

**DISTRICT WELFARE PLANNING PROTOCOL
AND
SOCIAL INDICATORS ON DISTRICT WELFARE NEEDS**

Scope

The District Welfare Planning Protocol (The Protocol) consolidates good practices currently exercised by the District Social Welfare Officers (DSWOs) of the Social Welfare Department (SWD) in the process of district welfare planning. It sets out a standardised planning framework and common approach for DSWOs to follow. It covers the common areas of concern while at the same time allows flexibility to address specific characteristics and needs of individual districts. The Protocol is a set of general guidelines and basic steps on how to assess and prioritise district welfare needs, formulate strategies and service plans at the district level to meet such needs.

Definition of District Welfare Planning

2. District Welfare Planning in this Protocol refers to the process whereby the welfare needs of the district are assessed and prioritised; district-based strategic approaches and plans in meeting such needs primarily through welfare facilities, services and programmes and available resources are set out via participation and involvement of local stakeholders. Whenever necessary, community resources from community organisations and individuals, such as the business sector, local associations, could be identified to help meet the district's needs. It also includes the process of implementation and evaluation of such plans.

Parameters for District Welfare Planning

3. Upon SWD's structural re-organisation implemented by phases from September 2001 to March 2002, DSWOs were upgraded with enhanced responsibilities in the following aspects to cope with the operational requirements and challenges arising from rapidly changing community welfare needs:

- (a) Planning welfare services on a district basis to meet community needs;

- (b) Collaborating with District Councils, related government departments and district organisations to facilitate the implementation of social welfare policies in the district;
- (c) Co-ordinating with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the district in respect of delivery of services in meeting the welfare needs of local community;
- (d) Establishing a more proactive social outreaching network in the district to help the needy and the disadvantaged; and
- (e) Administering and managing centralised operational units.

4. To guide DSWOs in fulfilling their enhanced functions, with special regards to their prominent role in district welfare planning, the following seven parameters have been worked out for their reference:

- (a) ***Responsiveness towards district welfare needs*** – Sensitivity and responsiveness to district welfare needs is a prerequisite for effective district welfare planning and service delivery. DSWOs should exercise discretion in the deployment, redeployment and optimal use of existing resources to respond to local welfare needs;
- (b) ***Evidence-based needs assessment*** – With the assistance of Planning and Co-ordinating Teams (PCTs), and making reference to available data and statistics, DSWOs should critically examine the validity and volume of needs and demands reflected, drawing reference to reliable evidence so as to assess and prioritise needs in the district for effectively allocating resources to meeting such needs;
- (c) ***Prevalent policy objectives and directions*** – While planning services, programmes and activities at the district level, DSWOs should always adhere to the policy objectives and directions. A full understanding of the Policy Address is necessary for formulating plans;
- (d) ***Resources allocation and pursuance of value-for-money*** – While headquarters maintains overall policy and service planning responsibilities for both new premises-tied and non-premises-tied initiatives, input from DSWOs is significant to make sure resources are put to the most needed areas, taking into account district characteristics and demographic profiles. In view of the current and

foreseeable financial constraints, a mindset to achieve value-for-money by service re-engineering, process streamlining, and redeployment of resources to meet new emerging needs is paramount;

- (e) *From fragmentation to integration* – Both at the service planning level and the service delivery level, integration of services should be explored and encouraged, not only to effect value-for-money, but also for effective and efficient delivery of holistic services to the customer;
- (f) *From compartmentalisation to cross-sector collaboration* – In the planning and delivery of services to meeting district needs, DSWOs should strive towards breaking the boundaries and maximizing cross-sector collaboration at the district level to achieve synergy and multi-disciplinary co-operation; and
- (g) *Community partnership* – DSWOs are positioned to enhance community partnership with District Councils, local personalities, local organisations, subvented and non-subvented NGOs, and other Government departments. DSWOs will serve as facilitators in assisting local communities to develop social capital and community partnership.

Protocol of District Welfare Planning

5. DSWOs are recommended to go through the following prerequisite steps in the process of district welfare planning: [The flow chart (**Appendix I**) sets out the overall work flow of the District Welfare Planning Protocol]

5.1 Analysis on Environmental Factors

Two conceptual frameworks of environmental scanning and analysis on critical environmental factors are recommended for DSWO's use as stipulated in the following:

- (i) “SWOT Analysis” assists in assessing both internal and external environments by evaluating **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats** and working out the corresponding strategies (the diagram below refers)

Internal Factors	Strengths (S)	Weaknesses (W)
External Factors		
Opportunities (O)	SO Strategies Use strengths to take advantages of opportunities	WO Strategies Take advantages of opportunities by overcoming weaknesses
Threats (T)	ST Strategies Use Strengths to avoid threats	WT Strategies Minimize weaknesses and avoid threat

