

Commission on Poverty (CoP)
Ad Hoc Group on the Elderly in Poverty
Draft Work Programme

The Ad Hoc Group on the Elderly in Poverty was established under the CoP to examine the key needs of the elderly in poverty, and to work with the Health, Welfare and Food Bureau (HWFB) and the Elderly Commission (EC) to identify short-term improvements as well as longer term policy direction to better address such needs. The Ad Hoc Group is chaired by Mr. Tik Chi Yuen.

Work Programme

2. Taking into account the views expressed by CoP members in previous discussions¹, 4 key areas have been identified for further follow-up by the Ad Hoc Group with HWFB, the EC and other relevant parties -

(I) Health needs

- In the short run, the Ad Hoc Group would look into further improving the accessibility of subsidized medical service by non-CSSA recipients through improving the present one-off *medical fee waiver mechanism* (e.g. duration, operation).
- In the longer run, HWFB will take into account the needs of the elderly in poverty in the healthcare financing review.

(II) Financial needs

- In the short run, building on the existing Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme which provides a safety net for the elderly with financial needs, the Ad Hoc Group would explore if there is room to adjust the current CSSA assets limit for the elderly poor.
- In the meantime, elderly persons with financial needs should be encouraged to come forth and be assisted by the CSSA Scheme. Ways to reduce the 'stigmatization' of the CSSA scheme should be considered.

¹ Discussions on the elderly in poverty were held at the sharing session with the EC on 10.4.2006, at the CoP meeting on 13.6.2006 and as well as other informal liaison between CoP and the EC.

(III) Other needs in daily living

- Building on the existing network of District Elderly Community Centres (DECCs), the Ad Hoc Group would consider conducting a survey to take stock of various on-going efforts aimed at locating the ‘hidden elderly’ (such as those living alone or in remote places and those who do not get along well with their families) and the subsequent services provided to them.
- The findings of the survey will guide the Ad Hoc Group in considering what additional assistance should be given to address the needs of these “hidden elderly”.

(IV) Social support

- Building on the existing work of HWFB and the EC, the Ad Hoc Group will explore with the EC on how to better tap community resources (such as elderly volunteers and volunteers from the private sector) to provide care to the “hidden elderly”.
- In particular, the Ad Hoc Group would consider how to encourage more systematic tripartite partnership to address the needs of the elderly poor in the community.
- The Ad Hoc Group would explore with the EC on how to promote continued learning by the elderly in order to encourage their continued participation in the society and to provide better support to the other less advantaged.

3. The work programme is meant to be developmental, and would be adjusted taking into account views expressed by Members. Members are invited to comment on the above draft work programme.