

Panel on Welfare Services

List of outstanding items for discussion
(position as at 12 April 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.

Second 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. Infirmary care in non-hospital setting

The Administration consulted the Panel in December 2004 on a proposal to launch a trial scheme to provide infirmary 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 infirmary 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.

The subject will be followed up by the subcommittee after it is activated

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.

To be decided

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.

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 held 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. The Panel passed a motion urging the Administration to complete the work of the Inter-departmental Working Group on Review of the DA and make recommendations within four months, and report to the Legislative Council by this summer, so as to overhaul and improve the eligibility criteria and system for applying for 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.

Proposed timing for discussion

7. Visiting Pharmacist Scheme

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

To be decided

8. Updates 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.

16 April 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

To be decided

Proposed timing for discussion

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 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

Proposed timing for discussion

16. Review of the tendering mechanism for elderly services contracts

Item proposed by the Deputy Chairman of the Panel.

To be decided

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.

June 2013

The Panel discussed medium and long-term social welfare planning at its regular meeting on 19 February 2013 and special meeting on 26 March 2013. The Panel will discuss with the Administration progress of the subject matter at its regular meeting in June 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

Proposed timing for discussion

21. Promoting Active Ageing

At the Panel meeting on 11 March 2013, the Panel discussed the initiatives relating to the promotion of active ageing and an age-friendly community. The Chairman said that the Panel could consider inviting the Elderly Commission to give views on the implementation of its projects on promoting active ageing.

To be decided

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

The Panel met the Administration and deputations on the welfare services to support the victims of domestic violence and their families and "Policies on handling problems relating to domestic violence (including sexual violence)" at its meetings on 14 January and 19 February 2013 respectively.

The subject will be followed up by the subcommittee after it is activated

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.

23. 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

24. Community Investment and Inclusion Fund ("CIIF")

To follow up on the Public Accounts Committee ("PAC")'s recommendation of putting in place effective assessment tools, the Labour and Welfare Bureau ("LWB") had commissioned independent

To be decided

consultants to conduct a second evaluation study for CIIF, including the design of a set of social capital outcome indicators and assessment tools for CIIF projects to evaluate the outcome of social capital development.

The findings of the study confirmed that CIIF could effectively enhance capacity building of individuals, and promote cross-generational care, mutual help across different social strata and ethnic harmony, resulting in an overall enhancement of community capacity. LWB had followed up with the CIIF Committee on the recommendations of the independent consultants and devised the way forward and scale of operation for the CIIF.

PAC has recommended that the issue be followed up by the Panel (LC Paper No. CB(2)732/12-13(01)).

25. Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged ("the Fund")

Item proposed by the Administration. The Fund, administered by SWD, was set up in 2005 to promote tripartite partnership among the welfare sector, the business community and the Government in helping the disadvantaged. Donations in money and in kind from the business sector are matched dollar-for-dollar by the Government to enable non-governmental organizations ("NGOs") to carry out social welfare projects. By the end of February 2013, 141 NGOs had obtained matching grants totalling over \$247 million to implement 573 welfare projects, benefiting over 800 000 disadvantaged persons. The Administration will brief members on the implementation of the Fund.

16 April 2013

Proposed timing for discussion

26. Latest progress on the implementation of the licensing scheme for residential care homes for persons with disabilities ("RCHDs")

Item proposed by members. They wish to know the updated position on applications for licence or certificate of exemption ("CoE") by individual RCHDs, and the way forward (e.g. how the Administration will deal with RCHDs which have not applied for a licence/CoE, are awaiting the results of their applications, or do not meet the licensing requirements by the end of the grace period on 17 May 2013, as well as arrangements for the residents concerned).

16 April 2013

27. Additional funding for short-term food assistance service ("the Service")

Item proposed by the Administration. The Service was first launched in February 2009. The Administration aims to seek Finance Committee ("FC")'s approval in June 2013 for additional funding to carry out further service enhancement and extending the Service.

May 2013

28. Additional provision for social security recipients

Item proposed by the Administration. The Financial Secretary proposed in the 2013-2014 Budget to provide an extra allowance to CSSA recipients, which is equal to one month of the standard rate CSSA payments; and an extra allowance to recipients of OAA, Old Age Living Allowance and DA, which is equal to one month of the allowances.

May 2013

The Administration's paper will inform members of its proposal.