

For discussion
on 12 July 1999

**Joint meeting of
the LegCo Panel on Welfare Services
and the LegCo Panel on Home Affairs**

Review of the School Social Work Service

Introduction

At the meeting of the Welfare Panel held on 14 June, Members were consulted on the Administration's response to the recommendations of the Working Group on the Review of School Social Work Service. We are generally agreeable to the package of measures recommended by the Working Group. As regards the proposal on strengthening the manpower provision in the school social work service, we have taken into account the views of the education and welfare sectors during the consultation period and propose that one full time school social worker post should be provided in each secondary school.

Proposed on Manpower Provision

2. The proposal will require resources of \$97 million which can be funded from redeployment of resources from existing youth services. This is consistent with our approach of targetting resources at those services which are of the highest priority. The school is often considered the most convenient venue to identify the welfare needs of young people and to provide preventive and remedial services as part of

the nine-year compulsory education system. The proposal to provide one post in each school, as part of the school's total establishment, reflects the role of the school social worker as an integral component of the guidance system in the education service. With increased stationing time in the school, the school social workers are expected to develop greater interaction with the students, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of service delivery. It is noted that the amount required for implementing the proposal constitutes about 7% of the \$1.4 billion we currently allocate for youth welfare services.

3. The proposal to provide one school social worker in each school would help meet the concerns raised by the community about the need to strengthen manpower provision for the school social work service, which was earlier supported by the Welfare Panel, members of the Social Welfare Advisory Committee, the Board of Education, the Commission on Youth, and other community organisations involved in youth services. It is our intention to implement the proposal starting September 2000.

4. We are examining possible sources of funding for the above proposal. Our initial view is that there may be scope in redeploying resources from other existing youth services. We will seek to minimize the impact on the provision of existing services by reviewing the existing mode of service delivery.

5. The overall direction in the provision of youth services is being examined under the Fundamental Expenditure Review on Youth. A Steering Committee on this Review has been established under the

chairmanship of the Secretary for Home Affairs. In this respect, the redeployment of resources to fund the school social work proposal will also be considered in the wider context of the Fundamental Expenditure Review.

Health and Welfare Bureau
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