

**Minutes of the 15th Meeting of
the Committee on Integrated Family Service Centres**

Date : 31 October 2014 (Friday)
Time : 9:30 a.m.
Venue : Conference Room 918, Social Welfare Department Headquarters
9/F, Wu Chung House, 213 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai, Hong Kong

Present

Social Welfare Department (SWD)

Mr Wong Kwok-chun, Alex	Chief Social Work Officer (Family and Child Welfare)1	(Chairman)
Mr Tsang Kwok-hung, Kenneth	Acting 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	
Mr Au Wai-ming, Dimitri	Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Wong Tai Sin and Sai Kung)1	
Mr Chan Chau-sang	Acting Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Wong Tai Sin and Sai Kung)2	
Ms Ding Shuk-wah, Alice	Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Kowloon City and Yau Tsim Mong)1	
Ms Chik Ching-yee	Acting Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Sham Shui Po)1	
Miss Sandra Lim	Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Shatin)1	
Ms Ho Kwai-ying, Esther	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	
Ms Chan Mei-yi	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
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
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

Absent with apologies

Ms Sally Pang	Programme Director (Family and Community) Christian Family Service Centre
Ms Wong Chor-ling, Bell	Supervisor Long Love Integrated Family Service Centre Tung Wah Group of Hospitals [Representing Ms Wong Fung-ye, Margaret Assistant Community Services Secretary (Youth and Family) Tung Wah Group of Hospitals]

In attendance

SWD

Mr Lam Bing-chun Chief Social Work Officer
(Rehabilitation and Medical Social Services)1

[Remark: For sharing on the agenda item of “Introducing Integrated Support Service for Persons with Severe Physical Disabilities”]

Miss Lau Leung-yuk, Grace Assistant Social Work Officer (Family)1

Mrs Claren Tam Social Work Officer (Family)3

Department of Health (DH)

Dr Karen Tso Senior Medical Officer / Family Health Service

Dr Aster Lau Senior Medical Officer / Yan Oi Maternal and Child Health Centre

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

Introducing Integrated Support Service for Persons with Severe Physical Disabilities

The Chairman remarked that SWD would implement the Integrated Support Service for Persons with Severe Physical Disabilities (ISS) incorporating the regularisation of the two assistance programmes under Community Care Fund, namely “Provision of Special Subsidy to Persons with Severe Physical Disabilities for Renting Respiratory Support Medical Equipment” and “Provision of Special Subsidy to Persons with Severe Physical Disabilities for Purchasing Medical Consumables Related to Respiratory Support Medical Equipment” in 2014-15 so as to fully address the needs of persons with severe physical disabilities and give them targeted support. In this regard, he welcomed Mr Lam Bing-chun from Rehabilitation and Medical Social Services Branch (RMB) to brief the Committee the new initiative.

2. Mr Lam Bing-chun through a powerpoint presentation briefed the Committee the objectives and service scope of the ISS. He pointed out that through the ISS, support would be rendered to persons with severe physical disabilities who needed constant attention and care by relieving them of the burden of medical equipment and medical consumables, and enabled them to continue living in their familiar community. With the adoption of a case management approach, the ISS would provide one-stop support services, including casework counselling, occupational therapy / physiotherapy, nursing care service and financial support service. In response to the enquiries of Members, Mr Lam Bing-chun gave further information on the eligibility criteria, application procedures and fee charging.

3. The Chairman thanked Mr Lam for his detailed introduction. Members were welcome to contact the concerned staff of RMB if they had further enquiry.

[Remarks: Mr Lam Bing-chun left the meeting at this juncture.]

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

4. The Chairman recapitulated that Dr Karen Tso and two other representatives of DH represented the Task Group on Development of Assessment Framework on Parenting Capacity for CCDS (Task Group) to attend the last meeting of the Committee on 10 July 2014 and introduced the development of an assessment framework on parenting capacity for CCDS and a sample template for children aged 0-1 month. Dr Karen Tso and her colleague, Dr Aster Lau, were invited to attend the meeting again for briefing Members the progress of the draft assessment framework for children aged 0-12 months and the respective parenting capacity checklists for home visits and office interviews.

