

Panel on Welfare Services

List of outstanding items for discussion
(position as at 8 February 2012)

Proposed timing for discussion

1. Report of the Subcommittee on Guardianship and Custody of the Law Reform Commission ("LRC")

At the meeting on 8 February 2010, the Administration briefed the Panel on its position on the recommendations made by LRC in the Report on International Parental Child Abduction. The Administration is working on the amendments to the relevant legislation for implementing the recommendations.

As for the Report on Custody and Access ("the Report") released on 7 March 2005, the Administration advised that it is studying the recommendations carefully. The Administration launched a four-month public consultation on 28 December 2011 on whether the "joint parental responsibility model" should be implemented in Hong Kong by legislative means. The Panel was briefed on the consultation paper at its meeting on 9 January 2012. According to the Administration, it would map out, in the light of comments received, whether and how to take forward the relevant recommendations of the Report.

The Panel will hold a special meeting on 25 February 2012 to receive views from deputations on the consultation paper.

25 February 2012

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. At the meeting on 10 January 2011, the Panel decided to appoint a subcommittee to study issues relating to retirement protection. After obtaining the approval of the House Committee on 21 January 2011 for the activation of the Subcommittee on Retirement Protection, the Subcommittee on Retirement Protection held six meetings from May to November 2011. The Subcommittee will continue its work in the 2011-2012 session.

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.

To be decided

Following the release of the Consultation Paper on Charities by the Charities Sub-committee of LRC, the Panel held a special meeting on 24 August 2011 to receive public views on the subject. The Charities Sub-committee advised that it would work out concrete proposals after taking into account views and comments collected during the consultation period (which has been extended to 31 October 2011).

5. Absence limits for Old Age Allowance ("OAA")

In briefing Members on the proposed relaxation of the permissible limit of absence for OAA (which was subsequently implemented in February 2011) at the meeting on 8 November 2010, the Administration advised that as its existing policy on residence requirements under the Social Security Allowance ("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.

In his 2011-2012 Policy Address, CE announced that the Administration would make preparation for the Guangdong Scheme for the provision of OAA to Hong Kong elders who choose to move to live in Guangdong.

12 March 2012

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.

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 letters dated 30 October 2009 (LC Paper No. CB(2)183/09-10(01)) and 22 June 2011 (LC Paper No. CB(2)2196/10-11(01)).

Proposed timing for discussion

The JR case lodged by a former applicant against the decision of the Administration in respect of his eligibility for DA closed in June 2011. The Administration will revert to the Panel in due course upon the completion of its review on the mechanism for implementing the DA scheme.

1st quarter/
2nd quarter of 2012

A motion moved by Mr WONG Kwok-hing on comprehensively reviewing the DA scheme was carried at the Council meeting of 9 November 2011.

Dr PAN Pey-chyou requested vide his letter dated 11 November 2011 (LC Paper No. CB(2)310/11-12(01)) to discuss the eligibility criteria of persons with disabilities for fare concessions under the public transport concessions for the elderly and persons with disabilities. The Administration's response to Dr PAN's letter was circulated vide LC Paper No. CB(2)513/11-12(01) on 7 December 2011.

7. Long-term social welfare planning

At the meeting on 11 July 2011, the Panel discussed the report of the Social Welfare Advisory Committee ("SWAC") on the long term planning of social welfare development in Hong Kong. The Panel held a special meeting on 22 August 2011 to receive public views on the subject matter. The Administration advised that it had yet to form its position on the recommendations of SWAC's study and undertook to revert to the Panel in the 2011-2012 session as early as practicable.

To be decided

Proposed timing for discussion

8. 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. One of the cases was heard on 12 December 2011.

9. Elderly Commission ("EC")'s consultancy study on community care services for the elderly – Pilot Scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly

Following the release of the findings of EC's consultancy study on community care services for the elderly, the Panel was briefed on the findings and recommendations of the study at its meeting on 11 July 2011. The Panel held a further meeting on 22 August 2011 to receive views from deputations on the subject matter. The Administration was requested to revert to the Panel on its stance on the recommendations of the EC study in the 2011-2012 session as early as practicable.

Proposed timing for discussion

In his Policy Address 2011-2012, the Chief Executive announced that the Government would introduce a community care service ("CCS") voucher scheme to provide direct subsidy to elders who had long-term care service need with more flexibility and choices of CCS that suited their needs to age at home.

13 February 2012

10. 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.

At the meeting on 12 December 2011, the Administration reported the progress on the implementation of the recommendations of the Review. While the issue on handling housing assistance cases remained a prominent concern of IFSC staff, members agreed that a further meeting would be held to discuss with the Administration. Representatives of the Housing Department would be invited to attend the meeting. The Panel will hold a special meeting on 14 March 2012 to receive views from deputations.

14 March 2012

		Proposed timing for discussion
11.	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.	2 nd quarter/ 3 rd quarter of 2012
	At the informal meeting on 25 October 2010, Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che, Chairman of the 2010-2011 session, proposed that the Administration should brief members on the progress of implementation of recommendations of LSGIRC.	
12.	Work progress of the Family Council	
	At the informal meetings on 4 November 2010 and 24 October 2011, the Administration agreed to brief the Panel on the findings of the four thematic studies being conducted by the Family Council. The Administration plans to brief the Panel on its findings in March 2012.	12 March 2012
13.	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
14.	Progress on the implementation of the licensing scheme for residential care homes for persons with disabilities ("RCHDs") and related complementary measures	
	At the request of the Subcommittee on Residential Care Homes (Persons with Disabilities) Regulation and Residential Care Homes (Persons with Disabilities) Ordinance (Commencement) Notice 2011, the Administration agreed to report to the Panel on the progress in implementation of the licensing scheme for RCHDs and the related complementary measures, including the pilot Bought Place Scheme for RCHDs and Financial Assistance Scheme in about six months after the commencement of the licensing scheme.	2 nd quarter/ 3 rd quarter of 2012

Proposed timing for discussion

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| 15. | Public Transport Concessions for the Elderly and People with Disabilities | |
| | Item proposed by the Administration. At the meeting on 12 December 2011, Dr PAN Pey-chyou proposed to discuss the item before the implementation details were finalised. | 2 nd quarter/
3 rd quarter of 2012 |
| 16. | Visiting Pharmacist Scheme | |
| | Item proposed by the Administration. | To be decided |
| 17. | Employment assistance programmes under the CSSA Scheme | |
| | Item proposed by the Administration. | 2 nd quarter of 2012 |
| 18. | Progress Report on Child Development Fund | |
| | Item proposed by the Administration. | 2 nd quarter/
3 rd quarter of 2012 |
| 19. | Progress Report on Task Force on Poverty | |
| | Item proposed by the Administration. | 2 nd quarter/
3 rd quarter of 2012 |
| 20. | Enhanced Bought Place Scheme for Residential Care Homes for the Elderly | |
| | Item proposed by Hon WONG Sing-chi. | 2 nd quarter of 2012 |