

Panel on Welfare Services

List of outstanding items for discussion
(position as at 8 April 2014)

Proposed timing for discussion

1. Hong Kong Law Reform Commission Report on Child Custody and Access

The Law Reform Commission ("LRC") has published its Report on Child Custody and Access putting forward 72 recommendations, the main thrust of which relates to the introduction into Hong Kong's family law of a new "parental responsibility model". The Administration has conducted a public consultation exercise on LRC's recommendations in January 2012. The Panel was briefed in July 2013 on the results of the consultation exercise and members' views were sought on the proposed way forward. The Administration will report the progress in due course.

To be decided

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 Administration was requested to brief the Panel on the findings of the consultancy study on retirement protection in Hong Kong at its meeting to be held on 14 July 2014.

To be decided

The subject of retirement protection is being followed up by the Subcommittee on Retirement Protection.

4. Charitable fund-raising activities

Following the release of the Consultation Paper on Charities by the LRC Charities Sub-committee, 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.

To be decided

On 6 December 2013, LRC released its report on charities, which put forward a number of recommendations including those on monitoring charitable fund-raising activities.

5. Review of Disability Allowance ("DA") and the system for processing applications thereof

(a) Review of DA by the Administration's Working Group

The Panel was briefed in February 2013 on the work of the Administration's inter-departmental Working Group to review DA, which would follow up the subject of allowing people with loss of one limb to apply for DA.

To be decided

The Panel received the Administration's briefing on the progress of the work of the Working Group at its meeting on 8 July 2013. The Chairman said that the subject matter should be further discussed as soon as possible.

(b) Amendments to the medical assessment form for DA

At the Panel meeting on 9 December 2013, a motion was passed whereby the Panel, inter alia,

To be decided

objected to the Administration's proposed removal of "work in the original occupation and performing any other kind of work" from the medical assessment form.

6. Review of the one-year-continuous-residence requirement under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ("CSSA") Scheme and Social Security Allowance ("SSA") Scheme

Item raised by Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung in 2010. He 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.

9 June 2014

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

The Subcommittee on Improving Barrier Free Access and Facilities for Persons with Disabilities submitted its report (LC Paper No. CB(2)2065/11-12) to the Panel in May 2012 and recommended, inter alia, that the Panel should follow up with the Administration on the matter in the next legislative term.

To be decided

The Administration will continue to provide quarterly reports on 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.

9. Report on the progress of the implementation of the recommendations of the Lump Sum Grant Independent Review Committee ("LSGIRC")

Item proposed by the Administration. The Administration last reported the progress on the implementation of the recommendations of LSGIRC's in June 2012. Out of the LSGIRC's 36 recommendations, 35 recommendations have been implemented.

12 May 2014

The remaining recommendation is that the welfare sector should develop a Best Practice Manual ("BPM") for non-governmental organizations on various management issues, including human resource management, financial management, as well as corporate governance. For this purpose, the Social Welfare Department ("SWD") has been working with the sector since 2010 through a consultancy study, visits, meetings and consultations. Subject to the Lump Sum Grant Steering Committee's endorsement of BPM at its meeting scheduled for 8 April 2014, the Administration will brief the Panel on the progress of the LSGIRC's recommendations including the production of the BPM.

Proposed timing for discussion

10. Elderly care policy

Item proposed by the Deputy Chairman.

To be decided

The Chairman suggested that the Panel should discuss residential care services.

11. Social enterprise development policy

Item proposed by the Deputy Chairman. He suggested that review of the Co-operative Societies Ordinance (Cap. 33) should also be discussed under the proposed item. The Chairman suggested that the issue be discussed in the first quarter of 2014.

To be decided

The initiatives and work of the Home Affairs Department and SWD to help the socially disadvantaged to become self-reliant through promoting the development of social enterprises were discussed at the meeting of Subcommittee on Poverty on 28 January 2014.

12. Review of the tendering mechanism for elderly services contracts

Item proposed by the Deputy Chairman.

To be decided

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

Item proposed by the Deputy Chairman.

To be decided

14. Social welfare planning

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

To be decided

The Panel discussed medium and long-term social welfare planning at its meetings on 19 February, 26 March and 8 July 2013. Members suggested that

Proposed timing for discussion

the Panel should discuss with the Administration progress of the subject matter as soon as possible.

15. Work progress of the Family Council

Item proposed by the Deputy Chairman.

June 2014

The Home Affairs Bureau has proposed to brief the Panel on the subject in June 2014.

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

Item proposed by the Chairman.

To be decided

17. 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

18. 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 Panel accepted Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG's proposal to form a Subcommittee on Strategy and Measures to Tackle Domestic Violence. The Subcommittee is now on the waiting list and will activate upon the completion of work of the Joint

The subject will be followed up by the Subcommittee on Strategy and Measures to Tackle Domestic Violence after it is activated.

Proposed timing for discussion

Subcommittee on Long-term Care Policy by end of July 2014.

19. Provision of child care services and after school 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 and after school care services.

To be decided

Dr Hon Helena WONG suggested on 20 January 2014 (LC Paper No. CB(2)748/13-14(01)) that the Panel fix a date for discussing the subject and receiving views from deputations.

20. Shortage of supporting staff (including Programme Workers) in the social welfare sector

A number of trade unions and concern groups from the social welfare sector have jointly requested the Panel to meet with deputations and the Administration on the subject of "converting the temporary post of Programme Worker to a permanent post".

To be decided

Arising from discussion of the subject at the case conference in September 2013, Members attending the conference requested the Panel to follow up the policy issue of "shortage of supporting staff (including Programme Workers) in the social welfare sector". The situation of supporting staff in the welfare sector was discussed at the Panel meeting on 13 January 2014, and the Administration was asked to report on the progress in six months' time.

21. Review of Old Age Living Allowance ("OALA")

Item proposed by Hon LEUNG Che-cheung. The Administration has undertaken to review OALA one

To be decided

year after its implementation and report the outcome of the review to the Panel.

The Chairman said that the issue might be discussed at the Panel meeting to be held on 14 July 2014.

22. Review of SWD's Standardised Care Needs Assessment Mechanism for Elderly Services

Item proposed by Hon TANG Ka-piu.

9 June 2014

23. Setting up a day activity centre cum hostel for severely mentally handicapped persons and supported hostel for mentally handicapped persons in Cheung Sha Wan Estate, Shum Shui Po

Item proposed by the Administration. The Administration will consult the Panel with a view to seeking the approval of the Finance Committee ("FC") in June 2014 for allocation of funding under the Lotteries Fund for the related capital costs (i.e. costs of fitting-out works and acquisition of furniture and equipment).

12 May 2014

24. Setting up two new contract residential care homes for the elderly ("RCHEs") cum day care units in Kwun Tong and Sha Tin, and one new contract RCHE and a day care centre for the elderly in Sheung Shui (could be presented as separate items or combined as one item subject to works schedule)

Item proposed by the Administration.

9 June 2014

25. Additional provision for social security recipients

Item proposed by the Administration. The Financial Secretary proposed in the 2014-2015 Budget the provision of an extra allowance to CSSA recipients, which is equal to one month of the standard rate CSSA payments, and an extra allowance to OAA (including the Guangdong Scheme), OALA and DA recipients, which is equal to one month of the allowances.

12 May 2014

The Administration will brief the Panel on its proposal. The Administration intends to submit the relevant funding proposal to FC on 6 June 2014.