

**Minutes of the 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting of  
the Committee on Integrated Family Service Centres**

**Date** : 6 February 2015 (Friday)  
**Time** : 2:30 p.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	
Mr Au Wai-ming, Dimitri	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 Ding Shuk-wah, Alice	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 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	
Mrs Ng Ng Lai-chun, Quinnie	Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (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)

Mr Christopher Tang	Officer (Family & Community) [Representing Mr Moses Mui Chief Officer (Family and Community)] Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS)
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
Ms Sally Pang	Programme Director (Family and Community) Christian Family Service Centre
Ms Wong Chor-ling, Bell	Supervisor Long Love Integrated Family Service Centre [Representing Ms Wong Fung-yee, Margaret Assistant Community Services Secretary (Youth and Family)] Tung Wah Group of Hospitals

**In attendance**

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

## **Welcoming remarks**

The Chairman welcomed Mrs Ng Ng Lai-chun, Quinnie, ADSWO(TM)2 and Ms Lam Hiu-ying, Clara, S(F)1, who had replaced Miss Chan Sau-bik, Ada and Miss Chow Mei-yee respectively. He also welcomed Mr Christopher Tang and Ms Wong Chor-ling, Bell, who attended on behalf of Mr Moses Mui and Ms Wong Fung-yee, Margaret.

## **Confirmation of minutes of last meeting**

2. Minutes of the last meeting were confirmed with an amendment proposed by the Chairman that the remarks after paragraph 3 should read “Mr Lam Bing-chun left the meeting at this juncture” and the remarks after paragraph 6 should read “Dr Karen Tso, Dr Aster Lau and Mrs Claren Tam left the meeting at this juncture” .

[Post-meeting notes: The confirmed minutes of the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting were uploaded onto SWD Homepage on 30.4.2015.]

## **Matter arising**

*Sharing on the Development of Assessment Framework on Parenting Capacity for Comprehensive Child Development Service (CCDS) (para. 4-6, p.4)*

3. Ms Chan Mei-yi reported that after the 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting when Members were briefed the progress on developing the draft assessment framework on parenting capacity targeting children aged between 0 and 12 months for use by social workers, the Secretariat issued an email to Members inviting their further comments on 31.10.2014. The consolidated views of Members were shared in the meeting of the “Task Group on Development of Assessment Framework on Parenting Capacity for CCDS” (Task Group) held on 26.11.2014. The concerned areas and suggestions were discussed with representatives of Department of Health (DH) and Hospital Authority (HA) in the meeting and the draft assessment framework had then been further refined.

4. Ms Chan Mei-yi furthered that another meeting of the Task Group was held on 28.1.2015. The assessment framework was tentatively scheduled for pilot use commencing June 2015. Yuen Long and Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing districts, having relatively high prevalence of child abuse and high number of child care cases, were selected to be the pilot districts. In order to prepare the frontline colleagues for pilot use of the assessment framework, a user manual would be devised and three one-day training workshops targeting a total of around 120 social workers handling child care cases and their supervisors in the districts would be held in late April or May 2015 with dates to be fixed. Trainers would be the Task Group members including speakers from DH, HA and SWD. Taking into account the feedback collected in the pilot phase, the assessment framework would be refined and gradually rolled out to all the districts over the territory by phases.

5. Members were invited to give their views on the preliminary training proposal. Miss Hui Kwai-fan enquired the implementation and review timeframe and the targeted participants of the training. Ms Chan Mei-yi shared that Members would be informed of the details of the pilot and the review timeframe once available, while the training workshops would target at social workers handling child care cases in the districts with priority accorded to IFSC social workers.

6. The Chairman shared that the assessment framework on parenting capacity was developed with a view to facilitating early identification of the health and social needs of the target service users and enhancing the inter-sectoral and inter-disciplinary collaboration. He encouraged Members, especially those from the said districts, to support the pilot and nominate suitable staff to attend the training. Members to be involved in the pilot were welcomed to share with us their observations/comments in the coming meetings.

7. To facilitate the collaboration of MCHCs and IFSCs / ISCs, Ms Chan Mei-yi, taking this opportunity, recapitulated the gist of discussion at the 5th Inter-departmental Coordinating Committee on CCDS held on 10.6.2013 as follows -

- (a) MCHCs welcomed collaboration with IFSCs / ISCs through on-site social services such as mobile booth, groups and programmes, as well as meeting those unmotivated service users upon prior appointments between MCHCs and IFSCs / ISCs;
- (b) social workers should refer those cases in need of urgent psychiatric consultation at Accident and Emergency Department of the regional hospitals or enlist the assistance of the concerned psychiatric outreaching teams where appropriate, instead of seeking urgent assistance from MCHCs; and
- (c) IFSCs / ISCs should acknowledge receipts of referrals from MCHCs within seven days and issue full replies in one month.

