

The Hong Kong Council of Social Service
Standing Committee on Service Development & Liaison
Progress Report (October 2007 – mid-January 2008)

Service Planning & Development

1. Meeting with Assistant Director of SWD on Child Care Services
Network of Residential Child Care Services has met with the respective Assistant Director of SWD for exchanging the views on the service development. Basically, the sector has urged the Department to make use of existing platform, i.e. the Development Committee of Residential Child Care Services, to co-work with the operators for better service planning and implementation. Department's attention to those long waitlisted cases has also been drawn. However, SWD expressed that premise-tied expansion would be difficult and she thought the newly introduced day services might help to release the demand of residential services.
2. Meeting with Director of Social Welfare
A meeting was held between the DSW & representatives from agencies operating CY, family & community services. The operators' observations of current community needs were shared and responding strategies discussed. The DSW suggested regular meetings with the Council representatives to exchange views and strengthen collaboration & partnership.
3. Task Force on Youth Substance Abuse
The Chief Executive in his Policy Address announced to form a high level inter-departmental task force to combat youth substance abuse. The Task Force aimed to complete its task within one year. Secretary for Justice, as the chairperson of the Task Force, met with members of ACAN as well as the Narcotic Department's Drug Liaison Group. Our Council had submitted a letter and our position paper to Secretary of Justice requesting the Task Force to open up more channels to collect views from the frontline workers. Besides, we also stressed that the existing data collection mechanism should be strengthened so as to facilitate concerned parties to better understand the magnitude of youth substance abuse issues and tailor targeted solutions to tackle the problem. Moreover, more resources should be given to carry out preventive education especially secondary prevention.
4. Procedural Guideline on Handling Spouse Abuse Cases
A multi-disciplinary Task Group on Review of "Procedural Guidelines for Handling Battered Spouse Cases (2004)" was formed under the Committee on Combating Violence in SWD with representatives from NGOs and the Council. After the first meeting of the task group, it was agreed that the review would be focused on Collaboration among various disciplines, Identifying high-risk cases, Support service for victims and abusers, legal proceedings.
5. Strengthening Outreaching and support Service to Hidden and Vulnerable Elders
The scope of service includes outreaching, counselling, making referrals and providing support services to hidden and vulnerable elders, as well as conducting networking activities with district stakeholders were released. It is the result of the recommendation made to SWD after the meeting of a Task Group and a Working Group with participants from Labor and Welfare Bureau, NGOs and HKCSS. Each DECC/NEC participating in the new initiative will receive an additional recurrent subvention of around 0.268 million per annum. This lump sum has taken into account PE, including provident fund for employing RSW and all other relevant costs applicable to operation of the initiative.

6. Survey on Impact of the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme on Low Income Families
 Since the present Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme (PEVS) is only provided to Half-day Kindergarten Schooling for 3-6 year-old children. 2-3 year-old children and Whole-day Kindergarten Schooling receive only limited subsidy. In this circumstance, low income families who have 2-3 year-old children or children joining Whole-day Kindergarten Schooling could not benefit from the PEVS. A survey on the impact of the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme on Low Income Families is being carried out from November 07, and the data will be analysed by February 2008.
7. Survey on the existing circumstance of school personnel handling cases in pre-school settings
 Joining hand with Council of Non-profit Making Organizations for Pre-primary Education, a mini-survey is being conducted to understand the existing situation of school personnel on handling cases in pre-school settings. The data can justify whether there is a need of setting up a new position on handling cases and mobilizing community network for deprived families. Data are being collected and the report will be compiled by March 2008.
8. Kicking off website on Mentoring (www.mentoring.org.hk)
 In cooperation with the Department of Applied Social Studies, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, the first Chinese mentoring website was kicked off on Dec 16, 2007 by the Secretary of Labour and Welfare, Matthew Cheung. The content in the first stage included historical and general introduction of mentoring, organizing method, related local and overseas' linkage, real stories, resource in career planning and development, registration and sharing forum.

