

NDC/6/64(00)II

Urgent by Fax

2867 2746

28 March 2002

Clerk to LegCo Panel on Security
(Attn: Mr Raymond Lam)
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Central
Hong Kong

Dear Mr Lam,

LegCo Panel on Security
List of follow-up actions required of the Administration

Further to my letter of 8 February 2002, I would like to provide Members with the following information requested at the LegCo Panel on Security Meeting held on 17 January 2002 :-

(a) Service and caseloads of the existing service provided by the social workers of the Society for the Aid and Rehabilitation of Drug Abusers (SARDA) and improvement to be achieved with the proposed addition of social workers

Since 1993, SARDA has provided individual counselling service to methadone patients at methadone clinics operated by the Department of Health. Young patients under the age of 21 and new patients are given priority to receive such counselling service. Other patients may receive the service through self-referral or referral by doctors or social workers. As at 31 December 2001, a total of 1,506 methadone patients were receiving such service.

Fund has been included in the Estimates of Expenditure for 2002/2003 for the creation of 1 SWO and 6 ASWO posts to strengthen various support services for methadone patients. It is planned that with the enhanced manpower support, individual counselling service will be provided for another 320 patients in a year. Furthermore, 192 group counselling sessions involving young methadone patients, female patients and their families will be organised each year.

(b) Crime Situation outside methadone clinics, including those in Sham Shui Po, Tsuen Wan and Shatin

According to Police records, the overall rate of reported crimes and drug offences committed in the vicinity of methadone clinics of those police districts with methadone clinics for the year 2001 was 3 % of all reported crimes in the district. The crime rate above was calculated to include all offences committed within an area not extending beyond more than two streets away from the methadone clinic. The rates for Sham Shui Po, Tsuen Wan and Shatin districts were 4.12%, 2.48 % and 0.09 % respectively. It was worth noting that there is no evidence to show that crimes occurring in the vicinity of methadone clinics are committed by methadone patients. Likewise, there is no evidence that drug offences taking place in the vicinity of these clinics are connected solely with methadone patients.

Yours sincerely,

(Mrs Clarie Lo)
Commissioner for Narcotics