

For Discussion
on 30 October 2007

LEGCO PANEL ON WELFARE SERVICES

Provision of Welfare Services and Community Facilities For High-risk Families in Tin Shui Wai

PURPOSE

This paper informs Members of the latest position on the provision of welfare services and community facilities by Government for Tin Shui Wai residents, in particular the high-risk families.

BACKGROUND

2. Tin Shui Wai is one of the new towns in Hong Kong with relatively more rapid developments in recent years. Since it is situated in a relatively remote location, it offers limited employment opportunities; coupled with a high density of public housing estates, the majority of the residents in Tin Shui Wai are either relocated from other districts or are new arrivals with weaker family support, hence resulting in relatively more family problems. The Government has all along been concerned with the well-being of Tin Shui Wai residents, and has accorded a high degree of importance to providing support to the residents. Following the family violence case in Tin Hang Estate in 2004, a three-person Review Panel appointed by the Government put forward in its “Report of Review Panel on Family Services in Tin Shui Wai” a series of recommendations to improve family services in the district. The Government has since implemented a series of initiatives to follow through these recommendations. The strategies and measures adopted by the Government are detailed in the ensuing paragraphs.

STRATEGIES AND MEASURES ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

(A) District Inter-departmental Co-ordination and Community Building

3. In order to enhance the community services and facilities in Tin Shui Wai, a Working Group on Planning and Community Building for Tin Shui Wai was set up by the Yuen Long District Council (YLDC) in December 2004. The Working Group is convened by the Vice-Chairman of YLDC, and include as members the District Officer (Yuen Long), the District Social Welfare Officer (Yuen Long) (DSWO(YL)), YLDC members and representatives from all concerned government departments. Regular meetings are held to discuss and closely monitor the progress of service and facility improvements in Tin Shui Wai. Welfare services and community facilities in Tin Shui Wai have been gradually improved through the concerted efforts of the Working Group, local stakeholders and concerned government departments, including the Home Affairs Department, the Social Welfare Department (SWD), the Housing Department, the Education Bureau as well as the Leisure and Cultural Services Department. The improvements include setting up an additional library; speeding up construction works for a new community hall, a sports centre, basketball courts, soccer pitch and leisure facilities etc; and the conversion of under-utilised car parks and home for senior citizens into new welfare service units and community facilities (including Integrated Children and Youth Centre; District Elderly Community Centre; multi-service centre that offers family support service, assistance in kind and employment service for the disadvantaged; and multi-purpose room and conference room for use by local residents). A number of schools in the district have also opened their school campus by setting up reading rooms, multi-media self-access learning centre and reading centre for parents and children, etc, for use by the residents. In addition, the Working Group has collaborated with government departments and local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to organise community building projects and to mobilise community resources in promoting a caring culture and mutual help.

4. Through close liaison with the Housing Department, the Yuen Long District Social Welfare Office (YLDSWO) is able to expedite the identification of suitable premises for the setting up and reprovisioning of an Integrated Family Service Centre (IFSC), a Social Security Field Unit, a Family and Child Protective Services Unit as well as a Clinical Psychology Unit in Tin Shui Wai.

5. Over the past three years, a total of 12 new social welfare service initiatives were implemented in Tin Shui Wai, and another six are expected to come on stream in the coming year. For details, please refer to the Annex.

(B) District Cross-sectoral Collaboration Mechanism

Yuen Long District Welfare Service Planning and Co-ordinating Committee

6. SWD has introduced the “District Welfare Planning Protocol” and “Social Indicators on District Welfare Needs” since August 2005 to facilitate District Social Welfare Officers in assessing district welfare needs and formulating district welfare plans.

7. YLDSWO has established the Yuen Long District Welfare Service Planning and Co-ordinating Committee (the Committee) in March 2006. The Committee is chaired by DSWO(YL) and members include representatives of the YLDC, Yuen Long District Office, Federation of Parent-Teacher Associations and core members of various service sectors. The Committee is responsible for co-ordinating the work of five existing district welfare service co-ordinating committees, facilitating collaboration among NGOs in Yuen Long for more effective use of district resources, and assisting DSWO(YL) in mapping out the annual district welfare plan to meet district welfare needs. The Committee also conducts focus groups, district visits, surveys and retreat camps to collect views on local welfare issues, and organises District Welfare Planning Forum annually to enlist participation of different sectors in formulating service strategies and implementing district welfare plans.

