

CHAPTER 9

HOUSING DEPARTMENT

- 9.1 Families suffering from intimate partner violence problem and residing in Public Rental Housing (PRH) units may be brought to the attention of the Estate Management Offices (EMO) of Housing Department (HD) in the course of carrying out their tenancy management duties, by informants (say, by their neighbours) or when the victims or their family members request for housing assistance on such ground.

REFERRAL FOR SERVICES

- 9.2 When staff of the EMO identifies any intimate partner violence case, the staff shall, with the victim's consent, refer him / her to / consult the Family and Child Protective Services Units (FCPSUs) of Social Welfare Department (SWD), or Integrated Family Service Centre (IFSCs) / Integrated Services Centre (ISCs) of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) listed in **Appendix XIX** (a sample of referral letter is at **Appendix XI**) at the earliest possible time. To ensure prompt action will be taken by these units / centres, there should be prior discussion between the responsible staff of the EMO and the concerned social worker.
- 9.3 Some PRH tenants suffering from intimate partner violence problems may approach EMO to raise the following requests:

Temporary Accommodation Service

- 9.4 If the victim, with / without child(ren), feels unsafe to stay at home because of the battering incident(s) and requests for temporary accommodation service, staff of EMO shall refer him / her to the FCPSUs of SWD, or IFSCs / ISCs of NGOs with his / her consent and inform him / her of the services provided by the refuge centres and other temporary accommodation services.
- 9.5 List of organisations providing temporary accommodation services and the refuge centres can be found in **Appendix XIX**. All the refuge centres accept 24-hour admission and their locations are confidential.

Housing Assistance

- 9.6 If the victim requesting for housing assistance, no matter he / she is still **living with the batterer** or has already **left the matrimonial home** in the PRH unit with or without dependent children and has decided to proceed with a divorce, staff of the EMO, after obtaining his / her consent, shall refer him / her to the

FCPSUs of SWD or IFSCs / ISCs of SWD / NGOs for assessment of his / her housing request and need for other welfare services.

- 9.7 For cases with genuine housing need before finalization of the divorce proceedings, upon the recommendation of SWD, conditional tenancy under Compassionate Rehousing Category can be granted to the aggrieved party with or without dependent children when the former leaves the matrimonial home, awaiting the judgment of the court for a divorce decree and order of custody of the children.
- 9.8 For victims who had finalized their divorce proceedings, staff of the EMO shall make reference to the prevailing housing policy of HD and Guidelines and Procedures for Processing Applications for Compassionate Rehousing and Other Housing Assistance to handle their housing request. Besides, the case may be referred to the concerned IFSC / ISC for other welfare services.
- 9.9 The victim may approach IFSCs / ISCs direct or declare his / her consent to the staff of the EMO regarding HD's referral of his / her request for conditional tenancy to concerned IFSC / ISC. If the case involves high risk of violence, EMO staff must pay special attention to avoid exposing the victim to the possible intimidation from the batterer and protect the personal data of the victim when processing the housing request. The staff shall ensure that the batterer has no access to the new telephone number and residential address of the victim without the latter's consent.
- 9.10 Some victims may decline the referral to social worker simply out of worry and misunderstanding about related procedures, e.g. fear of personal information being disclosed, reluctance to relay the incident to different persons etc., staff of the EMO should give assurance to the victim to address the victim's concerns (e.g. to inform the victim that all the information given will be kept confidential) as far as possible. If the victim still insists on not receiving any welfare service, the staff of the EMO should (i) remind him / her that he / she should have taken care of the safety of himself / herself and other family members e.g. the children; (ii) provide information to contact SWD or other agencies in the future if he / she needs to.
- 9.11 Cases involving child abuse elements must also be referred to the FCPSUs immediately. For cases involving intimate partner violence suffering from sexual violence or with elder victims, reference should also be made to the "Procedural Guidelines for Handling Adult Sexual Violence Cases (Revised 2007)" and "Procedural Guidelines for Handling Elder Abuse Cases (Revised August 2006)" respectively.