- (ii) “PEST Analysis” helps analyse mainly the external environments, i.e. Political, Economic, Social and Technological conditions

5.2 Mapping Out District Needs Profile

- 5.2.1 Collate primary data (e.g. research data); secondary and archival data (e.g. readily available demographic and socio-economic data in SWD and other departments) for analysing the nature and volume of welfare needs in the district. SWD and NGO service statistics are also useful data in mapping out district needs profile.
- 5.2.2 Analyse demographic and socio-economic characteristics and trends including global and local economic trends, crime rate, household income, domestic violence and child abuse, single-parenthood, ageing trends, homelessness and new arrivals, etc.
- 5.2.3 District characteristics, e.g. concentration of special vulnerable groups or at-risk target groups as well as the district atmosphere and dynamics would be taken into account. Such characteristics include both the concrete ones (such as the presence of large number of street sleepers, minority ethnic groups, single parents, high juvenile crime rate, etc.) as well as the conceptual ones (such as social cohesiveness, extent of volunteerism, major concerns of local personalities, community dynamics, etc.).

5.2.4 Collect views from stakeholders (e.g. service users, service providers, other government departments and local personalities) on district welfare needs and topical issues (e.g. urban redevelopment projects). These expressed needs of the stakeholders must however be validated by reliable statistical figures or survey/research results.

5.3 **Identifying District Welfare Needs**

5.3.1 Review on existing service provision and planned projects, including both subvented and non-subvented, regular and time-limited ones.

5.3.2 Identify service gaps and shortfall by comparing the district needs profile and the district service provision profile. This may include a "geographic" view on the distribution of needs/provision of the same service (e.g. surplus of child care centre services in one geographic locality but lack of such services in another); or a "cross-services" view (e.g. under utilisation of youth services in one locality but at the same time, long waiting list of community services for elderly in the same locality) of provision of welfare services in a particular locality. If necessary, service gaps identified would be reflected to concerned service branches at the SWD Headquarters for consideration during service planning.

5.3.3 A set of evidence-based social indicators on district welfare needs (**Appendix II**) as an additional tool has been developed to be used together with the Protocol to facilitate DSWOs in the district welfare planning. This set of social indicators provides consistent measurements of the multi-dimensional societal conditions across the districts and serves as an additional reference in relation to optimal use of welfare resources available in the districts. It is one of the means to help DSWOs to map out district welfare needs profile and identify service gaps and shortfall. The indicators should not be regarded as a scientific planning ratio for welfare service provisions.

5.4 **Setting of Strategies and Service Priorities**

5.4.1 Service needs identified would be prioritised to determine their relative importance and urgency to achieve more effective and efficient use of resources.

- 5.4.2 Considerations including consistency with policy directives, size of the at-risk target groups and vulnerable groups, political pressure in the locality, anticipated cost-effectiveness of the planned services and programmes, etc. would be taken into account.
- 5.4.3 Adherence to the policy objectives and directions, the administration's initiatives and priorities laid down in policy papers should be ensured. Chief Executive (CE)'s policy address and Financial Secretary (FS)'s budget speech are two essential policy papers giving significant directions to the planning process. To enhance the planning process at district level, DSWOs would make reference to departmental strategic directives and priorities as a basis to develop their district-specific strategies.
- 5.4.4 To enhance accountability and transparency, in the process of setting strategies and service priorities, exploration and data collection would be done via various channels, such as District Co-ordinating Committees, Local Committees, Management Committees of NGOs, briefings or sharing sessions, focus groups, communication with service users, researches or need surveys, district welfare planning forums and other forms of informal communication with stakeholders.
- 5.4.5 To enhance mutual understanding and strengthen communication between districts and Headquarters and hence a more effective service planning, internal forums such as DSW's Round-up, sharing sessions on service planning with concerned districts are arranged.
- 5.4.6 Based on the experience of most DSWOs, District Welfare Planning Forum is highly recommended as a useful and effective way to serve a number of strategic objectives. To achieve consistency and allow flexibility, the forum may be preferably conducted around the beginning of the financial year as considered appropriate by DSWOs. The forum would serve the following purposes:
- (i) report back of completed tasks
 - (ii) sharing of welfare policies, service initiatives
 - (iii) deliberation of district needs and welfare concerns

- (iv) exploration of areas of possible collaboration
- (v) soliciting support, establishing network and partnership, encouraging synergy
- (vi) strengthening ownership of district issues and strategic planning

5.5 Formulating District Welfare Plan

Based on the above steps, a strategic district welfare plan, including plans on welfare facilities, services and programmes with specific objectives and time frames to meet the district welfare needs, would be formulated.

