

The Hong Kong Council of Social Service
Standing Committee on Service Development & Liaison
Progress Report (August – September 2007)

Service Planning & Development

1. **Meetings with SLW and DSW**

2 meetings for DSW and SLW to meet the sector were arranged on July 18 and August 31 respectively. The sector strongly voiced out the impact on the civil servants starting salaries upward adjustment on subvented welfare service staff and other concerns on welfare planning, cross-border problems, employment, mental health, child care, and competitive bidding policy etc..

2. **Meeting with DSW, Mr. Stephen Fisher**

The Management Committee of Joint Council met with Director of Social Welfare, Mr. Stephen Fisher on September 12, to discuss the possible sponsorship for participation of rehabilitation workers in overseas events in coming years as well as the development of rehabilitation services. Major concerns raised at the meeting included employment of people with disabilities, shortage of nurses and para-medical personnel, residential and community support services for people with mental handicap and psychiatric disability, and support to carers, etc. Mr. Fisher treasured this occasion of meaningful encounter and initiated to meeting regularly on a yearly basis.

3. **Hidden Elders**

In response to the additional allocation of \$38 million in the 2007-08 Budget to 156 elderly centres for enhancing outreach programmes for hidden elders, SWD had involved the Council and the NGOs in a task group and a working group to follow up the operation details. The operation model and the details of the Funding and Service Agreement were being worked out.

4. **Aged home conversion exercise**

A special meeting with SWD and 9 agency operators of Conversion Home was held to raise out the concerns arising in the conversion exercise. SWD agreed

- 1) to collect home data of air-conditioner installations and power supplies before consider to process the application separately from the major grant.
- 2) To provide a guideline of “majors grants for full fledged renovation for RCHES selected for conversion”.
- 3) To have a review meeting in March 2008.

5. **Press Conference on Serious Injury of ‘Children at Home Alone’ and Follow-up Actions**

Council, together with member agencies, held a press conference in response to the serious injury of ‘children at home alone’ on August 27. 25 reporters attended the conference and there was good coverage in the media. The discussion of the issue continued for the following two weeks. Sharing forum within our sector was organized on September 7 for reviewing and discussing the existing policies and services as well as the ideas for future policies, legislation. Service development for quality childcare was proposed. Initial contact with SWD was arranged to share and discuss the initial proposal and ideas.

6. **Services for cross-border living families**

Two agency visits on cross border service projects in Shenzhen were organized. 22 participants from the Specialized Committee of Family and Community attended and met with 6 concerned working parties in Shenzhen. Issues relating to domestic violence, pre-migration family preparation, cross-border schooling and child care of children with HK resident identity with non-HK resident parents were raised for discussion. The Specialized Committee had also discussed the service needs and policy matters in supporting the cross border living families.

Topical Discussion & Mutual Learning

7. **Conference on Lifelong Learning for the Third Age**

University of the Third Age (U3A), the first learning scheme of its kind in Hong Kong, was jointly launched by The Hong Kong Electric Co. Ltd. and the Council to promote active aging and life-long learning among the retired population. The conference was held on September 1 with 230 participants, providing a valuable platform to share experience with overseas & local experts and U3A units.

8. **2007 National Conference on Prevention of Drug Abuse and Report Back Session on IFNGO Conference**

This National Conference was held from September 18-20 in Macau. About 50 delegates from Hong Kong had participated in the event. As one of the co-organizers, the Council delivered a plenary speech at the opening ceremony. Besides, the report back session of the IFNGO Conference was successfully held on August 7 with 67 participants from youth and drug services attended the programme.

9. **Sharing session on drug service for Ethnic Minorities**

In order to facilitate the communication and collaboration between operators of substance abuse and ethnic minority services, the Council arranged a sharing session on September 3. About 30 representatives participated in the session and shared their experience, difficulties encountered and work practice on working with substance abusers with different ethnic backgrounds.

10. **Report-back Seminar - 3rd International Conference on Children Exposed to Domestic Violence cum Post-conference Study Visit on Working with Child Victim in Domestic Violence**

Report back seminar was held in September to share the overseas experience in handling children exposed to domestic violence. Other than the six delegates from both NGO and SWD, a clinical psychologist was also invited to share the clinical experience in working with children witnessed domestic violence. There were over 100 enrolments for the seminar.

Special Event

11. **“Care for Elderly 2007 – Brain Health Action”**

“Care for Elderly 2007 – Brain Health Action” is Hong Kong’s first community program jointly organized by the Council, 35 NGOs (over 70 units) and CLP Power Hong Kong Limited (CLP) to raise funds for and promote awareness of dementia care and support. This programme aims at raising fund to help deprived elderly with suspected memory problems and promoting “Early Detection and Intervention”. The media briefing was held on September 15 and the kick off event will be on September 21. Led by HKCSS, a Steering Committee is formed composing of medical practitioners, social workers, occupational therapists, university professors,

etc. The concerted effort will enable better management and bring synergy to the program.

Presentation at Legco Panel

12. Prosecution of Abusers

Council made a presentation at the meeting of Legco's Subcommittee on Strategy and Measures to Tackle Family Violence in July over the issues of 'Prosecution of abusers' and 'Handling of high risk domestic violence cases by the Police and the Social Welfare Department'. It was urged that the government should review the effectiveness of 'Bind Over Order', since over 65% domestic violence criminal cases would be granted binding over. In order to protect the victims of domestic violence and to better support them as the witness in court, it was suggested setting up 'Witness Support Programme' for domestic violence witness.