

**Minutes of the 14th Meeting of
the Committee on Integrated Family Service Centres**

Date : 10 July 2014 (Thursday)
Time : 9:30 a.m.
Venue : Conference Room, 1/F, Queen Elizabeth Stadium,
18 Oi Kwan Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong

Present

Social Welfare Department (SWD)

Mr Wong Kwok-chun, Alex	Chief Social Work Officer (Family and Child Welfare)1	(Chairman)
Miss Chan Lai-chu	Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Central Western, Southern and Islands)1	
Mr Fung Ching-kwong	Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Eastern and Wan Chai)1	
Ms Leung Ho-yau, Bonnie	Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Kwun Tong)2	
Miss Cheung Lai-kuen, Jessica	Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Wong Tai Sin and Sai Kung)1	
Mr Heung Wing-keung	Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Wong Tai Sin and Sai Kung)2	
Ms Hui Suet-ling, Shirley	Acting Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Kowloon City and Yau Tsim Mong)1	
Mr Lai Huen-lam, Stephen	Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Sham Shui Po)1	
Miss Wan Pui-kuen	Acting Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Shatin)1	
Mr Chan Ping-wa	Acting Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Tai Po and North)2	

Miss Hui Kwai-fan	Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Yuen Long)1	
Ms Lam Yuen-ting, Heidi	Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing)1	
Miss Chan Sau-bik	Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Tuen Mun)2	
Mr Tse Shu-to, Sebastian	Senior Social Work Officer (Family)2	
Miss Chow Mei-yee	Social Work Officer (Family)1	(Secretary)

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs)

Mr Mui Wai-keung, Moses	Chief Officer (Family and Community) Hong Kong Council of Social Service	
Ms Angie Lai	Head of Family Service Caritas – Hong Kong	
Ms Judy Chan	Head of Service Hong Kong Family Welfare Society	
Mrs Leung Li Chi-mei, Cross	General Manager (Family and Community Core Business) Hong Kong Christian Service	
Ms Iris Liu	Director of Program International Social Service Hong Kong Branch	
Ms Sally Pang	Programme Director (Family and Community) Christian Family Service Centre	
Mrs Angela Chiu	Executive Director Hong Kong Catholic Marriage Advisory Council	
Mrs Ngan Lai Mee-yuk	Social Work Supervisor Hong Kong Children and Youth Services	
Ms Wendy Wong	Senior Manager St James' Settlement	
Ms Wong Chor-ling, Bell	Supervisor Long Love Integrated Family Service Centre Tung Wah Group of Hospitals [Representing Ms Wong Fung-yee, Margaret Assistant Community Services Secretary (Youth and Family) Tung Wah Group of Hospitals]	
Mr Chu Muk-wah, Daniel	Division Head (Family Service Division) Yang Memorial Methodist Social Service	

Ms Keung Choi-yin Service Director
Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Welfare Council Limited
Mr Lee Tin-yan District Service Director
The Neighbourhood Advice-Action Council

In attendance

SWD

Mrs Claren Tam Social Work Officer (Family)³
Miss Lau Leung-yuk, Grace Assistant Social Work Officer (Family)¹

Representatives from Department of Health (DH)

Dr Karen Tso Senior Medical Officer / Family Health Service
Dr Sandra Yau Senior Medical Officer /
West Kowloon Maternal and Child Health Centre
Mrs Francis Au Clinical Psychologist / Family Health Service

[Remarks: For sharing on the agenda item of Development of Assessment Framework on Parenting Capacity for Comprehensive Child Development Service]

Sharing on the Development of Assessment Framework on Parenting Capacity for Comprehensive Child Development Service (CCDS)

The Chairman recapitulated that as shared in the last meeting of the Committee, the Interdepartmental Coordinating Committee on CCDS had proposed to develop a reference framework for assessing the families' parenting capacity with a view to facilitating the frontline colleagues in both the medical health and the social work sectors to have a common assessment tool in handling CCDS cases. A Task Group was subsequently formed for the purpose with representatives from DH, Hospital Authority (HA) CCDS Paediatricians and SWD where Mr Tse Shu-to, Sebastian was the representative. The Task Group had held two meetings with the latest one held on 2 July 2014.

