

Panel on Welfare Services

List of outstanding items for discussion
(position as at 15 February 2013)

Proposed timing for discussion

1. Reports issued by 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 Guardianship of Children, the Report on International Parental Child Abduction, as well as the Report on Child Custody and Access. The Administration has since then completed the legislative amendments for implementing the recommendations in the Report on Guardianship of Children and is working on the amendments to the relevant legislation for implementing the recommendations of the Report on International Parental Child Abduction.

First quarter of 2013

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. A special meeting was held on 25 February 2012 to receive views from deputations on the consultation paper. 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 Administration will brief members, in the first quarter of 2013, on the results of the public consultation on Child Custody and Access: Whether to Implement the "Joint Parental

Responsibility Model" by Legislative Means, and on the way forward.

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 the progress in due course.

To be decided

3. Retirement protection

The Panel and its Subcommittee on Retirement Protection had studied the subject of universal retirement protection in the last legislative term. The Subcommittee submitted its report (LC Paper No. CB(2)1942/11-12) to the Panel on 14 May 2012 and made a number of recommendations for the Administration's consideration. The Subcommittee also recommended that the Panel should follow up with the Administration on the matter in the next legislative term.

To be decided

Hon Alice MAK and Hon TANG Ka-piu have jointly suggested that the Panel form a Subcommittee on Retirement Protection. The suggestion was agreed by the Panel at its meeting on 14 January 2013. The Subcommittee is in the first place on the waiting list.

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

To be decided

generated from public charitable fund-raising activities.

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 LRC Charities Sub-committee has proceeded to work on concrete proposals for enhancing the monitoring measures for charitable fund-raising activities in light of the views collected from the public consultation which ended in October 2011.

5. Review of the system for processing applications for Disability Allowance ("DA") under the Social Security Allowance ("SSA") Scheme

Item proposed by Hon WONG Kwok-hing and Hon WONG Kwok-kin in the last legislative term. Members were concerned about the eligibility criteria for DA, the system for processing DA applications and the appeal mechanism.

25 February 2013

According to Hon WONG Kwok-hing, the Administration has completed the captioned review but the review report has not yet been released. He hopes that this item could be discussed by the Panel as soon as possible, so as to push for the Administration's release of the review results as soon as possible.

At the meeting of the Panel on Constitutional Affairs ("CA Panel") on 16 October 2012, Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun called for a review of the eligibility criteria for DA which in his view had led to a situation that some disabled persons suffering certain kinds of disabilities (e.g. total loss of sight) were covered by DA, while others suffering different kinds of disabilities (e.g. loss of leg) were not fully covered.

Proposed timing for discussion

The Panel met the Administration and deputations on the review of the system for processing applications for DA under the SSA Scheme at its regular meeting on 10 December 2012.

The Panel will hold a special meeting on 25 February 2013 to discuss with the Administration its response to the views and concerns expressed by members and deputations at the meeting on 10 December 2012 and the progress of the work of the inter-departmental Working Group set up by the Administration to study DA.

6. 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 High Court ruling on the judicial review 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 Old Age Allowance ("OAA") applicants.

To be decided

In anticipation of the appeal proceedings, members agreed to revisit the need to discuss the matter in due course.

Pursuant to the Court of Appeal's ruling made in February 2012, the one-year-continuous-residence requirement was removed from the CSSA Scheme. Meanwhile, the Court of First Instance dismissed two cases of judicial review of the OAA one-year-continuous-residence requirement on 14 May and 17 September 2012 respectively, and ruled that the requirement was constitutional.

7. Visiting Pharmacist Scheme

Item proposed by the Administration in the 2011-2012 session.

To be decided

Proposed timing for discussion

8. Progress Report on Child Development Fund

Item proposed by the Administration in the 2011-2012 session. The Administration will brief members on the implementation progress and enhancement measures of the Child Development Fund.

First half of 2013

9. Review of rent allowance under the CSSA Scheme

At the joint meeting of the Panel and the Panel on Housing held on 13 April 2012, members expressed concern about the inadequacy of the rent allowance under the CSSA Scheme for street sleepers on CSSA to meet rental expenses of private housing and considered it necessary for the Panel to follow up on the review mechanism for the maximum rate of the rent allowance.

To be decided

10. Guangdong Scheme

At the meeting on 12 March 2012, the Panel was briefed on the Guangdong Scheme for the provision of OAA to Hong Kong elders who chose to move to live in Guangdong. Members were concerned about the implementation timetable and the plan to extend the Scheme to other provinces, e.g. Fujian. Members agreed at the meeting on 12 April 2012 that the Panel should continue to follow up the matter.