“Cluster-based” Service Collaboration Mechanism

8. Since June 2005, YLDSWO has set up five “cluster-based” service collaboration mechanisms (i.e. Tin Shui Wai North, Tin Shui Wai South, Tin Shui Wai West, Yuen Long East and Yuen Long West) according to the service boundary of each IFSC in Yuen Long. Under the mechanism, government departments, secondary/primary schools and kindergartens as well as social service units located in a cluster form themselves into a network. Through setting up referral systems within the network, streamlining of the referral procedures, enhanced co-operation among frontline staff, and establishment of close communication mechanism, community resources can be better utilised and family problems, including domestic violence cases, can be handled more effectively.

District Liaison Group

9. To enhance cross-sectoral collaboration in handling the problem of domestic violence, YLDSWO set up the Yuen Long District Liaison Group on Family Violence in March 2005. With DSWO(YL) as the convenor, and representatives from the Police, Medical Social Services Unit, Family and Child Protective Services Unit and IFSCs as members, the Liaison Group provides a platform for front-line staff to directly discuss and address problems encountered in their day-to-day handling of cases.

District Cross-sectoral Liaison and Collaboration Meetings

10. YLDSWO, the Housing Department and school social workers or school discipline and guidance teachers in the district hold cross-sectoral liaison and collaboration meetings regularly to exchange views on service needs of local residents and students, on service coordination in the district as well as case handling. To widen the community support network to reach out to residents of various backgrounds, YLDSWO also takes the initiative to liaise with religious organisations in the district and hold sharing sessions with them on the district characteristics and welfare services in Yuen Long and to explore

opportunities for collaboration.

(C) Improvement Measures and Services for High-risk Families in Tin Shui Wai

Strengthening Support to Families

(i) Integrated Family Service Centres (IFSCs)

11. Three IFSCs were set up in Tin Shui Wai respectively between 2002 and 2004 to provide a continuum of preventive, supportive and therapeutic services for the 280 000 residents in the district. In addition, the IFSCs organise specially-designed groups and activities to address the specific needs and problems of the new arrival families, the divorced and single parents in the district. Compared with the former Family Services Centres, these IFSCs have been greatly improved in terms of area, facilities and interior design. The IFSCs have also extended their service hours on weekdays and Saturdays to provide local families with more timely assistance. As for manpower, through the allocation of additional recurrent funding, SWD has increased the provision of social workers in IFSCs from 27 in 2004 to 48 at present (excluding centre supervisors), representing an increase of 78%.

(ii) Family Support Programme

12. To provide early assistance for socially isolated families or vulnerable families that are unwilling to receive welfare services, including those at risk of domestic violence or are affected by mental health problems, the three IFSCs in Tin Shui Wai and the Family and Child Protective Services Unit (FCPSU)(Yuen Long) launched a Family Support Programme (FSP) in mid-2007. Under the FSP, the service units recruit and train volunteers, including those who have experienced similar problems and crises, to become Family Support Persons. The FSP aims to build a mutual-help network in the community, with the volunteers keeping in touch with vulnerable families through home visits, telephone contacts and outreach service, etc., so as to connect these families to appropriate support services and prevent further deterioration of their problems. Training provided to the volunteers includes

familiarisation on available community resources, characteristics of domestic violence, as well as the needs and mental and psychological health of socially withdrawn families. Volunteers who receive training on basic knowledge of mental illness regularly make telephone contacts with ex-mentally ill persons and show concern about their well-being. From April to June 2007, the three IFSCs in Tin Shui Wai and FCPSU (Yuen Long) have connected 65 individuals/families from Tin Shui Wai and Yuen Long to appropriate support services. In addition, the Psychiatric Medical Social Services Unit has handled 16 cases residing in the service area of the Castle Peak Hospital (Yuen Long, Tuen Mun and Tin Shui Wai) between May and September 2007.

(iii) Comprehensive Child Development Service

13. The Government launched the pilot Comprehensive Child Development Service (CCDS) in Tin Shui Wai in 2006. As the Maternal and Child Health Centres (MCHCs) serve about 90% of newborn babies, CCDS uses them as a platform to identify at-risk pregnant women, mothers with post-natal depression, families with psychosocial needs, as well as pre-primary children with health, developmental and behavioural problems at an early stage and refer them to appropriate service units for follow-up. Through CCDS, MCHCs have established a more effective referral mechanism with local IFSCs and kindergartens, etc. Young children and their parents in need, including single parents, unmarried mothers, new arrivals, people with chronic illness or ex-mentally ill persons are referred to services including casework counselling, group activities and other community support services. CCDS was extended to the entire Yuen Long district in the first half of 2007. From January 2006 to July 2007, 99 families in Tin Shui Wai were referred by the health professionals in MCHCs to IFSCs for appropriate services. During the same period, 46 pre-primary children were referred by pre-primary institutions in the district to MCHCs for services.