2. Upon developing a preliminary framework of the assessment tool, the Task Group would like to take the opportunity to share with the Committee the proposed assessment tool and collect feedback from Members. In this regard, the Chairman welcomed Dr Karen Tso, Dr Sandra Yau and Mrs Francis Au from DH, who were attending the meeting on behalf of

the Task Group, to introduce the development of assessment framework on parenting capacity for CCDS.

3. Dr Karen Tso through a powerpoint presentation briefed the Committee the purpose and the design of the assessment framework. The prime objective of the assessment framework was to serve as a common reference for frontline colleagues in the medical health and the social work sectors to facilitate the assessment on the capacity of the families in protecting the children from risk and enhancing their developmental experiences, as well as the formulation of feasible welfare plans for the children. The target users of the assessment framework were the frontline nursing staff of the Maternal and Children Health Centres (MCHCs) / HA services and the social workers of Integrated Family Service Centres (IFSCs) / Integrated Services Centres (ISCs) / Family and Child Protective Services Units (FCPSUs) / NGOs concerned who had to handle child care and child protection cases. While CCDS aimed to serve children aged between 0-5 years and their families with specific medical, developmental and social needs, the proposed assessment framework was targeted for families with children aged between 0-3 years as these children had not yet reached the age to attend pre-primary institutions where they could receive proper attention from the teaching personnel. It was tentatively planned that the assessment tool would be developed and implemented by phases. To start with, assessment framework would be first developed for children aged between 0-12 months.

4. Dr Sandra Yau demonstrated a sample assessment framework for the reference of Members. Apart from indicators on the children's usual developmental conditions according to their respective age ranges, there would be highlights on some alert and serious conditions with suggestions on specific attention or immediate intervention. Besides, there would be a "to-do-list" for the deployment of the users for assessing the families' parenting capacity when conducting home visits. Making reference to the "to-do-list", the parents / carers would be invited to demonstrate the steps in feeding, taking bath and changing diapers for the children so that the concerned colleagues could make due assessment through on-site observations during home visits. For documentation and communication purposes, a record form would be designed for the responsible colleagues to note down the relevant findings and exchange information with the concerned parties. To facilitate concerned colleagues to understand and make use of the assessment framework, Dr Karen Tso revealed that a User Guide would be in place while training programmes would be organised for concerned colleagues upon implementation.

5. With the detailed introduction, the Chairman invited Members to give their feedback. Members had overall shown appreciation to the initiative of developing a

common assessment framework for the use of medical health and social work colleagues to facilitate their handling of CCDS cases. Some Members suggested that more areas could be added to make the assessment framework more comprehensive, say items relating to the emotional state / post-natal depression of the carers / mothers, and the social support network available. Besides a Chinese version, if possible, was proposed for the use of Family Aide Workers who also played an important role in providing support to child care cases through training for service users to enhance their child care knowledge and skills.

6. To conclude this agenda item, the Chairman extended thanks to DH's representatives and reassured that the progress of developing the assessment framework would be duly reported to the Committee in the coming meetings.

[Remarks: Dr Karen Tso, Dr Sandra Yau and Mrs Francis Au left the meeting at this juncture.]

[Post-meeting notes: The Secretariat issued an email to Members on 15 July 2014 attaching the powerpoint file presented by DH's representatives in the meeting for their reference.]

Welcoming remarks

7. Before starting other agenda items, the Chairman welcomed Miss Chan Lai-chu, Mr Fung Ching-kwong and Mr Lai Huen-lam, Stephen of SWD who attended the meeting for the first time as well as Mrs Leung Li Chi-mei, Cross of Hong Kong Christian Service who had replaced Mr Kwok Wai-keung as General Manager (Family and Community Core Business). He also introduced colleagues who attended on behalf of Members, including Ms Hui Suet-ling, Miss Wan Pui-kuen and Mr Chan Ping-wa of SWD and Ms Wong Chor-ling, Bell of Tung Wah Group of Hospitals respectively.

Confirmation of minutes of last meeting

8. Minutes of the last meeting were confirmed without amendment.

[Post-meeting notes: The confirmed minutes of the 13th meeting were uploaded onto SWD Homepage on 15 July 2014.]

