

For Information

On 28 November 2006

LEGCO PANEL ON WELFARE SERVICES

Subcommittee on Strategy and Measures to Tackle Family Violence

**Progress of the Implementation of
District Liaison Group on Family Violence**

Purpose

This paper informs Members of the progress of the implementation of District Liaison Group on Family Violence (DLGFV) since its establishment in March 2005.

Background

2. After the Tin Shui Wai family tragedy in April 2004, the Administration has reviewed the district coordination mechanism in handling domestic violence cases and considered that there was a need to have a platform in place for more focused discussion on the handling of domestic violence cases among related professionals in a format based on different district dynamics. Since March 2005, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) has set up 13 DLGFV across the territory to address operational issues in handling domestic violence cases, including spouse battering, elder abuse and violence between other family members¹. The membership and terms of reference of the DLGFV are at Annexes I and II respectively.

¹ For child abuse cases, SSWOs/FCPSUs will coordinate regular meetings with the Medical Co-ordinators on Child Abuse and Child Abuse Investigation Units of the Police on a cluster basis. FCPSUs will serve as linkage between this forum and the DLGFV

Progress

3. The DLGFV meet on a regular basis (varying from three to six months) according to the needs of individual districts. More than 60 meetings have been convened since March 2005. The objective of enhancing collaboration in handling domestic violence cases has generally been achieved. Below are some of the significant achievements of DLGFV -

- (a) Through sharing of related guidelines and good practice, better understanding on handling of domestic violence cases is achieved.
- (b) Through the exchange of views on the respective roles of different professionals at different stages of case handling, multi-disciplinary collaboration is enhanced. Other than regular meetings, there are close contacts among members of different departments/organisations/units in their daily operations. Hence, members can seek direct assistance from the related departments or units in needy situation more conveniently and smoothly.
- (c) There is better communication and sharing of information in handling domestic violence cases. The social workers may contact the Police representative to check the case record in Police's database so as to facilitate case assessment and formulation of follow-up actions. The social workers may, on the other hand, offer advice to the Police on case handling.
- (d) Joint actions and programmes between the Police and social workers have been launched. For example, social workers directly enlist assistance from the respective Police Division in handling high-risk or potential violent cases, and the Police takes part in the publicity programme launched by SWD on combating domestic violence.

- (e) Operational difficulties in handling domestic violence cases have been resolved through streamlining of referral procedures on domestic violence cases at district level.

Way Forward

4. The DLGFV has provided a platform for regular communication and sharing among the departments and service units concerned, thus enhancing multi-disciplinary collaboration at the district level. With the positive feedback from various stakeholders, the DLGFV will continue to operate in the existing mode. In the coming year, we shall continue to share the good practice and measures in handling domestic violence cases among different districts to promote a coordinated effort in tackling domestic violence.

Social Welfare Department
November 2006

Annex I

Membership of District Liaison Group on Family Violence

The membership of the District Liaison Group on Family Violence (DLGFV) is as follows:

- Convenor : District Social Welfare Officer / Assistant Social Welfare Officer of SWD
- Key Members : - Police Officer of Chief Inspector rank
- Representative from Family and Child Protective Services Unit
- Representative from Integrated Family Service Centres / Integrated Services Centres of SWD and NGOs
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- Other Members (Note) : - Representative from Medical Social Services Units
- Representative from District Elderly Community Centres
- Representatives from other relevant service units as considered appropriate by the Convenor

(Note : The Convenor has the flexibility to invite other representatives of other departments, service units or local organisations to attend the meeting on a regular or on ad-hoc basis according to the district characteristics and needs.)

Annex II

Terms of Reference

1. The terms of reference of the DLGFV are as follows:
 - To enhance collaboration at working level among District Social Welfare Office, Police Division and other service units of Social Welfare Department/Non-government organisations (Family and Child Protective Services Units and Integrated Family Services Centres are the key members) in relation to the handling of cases of domestic violence including spouse battering and elder abuse²
 - To identify deficiencies/problems and to recommend measures/solutions to improve collaboration of different service units in the district in case handling.
 - To implement the measures/solutions recommended in improving the collaboration in case handling and monitor the implementation.
 - To advise the headquarters of the concerned departments on issues with implications on policy level.
 - To establish a direct and fixed point of contact amongst members service units.

² For child abuse cases, SSWOs/FCPSUs will coordinate regular meetings with the Medical Co-ordinators on Child Abuse and Child Abuse Investigation Units of the Police on a cluster basis. FCPSUs will serve as linkage between this forum and the DLGFV.