(iv) Child Care and After-school Care Service

14. To assist parents in taking care of their children, a new kindergarten-cum-child care centre and an additional mutual help child care centre were set up in Tin Shui Wai in September 2005 and November

2006 respectively. As many parents living in the district have long working hours, occasional child care services are provided in over 90% of the child care centres and kindergarten-cum-child care centres and 80% of these centres provide extended hour service. As at April 2007, the utilisation rates of kindergarten-cum-child care centres, standalone child care centres for children under the age of three, occasional child care service and extended hours service were 83%, 100%, 80% and 75% respectively. To meet the service needs of children in Tin Shui Wai and Yuen Long with delayed mental development, SWD will set up a special child care centre-cum-early education and training centre in Yuen Long in early 2008.

15. In addition, half-day supportive after-school care service is also available in the district for children aged 6 to 12, so that their parents can go to work with their minds at ease. Such After School Care Programmes are operated by NGOs on a self-financing and fee-charging basis. To encourage women and family carers to become self-reliant, SWD provides full or half fee-waivers for places in After School Care Programme to families with financial difficulty. According to information available to SWD, the number of units offering After School Care Programme in Tin Shui Wai has increased from six in 2004 to nine, currently providing a total of 298 places. The number of full fee-waiving places has increased from 26 to 96 at present. As at June 2007, the take-up rates of the After School Care Programme places and the full fee-waiving places were about 85% and 70% respectively.

(v) Parenting Service

16. During the past years, SWD has cooperated with the Family Life Education Unit, IFSCs, Integrated Children and Youth Services Centres, Children and Youth Centres as well as Community Centres in the district to organise family life education publicity campaigns and “Parent-School (Community-based)” to help parents strengthen their parenting knowledge and skills, promote parent-child relationship, enhance family functioning and build up a mutual-help network.

Specialised and Crisis Intervention Services

(i) Family and Child Protective Services Units (FCPSUs)

17. The FCPSUs, which are specialised units under SWD manned by experienced social workers, adopt a multi-disciplinary approach in providing a series of one-stop support and in arranging various service assistance for domestic violence victims, their families, and the abusers, to help them tide over the difficult period, lessen trauma associated with violence and live a new life. Social workers of FCPSUs perform the role of a case manager to coordinate a wide range of services and assistance including crisis intervention, short-term accommodation at refuge centres for women or the Family Crisis and Support Centre, counselling, clinical psychological services, medical treatment, housing assistance, financial assistance, statutory protection for children etc. FCPSUs also serve as the contact points for referrals and initial screening of domestic violence cases referred by the Police. High-risk domestic violence cases will be handled by social workers of FCPSUs.

18. To ensure service quality and strengthen clinical support to the frontline social workers of FCPSUs, SWD has deployed additional resources to strengthen the manpower of FCPSUs and increase the number of FCPSUs from five units in 2004-05 to the present 11. As Yuen Long is a district with relatively more domestic violence cases, SWD set up a FCPSU in Tin Shui Wai in April 2005 to serve families in need in Tin Shui Wai and Yuen Long. The manpower of this team has already been strengthened to 18 social workers since its establishment in early 2005.

(ii) Family Support and Crisis Intervention Centre

19. A new family support and crisis intervention centre (CEASE Crisis Centre) serving the whole territory and with its address kept confidential was set up in March 2007. It provides round-the-clock service throughout the year to victims of sexual violence as well as individuals and families affected by, among others, domestic violence. A new 24-hour hotline manned by social workers has also been set up to

assist the public to seek help or to refer cases. In addition, the CEASE Crisis Centre will provide short-term accommodation for those in need, including victims of sexual violence, domestic violence and elder abuse, as well as those facing other family crisis. The accommodation facility in CEASE Crisis Centre is expected to commence operation in 2008. This new centre will provide emergency support service to families in need, including families in Tin Shui Wai.

(iii) Pilot Project on Batterer Intervention Programme

20. To assist batterers in changing their violent behaviour, other than providing the batterers with individual counselling or treatment services by social workers and clinical psychologists, the SWD has also launched a pilot project on Batterer Intervention Programme since January 2006 to provide group therapy for batterers who join the programme on a voluntary basis or are under a probation order of the court. The FCPSU (Yuen Long) has completed two therapy groups for 17 batterers in the district, and is organising the third therapy group in October 2007.