*Training courses (para 9-10, p.5)*

8. Mrs Claren Tam reported the enrolment of training courses conducted during the period from November 2014 to January 2015. She also highlighted those courses to be organised tentatively during the period from February 2015 to April 2015 as listed below and encouraged Members to nominate suitable colleagues to attend:

- (a) Training Course on Bereavement Counselling (4, 9 and 11.2.2015);
- (b) Training Course on Handling Family Relationship Issues of Ethnic Minorities in Hong Kong (9.2.2015); and
- (c) Foundation Course on Couple Therapy (20, 24 and 26.3.2015).

9. The Chairman shared that there would be new elements to be introduced in the training programme to provide caseworkers with new knowledge in meeting the diversified service needs of the service users.

*Invoking section 34F under the Protection of Children and Juveniles Ordinance (PCJO), when handling suspected child abuse cases (Para. 11-15, P.5-8)*

10. Ms Chan Mei-yi recapitulated the conditions for invoking section 34F under PCJO in relation to the legal advice sought by Domestic Violence Team (DVT) of the Family and Child Welfare Branch (FCWB) were briefed in the last meeting of the Committee held on 31.10.2014. She informed Members the Secretariat had issued an email to Members on 19.11.2014 afterwards summing up the gist of the legal advice and invited Members to share the information with IFSC / ISC colleagues.

*Multi-disciplinary case conference (MDCC) on suspected child abuse (CA) cases (para. 26, p. 11)*

11. Ms Chan Mei-yi shared with Members that regarding the concerns on the participation of Family and Child Protective Services Unit (FCPSU) social workers in MDCC and the classification of case natures as concluded in the MDCC such as intermediate risk of CA, DVT's feedback was sought as follows –

- (a) *Recent Review* - DVT has currently been reviewing the operation and arrangement of MDCC on Suspected Child Abuse Cases. A task group on the Review of MDCC with members from various professionals was set up in January 2013 and consultation had been conducted to collect views from the stakeholders on the concerns regarding MDCC. DVT was recently consulting the relevant stakeholders, including Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS) on draft revised chapters. Further views and comments were welcome.
- (b) *Role of FCPSU workers in MDCC* – As stated in the Annex I to Chapter 11 of the prevailing “Procedural Guide for Handling CA Cases” (Revised 2007), “Those professionals who have direct knowledge on the child and his/her family and have a major role in the handling and investigation of the suspected CA case, as well as those not involved in the investigation but will give particular information or advice on the case for determining whether abuse has occurred and formulation of welfare plan should be invited as members of the MDCC.” In this light, FCPSU social worker, though not involved in the investigation but would give particular information or advice, should be invited as members of the MDCC.
- (c) *Classification of case natures in the MDCC* – In the prevailing guideline, it is stated that the decision on whether the case is a child abuse case is expected to be made in the MDCC. In the above-mentioned draft revised chapters,

while there was no amendment on the determination of case nature and case classification, the case nature of “suspicious” or “inconclusive” would not be used as the meaning of these terms was not clear enough and would not be added in the Procedural Guide. Besides, risk assessment was suggested to be a separate item in the agenda of MDCC.

*Declaration for processing compassionate rehousing (CR) applications (para. 29, p.12)*

12. Ms Chan Mei-yi reported as regards the concerns that individual applicants were, from time to time, found to have intentionally provided inaccurate and/or incomplete information to the social workers in the course of social investigation of CR application, it was suggested adding the wording in CR application form illustrating that the applicants were subjected to liability / legal liability if providing false information as a deterrent to giving false information. The suggestion has been deliberated in the Liaison Group (LG) meeting with Housing Department (HD) held on 22.1.2015. As the wording in relation to the liability / criminal liability might imply legal action probably to be taken and appropriate legal base / authority should be referred to, SWD would further scrutinize the issue.

13. The Chairman pointed out the concerns that the individual applicants providing false information would incur substantive wastage of the professional time and inputs of social workers. He furthered that the applications for public rental housing (PRH) to HD were governed by the Housing Ordinance (Cap 283) that was concrete and clear, while there were no provisions in the Ordinance for SWD or NGO officers to pursue criminal prosecution against intended deception CR application cases. One of the options currently FCWB considering was to state the Housing Ordinance in the CR application form. To address the concerns of IFSC colleagues and to facilitate the appropriate handling of the CR applications, FCWB would examine the issue and consider seeking legal advice.

**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*

14. The Chairman took Members through the updated summary tabled 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. He shared the progress of follow-up actions taken for the concerned recommendations and informed that the details would be reported under the respective working groups in the next agenda items.

