

**Minutes of the 25th Meeting of
the Committee on Integrated Family Service Centres**

Date : 29 August 2017 (Tuesday)
Time : 9:30 a.m.
Venue : Committee Room I-III, 1/F, Queen Elizabeth Stadium,
18 Oi Kwan Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong

Present

Social Welfare Department (SWD)

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| Ms Lui Siu-ying, Micy | Chief Social Work Officer (Family and Child Welfare)1 | (Chairperson) |
| Miss Hau Suk-kwan | Assistant District Social Welfare (Central Western, Southern and Islands)1 | |
| Mr Fung Ching-kwong | Assistant District Social Welfare (Eastern and Wan Chai)1 | |
| Ms Fung Man-yu, May | Assistant District Social Welfare (Kwun Tong)2 | |
| Ms Lam Bun-gee | Assistant District Social Welfare (Wong Tai Sin and Sai Kung)1 | |
| Ms Chan Chun-mei | Assistant District Social Welfare (Wong Tai Sin and Sai Kung)2 | |
| Ms Ding Shuk-wah, Alice | Assistant District Social Welfare (Kowloon City and Yau Tsim Mong)1 | |
| Miss Loo Sau-ting, Brenda | Officer-in-charge/Cheung Sha Wan Integrated Family Service Centre [Representing Mr Lai Huen-lam, Stephen, Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Sham Shui Po)1] | |
| Ms Ching Oi-ho, Sandy | Social Work Officer /Integrated Family Service Centre (Shatin)2 [Representing Mr Chan Ping-ching, Roy, Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Shatin)1] | |
| Ms Ho Yuen-ming, Agnes | Assistant District Social Welfare (Tai Po and North)2 | |

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| Miss Au Yeung Yee-kit | Social Work Officer /Integrated Family Service Centre (Yuen Long)2 [Representing Mr LAM Chi-ming, James, Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Yuen Long)1] |
| Ms Yu Yuen-han, Jenny | Assistant District Social Welfare (Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing)1 |
| Mrs Ng Ng Lai-chun, Quinnie | Assistant District Social Welfare (Tuen Mun)2 |
| Ms Chan Mei-yi | Senior Social Work Officer (Family)2 |
| Ms Lam Hiu-ying, Clara | Social Work Officer (Family)1 (Secretary) |

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs)

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| Mr Mui Wai-keung, Moses | Chief Officer (Family and Community) Hong Kong Council of Social Service |
| Ms Eliza Lam | 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 |
| Mr Cham Kwok-wing, Kerin | Director of Program International Social Service Hong Kong Branch |
| Mr Ng Ka-kui, Charles | Programme Director (Family and Community) Christian Family Service Centre |
| Ms Tsui Shuk-yin, Terry | 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 Dr Wong Fung-ye, Margaret, Assistant Community Services Secretary (Youth and Family)] |

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| Mr Chu Muk-wah, Daniel | Assistant Director (Rehabilitation and Family) Yang Memorial Methodist Social Service |
| Ms Keung Choi-yin | Service Director Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Welfare Council Limited |
| Ms Yam Pui-wah, Zerlina | Islands and Tung Chung District Supervisor The Neighbourhood Advice-Action Council |

In attendance

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| Ms Kwan Po-shan, Avis | Social Work Officer (Family)3 / SWD |
| Miss Lau Leung-yuk, Grace | Assistant Social Work Officer (Family)1 / SWD |

Absent with apologies

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| Mrs Angela Chiu | Executive Director The Hong Kong Catholic Marriage Advisory Council |
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Welcoming remarks

The Chairperson welcomed colleagues who attended the meeting on behalf of Members, including Ms Wong Chor-ling, Bell of the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals (TWGHs) and colleagues from SWD, including Ms Ching Oi-ho, Sandy, Miss Au Yeung Yee-kit and Miss Loo Sau-ting, Brenda. She also welcomed Ms Kwan Po-shan, Avis who had taken over the post of Social Work Officer (Family)3 overseeing the subject of compassionate rehousing (CR) on 17.7.2017.