(iv) Clinical Psychological Service

21. There are at present four Clinical Psychology Units (CPU) under SWD. Their main duties are to provide psychological assessment and treatment to the public for the purpose of enhancing individuals' and families' abilities in coping with pressure or solving emotional problems, and to hold talks and provide training on mental health issues regularly for local residents. To provide more accessible service for local residents, SWD will set up the fifth CPU in Tin Shui Wai in early 2008, so as to serve the increasing needs in Tin Shui Wai, Yuen Long and Tuen Mun.

Community Mental Health Services

22. As for the community mental health services, through multi-disciplinary and cross-sectoral collaboration, the Government seeks to ensure that the mentally ill persons receive appropriate medical and rehabilitation treatment, care and support. The Hospital Authority (HA)'s psychiatrists, community psychiatric nurses, allied health

professionals, SWD's Medical Social Workers (MSWs) and the social workers of NGOs' rehabilitation services all work together to achieve this goal. The following is a brief description of a series of related services.

(i) Medical Social Service (MSS)

23. Taking into account that high-risk families with members suffering from mental health problems require particular attention, SWD has stationed 193 Psychiatric MSWs at the psychiatric units of all public hospitals and clinics to provide support for the mentally ill persons who are staying in hospitals, ready to be discharged and undergoing follow-up consultations; as well as the ex-mentally ill persons. MSWs provide counselling and financial and housing assistance for the patients and their families to help them deal with various problems arising from their illness, trauma or disability, including emotional, family, care and inter-personal relationship problems. MSWs also draw up discharge plans for the patients with other medical and allied health professionals, assess their mental health, and refer them and their families to relevant units to apply for rehabilitation services and community resources. The financial/in-kind assistance provided by MSS include medical charge waivers, applying for funding assistance, referring patients and their families to relevant units to apply for social security benefits and purchase medical equipment. Under MSS, group counselling service or seminars are also arranged for the patients and their families.

(ii) Community Support Services

24. For the discharged ex-mentally ill persons who are living in the community, SWD offers them a series of community support services, including the Community Mental Health Link, Community Mental Health Care, and Community Rehabilitation Day Services, etc, so as to provide the ex-mentally ill persons and their families with continuous care and support, and to help them re-integrate into the community.

- Community Mental Health Link (CMHL)

25. CMHL aims at providing care and support, including counselling service, social/recreational/educational activities, outreaching visits,

networking and community educational activities, for ex-mentally ill persons and their families/carers. The service is provided by social workers from half-way houses or training and activity centres. At present, there are two NGOs operating CMHL in Tin Shui Wai and Yuen Long.

- Community Mental Health Care (CMHC)

26. CMHC aims at providing continuous support for the recently discharged ex-mentally ill persons or halfway house residents in the community mainly through outreaching visits and various support services, with a view to helping them resolve their adjustment problems and re-integrate into the community. A total of four NGOs are providing CMHC in Tin Shui Wai and Yuen Long.

- Community Rehabilitation Day Services (CRDS)

27. CRDS provides outreaching occupational therapy services for the ex-mentally ill persons so as to give them continuous support in the community, assist them to resolve the adjustment problems in their daily living and help them re-integrate into the community. One NGO is providing CRDS in Tin Shui Wai and Yuen Long.

(iii) Community Psychiatric Services

28. To facilitate the re-integration of discharged patients with mental illness into the community, the HA is providing community psychiatric services for these patients. Each service team comprises psychiatrist, community psychiatric nurses, medical social workers, occupational therapist and clinical psychologists. Community psychiatric services are available in all hospital clusters of the HA. Community psychiatric nurses perform an information function in the team. They work towards improving the quality of life of patients and encouraging an optimal level of their independence. Apart from providing discharged patients with direct medical care, community psychiatric nurses also collaborate with other health care team members across different disciplines to monitor the condition of discharged patients and conduct comprehensive assessment in order to identify the health related needs of each patient and to take

appropriate follow-up action.

(iv) Community Mental Health Intervention Project (CoMHIP)

29. For those who may have early signs of mental health problem, or those who are suspected to have mental health problems living in the community, early intervention of social workers or psychiatrists for the provision of appropriate counselling is essential. Launched by SWD this October, CoMHIP is specially designed to provide these people with in-depth outreaching social work intervention services. This innovative service includes mental health assessment, follow-up action and therapeutic/supportive group services, etc. Where necessary, CoMHIP teams will refer cases to HA for more detailed assessment and follow-up action by psychiatrists. CoMHIP in Tin Shui Wai is launched in October 2007. One NGO is responsible for serving both Tin Shui Wai and Yuen Long.