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

Collaboration between IFSCs / ISCs and FCPSUs

15. Ms Chan Mei-yi shared that the WG had held its 12<sup>th</sup> meeting on 20.11.2014 for

deliberating DVT's third round comments as well as Committee's feedback as discussed in its 15<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 31.10.2014, on the collaboration issues between IFSCs / ISCs and FCPSUs. Upon incorporating the comments of the Committee and the WG, the Secretariat had invited DVT's fourth round comments in November 2014. The return of DVT would be shared in details in the next agenda item.

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

16. Ms Chan Mei-yi shared that she had attended the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the "Working Group on Operational Issues Relating to Service Interfacing and Division of Work between MSSUs and IFSCs" (WG on MSSUs / IFSCs) held on 12.12.2014 when the members shared various issues of concerns in relation to the service interfacing and division of work between MSSUs and IFSCs / ISCs. The Secretariat of the WG on MSSUs / IFSCs would compile a list of major issues of concern to be discussed in the coming meetings of WG on MSSUs / IFSCs including to make clear definitions and to formulate guidelines / principles on handling specific types of cases.

17. Ms Chan Mei-yi invited Members to pass their issues of concern, if any, to Secretary by 26.2.2015 for deliberation in WG meeting on 27.2.2015.

#### Collaboration between IFSCs / ISCs and Family Crisis Support Centre (FCSC)

18. Ms Chan Mei-yi shared with Members that the "Guidelines on Collaboration between Family Crisis Support Centre (FCSC) and IFSCs / ISCs (June 2006)" was being revised upon the recent refinements on the Funding and Service Agreement of FCSC that the duration of stay from preferably not exceeding "a week" was revised to "two weeks" in October 2014. While the comments of the operating NGO (i.e. Caritas – Hong Kong and the support IFSC (i.e. Kai Ping IFSC as its serving boundaries covers the location of FCSC) were invited by FCWB beforehand.

19. Ms Chan Mei-yi then took Members through the proposed revisions suggested by the Secretariat as well as the comments collected from Caritas – Hong Kong and Kai Ping IFSC. The revisions included the division of work between the IFSC / ISC covering the original place of residence and the last known place of residence and the maximum number of days for extension application. Members would be invited for comments on the draft revised guidelines via email after the meeting. After incorporating the comments of Members, WG, Caritas – Hong Kong and Kai Ping IFSC, it was envisaged that the draft revised guidelines could be prepared for Members' consideration in the next Committee meeting.

[Post-meeting note: The Secretariat issued an email to Members on 27.2.2015 inviting Members to comment on the draft revised guidelines and the comments had been received.]

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

20. Ms CHAN Mei-yi reported that the 8th meetings of the five LLGs of the respective clusters were held between March and November 2014 whereas the 9th meetings had been or would be held between September 2014 and May 2015. Ms CHAN shared with members that at the 8<sup>th</sup> LG meeting held on 22.1.2015, a number of streamlined measures in handling compassionate rehousing (CR) and other housing assistance cases had been worked out, including the following major ones –

- (i) A consent form for counselling would be devised to ensure that explicit consent from the public rental housing (PRH) tenants referred by Housing Department (HD) for counselling service had been properly sought.
- (ii) As regards the circumstances warranting social workers' inputs for cases with strong / explicit medical grounds, HD had clarified in the 7<sup>th</sup> LG meeting that "only applications concerning special care arrangements for the tenants may require inputs from social workers although explicit medical supports are available". In order to facilitate frontline colleagues' collaboration, the scope of social assessment in processing other housing assistance cases had been further deliberated in the 8<sup>th</sup> LG meeting. Some case examples were deliberated in the meeting. They would be shared with frontline colleagues of HD, NGOs and SWD to facilitate collaboration at operational level.
- (iii) As agreed in previous meetings, social workers might refer the past beneficiaries of various subsidised housing schemes to the Applications Sub-section for confirming their eligibility for application for PRH through Waiting List eligibility screening by means of a standard memo / letter. There had been concerns about the necessity to attach the completed PRH Application Form (HD 300) when sending the standard memo / letter to HD. Social workers would not be required to attach the HD 300 forms when sending the standard memo / letter to HD.
- (iv) In general, all sources of income before tax had all along been declarable items for PRH application and there were some exemption items. For the sake of administrative convenience, a board brush approach was suggested for social workers to list out all the declarable items received by the applicants in the computation of income in CR applications for HD staff's comprehensive information in the detailed vetting. For doubtful cases, prior clarification with HD contact points would be advisable.

21. Ms Chan Mei-yi furthered that the updated contact list of designated HD officers was sent to DSWOs and services units on 29.1.2015.



