

Commission on Children's Child Protection Campaign officially launched (with photos/videos)

The Chief Secretary for Administration and Chairperson of the Commission on Children (CoC), Mr Chan Kwok-ki, hosted the Launching Ceremony of the Child Protection Campaign at Victoria House today (January 20). The Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse Ordinance will come into effect on January 20 next year. The event marked the one-year countdown to the commencement of the Ordinance and demonstrated the Government's determination to team up with relevant professional sectors and members of society to safeguard the well-being of children, and promote the message of "child protection is the responsibility of all" to members of the public.

In his welcoming remarks, Mr Chan said that the healthy growth, development and well-being of children rely not only on family nurturing and school education, but also on the collaborative efforts of the Government and all sectors of society. The Legislative Council passed the Ordinance in July last year, marking an important milestone of Hong Kong's efforts on child protection. Upon the commencement of the Ordinance, specified professionals in the social welfare, education and healthcare sectors are required to report serious child abuse cases for the purpose of early identification and intervention, thereby strengthening the efforts of child protection.

Mr Chan added that to complement the commencement of the Ordinance, the Government is actively preparing, together with the sectors, for the implementation of the mandatory reporting regime. These include the provision of training for mandated reporters, formulation of the Mandated Reporter Guide, an increase of emergency places for residential child care, and enhancement of professional support for child abuse victims and their families with a view to ensuring that the various support measures are properly put in place upon the commencement of the Ordinance. That way, the mandated reporters can discharge their statutory duties and children and families in need can receive appropriate and timely care. At the same time, the Government will strengthen the prevention of child abuse at the source. The Chief Executive announced in the 2024 Policy Address the setting up of four Community Parents and Children Centres on a pilot basis with a view to commencing operations progressively starting from 2026. These centres will promote parent-child interaction through play-based services, instil positive parenting skills in parents, render support for families with parenting needs, and refer families in need to various appropriate services of the Government and the community.

Following the launch of the Child Protection Campaign today, the Government will roll out a series of activities in phases. These include hosting seminars for relevant professions, promulgating the Mandated Reporter Guide and launching Module 2 of the Child Protection Online Training. The CoC will also hold public and stakeholder engagement activities. Mr Chan urged

professionals and all sectors of society to actively support and participate in promoting the mandatory reporting regime for child abuse and the messages for child protection, and work closely with the Government to create a comprehensive and effective safety net for children.

Mr Chan also officiated at a pledging ceremony and witnessed children present potted seedlings to professionals from 25 specified categories including those in the social welfare, education, and healthcare sectors. This symbolised the commitment of the professionals to protect children and promote their healthy and happy growth. Attendees joining the launching ceremony and the pledging session included the Vice-chairperson of the CoC and Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun; the Commissioner of Police, Mr Siu Chak-ye; the Under Secretary for Health, Dr Libby Lee; the Under Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs, Mr Clarence Leung; the Under Secretary for Education, Dr Sze Chun-fai; the Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Services), Mr Alex Wong; and the Consultant Community Medicine (Family and Student Health) of the Department of Health, Dr Chuang Shuk-kwan.

The launching ceremony was one of the stakeholder engagement activities of the CoC, with around 100 participants present, including children, Legislative Council Members, professionals from the social welfare, education, and healthcare sectors, as well as stakeholders closely related to children's welfare. The Convenor and Vice-convenor of the Working Group on Child Protection of the CoC, Ms Kathy Chung and Dr Rizwan Ullah respectively, together with two children, provided a briefing at the ceremony on the Child Protection Campaign, the key points of the Ordinance and relevant support measures, as well as the work on child protection of the CoC.



