

香港特別行政區政府  
保安局



The Government of the  
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region  
Security Bureau

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9 April 2018

Miss Betty MA  
Clerk to Panel on Security  
Legislative Council  
Legislative Council Complex  
1 Legislative Council Road  
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Miss MA,

**The Hong Kong Police Force's training  
on the handling of persons suspected to suffer from autism**

Thank you for your letter to the Secretary for Security dated 7 March. Having consulted the Hong Kong Police Force ("HKPF"), we reply as follows.

When patrolling in Sham Shui Po in the afternoon of 27 February this year, police officers saw a woman running after a boy on the street. During police investigation of the two persons, the 15-year-old boy became emotionally agitated. While contacting his family members to come to the scene for assistance, police officers brought the boy onto the police vehicle to try to comfort him and stabilise his emotions. Subsequently, the Police assisted the boy and his family members to go home.

The HKPF have all along attached great importance to safeguarding the rights of mentally incapacitated persons ("MIPs") (including autistic persons), and will ensure that persons in need of police assistance are treated with respect and fairness. In June 2015, the



Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services (“Panel”) discussed procedures of law enforcement agencies (“LEAs”) in handling disabled persons or persons with special needs (including MIPs), and the support relating to legal matters provided to them under the social welfare system. At the meeting, representatives of different disciplined services and other departments responded to members’ enquiries from the security, healthcare and rehabilitation perspectives. The HKPF also provided members with post-meeting information as requested.

To enhance the Police’s services for MIPs and strengthen police officers’ awareness and professional sensitivity in handling MIPs, the HKPF have established in mid-2015 the Working Group to Review the Care of Mentally Incapacitated Persons (“WG”), which was chaired by the Assistant Commissioner of Police, to review and formulate internal working procedures taking into account of the needs of MIPs. During the review, the WG worked with the Social Welfare Department (“SWD”), non-governmental organisations (“NGOs”), parents’ groups and various stakeholders, adopted views from medical experts in related fields, and drew reference from relevant experience of overseas LEAs. Based on the recommendations of the WG, the HKPF eventually introduced in 2016 a package of new initiatives to enhance protection for MIPs, including the Care Card Scheme, Behavioural Indicators Guide and Notice to Appropriate Adult.

In November 2016, the HKPF provided a paper (LC Paper No. CB(2)225/16-17(01)) to inform the Panel on the improvement initiatives for MIPs as recommended by the WG. A dedicated webpage has also been launched at the police website ([www.police.gov.hk/mip](http://www.police.gov.hk/mip)) to provide the public with detailed information. Such initiatives are highlighted below:

#### *Care Card Scheme*

The concept of the care card is to allow persons with special needs (or their relatives) to record their medical and communication needs, as well as emergency contacts on care cards to be carried by them on a voluntary basis, based upon which LEA officers may identify their special needs soon enough under permitted circumstances and promptly



inform their relatives to render assistance in case of emergency. Care cards are available at reporting rooms of police stations, SWD's medical social service units, integrated family services centres and relevant social welfare organisations as well as parents' groups. This initiative has also been promoted among persons with special needs through the above stakeholders. A copy of the care card is at **Annex A**.

### *Behavioural Indicator Guide*

Having regard to the views from experts as psychiatric consultants and police clinical psychologists on common behavioural characteristics of persons with psychotic symptoms and the communication skills required, the WG devised a behavioural indicator guide to assist police officers to identify MIPs, so as to enhance their alertness and enable them to promptly render appropriate service to MIPs under permitted circumstances. The guide elaborates on the common characteristics of MIPs and categorises such characteristics into personal circumstances, behavioural indicators and conversational indicators, and includes a broad range of guidance on effective communication with MIPs. The HKPF has distributed the guide to all police officers for helping them render service to MIPs. A copy of the guide is at **Annex B**.

### *Notice to Appropriate Adult*

Currently, the Police require that statement-taking involving MIPs and their participation in such investigation procedures as identification parades must be conducted in the company of at least one appropriate adult, who may be the MIP's relative, social worker, etc. As a further protection to MIPs, appropriate adults will be given a Notice to Appropriate Adult to ensure that they fully understand their roles and responsibilities. A copy of the notice is at **Annex C**.

Regarding the above initiatives, the Police have provided comprehensive training to all regular, auxiliary and civilian members of the HKPF. Apart from incorporating relevant training into the Probationary Inspector Course, Recruit Police Constable Training Course, Police Constable Development Course, Sergeant and Station Sergeant Promotion Course, Standard Criminal Investigation Course and Advanced



Criminal Investigation Course, the HKPF have held thematic talks for frontline police officers and released a training day package on “Handling Mentally Incapacitated Persons” to enable sufficient understanding of the initiatives among police officers.