Confirmation of minutes of last meeting

2. Minutes of the 24th meeting were confirmed with amendment made to the list of members present at the meeting.

[Post-meeting notes: The confirmed minutes of the 24th meeting were sent to Members on 30.8.2017 and uploaded onto SWD Homepage on 1.9.2017.]

Matters arising

Sharing on the Development of Parenting Capacity Assessment Framework (PCAF)
(para.3-4, p.4)

3. Ms Chan Mei-yi thanked Mrs Quinnie Ng and colleagues of Tuen Mun (South) Integrated Family Service Centre for their initiative in drafting the PCAF version in

Chinese for use of family aide workers which had been passed to the Family Team (FT) for consideration after the last meeting. FT had refined the draft and would seek the views of the Task Group on PCAF (TG) on the refined draft. The proposal of having a Chinese version for facilitating the frontline social workers to make good use of the assessment framework would also be passed to TG. She furthered that TG was working on the Social Worker version for children of 13 to 36 months and next TG meeting would be held in September 2017.

4. The Chairperson thanked the efforts of the district and comments from Members. She remarked that TG would accord priorities to the development of PCAF for various professionals and further development of PCAF would be shared with Members when available.

Training courses (para. 5, p.4)

5. Ms Avis Kwan briefed Members on the training courses that had been conducted from June to August 2017 and those to be conducted from September to December 2017 which were sent to Members before the meeting vide email. She highlighted the courses to be organised relating to ethnic minorities, handling of compassionate rehousing (CR) cases and collaboration with Immigration Department and encouraged Members to nominate suitable colleagues to attend the training courses.

Review of Procedural Guide for Handling Child Abuse Cases (Review) (para. 10, p.5)

6. Ms Chan Mei-yi shared that two focus groups had been formed to discuss definition and handling approaches, and identification and risk assessment. The first meeting of focus group discussing definition and handling approaches was held on 4.7.2017. A joint meeting of the two focus groups was held on 25.8.2017.

New arrangement on admission / re-admission of the Family Crisis Support Centre (FCSC) (para. 33, p. 10)

7. The Chairperson recapped that the proposed admission / re-admission arrangement of FCSC was discussed at the last meeting. While Members generally acknowledged the nature and objective of the time-out service as well as shared understanding on the rationale for the proposed arrangement, the new arrangement was put into implementation with effective from 1.7.2017. The Chairperson appealed Members to advise frontline social workers to monitor the discharge plan of their cases closely with reference to the nature of the service for providing timely intervention for individuals / families in crisis.

Free Legal Advice Scheme (Scheme) (para. 38-39, p. 11-12)

8. As shared in the last meeting, Ms Clara Lam recapitulated that the referral agencies, including Integrated Family Service Centres / Integrated Services Centres (IFSCs / ISCs), could use the designated application forms of the Scheme, which was tabled to Members in the meeting, to refer clients for free legal advice service. Additional referral forms were sent to respective IFSCs / ISCs in May and June 2017. Further replenishment of the forms could be arranged with the Administrative Office of the Duty Lawyer Service.

[Post-meeting notes: The contact details of Senior Court Liaison Officer of the Free Legal Advice Scheme of the Duty Lawyer Service were sent to Members on 30.8.2017 vide email.]

Handling of Suspected Child Abuse Cases – Collaboration with Hospital Authority (para. 45-46, p. 13)

9. Ms Chan Mei-yi recapitulated the arrangement worked out by Domestic Violence Team (DVT) and the Hospital Authority (HA) that social workers could use the sample letter at the Annex V to Chapter 4 of the “Procedural Guide for Handling Child Abuse Cases (Revised 2015)” to enquire whether a person had received treatment in hospital/clinic of HA, with no consent from that person available, so that the social worker can contact the medical officer for more information and/or invite the medical officer to attend the Multi-disciplinary Case Conference (MDCC) to discuss the welfare plan of the child. In the last meeting, Members asked whether HA would charge fee for the said enquiry made by NGO. To facilitate the enquiry made by NGOs, DVT had further discussed the matter with HA and the Rehabilitation and Medical Social Services Branch (RMB) to sort out the arrangement, including the fee-charging. Members would be informed about the progress when available. The Chairperson remarked that HA currently had fee-charging policy in handling enquiries of NGOs.