Matter arising

Training courses (para. 3, p.4)

9. Mrs Claren Tam reported the enrolment of training courses conducted during the period April 2014 – June 2014. She also highlighted those courses to be organised tentatively during the period July 2014 – October 2014 as listed below and encouraged Members to nominate suitable colleagues to attend:

- (a) Training Workshop on Conducting Supportive Group for Parents with Children suffering from Dyslexia Problem (21, 22 and 27 August 2014);
- (b) Training Series on Effective Parenting for Children with Special Educational Needs -
 - Course A: An Overview on Children with Special Care and Educational Needs (19 September 2014 a.m.);
 - Course B: Families having Children with Dyslexia Problem (19 September 2014 p.m.);
 - Course C: Families having Children with Attention-Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder (26 September 2014 a.m.); and
- (c) Training Course on Helping Couples Separate in Peace (7, 8 and 15 October 2014).

Progress of follow-up on the recommendations of the Review on the Implementation of the IFSC Service Mode (the Review)

Progress of follow-up on the recommendations of the Review report

10. The Chairman took Members through the updated summary table on the progress of follow-up actions taken in respect of the recommendations of the Review report, which had been sent to Members before the meeting. Among the 26 recommendations of the Review report, the Chairman highlighted the progress of follow-up actions taken for Recommendation 4 relating to IFSC premises. Apart from the reprovisioning plan of

Caritas IFSC – Fanling as reported in the last meeting, the Chairman revealed that Hong Kong Christian Service Family Ties IFSC would also be reprovisioned upon completion of the fitting-out works of the new premises. It was tentatively scheduled that both IFSCs would have their reprovisioning completed by 2015-16. Besides, the Chairman reported that approval had been given to Tung Wah Group of Hospitals Long Love IFSC for another office in the same building of its Kwong Wah Office with effect with 1 June 2014 upon closure of its Long Ping Office due to termination of tenancy agreement. The Chairman then shared the progress of follow-up actions taken for other concerned recommendations and informed that the details would be reported under the respective working groups in the next agenda items.

Working Group on Review on the Operation of IFSC Services

11. Mr Tse Shu-to, Sebastian reported that after consolidating the comments of the Working Group and the Committee on the collaboration issues between IFSCs / ISCs and FCPSUs as deliberated in their respective meetings held on 21 January 2014 and 27 March 2014 respectively, the Secretariat had invited the feedback of the Domestic Violence Team (DVT) of the Family and Child Welfare Branch (FCWB) in consultation with FCPSUs again. With the second round comments received from DVT, the Working Group had conducted its 11th meeting on 17 June 2014 for further deliberations on the collaboration issues, of which the details would be shared in the next agenda item.

Liaison Group (LG) / Local Liaison Groups (LLGs) on Issues relating to Housing Assistance Cases

12. The Chairman reported that Mr Tse Shu-to, Sebastian had become the new Secretary of the LG. Besides, the LG at headquarters level had held its 7th meeting on 8 July 2014 whereas the respective five LLGs had held / would hold their 8th meetings at district level between March 2014 and September 2014.

13. Mr Tse Shu-to, Sebastian then went on reporting the gist of discussion of the LG's 7th meeting held on 8 July 2014. He remarked that a Summary of Discussion of the meeting would be duly issued to the district management of SWD and relevant NGO service units for their reference.

Collaboration issues between IFSCs / ISCs and FCPSUs

14. Mr Tse Shu-to, Sebastian reported that second round comments from DVT on the collaboration between IFSCs / ISCs and FCPSUs were deliberated by the Working Group

on Review on the Operation of IFSC Services in its 11th meeting held on 17 June 2014. He then took Members through the details of the Working Group's deliberations on DVT's comments as contained in the Summary Table which was tabled for Members' reference. Members then exchanged their views on the respective collaboration issues concerning the handling of battered spouse / child abuse / child custody cases.

