SEs met the service standards and requirements.

#### Provision of barrier-free access and facilities

34. Following the release of the Formal Investigation Report: Accessibility in Publicly Accessible Premises ("EOC Report") by the Equal Opportunities Commission ("EOC") in June 2010, the Panel was briefed on the Government's response to and proposed follow-up action on the EOC Report. Members were pleased to note that the Administration had responded positively to the 23 recommendations in the EOC Report on the improvement of accessibility, connectivity and interface with surrounding environment and user-friendly management practices for publicly accessible premises. According to the Administration, it had worked out a consolidated retrofitting programme for about 3 900 premises and facilities under the management of Government departments and Housing Authority properties, of which 3 306 (85.1%) would be retrofitted before 30 June 2012, 386 (9.9%) would have retrofitting works completed by 30 June 2014 and 193 (5%) would not be retrofitted because of imminent plan of decommissioning or disposal. At the request of the Panel, the Administration agreed to provide quarterly reports on the implementation progress of the retrofitting programme. The first progress report of the Government's follow-up action on the EOC Report was issued to members in April 2011.

35. Noting that the scope of the EOC Report covered 60 publicly accessible premises owned or managed by the Hong Kong Housing Society, The Link Management Limited ("The Link"), Housing Authority and eight Government departments only, members requested the Administration and EOC to follow up on the progress of providing barrier-free access to or use of other premises and facilities under the management of The Link, and services operated by the public transport companies.

36. According to the Chairperson of EOC, EOC had set up a working group to examine the progress made on the realisation of a barrier-free environment for persons with disabilities ("PWDs") and the development of an overarching policy on building an inclusive society. EOC would also be working closely with the Task Force convened by the Labour and Welfare Bureau ("LWB") comprising representatives of different bureaux/departments and stakeholders from various sectors to follow up on the accessibility problems identified in the Formal Investigation.

37. To monitor the Government's follow-up actions 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 Panel appointed a subcommittee for the purpose and obtained the approval of HC on 8 April 2011 for the Subcommittee to activate in June 2011. The Subcommittee held its first meeting in June 2011, and will continue its work in the 2011-2012 session.

38. To provide an opportunity for Members to express their views on the subject and for the Administration to provide its response to the recommendations in the EOC Report and make a commitment on the implementation timetable of the retrofitting programme for upgrading the barrier-free facilities in existing Government premises and facilities, the Panel obtained the approval of HC for the allocation of a debate slot to its Chairman to move a motion on the EOC Report at the Council meeting of 26 January 2011, and the motion was carried.

#### Financial Assistance Scheme for private residential care homes for persons with disabilities

39. The Panel was briefed on the proposed Financial Assistance Scheme ("FAS") for private residential care homes for persons with disabilities ("RCHDs") to provide subsidies for private RCHDs to carry out improvement works in compliance with the licensing requirements in building and fire safety. According to the Administration, FAS would be implemented after the enactment of the Residential Care Homes (Persons with Disabilities) Bill which sought to implement a statutory licensing scheme for all RCHDs. The Bill was passed by LegCo at the meeting of 15 June 2011.

40. While welcoming the proposal to assist the private RCHD operators to comply with the licensing requirements, members noted with concern that the approved grant would be released upon completion of the improvement works. Members were worried that some operators would encounter cashflow problem if they had to meet the entire costs of the improvement works first, having

regard to the increasing operating costs and difficulties in operating private RCHDs. Members requested the Administration to release partial subsidy in advance before the commencement of the improvement works.

41. The Administration's explanation was that FAS was funded by the Lotteries Fund ("LF"), and therefore the standing practice of reimbursement of grant was applicable to all organisations receiving LF. As private RCHD operators were not well versed in the payment arrangements of public funds, members called on the Administration to explain clearly to the private RCHD sector the application and reimbursement procedures so as to avoid unnecessary delay in effecting the grant payments.

#### Support services for street sleepers

42. According to the findings of a survey jointly conducted by four NGOs providing services for street sleepers, there were currently more than 1 000 street sleepers in the territory. Of them, about 38.8% were low-income earners whose monthly median income was \$3,000 and 60% with different symptoms of mental illness. Most of them became homeless because of inability to meet the rising rentals of private housing and ineligibility for CSSA due to the one-year-continuous-residence requirement. Members expressed grave concern about the trend of young street sleepers and an increasing number of them returning to Hong Kong from the Mainland due to loss of jobs.

