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LABOUR AND WELFARE BUREAU
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5 June 2018

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

Dear Mr CHUI,

**Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services
Follow-up Action for Meeting on 9 April 2018**

At the meeting of the Panel on Welfare Services on 9 April 2018, the Administration was requested to provide the following information –

- (a) conduct an analysis on domestic violence cases and provide information on the number and nature of the cases, the reasons for domestic violence, the average service hours per case, the changes in the caseload of frontline social workers, the actions the Administration would take to tackle domestic violence, etc.;
- (b) (i) the number of cases referred by the Maternal and Child Health Centres of the Health Department to Social Welfare Department (SWD); (ii) the number of home visits conducted by case social workers to the families concerned; and (iii) the number of cases in which the case social workers were able to get in touch with the parents concerned for follow up actions and the background of these cases;
- (c) the number of domestic violence cases which had been re-categorized by Hong Kong Police Force (the Police) and the details of the re-categorization;

- (d) the existing number of volunteers of the Family Support Programme and the target number of children to be served by the enhanced Educational Programme on Stopping Domestic Violence; and
- (e) details of the additional resources allocated to Integrated Family Service Centres ("IFSCs") and Family and Child Protective Services Units ("FCPSUs").

Having consulted SWD and the Police, we provide the requested information as follows -

- (a) According to the information in the Child Protection Registry, and the Central Information System on Spouse/Cohabitant Battering Cases and Sexual Violence Cases of SWD, the number of newly reported cases and the analysis from 2015 to 2017 are at **Annexes I and II**.

The numbers of newly reported child abuse cases from 2015 to 2017 were 874, 892 and 947 respectively. Among the child abuse cases, there were more girls than boys being the victims of abuse. Regarding the cases with boys as the victims, most of the cases were of physical abuse in nature whereas for the cases with girls as the victims, most of the cases were of sexual abuse. Most of the abusers were parents of the victims. In 2017, the district with the highest number of child abuse incidents was Yuen Long, followed by Kwun Tong and Tuen Mun. Incompetence in child rearing/lack of parenting skills was the major contributing factor of abuse, followed by emotional/psychological problem.

The number of newly reported Spouse/Cohabitant Battering Cases and Sexual Violence Cases from 2015 to 2017 were 3 382, 3 321 and 3 128 respectively. There were more female than male victims. The highest number of spouse/cohabitant battering cases involves physical violence, followed by psychological abuse. Over 70% of the perpetrators were spouses of the victims. In 2017, the district having the highest number of victims habitually residing at the time of the abuse was Yuen Long, followed by Sha Tin, Kwai Tsing and Kwun Tong. A number of perpetrators had alcoholism, indulgence in gambling, psychiatric illness, drug abuse and unsustainable indebtedness. Among them, more male perpetrators had alcoholism and more female perpetrators had psychiatric illness.

Currently, there are 167 frontline social workers in FCPSUs. The average caseload per worker was 44 cases in 2008-09. It has gradually been reduced to 27 cases from 2015-16 to 2017-18. As domestic violence problem involves complicated family and personal

factors and the time required for handling each case is different, SWD does not have the average processing time of each case handled by social workers.

Domestic violence is a complex social problem. Tackling domestic violence effectively requires close collaboration among various sectors and professionals in the community. To this end, the Government has adopted a multi-disciplinary model as well as a multi-pronged intervention approach to tackle domestic violence and to support the victims and their families.

- (b) The Government attaches great importance to the well-being of parents and children, and provides services to children in need and their families. In 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18 (up to December 2017), Maternal and Child Health Centres made 2 335, 2 358 and 1 659 referrals to IFSCs/Integrated Services Centers (ISCs) for follow-up services respectively.

All the referrals received will be followed up accordingly. Social workers at IFSCs/ISCs will use different means, including face-to-face interviews, home visits, etc. to contact the families, parents/carers. They will thoroughly assess the needs and problems of the families and provide appropriate services to them. SWD does not keep the information of the number of home visits conducted, number of cases on which the social workers were able to get in touch with the parents and background of these cases.

- (c) According to information of the Police, the number of Domestic Conflict Reports between 2015 and 2017 is tabulated as follows:

	2015	2016	2017
Domestic Violence (Crime)	1 464	1 509	1 394
Domestic Violence (Miscellaneous)	548	495	449
Domestic Incidents	11 733	11 306	10 642
<u>Domestic Conflict Reports*</u>	<u>13 745</u>	<u>13 310</u>	<u>12 485</u>

* Domestic Conflict Reports include Domestic Violence (Crime), Domestic Violence (Miscellaneous) and Domestic Incidents.

