

SWD deploys designated team to child care centre to follow up on suspected child maltreatment incident

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) continues to follow up on a suspected child maltreatment incident that took place in a residential child care centre in Mong Kok last December. A designated team, comprising social workers, nurses and personnel with experience in supervising child care centres, will be deployed by the SWD to the centre concerned starting from next Monday (January 17). The team, which will be stationed at the centre every day, will closely monitor the centre's daily operation on the ground to ensure that its operation measures up to the required service standard and that effective improvement measures have been put in place to provide children with proper care. The team will operate until the improvement measures and the operation of the centre meet the requirements of the SWD.

Since the incident, the SWD has taken a series of actions, including sending an interdisciplinary team comprising more than 20 clinical psychologists, nurses, social workers, etc, to the child care centre concerned on December 27, 2021, to conduct investigations, inspect the operation and work records of the centre, and observe the behaviour, health and emotional status of each of the 70 children in the centre to ensure that the children were in stable condition.

In addition, the SWD met with the executive committee and the management of the organisation which operates the service unit concerned on December 28, 2021, to receive a briefing by the organisation on its handling of the incident and follow-up actions.

The SWD has also stepped up inspections at the centre and continued investigations on the incident. Warning letters and directives for remedial measures were issued to the organisation, requesting it to strengthen its supervision and monitoring of frontline staff. The organisation is also required to submit a review report by January 25.

The SWD will continue to follow up on the incident in a serious manner. Subject to the investigation results on different fronts, the SWD may take further regulatory actions in accordance with the laws.