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

Updates on the follow-up actions taken

10. The Chairperson reported that the updated table detailing the progress of the follow up actions had been emailed to Members on 28.8.2017. Members were invited to note the progress.

Progress of work under various working groups

(i) Working Group on Review on the Operation of IFSC Services (WG)

11. Ms Chan Mei-yi shared that WG had held its 24th and 25th meeting on 10.7.2017 and 24.8.2017 respectively for discussion on the collaboration issues as well as the review on processing of CR cases. The updates would be shared and discussed in the ensuing agenda items 4 and 5.

(ii) Liaison Group on Issues Relating to Housing Assistance Cases (LG)

12. Ms Chan shared that the 13th LG meeting was held on 15.8.2017 and the coming meeting would be held in February 2018. Summary of discussion of the 13th LG meeting would be issued in October 2017. Among other collaboration issues, parameters for handling CR cases that involved tragic incidents and with donations far exceeding the asset limits were worked out by SWD and Housing Department (HD) and deliberated in the meeting. Though these cases were assessed to be eligible for CR by social workers for resolving their housing needs for their social rehabilitation, they might not be able to pass the means test as a result of the receipt of large sum of donations. In order to strike a

balance between providing appropriate and necessary assistance to the needy individuals / families and to safeguard and avoid abuse of the valuable housing resources, parameters were formulated. Subject to endorsement of LG members, the parameters would be issued to district colleagues for reference in September 2017.

13. For details of the other collaboration issues discussed in the LG meeting, Ms Chan invited district managers to refer to the summary of discussion to be issued in October 2017. The 14th meetings of the five Local LGs of the respective clusters were / would be held from April 2017 to March 2018. Members were welcomed to bring up the related issues for deliberation to the platforms.

[Post-meeting notes: The “Parameters for consideration of waiving the asset limits under the Comprehensive Means Test in handling CR cases arising from tragic incidents and with large sum of public donations” (Parameters) was sent to district colleagues vide email of 1.9.2017. The refined Parameters and the summary of discussion of 13th LG meeting were issued to Members vide email of 6.10.2017.]

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

14. Ms Chan Mei-yi reported that while the updating of the "Division of Work Between MSSUs of SWD and IFSCs / ISCs" was under process, RMB had been invited to share with the IFSC platforms when draft revisions on collaboration guidelines were available. She also shared that subsequent to the discussion and consultation in the WG, Committee on IFSCs, Like Service Meeting of IFSC and Like Services Meeting of Medical Social Services on the period of transferring guardianship cases, RMB informed the related SWD colleagues vide its mail of 7.8.2017 that guardianship cases should not be transferred within five months prior to the expiry of the order, with effect from 16.10.2017. The related part of the “Operational Guidelines on Procedures Arising from Provisions in the Mental Health Ordinance” was updated accordingly.

Review on Processing of CR Cases

15. The Chairperson reported that the review had been taken forwarded at the 24th and 25th meetings of the WG held on 10.7.2017 and 24.8.2017.

Session summaries of 1st round of focus groups meetings

16. The Chairperson recapitulated that as endorsed by the Committee at its meeting of 31.5.2017, views collected from individual sessions would be released to social workers / approved persons directly involved in processing CR cases, who were targets to be invited to join the focus group meetings, so as to uphold the virtue of transparency of the review, the review being a review among professionals and to facilitate further discussion in the 2nd round of focus group. The draft session summaries were sent to Members before the meeting and she invited Members to share their views. Members endorsed releasing the session summaries to the target participants of the focus group meetings to facilitate further discussion in the 2nd round focus group meetings. Members were invited to provide

further views on the session summaries, if any, to the Secretary by 18.9.2017.

