

政府總部
勞工及福利局
香港金鐘添美道
政府總部



LABOUR AND WELFARE BUREAU
GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT

Central Government Offices
Tim Mei Avenue
Admiralty, Hong Kong

本函檔號 **Our Ref.:** L/M to LWB CR 1/3281/01

電話號碼 Tel No. : 2810 2290

來函檔號 **Your Ref.:**

傳真號碼 Fax No. : 2501 0478

26 June 2014

Mr Colin CHUI
Clerk to Panel on Welfare Services,
Legislative Council Complex,
1 Legislative Council Road,
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Mr CHUI,

Handling of Urgent Domestic Violence Cases

As requested by the Honorable TANG Ka-piu, we provide herewith an information note on the handling of urgent domestic violence cases by the Government.

Your sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Winnie Chan', written in a cursive style.

(Winnie CHAN)
for Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Handling of Urgent Domestic Violence Cases

The Government does not tolerate domestic violence, and has adopted a cross-disciplinary model and a multi-pronged strategy to tackle domestic violence. A co-ordination mechanism, with relevant procedures, is in place to facilitate the Hong Kong Police Force (the Police) and the Social Welfare Department (SWD) to timely intervene in domestic violence cases round-the-clock in order to stop the batterers' abusive behaviour and provide necessary support to the victims and their families.

Handling of domestic violence cases by the Police

2. The Police have promulgated an effective set of policies and procedures to assist frontline officers in dealing with domestic violence cases. An officer of Sergeant rank or above will attend the scene upon receipt of a domestic violence report to ensure that the case is carefully handled. Police officers will make reference to an "emergency referral questionnaire" and an "action list" in assessing the risks of the case prior to taking appropriate actions. Where appropriate, police officers will also check against the Enhanced Central Domestic Violence Database, which contains a checklist of domestic violence indicators and details of relevant previous case(s), in order to assess the risks of continuation and recurrence of domestic violence in the family concerned.
3. Based on the results of the assessment, the Police will take suitable actions to minimise the risks, e.g. detaining the offender under appropriate circumstances, and / or arranging safe accommodation for the victim, etc. A 24-hour direct referral line has been set up between the Police and SWD. If the preliminary risk assessment indicates that the victim and the family concerned require immediate support services, the Police will promptly contact SWD through that direct referral line for making necessary arrangement.
4. The Police will refer a high-risk domestic violence case (e.g. a case which tends to have a high likelihood of recurrence) to SWD irrespective of whether the victim agrees to the referral or not. For a lower risk case, the Police will refer the case to SWD subject to the victim's consent. Even if the victim does not agree to the referral, he / she will be given a "Family Support Service Information Card" so that he / she may contact the relevant service agencies when appropriate.

Support services provided by SWD

5. SWD has been providing a wide range of services for victims of domestic violence to help them tide over the difficult period, overcome the trauma associated with violence and restore the normal functioning of their families. If immediate intervention is needed in an urgent domestic violence case, SWD will provide counselling, support and advice by social workers to the individuals / family in need and arrange appropriate follow-up services through its 24-hour hotline services. The five refuge centres for women, the Multi-purpose Crisis Intervention and Support Centre and the Family Crisis Support Centre also provide 24-hour hotline services for victims of domestic violence and their families. If necessary, social workers will provide outreach service for the victims of domestic violence round-the-clock.

6. Individuals and families subject to domestic violence can seek temporary accommodation at the refuge centres for women and the support centres as mentioned in paragraph 5 above. These centres offer urgent placements to individuals and families in need round-the-clock (even at late night) when they are approached by the Police, social workers or by the victims themselves.

Co-ordination and referral mechanism

7. SWD has held regular meetings with other departments (including the Police) and non-governmental organisations at the central and district levels to map out the strategies and co-ordinate the service provision to tackle the problem of domestic violence in Hong Kong. With the advice of relevant stakeholders, SWD has drawn up the “Procedural Guide for Handling Child Abuse Cases” and the “Procedural Guide for Handling Intimate Partner Violence Cases” for reference by front-line professionals, thus facilitating them in handling cases of child abuse and spouse / cohabitant battering in a professional and effective manner.

8. The Police have been working closely with SWD in combating domestic violence at the frontline operational level. As mentioned above, a referral mechanism for domestic violence cases between the Police and SWD has been established so that the Police can refer domestic violence cases to SWD promptly for crisis intervention, counselling and other assistance. In handling urgent and high-risk domestic violence cases, the Police can also seek social workers’ professional advice and assistance, or refer urgent cases to social workers through the 24-hour direct referral line as mentioned in paragraph 3

above. If necessary, the social workers may, together with the Police, provide the outreach service as mentioned in paragraph 5 above at any time (including late night) to handle crisis situation.

**Hong Kong Police Force
Social Welfare Department
Labour and Welfare Bureau
June 2014**