(v) Other Rehabilitative Services

- *Residential Service*

30. SWD provides ex-mentally ill persons with residential facilities equipped with appropriate support to help them lead an independent life in the community. At present, there are three half-way houses in Tin Shui Wai and Yuen Long, offering a total of 104 residential places. The average enrolment rate is 99.6%. These half-way houses provide residential care services for ex-mentally ill patients discharged from hospitals before they are able to lead an independent life in the community.

- *Day Training and Vocational Rehabilitation Services*

31. To assist ex-mentally ill persons to improve their social adjustment capabilities and enhance their social and vocational skills, SWD has set up the Training and Activity Centre for Ex-mentally ill Persons, sheltered workshops (SWs), Integrated Vocational Rehabilitation Services Centres (IVRSCs), etc. There are altogether three SWs and two IVRSCs in Tin Shui Wai and Yuen Long, providing

over 580 places for people with disabilities in need, including ex-mentally ill persons.

32. Meanwhile, SWD also provides supported employment service, On the Job Training Programme, Sunnyway – On the Job Training Programme for Young People with Disabilities, “Enhancing Employment of People with Disabilities through Small Enterprise” Project and marketing consultancy service etc, to help persons with disabilities, including ex-mentally ill persons, to seek employment and make a living in the open market. As at March 2007, 5 411 ex-mentally ill persons were making use of the employment services and vocational rehabilitation and training provided by the SWD.

33. In addition, HA also provides multi-professional diagnosis, continuous care and rehabilitation services for ex-mentally ill persons at its psychiatric day hospitals.

Providing Comprehensive Assistance to Help Unemployed Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Recipients to Become Self-reliant

34. In light of the increase in Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) caseload in Tin Shui Wai, SWD split its Social Security Field Unit in the district into Tin Shui Wai (South) Social Security Field Unit and Tin Shui Wai (North) Social Security Field Unit in April 2006 to facilitate those in financial difficulties in the district to seek and receive service.

35. To assist the relatively high number of unemployed CSSA recipients and “near CSSA” recipients in Yuen Long to enhance their ability for self-reliance and lessen their financial pressure, 19 Intensive Employment Assistance Projects (IEAPs) are organised in Yuen Long to provide tailor-made employment assistance services for unemployed CSSA recipients and “near CSSA” recipients in the district. From October 2003 to end August 2007, a total of 6 349 participants, including 5 149 unemployed CSSA recipients and 1 200 “near-CSSA” recipients, participated in the IEAPs. The New Dawn (ND) Project was launched to provide employment assistance services to the single parents and child

carers on CSSA. From April 2006 to end-September 2007, a total of 1 174 participants took part in the ND Project in the district. In October 2007, the SWD has just launched the 30-month-long Enhanced New Dawn Project to continue to provide enhanced employment assistance services for single parents and child carers on CSSA.

36. In addition, “My STEP”, a trial project for the unemployed youth on CSSA, was launched in Tin Shui Wai in October 2006. Up to end-September 2007, there were 68 participants in the district. Given its satisfactory results, the second phase of “My STEP” has been launched in Tin Shui Wai and Yuen Long in October 2007 and will run till September 2009, and the age of its target participants (aged 15-24) has been raised to 29.

37. The “District Employment Assistance Trial Project”, a project for the long-term unemployed CSSA recipients, has been launched in Tin Shui Wai in October 2006 and will run till September 2008. Up to end-August 2007, there were 74 participants in the district. By engaging the participants in appropriate and targeted employment assistance services, the Project helps them overcome their employment difficulties, re-enter the labour market and achieve self-reliance as early as possible.

Employment Services and Facilities in Tin Shui Wai

38. Apart from the provision of comprehensive employment services and job-searching facilities in the nearby Yuen Long Job Centre (YLJC), the Labour Department (LD) has installed three touch-screen Vacancy Search Terminals (VSTs) in Tin Shui Wai (viz. Tin Shui Community Centre, Tin Shui Wai North Social Security Field Unit and Tin Shui Wai South Social Security Field Unit) to facilitate residents in searching updated vacancy information conveniently. LD is planning to install an additional VST in Tin Ching Community Hall which will be newly opened for public use in November 2007. Moreover, job seekers residing in Tin Shui Wai may also call the Telephone Employment Service Hotline 2969 0888 for job referral service, without the need to visit the job centre for assistance.