Second quarter of 2013

11. Provision of barrier free access and facilities for persons with disabilities

The Panel and its Subcommittee on Improving Barrier Free Access and Facilities for Persons with Disabilities had studied the subject of provision of barrier free access and facilities for persons with disabilities in the last legislative term. The Subcommittee submitted its report (LC Paper No. CB(2)2065/11-12) to the Panel on

To be decided

Proposed timing for discussion

29 May 2012 and made a number of recommendations for the Administration's consideration. The Subcommittee also recommended that the Panel should follow up with the Administration on the matter in the next legislative term. The Administration will continue to provide a quarterly report on the progress of the retrofitting programme for upgrading the barrier-free facilities in existing government premises and facilities and the Housing Authority properties to the Panel for information.

12. Progress report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Lump Sum Grant Independent Review Committee

Item proposed by the Administration.

To be decided

13. Pilot scheme on community care service voucher for the elderly

Item proposed by the Administration in the 2012-2013 session.

Second quarter of 2013

14. Elderly care policy

Item proposed by the Deputy Chairman of the Panel.

To be decided

15. Social enterprise development policy

Item proposed by the Deputy Chairman of the Panel.

To be decided

16. Review of the tendering mechanism for elderly services contracts

Item proposed by the Deputy Chairman of the Panel.

To be decided

Proposed timing for discussion

17. Provision and enhancement of welfare service premises for the elderly

Item proposed by the Deputy Chairman of the Panel.

To be decided

18. Social welfare planning

The Deputy Chairman suggested that the Panel should discuss social welfare planning.

19 February 2013

The Panel agreed, at its meeting on 14 January 2013, to discuss medium and long-term social welfare planning at its next regular meeting on 19 February 2013.

19. Work progress of the Family Council

Item proposed by the Deputy Chairman of the Panel.

To be decided

20. Proposal for formation of a subcommittee on issues relating to welfare of people with disabilities

Item proposed by the Panel Chairman.

To be decided

21. Non-renewal of contracts of Social Welfare Department("SWD")'s non-civil service contract ("NCSC") Community Work Organisers ("CWOs")

Item proposed by Hon TANG Ka-piu and Hon KWOK Wai-keung.

19 February 2013

Arising from outsourcing of the employment assistance programme run by SWD, the contracts of some 80 NCSC CWOs will not be renewed upon the expiry of their current contracts on 31 March 2013.

The two Members requested the Panel on Welfare Services and the Panel on Public Service to discuss the subject as soon as possible. The Panel on Public Service received views from the relevant staff associations at its meeting on 21 January 2013. The Panel on Welfare Services will discuss this item at its meeting on 19 February 2013.

The Panel agreed, at its meeting on 14 January 2013, to discuss the item at its next regular meeting on 19 February 2013.

22. Integrated Community-based Services for Offenders

Item proposed by the Administration. With a view to generating more synergy and providing a one-stop service to better meet rehabilitation needs of offenders, SWD has implemented an integrated model on community-based services for offenders since July 2012. Under the model, the former 11 Probation Offices were integrated with the Community Service Orders ("CSO") Office and Community Support Service Centres, and re-organised into seven Probation and Community Service Orders Offices ("PCSOs"). The seven PCSOs are responsible for all statutory duties and each of them serves its respective Magistrates' Courts. A co-ordinating office of CSO has also been set up specifically to support the seven PCSOs in arranging unpaid community work for persons who are placed under CSO by the court.

March 2013

The Administration will brief members on the implementation of the integrated model.

Proposed timing for discussion

23. Promoting Active Ageing

Item proposed by the Administration. The Administration has all along encouraged the elderly to lead a healthy and active life. The Administration will brief members on the various initiatives relating to the promotion of active ageing and an age-friendly community.

March 2013

24. Policies on handling problems relating to domestic violence (including sexual violence)

The Panel agreed, at its meeting on 14 January 2013, to discuss the item at its next regular meeting on 19 February 2013.

19 February 2013

Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG proposed that a Subcommittee on Strategy and Measures to Tackle Domestic Violence be formed under the Panel. His proposal was accepted by the Panel at its special meeting on 21 January 2013. The Subcommittee is now in the second place on the waiting list.

25. Provision of child care services

In its submission to the Panel (LC Paper No. CB(2)601/12-13(01)), Hong Kong Women Workers' Association requests the Panel to discuss, as soon as possible, improving the provision of child care services.

To be decided