5. Through a powerpoint presentation, Dr Aster Lau briefed the Committee details of the draft assessment framework and two checklists. Dr Karen Tso remarked that the assessment framework was designed to be used by frontline staff of Maternal and Child Health Centres, Hospital Authority, SWD and NGOs who had to handle child care cases, but with tailor-made version for workers in different services. The assessment framework would be developed and implemented by phases and training on the use of the assessment framework would be provided for Integrated Family Service Centre (IFSC) and Integrated Services Centre (ISC) colleagues and the details of the training programmes would be worked out in a later stage by the Task Group.

6. The Chairman thanked Dr Karen Tso and Dr Aster Lau for their detailed introduction. Members expressed their appreciation to the efforts of the Task Group in developing the assessment framework and a Member suggested including the assessment parameter of handling persistent crying babies. The Chairman invited Members to seek the feedbacks of IFSC / ISC colleagues and provide comments, if any, to the Secretariat within two weeks after the meeting. Upon consolidating the returns of Members, SWD representatives would share the comments of IFSC / ISC colleagues in the next meeting of the Task Group to be held on 26 November 2014.

[Remarks: Dr Karen Tso, Dr Aster Lau and Mrs Claren Tam left the meeting at this juncture.]

Welcoming remarks

7. Before pursuing other agenda items, the Chairman welcomed Ms Chan Mei-yi, Mr Au Wai-ming, Dimitri, and Ms Ho Kwai-ying, Esther who attended the meeting for the first time. He also introduced Mr Chan Chau-sang, Mr Tsang Kwok-hung, Kenneth and

Ms Chik Ching-yee of SWD who attended on behalf of Members. Besides, he informed that Ms Sally Pang of Christian Family Service Centre and Ms Wong Chor-ling, Bell of Tung Wah Group of Hospitals were unable to attend the meeting due to engagement of other official duty.

Confirmation of minutes of last meeting

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

[Post-meeting notes: The confirmed minutes of the 14th meeting were uploaded onto SWD Homepage on 3 November 2014.]

Matter arising

Training courses (para. 9, p.6)

9. Miss Lau Leung-yuk, Grace reported the enrolment of training courses conducted during the period from July 2014 to October 2014. She also highlighted those courses to be organised tentatively during the period from November 2014 to January 2015 as listed below and encouraged Members to nominate suitable colleagues to attend:

- (a) Training Course on Application of Narrative Practice in Social Work Settings (19, 25 and 28 November 2014);
- (b) Training Workshop on Conducting Marital Enhancement Group for Couples (16 and 17 December 2014);
- (c) Induction Course on Services of Integrated Family Service Centre (IFSC) (Class 2) (13, 18, 20, 25 and 27 November 2014);
- (d) Training Course on Working with Asylum Seekers and Torture Claimants (25 November 2014 a.m.); and
- (e) Training Course on Application of Group Work Approach for People Suffering from Emotional Problems (12 December 2014).

10. As for (c) Induction Course on Services of IFSC, the Chairman highlighted that a session for introducing clinical psychology (CP) services had been revived so as to equip frontline colleagues newly posted to IFSCs with a more comprehensive understanding on the scope of CP services.

Invoking section 34F under the Protection of Children and Juveniles Ordinance (PCJO), Cap 213 when handling suspected child abuse cases (para. 19-23, p.10-12)

11. Ms Chan Mei-yi informed Members that after the conditions for invoking section 34F under the PCJO, Cap 213 were briefed in the last meeting of the Committee, the Domestic Violence Team (DVT) of the Family and Child Welfare Branch (FCWB) issued two mails to the concerned SWD service units and district management on 14 and 24 October 2014 respectively in respect of the matters. She recapitulated the legal provision of section 34F regarding the detention of child or juvenile in hospital as follows:

(a) section 34F(1)

Where any of the circumstances set out in subsection (1)(a) or (b) of section 34E applied in relation to a child or juvenile, any person mentioned in that subsection 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.

(b) section 34F(2)

A child or juvenile who was admitted to a hospital after being taken there under subsection (1) of section 34F might be detained by Director of Social Welfare (DSW) in that hospital for so long as the attendance of the child or juvenile at that hospital was necessary for the purpose of medical or surgical attention or treatment and thereafter DSW might take him to a place of refuge.

