

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)1586/99-00

(These minutes have been
seen by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/WS

LegCo Panel on Welfare Services

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 10 January 2000 at 10:45 am
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building

Members Present : Hon CHAN Yuen-han (Chairman)
Hon HO Sai-chu, SBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon David CHU Yu-lin
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
Hon LEE Kai-ming, SBS, JP
Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, JP
Dr Hon YEUNG Sum
Hon YEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon LAW Chi-kwong, JP

Member Absent : Hon Eric LI Ka-cheung, JP

Public Officers Attending : Item II

Mr HO Wing-him
Deputy Secretary for Health and Welfare 2

Mr Laurie LO
Principal Assistant Secretary for Health and Welfare (Welfare) 1

Mrs Eliza LEUNG
Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Elderly)

Action

Item III

Mr HO Wing-him
Deputy Secretary for Health and Welfare 2

Mr Lawrence LIU
Principal Assistant Secretary for Health and Welfare
(Elderly Services) 2

Mrs Eliza LEUNG
Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Elderly)

Dr CHAN Wai-man
Assistant Director of Department of Health (Elderly Health
Services)

Mr WONG Kuen-hang
Senior Housing Manager/Rent & Elderly Service of Housing
Department

Miss Kitty WONG
Housing Manager/Elderly Service of Housing Department

Item IV

Mrs Marion LAI
Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Administration)

Mr Laurie LO
Principal Assistant Secretary for Health and Welfare (Welfare) 1

Mrs Rachel CARTLAND
Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Social Security)

Mr WU Shu-wing
Chief Social Security Officer, Social Welfare Department

Miss Lilian FUNG
Senior Statistician, Social Welfare Department

Clerk in Attendance : Ms Doris CHAN
Chief Assistant Secretary (2) 4

Action

Staff in Attendance : Ms Joanne MAK
Senior Assistant Secretary (2) 4

I. Date of next meeting and items for discussion
(LC Papers Nos. CB(2)766/99-00(01) and (02))

Members agreed to discuss the following items at the next meeting to be held on 14 February 2000 -

- (a) Request for exemption of early education and training centres and special child care centres from the implementation of the Enhanced Productivity Programme (EPP);
- (b) The Elderly Commission work report; and
- (c) Implementation of the policy of one school social worker for each school.

2. Members also agreed to discuss the following at a future meeting -

- (a) Report on pilot schemes implemented at Carers' Support Centres and Respite Centres;
- (b) Implementation of EPP in the welfare sector;
- (c) Support services for street-sleepers; and
- (d) Monitoring of private elderly homes.

Overseas duty visits

3. The Chairman advised that as an established practice, funds had been earmarked each year for overseas duty visits to be conducted by committees. She sought members' views as to whether they wished to propose any visits. As members had no suggestions, the Panel decided not to conduct overseas duty visits during the remainder of the current legislative session

Action

II. Consultancy Study on the Review of Day Care Centres, Multi-services Centres and Social Centres for the Elderly and Development of Integrated Care Services for the Elderly

(LC Paper No. CB(2)766/99-00(03))

4. With reference to the Administration's paper, Deputy Secretary for Health and Welfare 2 (DSHW2) highlighted that a consultancy study had been commissioned to review the care and support services for the elderly, especially for those continuing to live at home, and to explore ways to improve the interface among various elderly care services. DSHW2 explained that the traditional approach of using population-based planning ratios for the provision of day care centres (D/Es), multi-service centres (M/Es) and social centres for the elderly (S/Es) was rigid and inflexible. The study would examine ways to improve the interface of these three kinds of centres for the elderly with other elderly services (including other community support services, home help/home care and residential care) with a view to improving the services and enhancing their cost-effectiveness.

5. DSHW2 pointed out that there was a need to improve the provision of care and support services for the elderly to meet the needs of the increasing ageing population. He added that the proportion of elderly people aged 65 and above was expected to rise further to 13.3% of the total population by 2016. Public expenditures on long-term care services had substantially increased from \$40 million in early 1990s to more than \$3 billion now including expenditures on infirmary services of the Hospital Authority. DSHW2 also invited members to note that the provision of various kinds of welfare services for the elderly still fell short of the demands. For example, there were still 17,000 people on the waiting list for admission to care and attention homes. He said that it was necessary to explore more cost-effective ways to provide adequate care and support for the elderly.

6. The Chairman was concerned whether the review was mainly aimed at cost-saving and reducing resources for elderly services. In response, DSHW2 explained that since the findings of many surveys had clearly shown that over 90% of the elderly people preferred to live at home, the Administration considered it important to ensure that appropriate care and support services were provided to the elderly, especially those with cognitive or physical impairment, and their families to enable the elderly to continue to live at home for as long as possible. On this basis, the Administration recognised that there was a need to further improve the D/Es and home care services. Therefore, the objective of conducting the review had nothing to do with cost-saving but it was out of practical need to improve the services to meet demands. He said that it was necessary to review the mode of service delivery to take into account the different practical needs of the elderly people. For example, he pointed out that an elderly person actually needed different support services such as home help service and other services provided by D/Es. Therefore, it would be more appropriate to provide better co-ordinated support services for the elderly instead of using traditional planning ratios for the provision of these services.

7. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan requested the Administration to provide details of the existing planning ratios for the provision of D/Es, M/Es and S/Es and the proposed new planning

Action

Adm

ratios for the proposed integrated facilities. DSHW2 agreed to provide information on the existing planning ratios after the meeting. As to the proposed new planning ratios, DSHW2 explained that they would not be available until completion of the consultancy study.

8. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan was concerned whether the review would lead to shrinkage in the provision of residential services. In response, DSHW2 explained that from the outset the purpose of launching the review was not cost-cutting. It was conducted with a view to meeting the genuine needs of the elderly people, the majority of whom had clearly indicated strong preferences for living at home. In order to satisfy their needs, the Administration was exploring ways to enhance the provision of community care and support services to them, and especially those living at home, and their families. He said that this approach would be more preferable as compared with mere expansion of residential services, which were actually very expensive.

9. Miss Cyd HO Sau-lan considered that the elderly people's preference for living at home was caused by their dissatisfaction with the poor conditions of some elderly homes. She pointed out that as there were many elderly people who had genuine need for residential services, the Administration should not reduce the provision of such services. To enhance cost-effectiveness, she suggested that the Administration should review the nursing manpower ratios of elderly homes as not all of them needed to have nurses stationed at there. In response, DSHW2 pointed out that there was clear evidence showing that the majority of the elderly people preferred living at home to living at elderly homes and the same attitudes were shown in surveys carried out in overseas countries targeting at the elderly people there.

Adm

10. The Chairman requested the Administration to address the problems of poor conditions found in some of the existing elderly homes in the course of the study. In response to the Chairman's request, DSHW2 agreed to provide a report to the Panel on the findings of the consultancy study upon its completion in July 2000.

III. Progress Report on Social Networking for the Elderly (LC Paper No. CB(2)766/99-00(05))

11. Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Elderly) (AD(E)) pointed out that based on the recommendations of the Research Team headed by Professor Nelson CHOW of the University of Hong Kong, the Administration had implemented some new measures to improve the social networking services. Details of these new measures were set out in paragraphs 3 to 10 of the Administration's paper.

12. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan asked if the Administration had estimated the number of elderly on the vulnerable elderly list to whom visits could be made when the number of support teams increased to 36 by 2001. AD(E) replied that as far as she knew, there were 111,000 one-person domestic household with single elderly person aged 60 or above according to

Action

the General Household Survey of Census and Statistics Department, out of whom some 70,000 had been contacted by the support teams. She assured members that the support teams would try their best to make contacts with the remainder but she hoped that members would appreciate the practical difficulties involved in reaching some of these elderly especially those dwelling in private premises.

13. In response to Mr HO Sai-chu's question, AD(E) said that last year, priorities had been given to improving the clientele information system of the social networking for the elderly project and to setting up support teams to continue the service. She agreed with Mr HO that priority should now be given to improving the service quality and emphasis would be put on improving the volunteer training programme.

14. In response to the Chairman's question about the coordination between the social networking project and the Department of Housing (HD), AD(E) said that good coordination and close liaison had been established between SWD and HD in implementing the project. In fact, 25 Estate Liaison Officers of HD were involved in the project. Their representatives were also included in the district coordinating mechanism assisting the service provision of the support teams for the elderly. Senior Housing Manager(Rent & Elderly Service) of HD added that the managers of public housing estates also attended the District Coordination Meetings of SWD and they helped to introduce the social networking service to their single elderly tenants and make referrals.

15. The Chairman asked whether SWD had considered recruiting unemployed women in public housing estates who were experienced in taking care of the elderly people to participate in the social networking project and paying remuneration to them. DSHW2 agreed to consider the suggestion and revert later with more details.

IV. The Computerized Social Security System (CSSS)
(LC Paper No. CB(2)766/99-00(04))

16. Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Administration) (DDSW(A)) said that the paper provided to the Panel had set out the progress of the development of the new CSSS in SWD. In response to Mr LAW Chi-kwong's question, Chief Social Security Officer (CSSO) said that applicants' data would be stored up in the CSSS Management Information System to facilitate retrieval of information and more efficient management of information.

17. Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Social Security) (AD(SS)) added that in the future, the data would be recorded on an individual recipient basis rather than on a case basis and SWD staff would be able to access and manipulate the data much more quickly. She anticipated that SWD would be able to provide answers to LegCo Members' questions more easily and quickly. DDSW(A) added that the new system would help generate useful information to facilitate policy reviews and planning.

18. Mr LAW Chi-kwong said that he was interested in seeing the system specifications of

Action

Adm

the CSSS. DDSW(A) explained that as the specifications were very voluminous, she would organize a briefing for members who were interested in the CSSS. Mr LAW and the Chairman expressed interest in the briefing.

19. Miss Cyd HO Sau-lan asked how the new CSSS could help facilitate policy reviews. In response, AD(SS) said that the new system would help the staff to get more information about the impact of the policies. DDSW(A) pointed out that in a policy review, analysis of data was only part of the process, and normally formulation of the policy and analysis of views obtained during the consultation process would take a longer time. In response to a further question from Miss HO, DDSW(A) said that the CSSS would enable faster compilation of statistical data for making projections. AD(SS) added that making projections for social security services was not a mechanical process because many factors came into play.

20. Referring to the "Support for Self-reliance" Scheme, Mr LEE Kai-ming asked how far the CSSS interfaced with the computer systems of the Labour Department to facilitate recipients of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) in finding jobs. AD(SS) replied that there was already a system in place in which a computer in every Field Unit allowed CSSA recipients direct access to the job vacancy database of the Labour Department.

21. The meeting ended at 12:35 pm.

Legislative Council Secretariat
5 April 2000