

LegCo Panel on Welfare Services

2007 Rehabilitation Programme Plan

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the 2007 Rehabilitation Programme Plan (RPP).

Background

2. The RPP was first introduced in 1976. The Government set up an inter-departmental working group then to look into the development of rehabilitation services, having particular regard to the ample room for service expansion at that time. The RPP was thereafter reviewed from time to time. The last review exercise took place in 1998.

3. Over the past 30 years, remarkable achievements were made in the development of Hong Kong's rehabilitation services, particularly on the promotion of equal opportunities, the building of an inclusive society as well as the creation of a barrier-free environment for persons with disabilities. The new millennium saw Hong Kong breaking new ground in community-based rehabilitation services through the provision of necessary care and support to persons with disabilities and their families. Social enterprises were also developed through the tripartite partnerships of the Government, the rehabilitation sector and persons with disabilities. All these initiatives led to significant improvements in the quality of life of persons with disabilities.

4. At the end of 2004, the Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food met with the rehabilitation sector and groups of persons with disability, and following the discussion, parties agreed to embark upon a review of the RPP. In January 2005, the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee (RAC) recommended that the new round of review of the RPP to propose the way forward with the development of rehabilitation services be conducted in Hong Kong in accordance with the following two major strategic directions:

- (a) enhancing social investment to build individual capacity of persons with disabilities and their families; and
- (b) promoting tripartite partnership in creating a social, economic and physical environment for full integration of persons with disabilities into society.

5. The RAC also endorsed a more broad-based, macro and strategic approach for the review, in place of the old model that focused on projecting in details the yearly demand for and supply of rehabilitation services. The previous model was no longer considered applicable because the related projections on future demand had not been able to reflect the actual circumstances given the rapid changes in Hong Kong society which affected the validity of the related estimates on future supply and resources required as well as action plan. Changes in the subvention and resource allocation systems also rendered the previous model inappropriate. Against this background, and given the overall strategic directions endorsed by the RAC, being promoting tripartite partnerships and enhancing the capabilities of persons with disabilities and their family members, the new RPP would seek to formulate clear and succinct strategic directions and priorities for the development of rehabilitation services for all sectors to follow.

The Review and the Consultation

6. A RPP Review Working Group with 25 members, chaired by the Deputy Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food, was tasked to conduct the review. The Working Group comprises representatives of persons with disabilities, rehabilitation service providers, self-help groups, RAC, Hong Kong Council of Social Services, and relevant public authorities. A membership list of the Working Group is at **Annex A**. The interests of different groups in the sector are well represented in the review.

7. The review was conducted from March 2005 to June 2007. The whole review approach and process testify to the close collaboration and partnership between the Government and the whole rehabilitation sector on the strategic way forward with rehabilitation services. The Working Group convened 16 meetings and four special meetings to take stock of the existing rehabilitation services and to consider future directions. To ensure transparency, all Working Group papers and notes of meetings are available on the internet for perusal by the public and interested parties.

8. To further encourage the involvement of the rehabilitation sector, the Working Group also conducted two briefing sessions and four consultation forums to keep the whole sector and interested parties abreast of the review process and deliberations, to enable individual members of the sector to voice their concerns directly and to facilitate open dialogue. In parallel, the Working Group also received and considered over 100 written submissions from persons and organisations concerned. Upon the completion of the review, the Working Group conducted a briefing session, which was attended by the Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food, to introduce the 2007 RPP to the rehabilitation sector and groups of persons with disabilities.

The 2007 RPP

9. The Working Group recognises that different individuals may face various disabling conditions at different stages in life. It decides that the new RPP would be structured according to the following programme areas:

- (a) prevention and identification,
- (b) medical rehabilitation,
- (c) pre-school services,
- (d) education services,
- (e) employment and vocational rehabilitation,
- (f) residential services,
- (g) day care and community support,
- (h) development of self-help organisations,
- (i) access and transport services,
- (j) application of information and communications technologies,
- (k) participation in recreational, sports, cultural and arts activities, and
- (l) public education.

In drafting the RPP, the Working Group has taken into account a wide spectrum of views and suggestions from different groups of persons with disabilities, rehabilitation NGOs and other individuals and organisations concerned.

10. Each chapter of the new RPP elaborates on the development of each programme area, which includes the following sections –

- (a) highlights of present services;
- (b) prioritized goals for future development of rehabilitation services; and
- (c) suggested measures.