12. Ms Chan Mei-yi went on highlighting the gist of the legal advice sought on the interpretation and procedure of invoking section 34F(1) and (2) 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) subsection (2) of section 34F which enabled a child or juvenile already taken to a hospital under subsection (1) to be detained there for necessary medical treatment could not be invoked without invoking subsection (1) as subsection (2) applied to a child or juvenile being taken to a hospital under subsection (1). If the child or juvenile was already in the hospital, subsection (1) would not be applicable and hence subsection (2) would also not be applicable; and

(c) in relation to the power of DSW under section 34F(2), DSW had a discretion to decide whether the child or juvenile should be detained in the hospital and whether the child or juvenile should be taken to a place of refuge after the child or juvenile had been discharged from the hospital. Only if DSW decided under section 34F(2) to take the child or juvenile to a place of refuge after the child or juvenile had been discharged from a hospital, section 34E(2), (3), (4) and (5) should come into play. In that case, application to the juvenile court should be made within 48 hours after a child or juvenile was taken to a place of refuge under section 34E(3). However, if DSW decided that the child or juvenile did not need to be taken to a place of refuge, e.g. the child or juvenile would be returned to his guardians / parents, section 34E(3) would not be applicable. In any case, DSW's decision under section 34F(2)

should be reasonable and justifiable on the basis of the best interest of the child or juvenile.

13. Ms Chan Mei-yi pointed out that for suspected child abuse cases where the child was taken to the hospital not by invoking section 34F(1) and the parents insisted to discharge the child from hospital but risk of child abuse was considered high, section 34F(2) could not be invoked according to paragraph 12 (b) of the legal advice mentioned above. When the child was still in the hospital and SWD officer's urgent assistance was enlisted, the officer was advised to handle the situation in the following ways:

- (a) to persuade the parent(s) to allow the child to stay in the hospital upon advice of medical professionals that urgent medical attention / treatment was required; and
- (b) if the parent(s) still insisted to discharge the child and the medical officer assessed that the child was medically fit to be discharged, to consider whether there was reasonable grounds to believe that the child was "in need of care or protection" by virtue of any of the matters set out in section 34(2) and if situation warranted, take the child or juvenile to a place of refuge. Within 48 hours, an application had to be made to a juvenile court. The parent(s) should be explained of the above arrangement. If the parent(s) changed their mind and were willing to place the child in the hospital voluntarily, the removal and application could be suspended.

14. Apart from section 34F, Ms Chan Mei-yi remarked that the legal advice was also related to section 34E regarding the detention of a child or juvenile in place of refuge. As stated in section 34E(1A), DSW was required to arrange for an assessment on the child or juvenile concerned pursuant to section 45A before DSW could exercise the power under section 34E to take the child or juvenile to a place of refuge on the grounds that the child appeared to DSW to be in need of care or protection by virtue of section 34(2)(b) or (c), i.e. whose "health, development or welfare had been or was being or appeared likely to be neglected or avoidably impaired".

15. While it was the statutory duties of SWD casework units to perform the care or protection proceedings where required, Ms Chan Mei-yi reiterated the essence of the existing division of work between IFSC / ISC and Family and Child Protective Services Unit (FCPSU), which had been shared in the previous meeting, in handling suspected child abuse cases as follows:

- (a) FCPSUs would take up new cases of suspected child abuse not known to any SWD / NGO unit;
- (b) the statutory care proceedings would be handled by the concerned SWD casework unit if it was a known case to that 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. 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)".

[Post-meeting notes: The Secretariat issued an email to Members on 19 November 2014 summing up the gist of the legal advice sought as detailed in the meeting and inviting Members to share the information with IFSC / ISC colleagues.]

