

Panel on Welfare Services

List of outstanding items for discussion
(position as at 6 October 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. 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

To be decided

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.

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. As the recommendations of the report are relevant to various bureaux and departments, the Home Affairs Bureau ("HAB") is coordinating their input and views with a view to formulating Government's responses to the report.

4. 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. Hon CHAN Yuen-han 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, 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.

To be decided

Proposed timing for discussion

5. Review of the one-year-continuous-residence requirement under the Social Security Allowance ("SSA") Scheme

Item raised by Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung in 2010. He expressed concern about the residence requirement for Old Age Allowance ("OAA") applicants.

To be decided

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.

6. Visiting Pharmacist Scheme

Item proposed by the Administration.

To be decided

7. 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 Fifth Legislative Council.

To be decided

Retrofitting programmes for upgrading the barrier-free facilities at Government and Housing Authority ("HA") premises had been completed by 30 June 2014. The progress report will be submitted to the Panel and uploaded to the Labour and Welfare Bureau's website for public information.

The Administration will continue to enhance the barrier-free facilities in Government and HA premises and facilities and take forward any additional proposals having regard to views and suggestions of stakeholders in accordance with the

established mechanism. Members of the public may continue to make use of the Access Co-ordinator and Access Officer Scheme to seek assistance, offer suggestions and lodge complaints in respect of the barrier-free facilities of Government and HA venues. The Administration will also continue to work closely with the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee, the rehabilitation sector and the community in building a barrier-free and inclusive society.

8. Elderly care policy

Item proposed by Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che.

To be decided

Hon CHAN Yuen-han suggested that the Panel should discuss residential care services for the elderly. Both the long-term care policy and residential care services for the elderly have been studied by the Joint Subcommittee on Long-term Care Policy and covered in its report.

9. Review of the tendering mechanism for elderly services contracts

Item proposed by Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che.

To be decided

10. Provision of welfare service premises for the elderly and enhancement of facilities provided therein

Item proposed by Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che.

To be decided

11. Social welfare planning

Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che 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

Proposed timing for discussion

March and 8 July 2013. Members suggested that the Panel should discuss with the Administration progress of the subject matter as soon as possible.

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

Item proposed by Hon CHAN Yuen-han at the Panel meeting on 12 November 2012. In deciding that the Panel would receive views from deputations on review of the system for processing applications for DA at the regular meeting to be held in December 2013, Hon CHAN Yuen-han suggested that the proposal for formation of a subcommittee on issues related to welfare of persons with disabilities should be included in the list of outstanding items for discussion by the Panel.

To be decided

13. 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. Hon CHAN Yuen-han 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

14. 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 on Strategy and Measures to Tackle Domestic Violence.

Proposed timing for discussion

The Panel accepted Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG's proposal to form a Subcommittee on Strategy and Measures to Tackle Domestic Violence. The Subcommittee can commence work in the 2014-2015 session as a vacant slot has become available to accommodate its activation. First meeting to be scheduled.

15. 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.

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

In discussing the captioned item at the Panel meeting on 13 January 2014, the Panel passed a motion urging the Administration to, among others, submit a report on matters related to Programme Workers to the Panel within six months. The report was forwarded to members on 31 July 2014 (LC Paper No. CB(2)2162/13-14(01)).

To be decided

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

Item proposed by Hon LEUNG Che-cheung.

To be decided

The Administration has undertaken to review OALA one year after its implementation and report the outcome of the review to the Panel.

Hon CHAN Yuen-han has requested that the Administration should report to the Panel the soonest possible (not later than December 2014).

Proposed timing for discussion

18. Progress report on the production of the Best Practice Manual for non-governmental organizations receiving Lump Sum Grant Subvention

The item was discussed at the Panel meeting on 12 May 2014. Hon CHAN Yuen-han suggested that the Panel revisit the subject matter relating to Lump Sum Grant Subvention in the 2014-2015 session and invite deputations to give views thereon.

To be decided

19. Targets for provision of hostels for mentally handicapped persons

The Panel was consulted on the Administration's proposal to set 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 at its meeting on 12 May 2014. Hon CHAN Yuen-han suggested that the Panel consider discussing, in the 2014-2015 session, the subject of setting targets for the provision of hostels for mentally handicapped persons, e.g. setting a target waiting time and a specific percentage of the total area of a new public housing project for such provision.

To be decided

20. Pilot Scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly

The subject was discussed at the meeting of the Panel on 13 January 2014. The Administration will brief members on the latest position.

November 2014

21. Extending the Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme for the Elderly and Eligible Persons with Disabilities to Green Minibuses

The Chief Executive announced in the 2014 Policy Address that the Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme for the Elderly and Eligible Persons with Disabilities will be extended to green minibuses in phases starting from the first quarter of 2015. The Administration will brief members on the progress of the preparation work. The Administration intends to submit the relevant funding proposal to the Finance Committee ("FC") in end-November 2014.

November 2014

22. Annual adjustment of social security payment rates under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ("CSSA") Scheme and the SSA Scheme, and issues relating to rent allowance under the CSSA Scheme

The Administration will brief members on -

November 2014

- (a) the latest position of the Social Security Assistance Index of Prices and the estimated corresponding adjustment to the rates of allowances under the SSA Scheme and standard payment rates under the CSSA Scheme as from 1 February 2015; and
- (b) the latest position of the Consumer Price Index (A) rent index for private housing and the estimated corresponding adjustment to the maximum rates of the rent allowance under the CSSA Scheme as from 1 February 2015 as well as relevant information on the maximum rent allowance.

The Administration intends to submit the relevant funding proposal to FC in December 2014.