Special Event

9. 2007 Best Practice Awards in Social Welfare
 The final adjudication of the Awards was completed and the result was appended. Favourable responses were received this year with 83 submissions from 31 agencies. The Awards presentation ceremony was held in the Council's 60th AGM on December 17, 2007. A sharing session of winning projects would be organized in February 2008. Information on the winning awards would be updated at <http://www.hkcss.org.hk/sd/sd/BP07/index.htm>.
10. 7th International Abilympics 2007
 The 7th International Abilympics was held from November 14 to 18, 2007 in Shizuoka, Japan. Our Hong Kong Team had a total of 83 delegates including 25 contestants with disabilities, officials, accompanying persons and art performers attending the event. In competition with 400 contestants coming from 29 countries and territories, we got a gold medal in the vocational skills contest of photography as well as a bronze medal and a special award in the contest of floral arrangement.
11. International Day of Disabled Persons and Caring Environment Recognition Scheme
 Coorganized by Council, Labour and Welfare Bureau and the 18 District Councils, the scheme received more than 200 nominations and the site inspections were completed in October. The scheme's award presentation ceremony was jointly held on December 9, 2007 at Hong Kong Convention Centre in conjunction with this year's International Day of Disabled Persons (IDDP) opening ceremony. Officiated by Mr. Matthew Cheung, SLW, 86 buildings were awarded to recognize the efforts of their management in making the access and facilities barrier-free to persons with disabilities and other people in need. Good media coverage was drawn for the ceremony. Other IDDP celebrations also included the day for free ride of public transport cum free admission to museums and sports facilities for people with disabilities on November 25 and the Ocean Park Fun Day on December 1.

12. 3rd Open Assessment for Sign Language Interpreters
This is the last of a 3-year project which, by holding a public assessment, aims to heighten the service standard of sign language interpretation in Hong Kong and identify qualified trainees for court sign language interpreters. The assessment was conducted smoothly on November 10-11, 2007 with 22 candidates participating in the examination. The assessors are working hard on the markings in order to ensure the results be announced within 3 months.
13. The Senior Citizens' Day
The Finale of Senior Citizens' Day was held on 18 Nov in Emax. A total number of 1,000 Senior citizens joined the ceremony and events that day. In this year, four positive images of Senior Citizens were strongly advocated. These included Elderly involvement in District Council Election and volunteer work, Elder Learning (U3A), Smart consumer, and Smart living with healthy lifestyle. Totally over 300 agencies, schools, companies, organizations, media partners and departments joined and supported as event partners of Senior Citizens' Day. The number of elderly participants and supporting partners had remarkably increased.

Topical Discussion & Mutual Learning

14. Conference on Combating Domestic Violence in Chinese Society
A Conference with speakers from Mainland, Taiwan and Hong Kong was held on November 23, 2007 with 100 participants. Trend over domestic violence, policy, intervention strategies, service programme and effectiveness across Taiwan, Mainland and Hong Kong were shared. The indigenous experiences on delivering Batterer Intervention Programme in HK were also shared and discussed.
15. Collaboration with the Hong Kong Poison Information Centre
Sharing Session was held to facilitate frontline workers' understanding of the study conducted by the Hong Kong Poison Information Centre on Katemine. Dr. Tse of the Centre highlighted their findings of Katemine's adverse effect on a person's urinal system. The Council would further collaborate with the Centre to issue concerned education materials for the reference of social workers as well as medical practitioners.
16. The 1st Caregiver of Dementia Forum
The 1st Caregiver of Dementia Forum co-organized by the Council and 2 NGOs was held on 6 October. This Forum was funded by Chest and it was the first one of its kind. A total of 92 caregivers attended the forum and made a fruitful discussion and recommendation on the 4 areas. (i.e. Community Support services, Medical support service, Long term care management in Dementia & Support to Caregiver). The caregivers would make use of these recommendations for the coming discussion of Elderly Programme Plan. About 80% of participants gave positive feedback to the forum and suggested to have regular meeting to facilitate further caregivers participation.
17. Good Practice Sharing on Trauma Intervention
In order to facilitate sharing of practical experience and wisdom on trauma counselling and intervention, a sharing forum was held on December 6, 2007 with psychologist, bereavement counselor and frontline workers as speakers. There were over 120 participants of which 94% of them indicated they were satisfied with the sharing.
18. Promotion of Elderly Right and Protection Forum
A multi-disciplinary sharing forum and Workshops were organized on December 14, 2007. As a promotion of elderly right and protection, it is planned to facilitate the frontline worker's understanding on the application of advances directives and care planning, enduring power of attorney. The Chairperson of the Guardianship Board, Mr. Charles Chiu spoke on application of AD and the EPA. Dr. Lee Siu Wah (CPH) and Dr. David Dai

(HKADA) highlighted the ethical dilemmas in working with elders and the medical and social partnership view of advance care planning. A total of 151 persons joined the forum and the workshops with good feedback.

