

Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services
Progress of Year 2000 (Y2K) Compliance Exercise in
Social Welfare Organisations

Purpose

This paper informs Members of the latest position of Year 2000 compliance work in the Social Welfare Department (SWD), and in non-governmental organisations (NGOs) providing essential social welfare services.

Progress within the Social Welfare Department

2. After completion of rectification work in respect of 54 mission-critical computer and embedded systems in June 1999, SWD has developed a departmental Y2K contingency plan covering all its service and administrative units, which will interface with the territory-wide contingency plan co-ordinated by the Information Technology and Broadcasting Bureau. The contingency strategies include making backup copies for essential data and switching to manual operation when necessary. In addition, staff in charge of the systems will be required to closely monitor the systems during the rollover to the critical dates and invoke the contingency plan if necessary. The contingency plan also includes a staff roster to maintain essential services to the public in the unlikely event of system breakdown during the rollover.

3. Overall management and co-ordination of the departmental contingency plan will be implemented through a Central Co-ordinating Centre supported by the Regional Co-ordinating Centre in each of the five SWD regions. This structure ensures the availability of a core group of management staff to react promptly to Y2K induced incidents. The contingency plans were tested in September this year. These will continue to be tested, and improved where necessary, from October to December 1999.

Progress in Social Welfare NGOs

4. SWD and the Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS) have continued, under their Y2K Joint Initiative, to provide assistance to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the welfare sector in respect of rectification of systems and contingency planning. The mission critical systems in all the regulated NGOs and 99% of the subvented NGOs have been rectified. The only outstanding rectification work required is related to some financial systems, and is expected to be completed in December 1999.

5. While providing assistance in terms of contingency planning to NGOs, the Joint Initiative undertaken by SWD and the HKCSS has regularly reminded NGOs of their inherent responsibility to ensure that a proper emergency plan is in place to deal with any crisis situation that may arise including those arising from Y2K. The Joint Initiative has also developed and distributed a generic Y2K contingency plan for the reference of all subvented and regulated NGOs. The main objective of the generic plan is to provide

NGOs with a benchmark from which they can evaluate, and possibly enhance their own contingency plans.

6. The Joint Initiative has also offered further assistance by organising five contingency plan workshops over the past year which attracted over 700 participants from NGOs. SWD will continue working closely with HKCSS to organise workshops on contingency planning, to provide suitable training and facilitate experience sharing amongst NGOs in the sector. The Joint Initiative will also organise visits to the larger NGOs to assist them with the fine-tuning of their contingency plans.

7. As regards non-mission critical systems, SWD and the HKCSS have jointly organised over 40 workshops on the rectification of commonly used software and has set up a hotline service providing technical advice on Y2K compliance.

Health and Welfare Bureau/
Social Welfare Department
November 1999