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

16. The Chairman took Members through the updated summary table on the progress of the 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 Hong Kong Christian Service Family Ties IFSC as reported in the last meeting, the Chairman reported that the Hong Kong Catholic Marriage Advisory Council Grace and Joy IFSC had just been approved of using a set of additional premises at Kennedy Town Community Complex in October 2014 to meet the area shortfall. 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

Collaboration between IFSCs / ISCs and FCPSUs

17. Ms Chan Mei-yi reported that subsequent to the meetings of the Working Group and the Committee held on 17 June 2014 and 10 July 2014 respectively, the Secretariat, upon consolidating their comments, had invited the third round comments from DVT on the collaboration issues between IFSCs / ISCs and FCPSUs. The return of DVT would be shared in details in the next agenda item. Together with the comments of the Committee collected in this meeting, the Working Group would conduct its 12th meeting on 20 November 2014 for further deliberations.

Collaboration between IFSCs / ISCs and Medical Social Services Units (MSSUs)

18. Ms Chan Mei-yi went on reporting that in the meantime, RMB was forming a Working Group on Operational Issues Relating to Service Interfacing and Division of Work between IFSCs and MSSUs. Membership would comprise of Assistant District Social Welfare Officers (ADSWOs) supervising IFSCs / MSSUs, supervisors and social workers of IFSCs / MSSUs (including both Psychiatric Unit and General Clinic) of SWD as well as representatives from FCWB and RMB respectively with a total of around 15-16 persons. The working group was tasked to identify areas of concern in relation to the service interfacing and division of work between IFSCs / ISCs and MSSUs and to make recommendations on revising and updating the existing guidelines in order to address the identified concerns. It was tentatively planned that the Working Group would meet about 4-5 times between December 2014 and December 2015. To collect the feedback and comments of IFSCs / ISCs on the collaboration issues with MSSUs, it was proposed that the existing platform of the Working Group on the Operation of IFSC Services and the Committee should be made use of for the purpose. This proposed arrangement was agreed in the Committee.

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

19. The Chairman reported that the 7th LG meeting with the Housing Department (HD) was held on 8 July 2014. The summary of discussion on the meeting was emailed to district management of SWD and concerned NGO service units for reference on 18 September 2014. While the 8th LG meeting was tentatively scheduled to be held in January / February 2015, the 8th meetings of the five LLGs of the respective clusters were held between March 2014 and October 2014 with the 9th meetings to be held between November 2014 and March 2015.

Collaboration issues between IFSCs / ISCs and FCPSUs

20. Ms Chan Mei-yi went through with Members the third round comments from DVT by making reference to the updated summary table on issues of concerns on collaboration between IFSCs / ISCs and FCPSUs which was tabled for Members' reference. Members were invited to give their views on the respective improvement measures regarding the handling of battered spouse / child abuse / child custody cases. Among the comments as shared by Members, they reiterated the genuine operational need of developing an assessment tool for common use in assessing the risk level of battered spouse cases.

21. Ms Chan Mei-yi further reported that the Working Group would conduct its 12th meeting on 20 November 2014 for detailed deliberations on DVT's comments. Upon consolidating the feedbacks of the Committee and the Working Group, the Secretariat would invite the consideration and comments of DVT again.

Any other business

Monitoring the discharge plans of cases admitted to Caritas Family Crisis Support Centre (FCSC)

22. The Chairman briefed that FCSC was a crisis support centre providing a package of integrated and easily accessible services to assist individuals and families facing crisis. FCWB had recently convened a service review meeting with the NGO operator, Caritas – Hong Kong. Due to the increasing complexity of case natures such as domestic violence problems and intense marital conflicts, a number of cases were in need of a longer live-in period for time out and formulating their future plans. In this regard, it was agreed that the duration of live-in service would be adjusted from “normally up to a maximum of a week” to “normally up to a maximum of two weeks” so as to reflect the service need more accurately. On the other hand, considering that FCSC had a high occupancy rate, the Chairman invited Members to advise supervisors and colleagues of IFSCs / ISCs to closely monitor the discharge plans of cases admitted to FCSC to avoid unnecessary overstay so that the live-in service could be timely provided for those needy cases.