In the light of past experience, the Police consider that early identification of families with potential risk with timely intervention and referral to SWD is one of the most effective ways in preventing and handling domestic violence cases. In January 2009, the Police

included the category 'Domestic Incidents' in the 'Enhanced Central Domestic Violence Database' for capturing non-violent incidents and non-criminal cases, such as reports of dispute and requests for police assistance, in order to expand the protection net and to facilitate appropriate risk assessment by investigation officers, and to make timely referrals to SWD where necessary. Cases are classified according to their nature, and are transferred to various formations for follow-up in accordance with established procedures and guidelines. Apart from making timely referrals, police officers will handle and investigate the cases with empathy, professionalism and impartiality irrespective of whether the cases are classified as 'Domestic Incidents', 'Domestic Violence (Miscellaneous) cases' or 'Domestic Violence (Crime) cases.

- (d) For early identification and intervention in families in need which are prone to domestic violence but are not willing to seek help, IFSCs/ISCs, FCPSUs and Medical Social Services Units in the psychiatric setting have implemented the "Family Support Programme". The relevant units recruit and train ex-service users who have experienced similar problems or crises to become volunteers of the "Family Support Programme" to contact those families with a view to building up a caring and supportive community network. A total of 4 565 volunteers had been recruited as family support persons as at end of December 2017. Regarding the enhancement of Educational Programme on Stopping Domestic Violence, the implementation details are yet to be finalised and thus the target number of children to be served is not available yet.
- (e) To further combat domestic violence, in 2018-19, SWD will allocate additional resources to increase the manpower in FCPSUs for strengthening child protection and family support services, including outreach services, counselling and groups. Besides, SWD will also provide resources to enhance the Educational Programme on Stopping Domestic Violence to support children who have witnessed or been exposed to domestic violence and victims of domestic violence, and to help perpetrators and individuals with the risk of using violence to stop their violence in order to protect the children from harm. These two enhanced services involve an additional annual recurrent expenditure of about \$43 million.

Moreover, with a view to having early intervention and enhancing the co-parenting support for separated/divorced parents and their children, the Government will provide additional manpower resources (11 social work officer and 18 supervisory social worker posts) to FCPSUs and IFSCs operated by SWD in 2018-19 respectively.

Additional manpower in FCPSUs is to enable early intervention in cases involving families with violence and to provide pre-separation/divorce counselling and co-parenting services to reduce the impact of separation/divorce on the children. The aim of enhancing the supervisory social worker manpower is to enhance parents' capability to cope with separation/divorce and strengthen family functioning, through district-based co-ordination. They will also arrange related training/sharing for professionals in the districts.

Yours sincerely,



(Huggin TANG)

for Secretary for Labour and Welfare

c.c. Director of Social Welfare (Attn: Mrs CHANG LAM Sook-ye)
Commissioner of the Police (Attn: Ms WONG Sau-ling, Kitty)

Statistical Data of Newly Reported Child Abuse Cases from 2015 to 2017 are tabulated below:

Table 1 Child Abuse Cases by Types of Abuse and by Gender

Types of Abuse	2015		2016		2017	
	Boy	Girl	Boy	Girl	Boy	Girl
Physical Abuse	250 (67.2%)	174 (34.7%)	221 (57.7%)	157 (30.8%)	211 (52.2%)	163 (30.0%)
Neglect	73 (19.6%)	66 (13.1%)	93 (24.3%)	89 (17.5%)	117 (29.0%)	112 (20.6%)
Sexual Abuse	34 (9.1%)	239 (47.6%)	52 (13.6%)	242 (47.5%)	63 (15.6%)	252 (46.4%)
Psychological Abuse	3 (0.8%)	4 (0.8%)	6 (1.6%)	4 (0.8%)	2 (0.5%)	3 (0.6%)
Multiple Abuse	12 (3.2%)	19 (3.8%)	11 (2.9%)	17 (3.3%)	11 (2.7%)	13 (2.4%)
Sub-total	372 (100%)	502 (100%)	383 (100%)	509 (100%)	404 (100%)	543 (100%)
Total	874 (100%)		892 (100%)		947 (100%)	