15. Among the comments as deliberated in the meeting, Members had particular concerns on the development of an assessment tool for assessing the risk level of battered spouse cases for the reference of IFSC / ISC and FCPSU colleagues to facilitate their benchmarking across the two sectors. Some Members proposed to adopt the "Suggested Indicators on Assessing Violence Risk" which had been worked out by the Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS) Network on IFSCs for reference within the IFSC / ISC sector before the development of a common assessment tool for use together with FCPSUs. Nevertheless, some other Members preferred to start with a standard assessment tool for the common use of IFSCs / ISCs and FCPSUs. To sum up, Mr Tse Shu-to, Sebastian thanked for the feedback of Members, for which their comments would be summarised by the Secretariat for inviting the consideration and comments of DVT again. It was tentatively planned that the Working Group would conduct its 12th meeting around late September 2014 for deliberating DVT's return and suggesting enhancement measures for improving the collaboration between IFSCs / ISCs and FCPSUs. The proposed improvement measures would be put up for consideration of the Committee in the next meeting.

Any other business

Special meeting of Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Welfare Services on 30 June 2014

16. Arising from the family tragedy happened in Sham Shui Po Wing Cheong Estate on 4 June 2014, in which a mother who was suspected of having post-natal depression killed her eighteen-month-old daughter, the Chairman reported that the LegCo Panel on Welfare Services had invited the Administration to attend a special meeting on 30 June 2014 to discuss on the agenda item of "Services and Policies relating to Family Support" and receive deputations' views. Another family tragedy unfortunately happened in Yuen Long on 27 June 2014 just near the meeting date, in which a father who was suspected of being over stressful in child care killed his 15-year-old autistic son.

17. The Chairman told that seven representatives of the respective bureaux / departments from Labour and Welfare Bureau, Food and Health Bureau, Hong Kong Police

Force, DH and SWD had attended the meeting. Besides, there were representatives from concerned deputations including Mr Mui Wai-keung, Moses who attended on behalf of HKCSS. Among the concerns raised by the Legco members and the respective deputations over the support services available to help those families and specific target groups in need, the gist of the concerns as deliberated in the meeting was highlighted for sharing with Members as follows:

- (a) The support for newly established public housing estates should be strengthened. Though IFSCs would promote welfare services through setting up information counters and networking with concerned local stakeholders, it was considered essential to build up formal network through the efforts of a designated team when there was population intake in new public housing estates. The Administration was advised to reconsider setting up the “Housing Advisory and Service Team” which aimed to assist tenants of new public rental housing flats to adapt to the new living environment and foster a stronger sense of community belonging. The project had been proven effective from its implementation in Tin Shui Wai in 2008 and extension to three other districts for another two years in 2010 but it subsequently ended upon its completion in mid-2012;
- (b) The collaboration among the medical health and the social work sectors as well as pre-primary institutions in delivering CCDS should be strengthened and enhanced for early identification and timely intervention purposes;
- (c) The support services for the sexual minority group should be strengthened as there were no specialised family services to help sexual minorities facing domestic violence; and
- (d) The support services for families with autistic children / members should also be strengthened as demonstrated in the recent family tragedy.

18. The Chairman invited Members to make reference to the relevant papers and documents from the website of LegCo for more details of the special meeting. He also revealed that a sub-committee on combating domestic violence would be set up under the LegCo Panel on Welfare Services with a view to examining the policies and services for strengthening support to the concerned families.

Invoking Section 34F under the Protection of Children and Juveniles Ordinance (PCJO), Cap 213 when handling suspected child abuse cases

19. Mr Tse Shu-to, Sebastian recapitulated that as reported in the previous meeting, DVT was reviewing the mechanism of Multi-disciplinary Case Conference (MDCC) on Suspected Child Abuse Cases. In the course of review, DVT had sought legal advice on the exercise of Section 34F of PCJO which had brought some implications on the handling of suspected child abuse cases.