39. In addition to organising district-based job fairs regularly in YLJC, LD also stages large-scale job fairs in Tin Shui Wai. A job fair was just conducted in Tin Yiu Community Centre on 16 October 2007, attracting 18 employers with 1 377 job openings, most of which were local vacancies. The event recorded a total of 2 450 visitors and 122 job offers on the spot.

Support Services for Children and Young People in Disadvantaged Circumstances

(i) Youth Services

40. As Tin Shui Wai is a newly developed community with a relatively high juvenile crime rate, SWD provided in 2005 additional resources to strengthen the Community Support Service Scheme (CSSS) teams (by increasing seven social workers) and the overnight outreaching social work service in Yuen Long (by increasing five social workers). Subsequently, SWD allocated further new resources to set up an additional Integrated Children and Youth Services Centre (ICYSC) in Tin Shui Wai on top of the eight existing ICYSCs/Children and Youth Centre to meet the strong service demand of young people and their parents in the district. This centre came into operation in June 2007. Another new ICYSC is expected to come into operation in Tin Shui Wai at the end of 2008. Besides, by end-2007, a centre for providing multi-media training to youth will also start to provide service.

(ii) District Support Scheme for Children and Youth Development

41. Since 2005-06, YLDSWO has been allocated an annual provision of \$1.5 million to implement the “District Support Scheme for Children and Youth Development” (the Scheme). With the aim of helping the children and youth in disadvantaged circumstances in the district to satisfy their personal developmental needs, the Scheme offers support to them in areas not covered by the mainstream education system, other funds and financial assistance. The Scheme aims to satisfy their needs on learning and education, job skills training and employment, as well as life experience and potential development. The provision is used to subsidise individual developmental projects, and distributed as direct

cash assistance. From 2005-06 to 2006-07, the Scheme has subsidised 18 projects and distributed over \$1.8 million worth of cash assistance to more than 1 300 beneficiaries. More than 5 000 children and youth have participated in the developmental projects and benefited from the cash assistance.

Enhancing Elderly Service

42. Though a young community, Tin Shui Wai has seen a constant increase in the demand for elderly services as its population grows. Currently, there are three Neighbourhood Elderly Centres, a District Elderly Community Centre (DECC), a Support Team for the Elderly, a Day Care Centre for the Elderly, five home-based community care service teams, and two subvented Residential Care Homes for the Elderly (RCHEs) providing elderly services in Tin Shui Wai. SWD will provide a new DECC and a contract RCHE with about 70 subsidised residential care places cum a 20-place Day Care Unit for the Elderly in Tin Shui Wai North in early 2008.

(D) Publicity and Promotion of Service Information

43. To enhance the understanding of Tin Shui Wai and Yuen Long residents of the services/resources available in the district and encourage them to make good use of such services/resources, YLDSWO has spared no effort in publicising and promoting service information through various channels, and promoting the concepts of strengthening family cohesion and combating violence. In addition to the publicity and promotion through the usual medium of posters, banners and newspaper features, it also promotes via other channels, including display of the phone numbers of service units that serve the residents of a particular public housing block by running texts on the LCD screens in the lobby of the respective block; making use of the district's business network (e.g., shopping malls, major chain stores, supermarkets and convenience stores) to distribute the Social Service Info Express so that residents can obtain district information at all times; creating the "Social Service One-stop Web" on-line platform at the district website to regularly disseminate the latest social service information; publication of the "Yuen Long District Social Services Information Booklet" with a "Question-and-Answer"

section on service information closely related to the residents' daily living, training social workers of various disciplines, estate management office staff and assistants to District Council members to become Social Service Information Ambassadors to promptly answer residents' enquiries on social service; as well as creating hyperlinks to the SWD website and the "Social Service One-stop Web" on the homepages of secondary and primary schools, putting up the latest promotion banners on "Family Harmony" on the fences or external walls of schools, and placing service information leaflets in school campus.

(E) Promoting Neighbourhood Support and Family Harmony Through Community Building

44. In promoting a caring community and a mutually supportive neighbourhood, the Mutual Aid Committees (MACs) play an important role in assisting residents to build a neighbourhood mutual help network. Over the past two years, Yuen Long District Office has set up more than 40 MACs in Tin Shui Wai. At present, there are a total of 82 MACs in the district.

