

## Aftercare for disabled being neglected

THE aftercare of physically disabled after they leave rehabilitation centres has been generally neglected.

This view was expressed yesterday by the committee member of the Rehabilitation Development Coordinating committee, Mr Peter Chan at a seminar on the integration of physically disabled into the community.

"There is also insufficient education for the parents of the physically disabled on how to deal with their children," Mr Chan said.

An unofficial survey, Mr Chan said, revealed that one-third of the physically disabled people interviewed lost contact with the rehabilitation centres after they left. Half of the rest said no social worker had ever tried to contact them.

He said this could waste efforts by the rehabilitation centres to assist disabled people to develop their capabilities and integrate them into the community.

"Disabled persons will no longer live in a protective environment after leaving the centre. They will certainly face difficulties in the process of integration back into the community. Thus, the continuation of counselling and assistance is significant. Any stoppage or disruption could make them feel unwanted," he said.

Mr Chan called on social workers to maintain close contact with the physically disabled when they leave the rehabilitation centre.

He suggested they should make regular visits to parents of the physically disabled to advise and help them to understand their children's needs and feelings.

Mr Chan said there was a lack of coordination between the government and voluntary organisations providing

rehabilitation services.

He called on the government to establish a special department to deal with this service.

Mr Chan said public attitudes and transportation had affected the rehabilitation process.

He explained that many physically disabled were not able to use public transport, making it inconvenient for them to go to study, work or attend social gatherings.

He urged the government to give more financial support to the rebus service by expanding it.

Moreover, he appealed to the government to speed up the legislation for the revised building code to aid handicapped.

• Meanwhile, speaking at the joint Christmas party of the Social Welfare Department's Aberdeen Rehabilitation Centre and Kaichi Children's centre yesterday, the director of Social Welfare, Mr John Chamber, said Christmas was a season of joy. But it was also a time when people should think more of others, and to give rather than be receiving.