Handling of referrals from Customs and Excise Department (C&ED)

23. Ms Chan Mei-yi recapitulated that as deliberated in the 11th meeting of the Committee held on 3 September 2013, the C&ED might contact IFSCs / ISCs for seeking childcare or welfare assistance to their detainees during their operation for which the gist was summed up as follows:

- (a) during the normal operation hours [i.e. 0900 to 1700 hours from Monday to Friday and 0900 to 1200 hours on Saturday (excluding public holidays)], the C&E officers could contact the IFSCs / ISCs according to the residential address of the detainees or the parents of the child-in-need; and
- (b) for cases in need of welfare assistance outside the normal operation hours, the C&E officers might contact SWD Departmental Hotline manned by the Hotline and Outreaching Service Team (HOST) operated by the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals. Upon receiving calls from C&ED, HOST would assess the case situation and might refer the cases to the respective IFSCs / ISCs operating extended service hours for follow up services according to the service users' residential addresses. In case the respective IFSCs / ISCs were not operating extended service hours, HOST would render immediate intervention as appropriate and refer the cases to the respective IFSCs / ISCs for follow up on the following working day using the standard referral form.

24. Ms Chan Mei-yi revealed that FCWB, upon working out the above arrangements with C&ED, issued a mail to them on 16 September 2013. In the mail, C&ED was advised to critically examine the need of urgent intervention or follow up service could be arranged on the following working day. Similarly, FCWB issued a mail to Members on 30

September 2013 informing the arrangement. To specify, C&ED was suggested to observe the followings:

- (a) to contact SWD / NGOs IFSCs / ISCs according to the place of residence of the parents;
- (b) the detention period should be substantial and continuous and release of the parent(s) was not expected within a short period;
- (c) reasonable assistance should be rendered to help the detainees secure their own childcare resources before referring the cases to SWD / NGOs IFSCs / ISCs for assistance; and
- (d) before reaching out, it was most useful for the social workers of IFSCs / ISCs / HOST to have direct phone contact with the detainees to have better understanding of the latter' social circumstances so as to work out preliminary welfare plans.

25. In relation to the recent concerns of C&ED, Ms Chan Mei-yi informed that FCWB would reiterate to C&ED the service provision of IFSCs / ISCs and the related protocol as stated above. In this regard, Members were advised to bring that arrangement to the attention of IFSCs / ISCs colleagues.

Other issues and concerns from Members

Multi-disciplinary case conference (MDCC) on suspected child abuse cases

26. Arising from their experience in conducting MDCC on suspected child abuse cases, some Members raised concerns on the role of FCPSU workers as to whether their participation in MDCC being convened by other service units was mandatory. Besides, they had concerns on the classification of case natures as concluded in the MDCC such as intermediate risk of child abuse. The Chairman noted Members' feedbacks which would be duly conveyed to DVT for their consideration.

Application for housing transfer

27. Some Members raised concerns on the referrals made by Members of District Council to IFSCs for follow up regarding applications for housing transfer on medical grounds or internal housing transfer. As no inputs from IFSCs were required for applications for housing transfer with medical support and internal housing transfer which could be handled direct by HD, the Chairman indicated that Members could inform the concerned Members of District Council that such referrals could be made direct to HD and the district management could clarify the arrangement with the concerned Members of District Council and other local stakeholders in their district liaison meetings.

Arrangement of discharge meetings for paediatrics cases

28. In light of that some medical officers invited IFSC to join the pre-discharge meetings for paediatrics cases including CCDS cases for discussing the welfare plans including the needs to apply for Care or Protection Order, some Members expressed that the medical social worker attending the meeting could share the details with the IFSC caseworker for follow up and wondered if IFSC social worker's participation in the meeting was warranted. After Members shared their experiences, the Chairman responded that the need of the arrangements should be subject to the needs and the nature of specific cases.

Declaration for processing compassionate rehousing applications

29. Regarding the forms of applications for compassionate rehousing, some Members shared the concerns that individual applicants might intentionally not provide the accurate and all details of information and suggested highlighting the wordings that applicants be held liable if providing false information. The Chairman noted the suggestion which would be conveyed to HD for consideration.

Date of next meeting

30. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:45 p.m. The next meeting was scheduled to be held on 6 February 2015 (Friday) at 2:30 p.m.

[Post-meeting notes: The next meeting will be held at Conference Room, 1/F, Queen Elizabeth Stadium, 18 Oi Kwan Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong.]