5.6 External Consultation on District Welfare Plan

District welfare plan thus formulated would be presented to respective District Councils' welfare related sub-committees or District Management Committees for consultation. Meanwhile, modifications to the plan would be made as appropriate to address the feedback gathered from this external consultation process.

5.7 Implementation of District Welfare Plan

Updating and evaluation (emphasis would be on qualitative evaluation) of the formulated district welfare plan would be made in the implementation process as appropriate in order to accommodate changing and emerging welfare needs.

District Welfare Planning Cycle

6. In order to achieve need-based welfare planning and be timely to echo any new central policies and initiatives, an annual district welfare planning cycle starting from 1 April of a year to 31 March of the following year is considered most desirable. This is also appropriate to tie in with the fiscal year, annual funding cycle and terms of office of various committees. Nonetheless, DSWOs may exercise discretion and flexibility to make adjustments in terms of time line in addressing specific district issues and achieving long-term objectives. The planning and its implementation could be extended beyond the annual planning cycle.

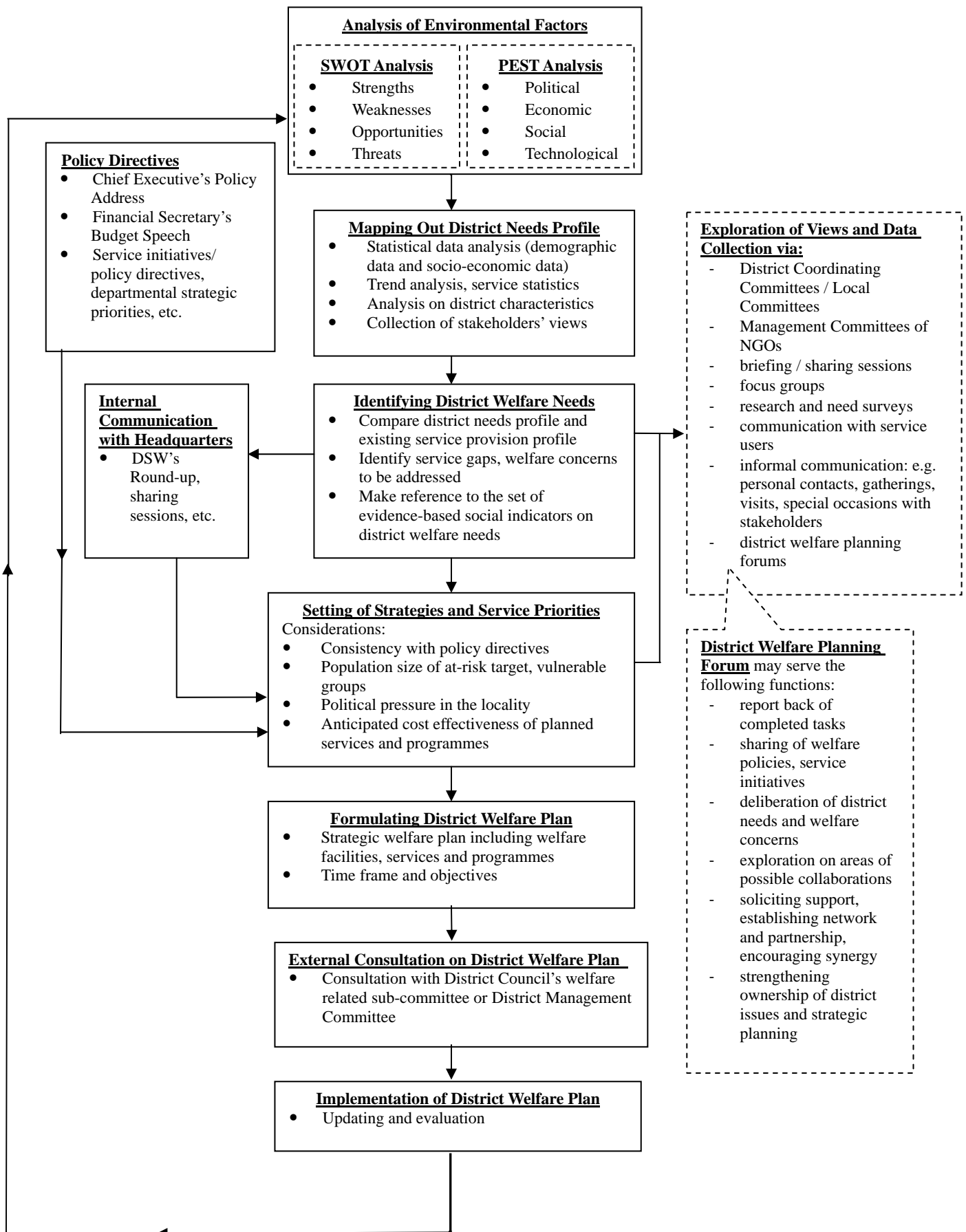
7. As a general guide, tasks on analysing environmental factors and district welfare needs profile could be conducted around June to September each year. While taking into consideration that CE's Policy Address is released in October and FS's Budget Speech in March, DSWOs could work out their annual district welfare plan through the necessary steps and conduct district welfare forum around the beginning of a financial year.

