

Panel on Welfare Services

**Subcommittee on Strategy and Measures to
Tackle Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence**

**Summary of views and concerns on the shelter service for victims of
domestic violence and sexual violence raised by deputations
at the meeting on 9 February 2015**

- (a) in view of the over-utilisation of the five refuge centres for women and crisis centres, the Administration should consider expanding the service capacity of the existing refuge centres or increasing the provision of short-term residential places for victims of domestic violence and sexual violence and their families. Additional resources should also be provided for these refuge centres and crisis centres to enhance the related manpower and support services as well as after-care service for discharged residents;
- (b) as those admitted to a refuge centre might generally stay for two weeks, the extended stay of service users at the refuge shelters had aggravated the problem of inadequate provision of temporary accommodation service. To this end, the departments concerned should speed up the processing of applications for compassionate rehousing / conditional tenancy and household splitting for allocation of public rental housing flats to individuals and families facing domestic violence and enhance the transparency in the procedures for handling these applications, so that residential places in refuge shelters could be released earlier for those in need;
- (c) some deputations pointed out that the scope of services and provision of facilities were inconsistent among different refuge centres. There was a view that the refuge centres should provide their service users with one-stop services (in particular emotional support and temporary child care service for women and their children taking refuge) and after-care service for discharged residents. Staff of these shelters should also exercise flexibility in governing the use of facilities by service users having regard to the undue hardships and specific needs of individual service users;
- (d) dedicated refuge centres should be provided for different groups of victims suffering from domestic or sexual violence, such as the elderly, people with mental health problems, sexual minorities and

ethnic minorities, such that specific support services could be provided for these people to cater for their special needs on the one hand and mitigate the problem of over-utilisation of the existing refuge centres for women and crisis centres on the other hand; and

- (e) the Police should step up patrols in the vicinity of refuge centres to prevent those women and their children taking refuge from being harassed by the batterers.

Council Business Division 2
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