Table 2 Abuser's Relationship with the Victim

Abuser's Relationship with the Victim	No. of Abusers		
	2015	2016	2017
Parent	548 (60.9%)	534 (58.6%)	568 (59.4%)
Grandparent/Sibling/Relative	35 (3.9%)	49 (5.4%)	41 (4.3%)
Step-parent	41 (4.6%)	46 (5%)	46 (4.8%)
Family Friend/Friend	85 (9.4%)	94 (10.3%)	89 (9.3%)
Caregiver	25 (2.8%)	23 (2.5%)	31 (3.2%)
Teacher/Tutor/Coach	31 (3.4%)	35 (3.8%)	23 (2.4%)
Co-tenant/Neighbour/Unrelated Person	111 (12.3%)	93 (10.2%)	128 (13.4%)
Unidentified Person/Others	24 (2.7%)	37 (4.1%)	31 (3.2%)
Total	900*	911*	957*

*Note: The number of abusers and the number of victims are not the same because one abuser may abuse more than one child and a child may be abused by more than one abuser.

Table 3 Districts Where Incidents Took Place

District \ Year	2015	2016	2017
Central & Western	12 (1.4%)	12 (1.3%)	19 (2.0%)
Southern	18 (2.1%)	28 (3.1%)	25 (2.6%)
Islands	17 (1.9%)	18 (2.0%)	14 (1.5%)
Eastern	29 (3.3%)	35 (3.9%)	36 (3.8%)
Wan Chai	8 (0.9%)	8 (0.9%)	13 (1.4%)
Kowloon City	48 (5.5%)	23 (2.6%)	38 (4.0%)
Yau Tsim Mong	34 (3.9%)	50 (5.6%)	69 (7.3%)
Shamshuipo	46 (5.3%)	42 (4.7%)	59 (6.2%)
Wong Tai Sin	37 (4.2%)	37 (4.1%)	44 (4.6%)
Sai Kung	31 (3.5%)	45 (5.0%)	31 (3.3%)
Kwun Tong	78 (8.9%)	102 (11.4%)	98 (10.3%)
Sha Tin	51 (5.8%)	66 (7.4%)	67 (7.1%)
Tai Po	27 (3.1%)	19 (2.1%)	27 (2.9%)
North	49 (5.6%)	51 (5.7%)	64 (6.8%)
Yuen Long	140 (16.0%)	107 (12.0%)	104 (11.0%)
Tsuen Wan	29 (3.3%)	29 (3.3%)	15 (1.6%)
Kwai Tsing	75 (8.6%)	77 (8.6%)	62 (6.5%)
Tuen Mun	104 (11.9%)	85 (9.5%)	78 (8.2%)
Outside Hong Kong	15 (1.7%)	17 (1.9%)	20 (2.1%)
Unknown	26 (3.0%)	41 (4.6%)	64 (6.8%)
Total	874 (100%)	892 (100%)	947 (100%)

Note : Owing to rounding, percentage may not add up to 100 as shown in the above tables.

Table 4 Major contributing factors of abuse relating to abuser / suspected abuser

	2015	2016	2017
Total number of abusers / suspected abusers	900	911	957
Major contributing factors of abuse relating to abusers / suspected abusers			
Marital problem	168	134	133
In-law relationship problem	28	21	13
Emotional / psychological problem	237	214	230
Mental illness / retardation / Illness / physical disability	93	124	97
Immaturity / extreme self-centredness	44	53	68
Incompetence in child rearing / lack of parenting skills	344	308	305
High expectation on child-in-question	91	64	68
Undesirable hobbies (e.g. gambling, indulgence in alcohol, substance abuse etc.)	97	151	203
Superstitious belief / Others	67	50	44

Note: One case may have more than one major contributing factor of abuse relating to abuser / suspected abuser, may have no such factor listed above or no information available. Thus, the sum of the above breakdown does not equal the total number of abusers / suspected abusers.