43. Members noted the Administration's advice that SWD had put in place a wide range of support services to address the emergency and accommodation needs of street sleepers. Rent allowance was payable to eligible CSSA recipients for meeting accommodation expenses. Apart from CSSA, an allocation of \$70,000 was included in the annual subvention for the Integrated Services Team for Street Sleepers ("ISTs") operated by NGOs as emergency funds for eligible users to cover various expenses, such as short-term payment of rent and living costs, rental deposits, etc. Members considered the phenomenon of street sleepers unacceptable in an affluent society like Hong Kong. Members called on the Administration to strengthen the support services for street sleepers by providing more resources to ISTs, re-opening the singleton hostels previously operated by the Home Affairs Department so as to provide an interim accommodation for street sleepers, and reviewing the level of rent allowance under the CSSA Scheme so as to catch up with the prevailing rentals.

44. Members also requested HA to provide outreach community psychiatric service to street sleepers with suspected mental illness. Members were pleased to note from HA's clarification that healthcare staff were willing to provide

outreach service to conduct preliminary assessment, although it would be most desirable for street sleepers with suspected mental illness to receive assessment and treatment services at the psychiatric outpatient clinics of HA. Moreover, HA would set up Crisis Intervention Teams in all the seven clusters in 2011 to provide rapid and prompt response to emergency referrals in the community.

#### Guardianship of Minors (Amendment) Bill 2011

45. The Panel was briefed on the Administration's proposal to amend the Guardianship of Minors Ordinance (Cap. 13) for implementing the recommendations of the Report on Guardianship of Children published by the Law Reform Commission of Hong Kong ("LRC"). According to the Administration, the Bill would focus on the legal arrangements relating to the guardians appointed by parents and the court for minors in the event of the death of one or both parents, having regard to the appointment of guardians being a private arrangement between the appointing parent and the appointed guardian.

46. While expressing support for the legislative proposal, members were concerned about the public consultation on the proposal. According to the Administration, LRC had conducted extensive consultation with the stakeholders, including children welfare organisations, on the subject of guardianship prior to preparing the Report and making its recommendations. The Administration had also approached frontline social workers for their feedback in the course of examination of the Report, and the latter responded positively to LRC's recommendations.

47. As children and juvenile affairs were dealt with by the Court of First Instance, the Family Court and the Magistrates' Court, members requested the Administration and LRC to study whether the arrangements should be rationalised such that issues relating to the welfare of children and juveniles would best be dealt under the jurisdictions of the Family Court.

48. The Bill was introduced into LegCo on 15 June 2011, and a Bills Committee was formed to scrutinise the legislative proposals in detail.

#### Funding and staffing proposals

49. The Panel had examined a number of funding proposals which required the approval of FC.

*Injection of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome ("SARS") Trust Fund*

50. The Panel had examined the proposed injection of \$50 million into the SARS Trust Fund for providing continued financial assistance to incumbent recipients to meet their medical and living expenses pending recovery from SARS-related dysfunctions. Members noted that 147 persons were receiving assistance from the Trust Fund. Members were concerned about the long-term support for these recipients and the longer term arrangement for the Trust Fund.

51. According to the Administration, it had since 2007 adjusted the criteria for the Trust Fund, which included, among others, lifting the accumulative assistance ceiling of \$500,000 so as to provide continued ex-gratia financial assistance to the recovered and suspected SARS patients upon their reaching the \$500,000 ceiling. The proposed injection of \$50 million into the Trust Fund should be sufficient to provide continued financial assistance to incumbent recipients under the Trust Fund up to 2018. Members noted that HA had since 2005 implemented a life-long medical fee waiver arrangement for patients with medical problems relating to SARS.

*Setting up of a new Integrated Rehabilitation Services Centre*

52. Members expressed grave concern about the waitlisting situation of subsidised residential care places for PWDs. After following up on the subject for years, members welcomed the proposal to set up a new Integrated Rehabilitation Services Centre ("IRSC") for PWDs in Kau Wah Keng, Kwai Chung to provide 210 residential care places and 160 day training places for PWDs. Members, however, remained concerned about the unduly long waiting time for different types of residential care services. For instance, the average waiting time for Hostel for Severely Mentally Handicapped Persons in 2009-2010 was 68.4 months. Members strongly urged the Administration to set a pledge for allocation of subsidised residential care places, draw up a long-term strategy to increase the provision of residential care services for PWDs and shorten the waiting time for subsidised residential care places. Members also requested the Administration to earmark sites and identify suitable premises for setting up RCHDs at the development stage. In this connection, members called on the Administration to set up a task force under SWD to follow up social welfare land use planning.