22. Mr Heung Wing-keung inquired when the consent form would be available for use. Ms Chan Mei-yi shared that the Chinese version was being prepared and would be issued to Members together with the gist of discussion of the LG shortly.

### **Collaboration issues between IFSCs / ISCs and FCPSUs**

23. Ms Chan Mei-yi went through with Members the fourth round comments from DVT by making reference to the 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 suggested along with the assessment framework / tool to be worked out, there would be user manual and training provided to the frontline colleagues. Besides, it was suggested adding description in the concerned guidelines regarding the handling of cases admitted to refuge centres referred from the police but screened by FSCPSUs as non-spouse / cohabitant battering cases while the victims determined not to return to the matrimonial home or last known place of residence.

24. Ms Chan Mei-yi further reported that WG would conduct its 13<sup>th</sup> meeting on 27.2.2015 for detailed deliberations on the comments of DVT. Upon consolidating the feedbacks of the Committee and WG, the Secretariat would invite the consideration and comments of DVT again.

### **Sharing on 2015 Policy Address**

25. The Chairman recapitulated the following 2015 Policy Address initiatives in relation to family and child welfare services -

- (i) the number of professional social workers in IFSCs and ISCs will be increased to provide early identification and intervention, and strengthen the support for families and children who are vulnerable to domestic violence and have other welfare needs, at-risk pregnant women, mothers with postnatal depression, and children with developmental problems and their family members;
- (ii) the number of residential places in small group homes will be increased to provide temporary accommodation and emotional support for children and young people who have been abused or affected by domestic violence or other family problems; and
- (iii) the number of full-day child care places for children aged below three will be increased whereas subsidised places of extended hours service provided by child care centres and kindergarten-cum-child care centres will be increased to some 6 200, which represents a fourfold increase with a view to enhancing child care services to provide better support for women who wish to join the

job market.

26. Members welcomed the initiatives. Ms Iris Liu asked whether the agreed level(s) of the output standard(s) as stipulated in the Funding and Service Agreement for IFSCs would be upwardly adjusted upon the provision of additional number of social workers and the Chairman confirmed the concerned agreed level(s) would be upwardly adjusted. Mrs Cross Leung enquired the number of residential places in small group homes to be increased and the Chairman shared that the Department was currently working on the details of these initiatives which would be announced in a later course.

### **Any other business**

#### *Recent concerns on PCJO*

27. Ms Chan Mei-yi briefed that arising from the recent case widely reported in the mass media, many frontline social workers had expressed concerns on the enforcement of PCJO. HKCSS, Office of Hon Cheung Kwok-che, Office of Hon Fernando Cheung, Hong Kong Social Workers' General Union and Hong Kong Social Workers Association co-organised a forum titled 《保護兒童及少年條例》實踐論壇 on 31.1.2015. The Chairman and Mrs Chang Lam Sook-ye, Senior Social Work Officer / Family and Child Protective Services (Child Protection,) spoke on the forum and the other speakers were an officer from Hong Kong Police Force, a retired Juvenile Court Magistrate and a lawyer.

28. Ms Chan Mei-yi reported that over 200 participants attended the forum. During the question and answer section, some social workers shared the hurdles encountered during collaborations with other disciplines in handling children and juvenile cases who presented to be in need of care or protection. Rounding up the forum, the moderator, Hon Cheung Kwok-che suggested HKCSS to set up a working group to collect and deliberate the concerns on PCJO from the frontline social workers. While similar platforms were already in place for work procedures under PCJO in relation to child abuse and domestic violence, HKCSS would consider the suggestion and see whether another platform should be set up for concerns related to youth with behavioural problems.

29. The Chairman pointed out that all along social workers of NGOs had been working closely with social workers of SWD in handling the children or juvenile who were considered in need of care or protection. He appreciated the forum provided a valuable platform for sharing and deliberation on better collaboration among various professionals for the best interest of the children and juvenile.

#### *Monitoring cases receiving emergency foster care service*

30. Miss Chan Lai-chu drew Members' attention to the overstaying cases in emergency foster care placements. While the emergency foster care service was meant to provide out-of-home care lasting from one day to six weeks on an emergency basis, there

were 73 overstaying cases as at the end of January 2015, representing about 80% of the total number of cases. Among them, 25 cases had overstayed for over six months and the service provision had been affected. Miss Chan Lai-chu appealed to Members to remind the supervisors and caseworkers of IFSCs/ISCs to closely monitor the welfare and discharge plans of children receiving emergency service so that the service could be timely provided for other needy cases.

### **Date of next meeting**

31. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m. The next meeting was scheduled to be held on 7.5.2015 (Thursday) at 2:30 p.m. at Conference Room 918, Wu Chung House.