45. Yuen Long District Office, Yuen Long District Council and YLDSWO, with staunch support by various government departments, such as the Labour Department and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, NGOs, business associations and local organisations in the district and funding provided by Yuen Long District Council, have organised a variety of district activities under different themes since 2004 to promote the message of family harmony, neighbourhood support and a positive life. The major district activities include assisting MACs to set up volunteer teams, organising caring visits and providing other volunteer services, promoting social service information, organising parenting education activities and job recruitment sessions, etc. In addition, a series of community building functions, including "Model Neighbour Competition", "Getting to know our Neighbours", "Tin Shui Wai Neighbourhood Mutual Help Scheme", "Neighbourhood Support Project", sharing sessions on "Building a Caring and Mutual Support Network at the Neighbour Level" have also been held to promote harmonious and caring neighbourhood. Related work carried out during this year include volunteer training, home visits, mobile game van for children and drama

performance by professional theatre companies, the goal of which is to forge a closer link amongst residents in the district by promoting mutual help and love.

46. Given that Tin Shui Wai is located in a remote area, the family support network of residents is generally weaker. In this connection, apart from providing general welfare services, social welfare organisations and local bodies have taken forward a number of social networking projects in Tin Shui Wai over the past few years with funding from the Community Inclusion and Investment Fund (CIIF), the Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged (PFD) and/or other funding resources including their own funding (e.g. Community Chest). These projects assist families in Tin Shui Wai to strengthen individual and family functioning, relieve family stress and encourage residents to build up mutual care and support networks. Examples of these projects include “Weaving Community Networks with Hope in Yuet & Yan Estates”, “Developing Family Mediation Ambassadors”, “Tuen Mun and Tin Shui Wai Districts Community Support Programme”, “Network Building in Tin Hang Estate” and “Awakening Soul - Tin Shui Wai Women Emotional and Mental Health Networking Project”. At present, the CIIF has funded 11 projects in the district, involving funding of over \$7 million, while the PFD has supported eight projects at a total cost of \$2.6 million.

47. To coordinate the implementation of the above projects, YLDSWO has tendered advice and offered assistance to organisations when formulating and implementing the projects, and held exchange sessions to facilitate communication and cooperation amongst organisations, with a view to making the best use of resources and providing services that can best suit the needs of families and the district.

(F) Basic and Professional Training

48. YLDSWO has been proactively providing advice, support and various levels of training on the procedures and skills for identifying and handling family problems (including domestic violence) for frontline workers from different sectors and service units. The targets include social workers, teachers, guidance personnel, District Council members

and their assistants, religious groups and estate management office staff, etc. Since 2005, YLDSWO has organised 16 training courses, including basic training and professional training on the prevention of domestic violence, such as the “Workshop on Understanding and Handling Neurosis and Mental Illness from the Family Perspective”, “Identification of Domestic Violence and Referrals for Services”, “Crisis Intervention for Domestic Violence – The Experience Sharing of Police Negotiators”, “Social Security and Housing Policy Relating to Social Welfare”, “Ordinances Relating to Divorce and Domestic Violence” and “Handling Family Conflicts with Casework Counselling”. Starting from November this year, YLDSWO will run a series of training courses on understanding domestic violence, including “Workshop on Handling Child Sexual Abuse”, “Workshop on Understanding Internet Sexual Offences” and “Workshop on Handling Suspected Child Abuse Cases”. In addition, YLDSWO is organising another training course on the handling of mental health cases. YLDSWO also invites experts to conduct seminars in the secondary/primary schools and kindergartens in the district every year.

49. In addition to the training courses regularly organised by District Social Welfare Offices, SWD Headquarters has also commissioned the University of Hong Kong to carry out a basic training programme, namely, the Training Programme on Understanding of Family Violence. The relevant training programme in Yuen Long was held in January 2006, where a two-day course was provided for some 650 frontline workers, professionals and local stakeholders. The handling procedures of the Police and the multi-disciplinary co-operation model were also explained to the participants.

Other Issues of Concern

50. There have been some discussions recently on SWD’s hotline service and case management approach, calling for service improvement and enhancement.

Hotline Service

51. Regarding the hotline service, SWD is always concerned with the service demand of individuals or families in need, and with meeting

such demand timely. The SWD hotline (2343 2255) and the Family Crisis Hotline of the Caritas (18288) subvented by SWD, seek to provide immediate counselling and support over the phone for those in need. In addition, other NGOs also provide hotline service, such as the 24-hour hotline operated by the CEASE Crisis Centre of Tung Wah Group of Hospitals (18281) funded by the Lotteries Fund and the 24-hour “Suicide Prevention Hotline” of the Samaritan Befrienders Hong Kong (2389 2222), to help those with emotional problems or with other needs.