Follow-up of suggestion raised / issues of concern

17. The Chairperson shared that some suggestions raised in the focus group meetings and observations from the case study would be followed up promptly if feasible while pending the completion of the review. Regarding the suggestion of providing soft copy of the form HD412 (i.e. the template for SWD to recommend CR cases to HD) to the related colleagues to facilitate the handling, after having sought the views of HD, the template was issued to the colleagues concerned on 25.7.2017. Some related issues were also discussed at the LG meeting held on 15.8.2017. Members were invited to make reference to the summary of discussion to be issued in October 2017. Ms Chan Mei-yi highlighted some of the issues having been discussed -

(i) Extent of preliminary financial assessment to be conducted by caseworkers for CR cases

Caseworkers had been advised to conduct preliminary assessment on CR cases with reference to “Guidelines for Income Assessment”, that is Annex 1 to “Guidelines and Procedures for Processing Applications for CR and other Housing Assistance”, so as to ascertain the clients could pass the Comprehensive Means Test with the income and assets limit pitching at Waiting List levels. Along the discussion in the previous LG meetings, caseworkers, when conducting social investigation and preliminary financial assessment, were expected to accord adequate diligence in obtaining and verifying information having been collected so as to ascertain the needs of the clients. The extent of preliminary financial assessment was suggested to be better defined so as to facilitate case handling. After deliberation in the LG meeting, Members agreed to incorporate the related discussion and agreement in the previous LG meetings to the “Guidelines for Income Assessment”.

(ii) Prevention of abuse of CR / precious housing resources

There were situations that some tenants who purchased the flats under Tenant Purchase Scheme (TPS) got into financial difficulty afterwards. For those hardship owners who sold the TPS flat and claimed to have imminent social (and medical) grounds for housing assistance, HD confirmed that TPS was one of the Subsidized Sales Flats Schemes and the parameters in accepting applications for PRH from those ex-beneficiaries of Subsidized Sales Flats Schemes with genuine hardship, set out in Chapter VI (Alternative Housing Assistance) of the “Guidelines and Procedures for Processing Applications for CR and Other Housing Assistance” was applicable to TPS ex-owners

Views collected

18. The Chairperson shared that apart from focus group, the Family and Child Welfare Branch (FCWB) continued to collect views through other means, including meetings and

written submission, which would then be reported and discussed in WG meetings. She shared the gist of the views of a district manager which was received vide email on 8.6.2017 and was tabled to Members. It sought clarification concerning the proposed setting up of a centralised office whether it would be open to the public to lodge their applications directly. If this being the case, it would cause misunderstanding to the public that CR was a general housing application open to the public which might deviate from the rationale of CR. Besides, if the centralised office was not open to the public but received referrals from casework units, it would not save the need to align the assessment yardsticks during the process of making decisions for referrals or not. WG took note of the view, and considered that the office should not be open to the public but receive referral from other service units. WG also considered that further deliberations on the proposed issues were required.

19. Ms Chan Mei-yi reported that another district manager had shared the concerns on referrals from IFSCs to Social Security Field Units (SSFUs) for CR. The district manager shared a referral from IFSC to SSFU was received three weeks after the aged client with disability and chronic illness approached IFSC in person for CR, as it was an active case of SSFU. However, it was considered that the elderly with disability and chronic illness might need other social welfare assistance that required input of a social worker, such as community care or other support services. The district manager thus suggested to review the related guideline and to rationalise the existing workflow. Ms Chan shared that though it was stated at Chapter IV of “Guidelines and Procedures for Processing Applications for CR and Other Housing Assistance” that SSFUs could process specific clientele, there was no related guideline on the collaboration between IFSCs and SSFUs including case referrals.

20. Members, after some deliberations, viewed that since the professional assessment and assistance required might vary subject to individual case needs, discussion between IFSC and SSFU should be made before the case referral. The Chairperson encouraged the good practice of having discussion on the related cases between service units, taking into consideration the welfare and interests of the service users. The suggestion of providing guidelines on the collaboration between IFSCs and SSFUs in CR case processing was noted.

Proposed areas for enhancement and alternatives for enhancement

21. The Chairperson shared with Members the gist of “Proposed scope for discussion on the areas for enhancement and alternatives of enhancement” which had been deliberated in the WG meeting on 24.8.2017 and sent to Members vide email on 28.8.2017. WG, after deliberation, agreed that to address the sources of frustration and the difficulties encountered by colleagues in processing CR cases, the proposed enhancement areas / measures should cover the following five areas -

- (i) Aligning the assessment yardsticks and extent of vetting;
- (ii) Reviewing the processing workflow and delineating the roles and responsibilities of different personnel involved so that elaborations on the roles and accountability of management staff and SWD designated persons could be spelt out;
- (iii) Reviewing the processing guideline including the definitions of “initial application” and “formal application” as well as the need to update the

- protocol and time frame on CR case processing especially in dealing with the requests for CR at intake level or through referrals from various sources;
- (iv) Exploring the pros and cons of setting up a centralized team(s) to process CR cases with reference to a more common understanding of the substance of the centralized team(s) as discussed in the focus group meetings; and
 - (v) Management of public expectation.

