

# 立法會

## *Legislative Council*

LC Paper No. CB(2)317/19-20(04)

Ref : CB2/PL/WS

### **Panel on Welfare Services**

#### **Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat for the meeting on 9 December 2019**

#### **Providing crisis support for sexual violence victims**

#### **Purpose**

This paper provides background information on providing crisis support for sexual violence victims and summarizes the major views and concerns expressed by Members during previous discussions on the subject.

#### **Background**

2. According to the Administration, the Social Welfare Department ("SWD") has adopted a one-stop service model to handle sexual violence cases since 2007. Under this service model, a designated social worker is assigned for each case to provide a range of services, including 24-hour outreaching services, counselling service, reporting to the Police, arrangement of medical treatment and forensic examination, as well as escorting and accompanying the victims to go through all necessary procedures. The one-stop service enables victims to receive services and go through all the relevant procedures in a convenient, safe, confidential and supportive environment, and minimizes the need for the victims to recount their unpleasant experience.

3. In addition, SWD has commissioned the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals to operate the Multi-purpose Crisis Intervention and Support Centre ("CEASE Crisis Centre") to provide one-stop crisis intervention and support services (including short-term accommodation) for sexual violence victims and their families. CEASE Crisis Centre provides follow-up services for victims for at least six months. Depending on the post-traumatic symptoms such as negative thoughts and emotions,

CEASE Crisis Centre provides counselling services to the victims to help them deal with such emotional issues. CEASE Crisis Centre also provides victims with other necessary support/assistance, including financial assistance, accompanying them during statement taking by the Police and court hearings, and where necessary, referring them to relevant services, such as medical follow-up services and clinical psychological service.

### **Deliberations by Members since 2015-2016 session**

4. A motion on "Requesting the Government to set up crisis support centres for sexual violence victims and abused children in public hospitals" moved by Dr Hon Pierre CHAN and as amended by Hon Alice MAK and Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG was passed at the Legislative Council ("LegCo") meeting of 12 December 2018. A question relating to measures to protect children from sexual abuses was also raised at the LegCo meeting of 31 January 2018. Moreover, issues relating to the support services for sexual violence victims were discussed at the meetings of the Subcommittee on Strategy and Measures to Tackle Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence ("the Subcommittee") formed under the Panel on Welfare Services in the Fifth LegCo. The major concerns and views expressed by Members and the responses given by the Administration are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

#### Setting up crisis support centres for sexual violence victims in public hospitals

5. At its meeting of 12 December 2018, the Council passed a motion urging the Administration to, inter alia, designate a suitable place with high privacy protection for setting up a 24-hour one-stop crisis support centre in public hospitals respectively in the New Territories, on Hong Kong Island and in Kowloon, thereby allowing sexual violence victims to receive treatment and follow-up services and undergo necessary procedures, including medical treatment, forensic examinations, reporting to the Police, statement taking, receiving support and counselling services from social workers, in the same place.

6. In response to the motion passed, the Administration advised Members that the Hospital Authority ("HA") had arranged two designated rooms (including one back-up room) in each of the 18 public hospitals providing accident and emergency services throughout the territory for provision of one-stop service to sexual violence victims. Besides, when considering the setting up of crisis support centres in public hospitals, the Administration and HA had to carefully evaluate various factors, including the capacity of the existing public hospitals. In response to the

increasing demand for healthcare services, HA needed to ensure optimal use of existing space to meet public demands for various healthcare services. Nonetheless, in the longer term, HA would actively study the provision and enhancement of designated rooms or facilities in newly built or renovated hospitals for patients in need, including sexual violence victims.

#### Training for frontline staff

7. In the motion passed at the LegCo meeting of 12 December 2018, the Administration was also urged to provide frontline personnel (including police officers and social workers) with professional and specialized training to enhance their sensitivity and skills in handling cases of sexual violence involving different genders, backgrounds, cultures and sexual orientations. In its progress report on the motion passed, the Administration advised that SWD regularly organized various training programmes for frontline professional staff to enhance their ability to handle cases of domestic violence. SWD also sent its staff to attend training activities for frontline professionals organized by other relevant bureaux, departments and non-governmental organizations ("NGOs"). Besides, to ensure that relevant healthcare and professional staff were familiar with the procedures of the one-stop service for better cooperation, SWD would work jointly with HA and relevant departments such as the Police to organize drill exercises on the provision of one-stop service at major public hospitals on a regular basis.

#### Support services for children who had been sexually assaulted

8. At the Council meeting of 31 January 2018, a written question was raised on whether the Administration would enhance the provision of psychological counselling and support services for children who had been sexually assaulted, so as to help them recover from their traumas.

9. In its written reply, the Administration advised that the Family and Child Protective Services Units ("FCPSUs") of SWD provided comprehensive services for the victims of child abuse (including sexual abuse), such as temporary residential care service and counselling service, etc. In the course of providing follow-up services, the social worker would continuously review the situation of the children and their families and provide them with necessary assistance. Social workers of FCPSUs would also arrange group counselling and developmental programmes for the affected children and their families to help them overcome the negative impact of the incidents, develop their resilience and self-confidence, and re-establish their interpersonal and family relationship. Besides, to help sexually-abused students reintegrate into their school life, professional staff of schools (including school social

workers, student guidance personnel and school-based educational psychologists) would provide a variety of guidance programmes as required, such as induction/adjustment programme, peer support scheme and therapeutic group work, etc.

### Shelter service for sexual violence victims

10. At the Subcommittee meetings on 9 February and 13 April 2015, members raised concern about inadequate provision of short-term accommodation for victims of domestic violence and sexual violence. They considered that the refuge centres for women should enhance their mutual referral mechanism so that better arrangement could be made to reserve adequate residential places for urgent cases. They also urged the Administration to draw up a concrete plan for increasing the capacity of refuge centres and earmark additional provisions for the expansion of shelter service. They further requested the Administration to consider setting up dedicated refuge centres as well as crisis and support centres for sexual violence victims from vulnerable groups, such as elderly persons, ethnic minorities and sexual minorities, to cater for their specific needs.

11. According to the Administration, SWD subsidized five refuge centres for women operated by NGOs with a total capacity of 260 places for females and their children aged below 18 who needed temporary refuge because of immediate risk of domestic violence or serious personal or family problems. In addition, CEASE Crisis Centre also provided 80 short-term residential service places for individuals or families facing domestic violence or other family crisis, as well as for victims of sexual violence. The Administration also advised the Subcommittee that SWD was making an effort to explore with the operator of refuge centres the possibility of increasing the number of places through insitu expansion by utilizing spare space and to bid for additional resources and manpower in accordance with the established mechanism.

### **Relevant papers**

12. A list of the relevant papers on the LegCo website is in the **Appendix**.

**Relevant papers on  
providing crisis support for sexual violence victims**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>Paper</b>
Subcommittee on Strategy and Measures to Tackle Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence	9 February 2015 (Item II)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
	13 April 2015 (Item II)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
	10 November 2015 (Item II)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
	8 March 2016*	<a href="#">Report of the Subcommittee to the Panel on Welfare Services</a>
Legislative Council	31 January 2018	<a href="#">Official Record of Proceedings (Pages 70-78)</a>
	12 December 2018	<a href="#">Wording of the motion passed</a> <a href="#">Progress report</a>

\* Issue date