Recognising the importance of multi-agency collaboration, the HKPF have been working with organisations of relevant sectors and strive to protect the rights of MIPs and provide them with proper assistance and care. In addition to inviting relevant experts, social workers and related individuals to share experience with frontline police officers, the HKPF offer opinions and recommendations to concern groups of MIPs. For example, the HKPF provided recommendations to the Equal Opportunities Commission (“EOC”) before the latter published the guidebook entitled “Autism: A Guide for Law Enforcement Officers Communicating with Persons with Autism Spectrum Disorders” in 2016. The recommendations provided by the HKPF tally with the EOC’s final guiding approach, both of which are useful in enhancing frontline officers’ protection to people with special needs.

Separately, the HKPF have invited relevant parents’ groups to attend training days of various police districts for sharing with frontline police officers their skills and experience in communicating with MIPs, held thematic sharing sessions with NGOs and self-help groups, conducted crime prevention talks, as well as arranged for related individuals, parents’ groups and organisations concerned to visit police stations and participate in activities conducted by the Police for strengthening mutual understanding and collaborative relationship.

The HKPF will continue to adopt the current multi-agency approach to maintain communication with relevant departments and organisations for the exchange of views on related issues.

Yours sincerely,

(Andrew TSANG)  
for Secretary for Security



# Care Card Scheme

## Service Target and Objective

The Care Card Scheme aims at allowing law-enforcement officers to identify mentally incapacitated persons (including persons with intellectual disabilities and autism) as early as possible, and be aware of their medical and communication needs and ways to contact their relatives.

# 守護咭 計劃

## 服務對象及目的

「守護咭」計劃旨在使執法人員能及早識別精神上無行為能力的人士，包括智障及自閉症患者，並知悉其醫療和溝通上的需要，以及其親屬的聯絡方法。

請填妥背頁資料，並撕出放在身上。  
Please fill in the form at the back, tear it off and carry it along with you.

## 計劃概念

「守護咭」的概念是讓有需要人士自願填寫其醫療需要、溝通需要、緊急聯絡人以及其聯絡方法，並可隨身攜帶該咭。當有關人士在沒有親友陪同下遇上緊急情況，如迷路、意外受傷、為刑事案件的受害者、或被執法人員調查時，執法人員可透過「守護咭」及早知悉持咭人的醫療及溝通需要，並通知其親友提供協助。

TotalCaring Award 2006/07  
全面關懷大獎 2006/07  
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The Hong Kong Police. We Serve with Pride and Care.

10 years +  
開心與關懷  
caringorganisation  
Awarded by The Hong Kong Police Force

## The Purpose

The Care Card is to let those in need have their medical and communication needs and emergency contacts available. They can carry the card in case of an emergency e.g. getting lost, being injured accidentally or being victimized in a crime. Furthermore, if they are subject to an enquiry by law-enforcement officers, but are not accompanied by any friends or relatives, the law-enforcement officers can become aware of their medical and communication needs, and inform their friends and / or relatives to render assistance.

我的名字是 \_\_\_\_\_ 男 ☐ Male 女 ☐ Female  
My name is : \_\_\_\_\_

我的緊急聯絡人是 \_\_\_\_\_  
My emergency contact: \_\_\_\_\_

他/她的電話號碼是 \_\_\_\_\_  
His/her contact no.: \_\_\_\_\_

我有這些殘疾 \_\_\_\_\_  
My illness/disability: \_\_\_\_\_

我的藥物及醫療需要 \_\_\_\_\_  
My medication and medical needs are: \_\_\_\_\_

我的行為特徵和溝通需要 \_\_\_\_\_  
My behavioural characteristics and communication needs are: \_\_\_\_\_

TotalCaring Award 2006/07  
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The Hong Kong Police. We Serve with Pride and Care.

Illustrated by Police Painting and Calligraphy Club

守護咭  
Care Card



## **BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS GUIDE**

### **A Quick Tool to Identify Mentally Incapacitated Persons**

According to the Mental Health Ordinance Cap. 136, a mentally incapacitated person (MIP) refers to a person who is (a) suffering from mental disorder; or (b) being mentally handicapped. Some commonly encountered MIPs include those with autism, schizophrenia, dementia or mild mental retardation. They are a vulnerable group of people who need our care, respect and patience when dealing with them. Below are some of the simple indicators that can help you identify a MIP:

#### **Search for Behavioural Indicators**

##### **Personal Circumstances:**

- Place of Education (e.g. special school)
- Employment (e.g. sheltered workshop)
- Nature of residence (e.g. hostel for mentally incapacitated person)
- Some intellectually disabled or mentally ill persons may carry
  - ★ Registration cards for persons with disabilities or
  - ★ Medical appointment cards or hospital bracelets
- Medication carried by the person