Review of the Protocol

8. The Protocol and Social Indicators would be kept under constant review around once in every three years in the light of experience and changing circumstances.

*Social Welfare Department
August 2005*

Flow Chart on District Welfare Planning Protocol



Remarks: An annual district welfare planning cycle is most desirable to achieve need-based planning and be timely to echo new central policies and initiatives as well as to tie in the fiscal year, funding cycle and terms of office of various committees. Nonetheless, DSWOs may exercise discretion and flexibility to address specific district issues or achieve long-term objectives by extending the respective implementation plans beyond the annual planning cycle.

Social Indicators on District Welfare Needs

Objectives

A set of evidence-based social indicators as an additional tool has been developed to be used together with the District Welfare Planning Protocol to facilitate the District Social Welfare Officers (DSWOs) of the Social Welfare Department in the district planning. This set of social indicators is one of the means to help DSWOs to map out district welfare needs profile and identify service gaps and shortfall. It provides consistent measurements of the multi-dimensional societal conditions across the districts and serves as an additional reference in relation to optimal use of welfare resources available in the districts. The indicators should not be regarded as a scientific planning ratio for welfare service provisions.

Principles of selecting social indicators

2. The selection of social indicators is based on a number of criteria. Each indicator selected should be:

- representative (representing a range of district welfare needs, reflecting different aspects of demographic and socio-economic conditions, relevant across all districts);
- valid and reliable (providing a true reflection or measurement of the issue, from a reliable source);
- cost-effective (readily available without costing additional resources and manpower);
- timely (available on a regular basis, up-to-date); and
- available at district level (to reflect individual district's situation).

3. To ensure workability and practicability, the number of indicators selected is limited to a reasonable and manageable size while covering the major target groups of service recipients. The focus is on identifying useful data from existing available sources essential for welfare needs assessment to facilitate strategic district welfare planning. Along this line, it is a basic collection of demographic data and other key indicators reflecting needs/problems around major welfare domains, including child care, family, youth and corrections, elderly, disabled, social security and other target groups.

Proposed list of social indicators on district welfare needs

4. Based on the above principles and considerations, a proposed list of 21 social indicators under seven domains is developed as described in the following table. The data will be presented and analysed mainly by 18 District Council districts. For a number of indicators, as the data sources are administered by different departments concerned, the district demarcations may not totally align with that of the boundaries of District Councils.

Domain	Indicator	Source of Data
Demographic & Socio-economic Characteristics	1. Population (analysed by age)	Census and Statistics Department
	2. Projected population (analysed by age)	Planning Department
	3. Household size	Census and Statistics Department
	4. Educational attainment	Census and Statistics Department
	5. Monthly domestic household income	Census and Statistics Department
Family & Children	6. Child abuse (analysed by sex of victim, type of abuse and abuser's relationship with victim)	Social Welfare Department
	7. Battered spouse (analysed by sex of victim, type of battering)	Social Welfare Department
	8. Sexual violence (analysed by sex of victim, perpetrator's relationship with victim)	Social Welfare Department
	9. Single parents and their dependent children	Census and Statistics Department
Youth & Corrections	10. Drug abusers (analysed by age group)	Narcotics Division
	11. Juvenile/Young offenders	Hong Kong Police Force

Elderly	12. Elders living alone (analysed by household size and number of elders in the household)	Census and Statistics Department
	13. Elder abuse (analysed by sex of victim, type of abuse and abuser's relationship with victim)	Social Welfare Department
Disabled persons	14. Persons under Social Security Allowance Scheme (analysed by type of disability, i.e. physical and mental disability)	Social Welfare Department
Social Security	15. CSSA cases (analysed by case nature)	Social Welfare Department
	16. CSSA elderly recipients living alone	Social Welfare Department
	17. New arrival CSSA recipients	Social Welfare Department
	18. Unemployed CSSA recipients	Social Welfare Department
Other Target Groups	19. New arrivals	Census and Statistics Department
	20. Ethnic minorities	Census and Statistics Department
	21. Street sleepers (analysed by age, sex, monthly earnings and occupation)	Social Welfare Department

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