19. Seminar on Service Needs of Aged Persons with Mental Handicap

The seminar was held on December 13, 2007 to highlight the sector's concern on aging issues of persons with mental handicap. Results of a survey conducted earlier were released, reflecting that aged persons with mental handicap are in need of substantial nursing and therapeutic care and the existing services for them are not adequate enough. Overseas studies on this target group were also shared by a guest speaker from Hospital Authority. More than 200 participants attended the seminar and positive feedbacks were received.

20. Seminar on Building a Barrier-Free City in Hong Kong

In recent years, several District Councils have initiated survey projects to check the accessibility of their built environments frequently visited by people with mobility challenges and followed up with the buildings managements for further improvement. The captioned seminar was held on January 5, 2008 to facilitate exchange of such experiences. Invited speakers included representatives of Hong Kong Institute of Housing, Equal Opportunities Commission and those disability NGOs involved in the District Councils' check-walk projects.

21. Seminar on Crisis Intervention in Community Mental Health Services

To address the concern of frontline mental health workers in dealing with service users in crisis, Council organized this seminar on January 10, 2008 for the purpose of enhancing professional competency. Apart from the presentations made by social work academic, psychiatric nursing manager and NGO service operators, small group discussions were arranged for participants to share practical experiences in handling different crisis situations such as service users with suicidal tendency, in mental relapse and running into debts.

22. Cross-sectoral Conference on Children and Youth Mental Health

A cross-sectoral conference co-organized with 2 educational bodies and Hong Kong Society of Adolescent Health was held on 19th December 2007, together with 7 other supporting organizations. Professor Yip Kam Shing of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Dr Peter Tsoi as private psychiatrist, Mr Ip Kin Yuen as school principal and a few well known projects were invited to share their views as well as working experience with over 100 participants.

23. Cross-sectoral Conference on Quality Environment For Child Development

Another cross-sectoral conference co-organized with The Hong Kong College of Paediatricians Foundation and Council of Non-profit Making Organizations for Pre-primary Education will be held on 17th January 2008, with The Hong Kong Psychological Society as supporting organizations. Professional representatives from Education, Social Service, Medication, City Planning and Business were invited to share their views and working experience.

24. Seminar on Handling Substance Overdose

The Seminar was held on December 3, 2007. 166 participants including representatives from Macau joined the event. Speakers from medical, youth service as well as treatment and rehabilitation sectors shared their experience and issues of concern in handling overdose cases.

25. Beat Drugs Seminar 2008

The Council co-organized with the Hong Kong Medical Association the captioned seminar on January 5, 2008. The theme of the seminar was "Team Approach in the Community-based Management of Substance Abusers." Over 120 community doctors and social workers attended the event. The Council would further advocate for community based collaboration between the two sectors in helping substance abusers.

Presentation at Legco Panel

26. Provision of welfare services for high-risk families in Tin Shui Wai
The Council submitted and presented views at the Legco Welfare Panel on Oct 30, 2007. Suggestions over manpower and welfare planning, neighbourhood development, mental health service support and specialized service for new arrivals were raised.
27. Further discussion on prosecution of abusers
Analysis over the effectiveness of existing sentencing of batterers was raised. Further suggestions on strengthening judicial intervention in domestic violence were discussed in the Legco Subcommittee on Strategy and Measures to Tackle Family Violence on October 8, 2007. For instance, Witness support service at the Court, Referral for Batterer Intervention Programme with Bind Over Order, etc.
28. Child Development Fund
The Council submitted and presented views at the Legco Welfare Panel on January 14, 2008.