##### **Behavioural:**

- Sign of hallucination and delusion (e.g. superman delusion)
- Socially inappropriate behaviours (e.g. giggling, yelling, being aggressive, inappropriate laughter, odd hand gestures)
- Disorientation (e.g. confused about time, place and person's identity)
- Rapid change of mood (e.g. being angry at one moment and becoming excited at another)
- Poor eye contact (e.g. avoid eye contact or look blank)
- Age-inappropriate behaviour (e.g. appear too childish, over affectionate, withdrawn)
- Poor personal hygiene

##### **Conversational:**

- Non-responsive
- Disorganized conversation (e.g. only brief answers, slurring, meaningless content, jumping from topic to topic)
- Incoherent conversation (e.g. provide answer irrelevant to the question asked)
- Repeat the last few words of what someone has just said (parrot talk / echolalia)
- Socially inappropriate tone (e.g. speak in odd tones, make funny sound)

**\*\*Please note that each MIP may present with very different characteristics and thus identification is sometimes difficult. You should handle with care if any of the above indicators are observed. In case of any doubt as to whether the subject is a MIP, officers should treat him/her as a MIP and initiate MIP handling procedures, or contact the Regional Child Abuse Investigation Unit (CAIU) for assistance.**



## **Tips on Effective Communication with a MIP**

### Things to Consider

- ☐ Conduct the interview as soon as possible
- ☐ Respect the subject as an adult
- ☐ Reduce the stress of the subject
- ☐ Allow the subject to finish his sentence or tasks in hand before communication
- ☐ Get the subject's attention before talking
- ☐ Use concise sentence, one matter per question
- ☐ Use simple languages
- ☐ Speak slowly
- ☐ Use body language, photos or other aids to facilitate communication
- ☐ Appropriately use open ended questions
- ☐ Clarify their meaning, use their language
- ☐ Allow slow or no response towards instructions or questions
- ☐ Address their physical needs, e.g. eating or drinking / using the toilet

### Things to Avoid

- ☐ Treat the subject as a 'child'
- ☐ Conduct the interview in an environment with distractions
- ☐ Speak in a loud voice
- ☐ Use long and complicated questions
- ☐ Suggest to the subject what you guess in respect of a particular detail of an incident and press the subject to say "yes" or "no" to your suggestion
- ☐ Push for an answer
- ☐ Infer a meaning from the subject's response





# NOTICE TO 'APPROPRIATE ADULT' FOR PERSON ASSISTING/UNDER POLICE ENQUIRY/IN POLICE CUSTODY WHO IS MENTALLY INCAPACITATED OR AGED UNDER 16

Please read the following information and keep it for reference.

1. **You are present as an appropriate adult to provide support to a person involved in police enquiries who is:**
  - aged under 16; or
  - mentally incapacitated.
2. **As an appropriate adult, if applicable, you should read the 'Notice to Persons in Police Custody or Involved in Police Enquiries' (Pol. 153) to know and understand their rights. You will be asked to countersign to acknowledge the service of a copy of the Notice to the person under police enquiry.**
3. **You will be asked to accompany the person assisting/under police enquiry during these occasions:**
  - police interview, including statement taking;
  - an identification parade;
  - the provision of an intimate body sample for forensic analysis;
  - the body search by police prior to detention in a police detention facility (only if the appropriate adult is of the same gender); and
  - the formal charging by police.
4. **Your role as an appropriate adult is to:**
  - provide emotional support and assistance to the person assisting/under police enquiry. You may inform the police the welfare matters related to the person;
  - help the person understand his / her rights;
  - act as a witness to observe whether any police interview / investigative procedure is being conducted fairly;
  - inform police of his / her medication and medical needs, if any; and
  - facilitate communication between police and the person assisting/under police enquiry, including inform police of his / her communication needs, if any.
5. **During police investigation, you will be asked to sign the written interview record. Before signing the written interview record, you should read the statement and satisfy yourself that the statement accurately records the questions asked and answers given. You are not required to confirm the authenticity of the content of the statement. After the interview, the Police will provide a copy of the statement to the interviewee.**
6. **You should not:**
  - provide answers on behalf of the person assisting/under police enquiry; or
  - interfere with police interview or enquiry other than in the performance of your role as an appropriate adult.

*Note:*

- Original of this Notice is to be retained by the OC Case as case property.

Formation/Ref. No.	:	_____
Issuing Officer	:	_____
Interpreter (if any)	:	_____
Language / Dialect	:	_____
Date & Time of Issue	:	_____
Name of Person Assisting/under Police Enquiry/ in Police Custody	:	_____
Name of Appropriate Adult	:	_____
Identification Document No. of Appropriate Adult / Staff No. of Social Worker	:	_____
Remark (if any)	:	_____

\*I have read / Police has read over to me the above paragraphs and acknowledge receipt of a copy of this Notice at ..... (hours) on ..... (Date).

(Appropriate Adult)

(Interpreter, if any)

(Issuing Officer)

\* Delete as appropriate