20. Mr Tse Shu-to, Sebastian highlighted that under Section 34F(1), public officer authorised by the Director of Social Welfare (DSW) or police officer who was of the opinion that the child or juvenile was in need of urgent medical or surgical attention or treatment might take the child or juvenile to a hospital instead of to a place of refuge. Under Section 34F(2), a child or juvenile who was admitted to a hospital after being taken there under Subsection (1) might be detained by the DSW in that hospital for the purpose of medical or surgical attention or treatment and thereafter the DSW might take him to a place of refuge. The gist of the legal advice sought concerning the exercise of Section 34F was highlighted as follows:

- (a) Section 34F should only be invoked if DSW had reasonable grounds to believe that the child or juvenile was “in need of care or protection” by virtue of any of the matters set out in Section 34(2);
- (b) If Section 34F had been invoked, DSW was still required to initiate care proceedings for that child or juvenile to a juvenile court within 48 hours after the child or juvenile was discharged from the hospital even though the MDCC which was subsequently held did not recommend the application for a supervision order under PCJO; and
- (c) Section 34F(2) which enabled a child or juvenile already taken to a place of hospital under Subsection(1) to be detained there for necessary medical treatment could not be invoked without invoking Subsection(1). Hence, for suspected child abuse cases where the child or juvenile was taken to the hospital not by invoking Section 34F(1) and the parents insisted to discharge the child or juvenile from hospital but the risk of child abuse was considered high, Section 34F(2) could not be invoked unless the child or juvenile had already been taken away from the hospital premises.

21. With respect to the legal advice sought, Mr Tse Shu-to, Sebastian supplemented that the following ways of handling might be adopted when the child or juvenile was still in the hospital:

- (a) To persuade the parent to allow the child or juvenile to stay in the hospital during the course of social investigation;
- (b) If the parent insisted to discharge the child or juvenile and the medical officer assessed that the child or juvenile was medically fit to be discharged, consideration should be made whether there was reasonable grounds to believe that the child or juvenile was “in need of care or protection”. If situation warranted, the child or juvenile should be taken to a place of refuge and an application for care proceedings had to be made to a juvenile court within 48 hours; and
- (c) Even the parent agreed to place the child or juvenile in the hospital, if there was reasonable grounds to believe that the child or juvenile was “in need of care or protection” by virtue of any of the matters set out in Section 34(2), an application to juvenile court could still be made before the child or juvenile was discharged from hospital.

22. Under the existing division of work, Mr Tse Shu-to, Sebastian shared the handling of suspected child abuse case as follows:

- (a) The care proceedings would be handled by the concerned SWD casework unit if it was a known case to that unit;
- (b) FCPSUs would take up new cases of suspected child abuse not known to any SWD / NGO unit; and
- (c) For known case of an NGO, according to paragraph 8.9 of the “Procedural Guide for Handling Child Abuse Cases”, if urgent statutory care proceedings on the child or juvenile was required for the case during the course of enquiry, application should be either made by the respective IFSC of SWD according to the latest residential address of the child or juvenile’s parent / guardian or by the police.

23. Regarding the implication on the division of work for the last scenario, Mr Tse Shu-to, Sebastian pointed out that the designated SWD IFSC providing back up support to the NGO IFSC / ISC with service boundary covering the residence of the child or juvenile's parent / guardian was required to assist in the urgent statutory care proceedings if it was a known case of NGO IFSC / ISC. The principle was in line with the paragraph 2.7.5 of the "Guidelines on Division of Work and Case Transfer Among IFSCs / ISCs (Revised in November 2012)". Yet, the occurrence of such kind of cases was expected to be rare. In regard to the application of Section 34F, Mr Tse Shu-to, Sebastian remarked that DVT would duly issue emails to concerned SWD and NGO units to keep them informed.

[Post-meeting note: Referring to para. 19(b) above, DVT had further sought legal advice regarding the application of 34F. According to the further legal advice, if Section 34F had been invoked, the DSW had discretion to decide whether the child should be taken to a place of refuge or be returned to his/her parents/guardian after discharge from hospital. Though DSW had the discretion whether to take the child to a place of refuge after discharge from hospital and whether to make an application in relation to that child or juvenile to a juvenile court under Section 34(1) or 34C after invoking Section 34F, the decision should be reasonable and justifiable on the basis of the best interest of the child.]

Date of next meeting

24. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m. The next meeting was scheduled to be held on 31 October 2014 (Friday) at 9:30 a.m. at Conference Room 918 of SWD Headquarters.