53. Members noted that the proposed IRSC would be set up by retrofitting and converting the existing premises located at Kau Wah Keng which had become vacant following the relocation of the then O Pui Shan Boys' Home ("OPSBH"). As the design and fitting-out of the former OPSBH was not for RCHD purpose, members requested the Administration to expand the project

scope by, say, demolishing the existing premises and constructing a larger RCHD so as to achieve the optimum land use. In the Administration's view, the project proposal was considered the most viable option to provide residential care places and day training places for PWDs in the shortest possible timeframe having regard to the technical constraints on the land use.

*Extension of a supernumerary Administrative Officer Staff Grade C ("AOSGC") post in the Poverty Team of LWB*

54. Members discussed the Administration's proposal to retain one supernumerary post of AOSGC (D2) in LWB for a period of three years with effect from 10 March 2011 to continue to provide support to the work on poverty alleviation. Members requested the Administration to examine the need for converting the supernumerary post into a permanent one so as to demonstrate its commitment in poverty alleviation. The Administration clarified that it had not proposed to extend the post indefinitely, as some of the poverty alleviation measures would eventually become regular ones.

55. Noting that the incumbent would also be the subject officer in LWB to provide policy input and coordinate contributions from parties concerned in relation to welfare initiatives in supporting the work of the Community Care Fund ("CCF"), and to monitor their implementation, members considered that the incumbent should examine from the policy perspective as to whether any of these welfare initiatives should become regular measures. At members' request, the Administration provided detailed information on the incumbent's involvement in providing support to CCF in the relevant paper for the consideration of the Establishment Subcommittee and FC.

56. Members also considered it inadequate for the Administration to focus on the following up of the recommendations of the former Commission on Poverty only. New initiatives to alleviate the poverty problem should be accorded with equal importance. Members considered it necessary for the Administration to keep the Panel abreast of work progress of the Task Force in poverty alleviation. The Administration had undertaken to provide the Panel with periodic work progress of the Task Force. The Panel will discuss the latest work progress of the Task Force at its meeting in July 2011.

Subcommittee on Residential and Community Care Services for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly

57. The Panel set up a subcommittee in January 2009 to study policies and measures relating to the provision of residential care places and community care services for PWDs and the elderly. The approval of HC was obtained on 5

February 2010 for the Subcommittee on Residential and Community Care Services for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly to commence work and on 25 February 2011 for it to continue to work in the 2010-2011 session in accordance with House Rule 26(c).

58. The Subcommittee held 12 meetings, including seven in the 2009-2010 session, to discuss with the Administration and receive views from deputations on various issues of concern. These included the waitlisting situation, the new initiatives to increase the provision of subsidised residential care places under planning, and the community care and support services in place to support elders with long-term care needs and persons with different types of disabilities to stay in the community. The Subcommittee had concluded its work and submitted its report to the Panel in June 2011.

#### Meetings held

59. During the period between October 2010 and June 2011, the Panel held a total of 14 meetings, including one joint meeting with the Panel on Health Services. Another three meetings have been scheduled for July and August 2011.

Council Business Division 2  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
29 June 2011

### **Legislative Council**

#### **Panel on Welfare Services**

##### **Terms of Reference**

1. To monitor and examine Government policies and issues of public concern relating to welfare (including women welfare) and rehabilitation services, poverty, social enterprise and Family Council.
2. To provide a forum for the exchange and dissemination of views on the above policy matters.
3. To receive briefings and to formulate views on any major legislative or financial proposals in respect of the above policy areas prior to their formal introduction to the Council or Finance Committee.
4. To monitor and examine, to the extent it considers necessary, the above policy matters referred to it by a member of the Panel or by the House Committee.
5. To make reports to the Council or to the House Committee as required by the Rules of Procedure.

**Panel on Welfare Services**

**Membership list for 2010 - 2011 session**

<b>Chairman</b>	Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che
<b>Deputy Chairman</b>	Hon WONG Sing-chi
<b>Members</b>	Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
	Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
	Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
	Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
	Hon LI Fung-ying, SBS, JP
	Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, SBS, JP
	Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC
	Hon Paul CHAN Mo-po, MH, JP
	Dr Hon LEUNG Ka-lau
	Hon WONG Kwok-kin, BBS
	Hon IP Wai-ming, MH
	Dr Hon PAN Pey-chyou
	Dr Hon Samson TAM Wai-ho, JP
	Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC
	Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
	Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip

(Total : 18 members)

**Clerk** Miss Betty MA

**Legal adviser** Mr YICK Wing-kin

**Date** 14 October 2010