

LCQ12: Domestic violence

Following is a question by the Hon Alvin Yeung and a written reply by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, in the Legislative Council today (April 29):

Question:

In recent months, my office has received a number of cases of assistance being sought which were related to domestic violence. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) Of the respective numbers of cases of assistance being sought and reports which were related to domestic violence, received by the Government in each month since January 2015, with a breakdown by District Council (DC) district;

(2) Of the respective numbers of cases in which the batterers of domestic violence were prosecuted and convicted in each of the past five years, with a breakdown by DC district; and

(3) Of the immediate measures put in place to prevent the problem of domestic violence from worsening during the Coronavirus Disease 2019 epidemic?

Reply:

President,

In consultation with the Security Bureau, my reply to Member's question is as follows:

(1) The breakdowns of domestic violence cases (including spouse/cohabitant battering cases and child protection cases) received by respective districts of the Family and Child Protective Services Units (FCPSUs) of the Social Welfare Department (SWD) between 2015-16 and 2019-20 are set out at Annex 1. SWD does not have breakdowns of domestic violence cases and reports by District Council (DC) districts. The breakdowns of domestic violence cases handled by the Police by police districts between 2015 and March 2020 are set out at Annex 2. The Police does not have breakdowns of domestic violence cases and reports by DC districts.

(2) The breakdowns of prosecution, conviction and sentence of "Domestic Violence (Crime)" cases between 2015 and 2019 are set out at Annex 3. The Government does not have breakdowns of such cases by DC districts.

(3) The Refuge Centres for Women, Family Crisis Support Centre and Multi-purpose Crisis Intervention and Support Centre operated by SWD-subsidised non-governmental organisations (NGOs) provide 24-hour temporary accommodation and support services for individuals and families (including victims of domestic violence). At the same time, the Victim Support Programme for Victims of Family Violence provides urgent support services to victims of domestic violence. The public may also report or refer cases in crisis through SWD's

24-hour hotline service (2343 2255). Social workers will provide immediate counselling, support and advice as well as arranging appropriate follow-up service for individuals/families in need. In case of domestic violence or children suspected of being harmed/maltreated, social workers will provide immediate outreaching and follow-up service. Furthermore, the Integrated Family Service Centres /Integrated Service Centres operated by SWD or NGOs, as well as the FCPSUs and Clinical Psychological Services of SWD provide urgent and essential services. These include, for instance, proactive contact by social workers of service units with service users by telephone to ensure that their welfare needs are properly addressed. In addition, SWD will strengthen messages of positive thinking and harmony at home through media channels such as television, radio and the internet, and step up publicity and public education efforts through different means with a view to encouraging people in need to seek help.

When handling domestic conflict reports, the Police will refer cases in need to SWD for follow-up actions once consent is sought from the parties concerned. SWD may arrange persons in need for admission to refuge centres or request immediate intervention by outreaching social workers, etc. For persons who refuse to accept referral services, the Police will provide a "Family Support Service Information Card", which was produced jointly by the Police and SWD, to facilitate the persons concerned to contact service agencies for assistance. To address the needs of ethnic minorities, the Police have translated the "Family Support Service Information Card" into 16 languages and uploaded them to the website of the Police Force. If a case is assessed as high risk, the Police will take the initiative to refer the case to SWD for follow-up actions.

The services mentioned above, including 24-hour/emergency services, have maintained normal operation during the epidemic.