Statistical Data of Newly Reported Spouse/Cohabitant Battering Cases from 2015 to 2017 are tabulated below:

Table 1 Distribution of Spouse/Cohabitant Battering Cases by Types of Violence and Gender of Victim

Types of Violence	Male			Female			Total		
	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017
Physical Violence	476 (14.1%)	437 (13.2%)	420 (13.4%)	2 270 (67.1%)	2 197 (66.2%)	2 012 (64.3%)	2 746 (81.2%)	2 634 (79.3%)	2 432 (77.7%)
Sexual Violence	1 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	12 (0.4%)	19 (0.6%)	21 (0.7%)	13 (0.4%)	19 (0.6%)	21 (0.7%)
Psychological Abuse	60 (1.8%)	80 (2.4%)	62 (2.0%)	297 (8.8%)	317 (9.5%)	348 (11.1%)	357 (10.6%)	397 (12.0%)	410 (13.1%)
Multiple Violence	21 (0.6%)	21 (0.6%)	14 (0.4%)	245 (7.2%)	250 (7.5%)	251 (8.0%)	266 (7.9%)	271 (8.2%)	265 (8.5%)
Total	558 (16.5%)	538 (16.2%)	496 (15.9%)	2 824 (83.5%)	2 783 (83.8%)	2 632 (84.1%)	3 382 (100%)	3 321 (100%)	3 128 (100%)

Table 2 Distribution of Cases by Perpetrator’s Relationship with the Victim

Relationship	2015	2016	2017
Husband	2 052 (60.7%)	1 987 (59.8%)	1 858 (59.4%)
Wife	408 (12.1%)	370 (11.1%)	338 (10.8%)
Estranged husband/ex-husband	140 (4.1%)	134 (4.0%)	157 (5.0%)
Estranged wife/ex-wife	36 (1.1%)	27 (0.8%)	31 (1.0%)
Heterosexual cohabitant	480 (14.2%)	565 (17.0%)	480 (15.3%)
Same-sex cohabitant	12 (0.4%)	16 (0.5%)	9 (0.3%)
Heterosexual/Same-sex ex-cohabitant	254(7.5%)	222 (6.7%)	255 (8.2%)
Total	3 382 (100%)	3 321 (100%)	3 128 (100%)

Table 3 Distribution of Cases by Victim's Habitual Residential District at the Time of Abuse

District	2015	2016	2017
Central and Western	70 (2.1%)	79 (2.4%)	68 (2.2%)
Southern	71 (2.1%)	44 (1.3%)	72 (2.3%)
Islands	67 (2.0%)	35 (1.1%)	39 (1.2%)
Eastern	175 (5.2%)	168 (5.1%)	162 (5.2%)
Wan Chai	53 (1.6%)	37 (1.1%)	52 (1.7%)
Kowloon City	174 (5.1%)	185 (5.6%)	166 (5.3%)
Yau Tsim Mong	229 (6.8%)	196 (5.9%)	195 (6.2%)
Sham Shui Po	189 (5.6%)	178 (5.4%)	191 (6.1%)
Wong Tai Sin	228 (6.7%)	231 (7.0%)	204 (6.5%)
Sai Kung	152 (4.5%)	143 (4.3%)	117 (3.7%)
Kwun Tong	327 (9.7%)	322 (9.7%)	256 (8.2%)
Sha Tin	300 (8.9%)	311 (9.4%)	289 (9.2%)
Tai Po	113 (3.3%)	147 (4.4%)	136 (4.3%)
North	176 (5.2%)	168 (5.1%)	138 (4.4%)
Yuen Long	426 (12.6%)	427 (12.9%)	437 (14.0%)
Tsuen Wan	120 (3.5%)	139 (4.2%)	90 (2.9%)
Kwai Tsing	271 (8.0%)	260 (7.8%)	287 (9.2%)
Tuen Mun	204 (6.0%)	218 (6.6%)	202 (6.5%)
Outside Hong Kong	32 (0.9%)	26 (0.8%)	21 (0.7%)
Unknown	5 (0.1%)	7 (0.2%)	6 (0.2%)
Total	3 382 (100%)	3 321 (100%)	3 128 (100%)

Note : Owing to rounding, percentage may not add up to 100 as shown in the above tables.

Table 4 Distribution of Number of Perpetrators with Special Situation by Gender

	Male			Female			Total		
	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017
Total number of perpetrators	2 824	2 783	2 632	558	538	496	3 382	3 321	3 128
Number of perpetrators with the following special situation									
Alcoholism	256	245	262	10	13	9	266	258	271
Drug abuse	102	69	87	3	3	2	105	72	89
Unsustainable indebtedness	26	36	27	2	1	1	28	37	28
Psychiatric illness	95	89	104	25	32	29	120	121	133
Indulgent in gambling	93	104	103	5	7	2	98	111	105

Note: A perpetrator may have no special situation listed above, have one or more than one special situation, or information not available. Hence, the sum of the above breakdown does not equal the total number of perpetrators.