11. The key new suggestions in the 2007 RPP include the following:
 - (a) “Specific Learning Difficulties” (SpLD) and “Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder” (AD/HD), are included in the list of categories of conditions with certain disabling impact on persons affected. The Working Group notes that persons affected by SpLD and AD/HD require very different support and services from persons with other kinds of disabilities, as the impact of the former are most significant in formal education setting;
 - (b) the Working Group recognises the significant role of self-help organisations in promoting the spirit of self-help and mutual help among persons with disabilities and their families/carers, and in encouraging the active participation of persons with disabilities in the formulation of rehabilitation policies and services tailored to their needs. The RPP recommends encouraging the setting up and development of more self-help organisations;
 - (c) recognising that supporting community living of persons with disabilities should be the overall direction in the rehabilitation programme, the RPP recommends continuous development in community support services to facilitate and encourage persons with disabilities to lead independent lives with their families and friends in the community;
 - (d) while full integration into society is the ultimate objective, the Working Group also recognises the need for residential services for those persons with disabilities who could not live independently and could not be adequately cared for by their families. The Working Group initiates a new three-pronged approach in developing residential services for persons with disabilities in need. It sets out the future

direction of regulating and encouraging the development of private, self-financed and subvented homes, to provide a wider variety of choices for persons with disabilities and their families;

- (e) the Working Group cannot emphasize more on the importance of public education in the prevention and early identification of disabling conditions, as well as in the promotion of an inclusive community that is fundamental to the realisation of full integration of persons with and without disabilities. The relevant chapter has covered both the directions of public education programmes, and the reviews of its strategies.

12. A number of other important subjects were raised in the course of the RPP Working Group discussions. These include the implementation of the *International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health* (ICF) in Hong Kong, mental health, standardization of sign language and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recently signed by the majority of the State Parties of the United Nations. The Working Group considers these four subjects should be further addressed and flagged up as issues of concern to be followed up outside the context of the RPP review.

13. In addition, the Working Group also considers it useful for readers by including in the RPP as appendixes an environmental scan depicting major demographic and socio-economic changes in the context of rehabilitation programme, as well as a summary of all the views collected from the public in the course of the review.

14. The full text of the RPP is at **Annex B**.

Mechanism

15. The 2007 RPP was considered, discussed and endorsed by the RAC on 30 May 2007. The RAC will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the 2007 RPP, in the following ways:

- (a) the Committee itself will continue to follow up on the overall implementation of the RPP, the development of strategies for the policies concerning community living and residential services, the development of self-help organisations, the feasibility of applying ICF in Hong Kong, the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, education and other rehabilitation services, etc.;
- (b) the RAC will set up a Working Group to consider specifically the standardisation of sign language in Hong Kong;
- (c) the RAC Sub-committee on Access will follow up on issues pertaining to barrier-free access to buildings, transportation, and information and communication technologies;
- (d) the RAC Sub-committee on Employment will follow up with the business and other sectors to promote employment for persons with disabilities; and
- (e) the RAC Sub-committee on Public Education on Rehabilitation will formulate a comprehensive strategy and coordinate cross-sectoral efforts to promote an inclusive society and will follow up on the proposed regular review to gauge the impact of the public education efforts. This Sub-committee is also tasked to work out an implementation plan

to promote the RPP and tripartite partnership to the business sector, in particular.

16. On the part of the Government, all relevant bureaux and departments had been actively involved in the discussions during the review and drawing up the RPP. We are committed to taking forward the relevant RPP initiatives and adhering to the RPP in planning for future services, deployment of existing resources and bidding for new resources. The Labour and Welfare Bureau will coordinate the efforts of relevant bureaux and departments in implementing the rehabilitation programme. The Administration will report to the RAC periodically on the progress of implementation.

Advice sought

17. Members are invited to note the 2007 RPP.

Health, Welfare and Food Bureau
June 2007

**2005-07 Rehabilitation Programme Plan Review Working Group
Membership List**

Chairman:	Deputy Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food (Family & Women)	
Members/ Sector:	Dr Joseph KWOK Kin-fun, JP Mr CHEUNG Kin-fai, MH Mr Philip YUEN Mr YEUNG Ka-sing, MBE, JP Mrs Grace CHAN, JP Mr Benny CHEUNG, MBE Ms Christina KAN Ms Nancy TSANG, JP Ms Deborah WAN, BBS, JP Mrs Winnie WONG Mr KO Nam Mr LAW Wai-cheung, MH Mr TSANG Kin-ping Mrs Julie LEE LAU Chu-lai, JP Mrs Heidi TONG HUI Sim-kiu	Rehabilitation Advisory Committee Hong Kong Joint Council for the Physically and Mentally Disabled Hong Kong Council of Social Service Business Rehabilitation Non-governmental Organization (NGO) (for persons with visual impairment) Rehabilitation NGO (for persons with physical handicap) Rehabilitation NGO (for persons with mental handicap and other disabilities) Rehabilitation NGO (for children with disabilities) Rehabilitation NGO (for persons with mental illness) Rehabilitation NGO (for persons with hearing impairment) Self-help Organization (for persons with hearing impairment) Self-help Organization (for persons with severe physical handicap) Self-help Organization (for persons with visual impairment) Parent Parent
Official Members:	Representative of Hospital Authority Representative of Education and Manpower Bureau Representative of Department of Health Representative of Labour Department Representative of Social Welfare Department Representative of Transport Department Representative of Vocational Training Council Commissioner for Rehabilitation	
Secretary:	Assistant Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food (Rehabilitation)	