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**Panel on Welfare Services**

**Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat  
for the meeting on 12 April 2007**

**Comprehensive Child Development Service**

**Purpose**

This paper provides background information on the launch of the Comprehensive Child Development Service (CCDS), and summarises the deliberations of the Panel on Welfare Services on the implementation of the pilot CCDS.

**Background**

2. In the 2005 Policy Address, the Chief Executive announced that \$10 million would be earmarked for the launch of a pilot Head Start Programme in phases for children aged five and below in four selected communities, namely, Sham Shui Po, Tin Shui Wai, Tseung Kwan O and Tuen Mun, to provide comprehensive and timely support for children and their families.

3. The pilot programme would be implemented through inter-sectoral collaboration among the Department of Health (DH), the Hospital Authority, the Education and Manpower Bureau, the Social Welfare Department and non-government organisations at the district level. The initiative entailed early identification and management of mothers with postnatal depression, early referral and feedback system for pre-school children with physical, developmental and behavioural problems at kindergarten and childcare settings, as well as introduction of a structural screening process in DH's Maternal and Child Health Centres (MCHCs).

## **Pilot Comprehensive Child Development Service**

4. The pilot CCDS (formerly known as the Head Start Programme) for children aged 0 to five and their families was first launched in Sham Shui Po in July 2005. CCDS is a community-based programme. MCHCs, which provide child health services to over 90% of newborn babies and maternal health (antenatal and postnatal) services, are used as the platform to identify the varied needs of children and their families so that appropriate services can be made available to them in a timely manner. Children and/or their family members in need of welfare services are referred to the Integrated Family Service Centres (IFSCs)/Integrated Services Centres (ISCs) for early intervention on the identified psycho-social problems.

5. The service has been extended to Tin Shui Wai, Tuen Mun and Tseung Kwan O since January 2006. Subject to the outcome of the review of the pilot at the end of 2006, the Administration plans to extend in phases CCDS to communities across the territory.

## **Deliberations of the Panel**

6. The Panel on Welfare Services was briefed on the launch of the pilot Head Start Programme/CCDS at the briefings by the Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food on the respective Policy Addresses on 20 January and 17 October 2005 and 13 October 2006. When the subject of child protection was discussed at the Panel's special meeting on 29 June 2006, members were also briefed on the implementation of the pilot CCDS.

7. At the Panel meeting on 29 June 2006, some members pointed out that the pilot CCDS had put more emphasis on the medical, instead of family welfare, perspective. They expressed concern that in the absence of additional resources for the social welfare agencies, the latter would find it difficult to offer prompt follow-up services even if problems were identified in the pilot CCDS. Deputations attending the meeting shared members' views and pointed out that community resources should be mobilised to identify needy families, and outreaching services should be available in MCHCs, child care centres and kindergartens where these families could be easily approached.

8. On the resources for CCDS, the Administration advised that an additional \$20 million had been allocated for the pilot. Consultation had been conducted at different levels on how to improve the pilot CCDS. As to whether the pilot CCDS had resulted in additional caseload for IFSCs and other services, the Administration considered that since CCDS was launched on a pilot basis, a full review of the project including its resource implications would need to be conducted sometime later. However, the experience of the

pilot run showed that some cases identified at an early stage could be handled at MCHCs, and referral to IFSCs and ISCs for follow up was not necessary. In addition, CCDS was a reciprocal working process under which IFSCs and ISCs could refer cases to MCHCs if necessary. The Administration advised that CCDS would be extended gradually to other communities by phases pending the review outcome expected to be available in the first quarter of 2007.

### **Latest development**

9. The Financial Secretary announced in the 2007-2008 Budget that the Administration planned to extend CCDS to all districts in phases and strengthen social services support.

10. The Administration will brief the Panel on the review outcome of the pilot CCDS at the meeting on 12 April 2007.

### **Relevant papers**

11. Members are invited to access the LegCo website at <http://www.legco.gov.hk> to view the Administration's papers for the meetings of the Panel on Welfare Services on 20 January and 17 October 2005, 29 June and 13 October 2006 and the relevant minutes of meetings.

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