52. SWD will allocate additional resources to further strengthen the manpower of hotline service between 10 p.m. and 9 a.m., so as to provide timely assistance to those in need. Furthermore, SWD is upgrading its own hotline system, including the revamping of the call flow to diversify calls with various nature more effectively such that the calls requiring counselling from social workers can be handled as soon as possible. Such enhancement project is expected to complete in November this year. On the other hand, SWD is studying the feasibility of streaming calls on welfare service enquiries to the “1823 Integrated Call Centre” so that social workers of the SWD hotline can focus on handling calls that require counselling, and more timely intervention services can be provided for the individuals and families in crisis. Such arrangement is expected to be implemented in early 2008.

Case Management

53. In terms of case management, the welfare sector currently does not have a consensus view on the definition of “case manager” and “key worker”. When handling family cases, social workers mainly adopt the principle of “one family one worker” to serve the whole family in need. If more than one social worker is involved in the case, one of them will take up the role as the key worker, responsible for liaising with all other social workers concerned and co-ordinating the services provided to ensure that the needs of recipient families can be fully addressed. For more complicated cases, such as child abuse, spouse battering and elder abuse cases, the key worker will take into account the recipient families’ needs and co-ordinate with other disciplines to convene a Multi-disciplinary Case Conference, with a view to assessing their needs from different perspectives and devising follow-up plans for them.

CONCLUSION

54. With the concerted effort of various government departments, Yuen Long District Council, NGOs, local organisations and residents of the district in the past few years, we have made some headway in improving the community facilities and welfare service in Tin Shui Wai and strengthening cross-sectoral collaboration. The Government will continue to promote cross-sectoral collaboration in the district, with emphasis on establishing and reinforcing community network, and promoting the spirit of “self-help, helping others”, to further enhance the services and support for Tin Shui Wai.

Labour and Welfare Bureau
Social Welfare Department
Home Affairs Department
Hospital Authority
October 2007

Annex**Services in Tin Shui Wai****I. Additional Service Units (since April 2004) :**

Service Type	Existing no. of service unit (4/2004)	No. of New service/unit	Operation Date of New Service
<i>Support Services for Families :</i>			
Integrate Family Service Centre	2	1	10/2004
Family and Child Protective Services Unit	Note 1	1	4/2005
Child Care Centre Kindergarten-cum-Child Care Centre	12	1	9/2005
Mutual Help Child Care Centre #	2	1	11/2006
Family, Women and Employment Centre (Family Education and Support Centre) #	0	1	3/2007
<i>Support Services for Youth :</i>			
Integrated Service Centre (Teen S' World) #	0	1	5/2007
Integrated Children and Youth Services Centre/ Children and Youth Centre	8	1	6/2007
<i>Social Security Service :</i>			
Social Security Field Unit	1	1	4/2006
<i>Rehabilitation Service :</i>			
Community Mental Health Care Services	0	1	10/2005
Integrated Rehabilitation Centre	0	1	3/2006
Community Rehabilitation Day Services	0	1*	10/2006
Community Mental Health Intervention Project	0	1	10/2007

II. Planned Service Items (since October 2007) :

Service Type	Existing no. of service unit (10/2007)	No. of new service/unit	Planned operation date of new service
Creative Media Training Centre for Youth [#]	0	1	Late 2007
Clinical Psychology Unit	Note 2	1	Early 2008
Special Child Care Centre/Early Education and Training Centre	2 [▲]	1 [▲]	Early 2008
District Elderly Community Centre	1 [▲]	1	Early 2008
Care and Attention Home for the Elderly	2	1	Early 2008
Integrated Children and Youth Services Centre/ Children and Youth Centre	9	1	Late 2008

Note 1 : Family and Child Protective Services Unit (New Territories West) and Family and Child Protective Services Unit (New Territories West) [offices at Shatin and Tsuen Wan districts respectively] provided service for Tin Shui Wai and Yuen Long

Note 2 : Clinical Psychology Unit (2) [office at Tai Po district] provided service for Tin Shui Wai and Yuen Long

: Self-financing service

* : Centre is situated at Tuen Mun and provides service for Tin Shui Wai and Yuen Long inclusively

▲ : Centre is situated at Yuen Long town and provides service for Tin Shui Wai and Yuen Long