

Panel on Welfare Services

List of issues suggested to be considered (position as at 12 October 2004)

Proposed timing for discussion

1. Review of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme and the Old Age Allowance (OAA) under the Social Security Allowance Scheme

At the meeting on 8 July 2002, the Administration agreed to report to members on the findings of the overall review of CSSA and OAA and consult the public on any proposed changes. OAA was discussed at the 9 December 2002 meeting under Financial Support for Older Persons, and an update on CSSA was given by the Administration on 10 February 2003.

To be confirmed

2. Proposed Unemployment Relief Fund

At the Panel meeting on 10 October 2002, Hon LI Fung-ying proposed to invite the Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food to brief members on the proposed Unemployment Relief Fund. According to the Administration, the subject will be considered in the context of CSSA Review under item 1 above.

To be confirmed

3. Progress of the formation of Integrated Vocational Rehabilitation Services Centres

Item proposed by Mr WONG Sing-chi at the meeting on 7 July 2003.

To be confirmed

Proposed timing for discussion

4. Report of the Subcommittee on Guardianship and Custody of the Law Reform Commission (LRC)

At the meeting held on 11 March 2002, members agreed that the Administration should brief the Panel on the above report when it became available.

To be confirmed

5. Study on the perceptions and experiences of discrimination of people with mental illness in Hong Kong

The above study was jointly conducted by the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Department of Psychiatry of The Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Department of Social Work of the Hong Kong Baptist University. Three relevant papers on the study were issued to the Panel on Home Affairs, and copied to all LegCo Members, on 28 November 2002 vide LC Paper Nos. CB(2)487/02-03(01) to (03). In response to a member's request for discussion, the Panel on Home Affairs agreed at its meeting on 10 January 2003 that since the subject came under the Health, Welfare and Food Bureau, it should be referred to the Panel on Welfare Services for follow-up action. Responses to the points raised in the study report being collated from relevant government bureau/departments and the HA.

To be confirmed

6. Subsidy arrangements for residential care services for frail elders

The Administration undertook to consult members on the finalised Fee Assistance Scheme for residential care services for frail elders, taking into account the suggestion of establishing a separate financial assistance scheme for elders and other views expressed by members on the matter on 12 May 2003.

To be confirmed

7. Portable CSSA Scheme

Item proposed by Hon CHAN Yuen-han and Hon CHOY So-yuk. In particular, Miss CHOY proposed to expand the coverage of the Portable CSSA Scheme to Fukien Province and other provinces and relaxing the permissible limits of absence from Hong Kong.

To be confirmed

Proposed timing for discussion

8. Evaluation of the re-engineered community support services for elders

Item proposed by Hon CHAN Yuen-han.

To be confirmed

9. Measures to help single parents on CSSA to achieve self-reliance

At the meeting on 9 February 2004, the Administration agreed to revert to the Panel improvement measures to help single parents achieve self-reliance, upon completion of the review on the entire issue of single parents on CSSA.

To be confirmed

10. Social welfare planning mechanism, subvention system for the welfare sector and efficiency savings with regard to the welfare sector in the period from 2005-06 to 2008-09

At the meeting on 8 March 2004, the Administration was requested to brief members in June 2004 on the progress made for implementing the 0-0-X funding proposal for the welfare sector and the development of a blueprint for the social welfare policies, and to respond to the Hong Kong Council of Social Service's requests for reviewing the Lump Sum Grant subvention system, in particular the aspect relating to funding of personal emoluments.

To be confirmed

11. Operation of the SARS Trust Fund

At the meeting on 10 May 2004, the Administration agreed to revert to the Panel operation of the SARS Trust Fund, in response to a series of complaint lodged by a deputation with Duty Roster Members.

To be confirmed

Proposed timing for discussion

12. Support for vulnerable elders

At the meeting on 10 May 2004, members agreed that should the Panel decide to hold a meeting in July 2004, consideration should be given to further discussing support for vulnerable elders. The discussion should also include the impact of the re-engineering of family services centres/counselling units into Integrated Family Service Centres on support for vulnerable elders.

To be confirmed

13. Standardized needs assessment tool for admission to residential homes for people with disabilities

Further to the discussion paper submitted to the Panel at the meeting on 5 January 2004, a progress report was presented at the meeting on 14 June 2004. Members agreed to follow up the progress of the Assessment Tool in the next legislative session.

To be confirmed

14. Livelihood of women and children living in poverty

The above item was referred by Duty Roster Members for follow-up by the Panel.

To be confirmed

15. Arrangements for adoption between Hong Kong and the Mainland

The above item was referred by the Bills Committee on Adoption (Amendment) Bill 2003 for follow-up by the Panel.

To be confirmed

16. Provision of community support for South Asians living in Shamshuipo district

The above item was raised at the meeting between LegCo Members and members of the Shamshuipo District Council held on 10 June 2004 for follow-up by the Panel.

To be confirmed

Proposed timing for discussion

17. Support and assistance for paralysed patients living in the community

The above item was discussed by the Panel on two occasions on 10 May 2004 and 19 July 2004. Although members welcome the Administration's plan to grant a Care and Attention (C&A) Allowance of \$4,296 per month to paralysed patients on CSSA to hire a carer even if the patient has a family carer who is available to provide help at home, they consider that the provision would do little to alleviate the burden of the patient as the amount is not sufficient to hire an overseas domestic helper. A member also suggested allowing paralysed patients to receive the C&A Allowance even if they chose to live in the Mainland. Members agreed that the aforesaid issues should be followed up in the next legislative session.

To be confirmed

18. Charitable fund-raising activities

The Administration's paper on enhancing the monitoring of charitable fund-raising activities was presented at the meeting on 19 July 2004. Members agreed to follow up the proposal of regulating funding-raising activities by mail in the new term of the Council.

To be confirmed

19. Strategy and measures to tackle family violence

The Subcommittee to study issues relating to the strategy and measures to prevent and tackle family violence formed by the Panel proposed a series of recommendations for implementation by the Administration. They are, inter alia, as follows –

To be confirmed

- (a) the Domestic Violence Ordinance (Cap. 189) should be amended to better combat family violence;
- (b) legislation against stalking committed by family members should be enacted;
- (c) Social Welfare Department (SWD) should set up its own 24-hour hotline, preferably in each SWD district, to help people facing family violence;

Proposed timing for discussion

- (d) experienced practitioners should be enlisted to provide up-to-date training to workers handling family violence;
- (e) eligibility criteria for providing housing assistance to battered spouse and family members in conflict should be relaxed;
- (f) workload of SWD's Family and Child Protective Services Units should be reviewed, including setting down the maximum number of cases which each unit should handle; and
- (g) appropriateness of having one social worker handling family violence taking up both the investigative and counselling functions should be reviewed.

20. Item proposed by the Administration

See Appendix.

Appendix

Panel on Welfare Services

Agenda item proposed by the Administration

<u>Proposed Item</u>	<u>Proposed Timing for Discussion</u>
Conversion of self-care hostel and home for the aged places into Long Term Care places	To be confirmed