

Panel on Welfare Services

List of outstanding items for discussion
(position as at 12 February 2008)

Proposed timing for discussion

1. Creation of Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Social Security) offset by deletion of a Principal Social Work Officer post to take charge of the social security portfolio

The Administration proposes to discuss the matter in March 2008.

March 2008

2. Social security assistance for needy elderly in Hong Kong

Discussions were held at the Panel meeting on 13 June 2005. The Administration was requested to brief the Panel on its thinking on how better to provide retirement protection to the current and future generation of older persons.

2nd quarter of 2008

The Administration has advised that the Government has launched a study on "Sustainability of the Three Pillars of Retirement Protection in Hong Kong", which is expected to be completed in due course. The Government will consider the findings of the study in deciding the future course of action.

3. Report of the Subcommittee on Guardianship and Custody of the Law Reform Commission

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.

2nd quarter of 2008

The Report on Custody and Access by the Subcommittee on Guardianship and Custody of the Law Reform Commission was released on 7 March 2005. The Administration is studying the recommendations carefully and will consider how to take forward the relevant recommendations together with the recommendations made in the other two earlier reports, namely, the Report on Guardianship of Children and Report on International Parental Child Abduction.

Proposed timing for discussion

4. Improving the homes of elderly people living in poor conditions

The 2007-2008 Policy Address has earmarked an one-off funding of \$200 million to help improve the homes of elderly people living in poor conditions. The Administration is working out the implementation details.

2nd quarter of 2008

5. Provision of family services at Integrated Family Service Centres

The Administration proposes to discuss the matter in the second quarter of 2008.

2nd quarter of 2008

6. Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged

The Administration would like to report on the progress of the Fund.

2nd quarter of 2008

7. Infirmity care in non-hospital setting

The Administration consulted the Panel in December 2004 on a proposal to launch a trial scheme to provide infirmity care places for medically stable elders in a non-hospital setting. In the light of feedback from the Panel and the sector during the consultation process, the latest plan of the Administration is to upgrade some of the places in subvented residential care homes for the elderly to provide infirmity care. The Administration has started discussion with the sector in December 2007.

2nd/3rd quarter of 2008

8. Licensing of residential care homes for people with disabilities

The Administration proposes to report progress on the introduction of a licensing scheme for residential care homes for the disabled in the third quarter of 2008 before the end of the current LegCo term, in order to allow time to clear the policy issues involved in the licensing scheme.

3rd quarter of 2008

Proposed timing for discussion

9. Latest situation on the implementation of review of family services

Item proposed by Hon Albert CHAN at the Panel meeting on 12 October 2004.

3rd quarter of 2008

The Administration has advised that transformation of all existing Family Services Centres/counselling units into 61 IFSCs was completed in March 2005. A review on the implementation of the aforesaid transformation will take place in 2008.

The Administration has subsequently advised that since the invitation of proposal for the review of IFSCs conducted between August and October 2007 has to be re-tendered, the earliest time to report progress to the Panel will be in third quarter of 2008.

10. Subsidy arrangements for residential care services for frail elders

The Administration aims to report progress on the work relating to the feasibility of developing the proposed 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 decided

11. Setting up of a refuge centre for abused men

Referred for follow-up by Duty Roster Members following their meeting with a deputation on 13 June 2005.

To be decided

12. Retirement protection

Item proposed by Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG.

To be decided

Proposed timing for discussion

13. Residential care homes and private homes for the elderly and mentally disabled

Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki has proposed to discuss measures to enhance the services of residential care homes and private homes for the elderly and mentally disabled.

To be decided

14. The disregarded earnings arrangement under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme and other measures to encourage and assist CSSA recipients to move towards self-reliance

When the review of disregarded earnings (DE) under the CSSA Scheme was discussed at the Panel meeting on 12 April 2007, members raised concern about the effectiveness of the DE arrangements and other measures introduced to encourage and assist CSSA recipients to move towards self-reliance. Members agreed that as the subject of DE arrangements was related to the employment of CSSA recipients, a joint meeting could be held with the Panel on Manpower to discuss the subject.

To be decided

15. Public dental care services for the needy

At the meeting of the Subcommittee on Review of the CSSA Scheme on 2 April 2007, the provision of public dental care services for the needy, including CSSA recipients, was discussed.

To be decided

As the subject of public dental care services for the needy was beyond its purview, the Subcommittee agreed that the matter should be referred to the Panel on Welfare Services and the Panel on Health Services for follow-up, and a joint meeting of the two Panels could be held as appropriate. The Panel on Health Services discussed the health care services for the elderly on 12 November 2007.

Dr KWOK Ka-ki has separately proposed to discuss the provision of dental grant for the CSSA recipients (LC Paper No. CB(2)1047/07-08 issued on 12 February 2008).

Proposed timing for discussion

16. Charitable fund-raising activities

The existing framework for the monitoring of charitable fund-raising activities was discussed at the meeting on 11 June 2007. Members agreed to further discuss the matter in the 2007-2008 session, especially the monitoring of the use of income generated from public charitable fund-raising activities.

To be decided

The Administration has advised that the subject matter involved various bureaux, namely the Home Affairs Bureau, the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau and the Labour and Welfare Bureau. As the Law Reform Commission is now studying this subject, the Administration has suggested deferring Panel discussion to after the completion of the study.

17. A solution-focused approach in the provision of welfare services

Item proposed by Mrs Sophie LEUNG at the Panel meeting on 9 July 2007.

To be decided

18. Annual adjustment of standard payment rates under the CSSA Scheme and the Social Security Allowance Scheme

At the Panel meetings on 12 November and 10 December 2007, members raised concern that under the existing adjustment mechanism for CSSA which took into account the SSAIP movements in the past 12 months, CSSA recipients had to catch up with past inflation. They urged the Administration to review the adjustment mechanism for social security payments. A motion was passed at the meeting on 12 November 2007 in this regard. Members agreed to follow up the matter at a future meeting.

To be decided

Proposed timing for discussion

19. Developing strategy and measures to promote a self/mutual help culture in the community

Item proposed by Hon Mrs Sophie LEUNG.

At the Panel meeting on 10 December 2007, members discussed with the Administration various initiatives to promote self/mutual help in the community through the Community Investment and Inclusion Fund.

20. Support services for young drug abusers

At the Panel meeting on 11 October 2007, Dr KWOK Ka-ki suggested that a joint meeting be held with the Panel on Security to further discuss the support services for young drug abusers, given that the Chief Executive announced in the Policy Address 2007-2008 the establishment of a high-level inter-departmental task force headed by the Secretary for Justice to combat juvenile drug abuse. At the meeting on 14 January 2008, Dr KWOK suggested that the joint meeting should be held by late February/early March 2008 so as to follow up the new measures drawn up by the Task Force.

The Panel on Security discussed the problem of juvenile drug abuse at its special meeting on 30 October 2007 and has decided to hold a follow up discussion around Budget time. As the issue of drug abuses is under the policy purview of the Security Bureau, the Administration has suggested that the subject should be followed up by the Panel on Security. The Administration will brief the Panel on Security in April 2008.