22. The Chairperson shared that FCWB colleagues would prepare more concrete measures for discussion of WG in the coming meeting. The proposals would be put up to Committee for endorsement before formal consultation was undertaken by FCWB. Members appreciated SWD's effort in the review on processing CR cases and agreed that the proposed enhancement areas / measures should be worked out to address the sources of frustration and the difficulties encountered by colleagues in processing CR cases. The Chairperson invited Members to provide their further views, if any, to the Secretary by 18.9.2017.

Arrangement of 2nd round of focus groups meetings

23. The Chairperson shared that the 2nd round of focus group meeting would be held in November 2017, with target participants and format similar to the 1st round meetings. Members were asked to take note of the revised "Proposed dates and venues" which was sent to Members vide email on 28.8.2017. The proposed arrangement of 2nd round of focus group meetings was deliberated in the recent WG meetings and the details would be further worked out in coming meetings. Members were invited to share their views, if any, to the Secretary by 18.9.2017.

Co-opting frontline representatives to WG

24. The Chairperson shared that in order to include views from frontline workers in service units involved in CR case processing at an early stage, FCWB proposed to co-opt a frontline social worker from the medical social service sector and one more frontline social worker of NGO IFSC / ISC to join WG. Members agreed to the proposed arrangement. The Chairperson enlisted assistance of Mr Moses Mui in nominating a frontline worker to join the WG.

Progress of Case Study

25. Ms Chan Mei-yi shared the gist of findings of the longitudinal study of "Recommended Cases" and the progress and preliminary observations of "Non-recommended / Difficult Cases". Further findings would be shared with Members in the next meeting.

26. The Chairperson thanked Members for their contribution and invited them to provide views on the related issues of this item, if any, by 18.9.2017.

Any other business

(i) Collaboration with Refuge Centres for Women (RCs)

27. Ms Chan Mei-yi shared that in view of the overstaying problem of the residents in the RCs, Members were appealed to encourage caseworkers to enhance communication / coordination with the workers of RCs in working out the discharge plans for their clients. Besides, caseworkers might consider referring victims of domestic violence to Po Leung Kuk Tsui Lam Centre for their assistance in accompanying the victims to locate community resources such as rental housing when necessary.

28. Taking the opportunity, Ms Chan also solicited the assistance from caseworkers in keeping the addresses of RCs confidential to safeguard the residents' safety, including the discussion with clients during intake process.

(ii) Agency-based Enhancement of Professional Staff Support Services (ABPSS)

29. Ms Clara Lam reported that ABPSS was introduced in early 2014 to provide additional social work services and clinical psychological (CP) support services to better meet the special needs of the children and youth in care of Residential Care Homes (RCHs) and to early identify their problems for early intervention. The clinical assessments / consultations / treatments were provided to facilitate the cognitive, emotional and behavioural development of children and youth in residential care on one-off/short-term basis or during the period of awaiting long-term CP service. In view of the one-off / short-term basis of CP service under ABPSS, Members were asked to remind caseworkers of referring the children, who were under the care of RCHs and assessed to be in need of CP service, to the respective CP service of IFSC if treatment was required in the long run.

(iii) New publication: Searching the way home – Narrating Homelessness in Hong Kong (尋家路 - 細說香港無家者現象) by St. James' Settlement

30. Ms Wendy Wong tabled a new publication "Searching the way home – Narrating Homelessness" prepared by St. James' Settlement for sharing with Members. The book, which included life stories of homeless clients, was aimed to help the public gain understanding of the live of the homeless.

Date of next meeting

31. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m. The date and time of the next meeting was scheduled on 24.11.2017 (Friday) at 9:30 a.m. at Room 922, 9/F, Revenue Tower, 5 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai.