Notes of the Twelfth Meeting of the
Task Group on Implementation of Integrated Family Service Centres

Date : 7 September 2005 (Wednesday)
Time : 2:30 p.m. to 6:20 p.m.
Venue : Conference Room 1, SWD Headquarters, 9/F., Wu Chung House, 213 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai, Hong Kong

Present:

Social Welfare Department (SWD)

Miss Cecilla LI	Chief Social Work Officer (Family and Child Welfare)1 (Convenor)
Mrs KUANG YEUNG Ngan-hoo	Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Central and Western / Islands)1
Mrs CHOY WONG Lai-chun, Sarah	Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Eastern / Wan Chai)1
Miss CHEUNG Yun-ping, Mary	Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Southern)
Mrs Emily LEUNG	Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Yau Tsim Mong)1
Miss LI Chor-man	Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Tai Po / North)2
Mrs WONG HO Fung-see	Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Tuen Mun)2
Ms YUEN Siu-ching, Lisa	Acting Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Tsuen Wan / Kwai Tsing)1
Mrs WONG LAM Yuk-lin	Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Kowloon City)1
Ms LAM May-ling, Ivy	Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Kwun Tong)3
Mr LAM Ding-fung	Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Yuen Long)
Mr CHAN Wah	Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Sham Shui Po)1
Miss Sandra LIM	Officer-in-charge Wong Tai Sin Integrated Family Service Centre

Miss CHEUNG Chau-ping	Officer-in-charge Yau Ma Tei Integrated Family Service Centre
Ms KWAN Shuk-yee, Nancy	Officer-in-charge Tseung Kwan O (North) Integrated Family Service Centre
Ms CHAN Ho-yi, Cammy	Officer-in-charge Shatin (South) Integrated Family Service Centre
Miss Mavis LEE	Officer-in-charge Aberdeen Integrated Family Service Centre
Miss CHAN Tak-ming, Virginia	Officer-in-charge Causeway Bay Integrated Family Service Centre
Ms CHAU Fung-mui	Officer-in-charge Tuen Mun (West) Integrated Family Service Centre
Ms LI Wing-sze, Grace	Officer-in-charge Central and Islands Integrated Family Service Centre
Ms MUI Shuk-ling, Adeline	Officer-in-charge Tin Shui Wai Integrated Family Service Centre
Ms CHAN Sau-fan	Acting Officer-in-charge Tuen Mun (East) Integrated Family Service Centre
Ms WONG Yin-yee	Senior Social Work Officer (Family)2
Miss SUNG Wai-kuen	Social Work Officer (Family)3
Ms LEE Chi-kiu	Social Work Officer (Family)1
Mrs WOO LEE Kam-ling	Assistant Social Work Officer (Family)2 (Recorder)

Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs)

Ms Grace CHAN	Social Work Supervisor Caritas – Hong Kong
Ms Sira NG	Social Work Supervisor Caritas – Hong Kong
Ms Alice WONG	Social Work Supervisor Caritas – Hong Kong
Ms Cora TSANG	Social Worker Caritas – Hong Kong
Ms Tabitha HO	Regional Manager (New Territories) Hong Kong Family Welfare Society
Miss Katrine LAM	Principal Social Worker Hong Kong Family Welfare Society

Mr CHAM Kwok-wing, Kerin	Director of Programme International Social Service Hong Kong Branch
Ms Iris LIU	Director of Programme International Social Service Hong Kong Branch
Mr Daniel CHU	Supervisor Yang Memorial Methodist Social Service
Ms KONG Tsz-yin	Social Worker Yang Memorial Methodist Social Service
Mrs Angela CHIU	Centre Supervisor Hong Kong Catholic Marriage Advisory Council
Mr KWOK Wai-keung	General Manager (Family and Community Core Business) Hong Kong Christian Service
Mrs Cross LEUNG	Principal Coordinator Hong Kong Christian Service
Ms Esther CHYU	Social Work Supervisor Hong Kong Children and Youth Services
Ms NG Kwok-tung, Agnes	Senior Programme Director (Family and Community) Christian Family Service Centre
Ms Bell WONG	Programme Director Christian Family Service Centre
Ms Wendy WONG	Senior Manager St. James' Settlement
Ms Crystal CHENG	District Director Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Welfare Council
Mr Jackey LO	Chief Officer Service Development (Family and Community) Hong Kong Council of Social Service

In Attendance

Mr CHEUNG Tat-ming	Senior Social Work Officer (Family)1	For Matters Arising only
Mr PANG Yu-on	Senior Social Work Officer (Child Care Centres)	For Agenda Item 3 only
Ms FUNG Man-yu, May	Social Work Officer (Child Care Centres)	For Agenda Item 3 only

Ms PANG Kit-ling	Chief Social Work Officer (Domestic Violence)	For Agenda Item 4 only
Ms CHAN Sau-ming	Senior Social Work Officer Family and Child Protective Services Unit (Hong Kong)	
Mr TSE Shu-to, Sebastian	Senior Social Work Officer Family and Child Protective Services Unit (East Kowloon)	
Miss Alice CHAN	Senior Social Work Officer Family and Child Protective Services Unit (West Kowloon)	
Mrs MAK LAM Pui-fong	Senior Social Work Officer Family and Child Protective Services Unit (New Territories East)	
Miss CHAN Wai-chun	Senior Social Work Officer Family and Child Protective Services Unit (New Territories West)	
Mr CHAN Moon-shing	Senior Social Work Officer Family and Child Protective Services Unit (Yuen Long)	

Opening Remarks

Miss Cecilla LI welcomed those who attended the meeting for the first time, i.e. from SWD: Mrs KUANG YEUNG Ngan-hoo, Doris, Mrs CHOY WONG Lai-chun, Sarah, Ms YUEN Siu-ching, Lisa, Miss CHAN Tak-ming, Virginia, Ms CHAN Sau-fan and Ms MUI Shuk-ling, Adeline; and from NGOs: Ms Cora TSANG, Ms Bell WONG and Ms KONG Tsz-yin.

Confirmation of Notes of the Last Meeting

2. The notes of the last meeting would be confirmed with the following amendment if no further comment was received by 14 September 2005 (5:00p.m.):

> paragraph 10(c) line 4 – to replace "…the service unit having received the referral would **be responsible** for the case…" by "…the service unit having received the referral would **take appropriate action** for the case…"

[Post-meeting notes: One proposed amendment was received that the post title of Mr Raymond WONG on page 3 was amended to "*Acting Integrated Family Service Centre Supervisor*". The confirmed notes of meeting were uploaded to the SWD Homepage on 15 September 2005]

Matters Arising

Paragraph 3

3. Ms WONG Yin-yee reported that the two amendments (i.e. addition of "with client's consent" in the "Remarks" column of the first and fifth row of the table in paragraph 5 of the summary report) proposed by three NGOs were accepted by Mr Helios LAU, Chief Clinical Psychologist (CCP). The final version of the "Summary of Agreements on Clinical Psychologist (CP) Support for Integrated Family Service Centres (IFSCs)" would be sent to members for circulation among the clinical psychologists concerned and social workers of IFSCs. As regards the separate forum to be established for clinical psychologists of NGOs and SWD to discuss professional / clinical issues of mutual concern, Miss Cecilla LI said CCP would send invitation to individual agency heads / coordinators to take the matter forward.

[Post-meeting notes: The final version of the "Summary of Agreements on Clinical Psychologist (CP) Support for IFSCs" was sent to members by e-mail on 8 September 2005]

Paragraph 4

4. Miss SUNG Wai-kuen highlighted the following training courses, which were relevant to the work of IFSC, to be conducted from September to December 2005. Members were encouraged to nominate suitable staff to attend these training courses:

(a) Workshop on Working with Family in Transition (two classes on (i) 21 and 28 September 2005; and (ii) 9 and 16 November 2005)

(b) Training Courses on Risk Assessment and Management (24 to 27 October 2005)

(c) Workshop on Working with Family in Crisis (two classes on (i)18 and 25 November 2005; and (ii) 9 and 12 December 2005)

(d) Induction Course for Social Workers in IFSCs (23 September to 14 October 2005)

(e) Seminar on Adoption Laws in Mainland cum Report Back Session on Adoption Service (November / December 2005)

(f) Clinical Practice in Family Cases (two classes on (i) 4 and 12 October 2005; and (ii) 13 and 20 December 2005)

(g) Workshop on Therapeutic Groups for Specific Groups in IFSCs (two classes in November and December 2005 respectively)

(h) Marketing and Service Planning of Integrated Family Service (December 2005)

(i) Training Package on Family Violence (2-day training package to be run from November 2005 to January 2006)

5. Miss SUNG Wai-kuen drew members' attention to the roll out of e-Learning Centre to NGOs again as five agencies operating IFSC(s) / ISC had not yet made the registration.

Paragraph 5

6. Mr CHEUNG Tat-ming reported that the Subsidized Housing Committee of the Housing Authority had endorsed the following two arrangements, which took immediate effect, in its meeting on 28 July 2005:

(a) accept "all children under the age of 18 with established Hong Kong birth status as permanent resident" as having fulfilled the seven-year residence rule requirement in processing their applications for public rental housing (PRH); and

(b) modify the ex-gratia arrangement for elderly property owner-occupier (EPO) applicants for Compassionate Rehousing (CR) to allow allocation of self-contained PRH flats on licence to EPOs upon their refusal of offers of Housing for Senior Citizens (HSC) flats.

The above information had been channeled to all IFSCs / ISCs and members vide e-mail on 29 July 2005. Arising from these changes, Chapter I and VI of the "Guidelines and Procedures for Processing Applications for Compassionate Rehousing and Other Housing Assistance" (the Guidelines) were revised accordingly and tabled for members' reference. With the modification of (b) above, Miss Cecilla LI advised all IFSCs / ISCs to contact those EPO cases again who had previously approached or being referred to the service units for the ex-gratia scheme since July 2004 but had later withdrawn the application or not recommended by the service unit because the applicants did not accept HSC but PRH flats in order to re-assess their housing need again in accordance with the revised Guidelines.

7. Mr CHEUNG Tat-ming also tabled a standard memo which was agreed by the Housing Department for use by District Social Welfare Officers to recommend CR for those conditional tenancy beneficiaries, upon the court's award of divorce decree, failed to pass the conversion test but were still found to have genuine housing need substantiated with strong social or medical ground as stipulated in paragraph 17 of Chapter II of the Guidelines.

Paragraph 9

8. Ms WONG Yin-yee reported that information of the channels / contact persons for processing Medical Enquiry Forms (MEF) in various hospitals / special out-patient clinics was still under compilation. It would be issued to all IFSCs / ISCs and members once ready.

[Post-meeting notes: Lists of contact points for processing MEFs were sent to all IFSCs / ISCs and members for reference by e-mail on 22 September 2005]

Paragraph 12

9. Ms WONG Yin-yee informed that each NGO member had been given a set of free legal advice application form. Members could make copies for use or request more copies from the Duty Lawyer Service direct if necessary.

[Mr CHEUNG Tat-ming left the meeting at this juncture]

Handling Applications under the Kindergarten and Child Care Centre Fee Remission Scheme

10. Miss Cecilla LI welcomed Mr PANG Yu-on and Ms FUNG Man-yu, May who were invited to join the discussion on this item. Mr PANG briefed members on the background of harmonization of pre-primary services. With effect from 1 September 2005, the Kindergarten and Child Care Centre Fee Remission Scheme (KCFRS) had replaced the Child Care Centre Fee Assistance Scheme (CCCFAS) to provide financial assistance to eligible pre-school children subject to means test. For cases in need of full-day care, parents would be required to meet the social need criteria which were the same as the CCCFAS. All KCFRS applications together with the supporting documents had to be submitted to the Student Financial Assistance Agency (SFAA) through child care centres / kindergartens.

11. On members' concern over the documents required to substantiate the social need criteria, Mr PANG Yu-on shared that a meeting had been held with representatives from SFAA, child care sector and HKCSS. It was clarified that documentary proof, applicants' self-declaration and social worker's recommendation would be considered by SFAA. Mr PANG reiterated that based on previous profile of CCCFAS cases, only a limited number of applications did not possess any documentary proof or under very special circumstances that would need to turn to social workers for assistance. As the majority of the pre-primary service units were operated by social welfare organizations, the applicants could approach social workers of the operating agencies for assistance if so required.

12. To streamline the work process, a proforma (社工推薦表) had been designed for use by SWD service units and it was tabled for members' reference. It was up to NGO service units to adopt this proforma or use other format in making the "Social Worker's Recommendation" for KCFRS applications. In response to NGO members' enquiry, Mr PANG Yu-on said that the Administration would keep in view the need to revise the Appendix of the "Guidance Notes of KCFRS" relating to the criteria for assessing "social need" at appropriate time. Members were also welcome to contact Mr PANG Yu-on or Ms FUNG Man-yu, May for further enquiry with their telephone number given. Once again, Mr PANG Yu-on thanked members and their colleagues for rendering assistance in putting up recommendations for customers who were in need of financial assistance for child care service.

[Mr PANG Yu-on and Ms FUNG Man-yu, May left the meeting at this juncture]

Interfacing / Collaboration with Family and Child Protective Services Units (FCPSUs)

13. Miss Cecilla LI welcomed Ms PANG Kit-ling, Ms CHAN Sau-ming, Mr TSE Shu-to, Sebastian, Miss Alice CHAN, Mrs MAK LAM Pui-fong, Miss CHAN Wai-chun and Mr CHAN Moon-shing who were invited to join the discussion on this item. She shared her observations on the information gathered from IFSCs / ISCs and FCPSUs recently on the interfacing / collaboration issues with other service units and government departments.

Refuge Centres for Women

14. On the collaboration with staff of the refuge centres for women, Ms PANG Kit-ling clarified that while social workers of these centres mainly focused their work on handling the residents' emotion, adjustment and other immediate needs within the centre, the referring social workers should be responsible for addressing their welfare needs (e.g. application for trust fund, housing assistance, etc) and formulating the care plan. For those in need of welfare service but not known to any service units, the refuge centres for women would refer them to the appropriate service unit for follow up in accordance with the existing guidelines. Social workers handling these cases could arrange the interviews at some places (e.g. premises of IFSC or other service units) which were safe to clients during their stay in the refuge centres.

Correctional Services Department (CSD)

15. In response to some NGO IFSCs' concern over the arrangements of visit with clients who were imprisoned / detained in correctional institutions, Miss Cecilla LI agreed to explore with CSD to see how the visits could be better arranged.

Medical Social Services Units (MSSUs)

16. In response to members' feedback on the difficulty in processing MEFs earlier this year, Miss Cecilla LI believed that the lists of designated contact persons in various hospitals / specialist clinics to be issued soon would help improve the situation. As regards the division of work between IFSCs and MSSUs and collaboration issues, Miss Cecilla LI advised members to make reference to the relevant guidelines and

information which were deliberated in the third and fourth meetings of the task group held in August and September 2004 respectively.

Family and Child Protective Services Units (FCPSUs)

17. In response to the concerns raised over the collaboration between FCPSUs and IFSCs / ISCs, Ms PANG Kit-ling and Senior Social Work Officers (SSWO) of FCPSUs briefed members on the existing practice adopted by FCPSUs in screening case referrals, arranging outreaching visits and conducting risk assessment. Gist of discussions was as follows:

(a) Under the existing practice, FCPSUs served as the contact points to receive referrals on domestic violence cases from the police. If the nature of the case was obviously beyond the scope of service of FCPSU (e.g. fighting between siblings, in-law conflicts, etc.), FCPSUs would pass the referral to the respective IFSC / ISC direct for follow-up without making contacts with clients. Besides, if it was already a known case of IFSC / ISC, FCPSUs would also re-direct the referral to the respective IFSC / ISC for follow-up.

(b) If there was information indicating that it was neither a battered spouse nor child abuse case after screening or if the violence was assessed to be mild and / or the incident was assessed to be an isolated one with no / low risk after having gathered supplementary information through phone contact(s), interview(s) or visit(s) as appropriate by FCPSUs, and with the client's consent, the case would be referred to the respective IFSC / ISC for follow up. It was stressed in the meeting that as a good practice, there should be prior discussion with the receiving end (i.e. IFSC / ISC) before sending out the referrals together with the relevant information provided by the police. Besides, social workers of FCPSUs should also include essential information (e.g. supplementary information gathered, assessment on case nature, services having been rendered / action taken, reasons for transferring the case to IFSC / ISC, etc) in the case referral as appropriate.

(c) For referrals indicating explicit / serious violence between the couple and / or the spouse having been admitted to the refuge centre for women, FCPSUs would take up these cases unless it was already a known case of

IFSC / ISC or other casework units.

(d) SSWOs of FCPSUs would assign referrals / cases received soonest the possible. IFSCs / ISCs were advised to contact SSWOs or the intake worker of FCPSUs (if the case had not been assigned) for referrals warranting special attention of FCPSUs or requiring urgent action due to unforeseeable reason(s). On the other hand, all immediate welfare needs of known cases of IFSC / ISC should be properly attended to before referring / transferring out the case to FCPSU or vice versa.

(e) Under the existing practice, two social workers of FCPSUs would conduct pair-up visit for newly reported battered spouse cases received during office hours if situation warranted. As for newly reported suspected child abuse cases, social workers from the respective IFSC of SWD would be involved in conducting pair-up visits with FCPSUs even though the cases fell within the service boundary of NGO IFSCs. If the case was assessed not a battered spouse case nor child abuse case and with client's consent, it would be referred to the respective IFSC of SWD or NGO for follow up as appropriate. Given that NGO-run IFSCs / ISCs did not take part in the outreaching visits for these cases, it was inevitable that the assessment of case nature would much rely on the information gathered by SWD staff in the outreaching visit(s) and other collateral contact(s).

(f) Given the divergent views on the definition of "known case", particularly when the case / referral was being handled at "intake / enquiry" level by NGOs, Miss Cecilla LI proposed to adopt a commonly agreed time span (i.e. number of working days to be specified) following that the IFSC / ISC handling the case / referral at "intake / enquiry" level should be responsible for conducting social investigation for the suspected child abuse case. This was intended to facilitate the collaboration between IFSCs and FCPSUs and avoid possible dispute on division of work. However, no concrete time span was agreed in the meeting. Miss Cecilla LI advised members to give further thought to this issue and put forth suggestions at any time for further discussion.

(g) Members noted that social workers of FCPSUs were ready to offer advice and support to IFSCs / ISCs and other service units in case assessment

and handling of cases. In the event there were "unresolved" divergent views on the division of work between IFSC / ISC and FCPSU, the matter should be brought up to senior officers of both parties for resolution. It was highlighted that communication and trust between the two service units involved were essential to ensure smooth collaboration.

(h) In response to a member's enquiry on whether the checklist currently used by FCPSUs in risk assessment could be shared with IFSC staff, Ms PANG Kit-ling said that if deemed appropriate, this checklist might be shared in the training courses on handling domestic violence cases in future but she remarked that training was essential before staff was allowed to administer it. Besides, she shared that The University of Hong Kong had been commissioned to develop a local assessment tool but it was not yet ready.

Any Other Business

Recommendations by the Coroner's Court

18. Ms PANG Kit-ling and Miss Cecilla LI briefed members on the recommendations made by the Coroner's Court in respect of the Death Inquest of Tin Shui Wai Tragedy. Members exchanged views on those recommendations pertinent to SWD / NGO service units as follows:

(a) On the recommendation that "social workers shall consider to provide their pager numbers to clients so that they can be reached directly in emergency situation", members were of the view that instead of putting the responsibility to individual social workers, a system should be developed to respond to the need in emergency situation after office hours. Members also noted that certain SWD staff had already been put on the "After Office Hours Child Abuse and Battered Spouse Outreaching Team" or "After Office Hours Psychiatric Emergency Outreaching Team" to attend to urgent needs for cases involving child abuse, battered spouse and psychiatric emergency outside office hours and the responsible SWD social worker could also be contacted through the existing means in emergency situations.

(b) On the recommendation to improve case transfer / referral process by providing written record of previous interviews and relevant documents, members shared the existing good practice in case transfer. Besides, the "acknowledgement system" had already been in place to enhance the communication and collaboration with the Police, Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes Authority, Maternal and Child Health Centres and Social Security Field Units (for single parent cases). Miss Cecilla LI proposed and members agreed that there was a need to develop an acknowledgement system to enhance case transfer / referral process between IFSCs and FCPSUs.

(c) On the recommendation relating to provision of training to NGO social workers, members noted that all along SWD had been organising relevant training courses to equip staff of SWD and NGOs with knowledge and skills in handling domestic violence cases. Besides, it was noted that individual social worker might pursue continuing education while NGOs would support their staff by providing training, coaching and clinical supervision as appropriate.

Burial Matters for the Elderly

19. Miss Cecilla LI shared with members the comments made by an NGO that some social workers of welfare agencies tended to avoid discussing with elderly clients on "burial matters" and seemed to treat it as "taboo". In this regard, Miss Cecilla LI advised members to encourage their social workers to provide relevant information on available funeral services, offer advice, counselling and other assistance as appropriate when they were approached by elderly clients on this particular topic.

Service Application Form of Support Teams for the Elderly

20. Ms WONG Yin-yee informed that the revised "Service Application Form of Support Teams for the Elderly", in both Chinese and English, had been sent to all IFSCs / ISCs and members by e-mail on 1 September 2005 for use. She remarked that the major amendment made on the application form was the addition of information on fee charging of the services.

Date of Next Meeting

21. The next meeting was scheduled for 20 October 2005 (Thursday) at 2:30 p.m. at Conference Room 1, 9/F., Wu Chung House.

22. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:20 p.m.