

SJ visits Tuen Mun

The Secretary for Justice, Ms Elsie Leung, paid a visit to Tuen Mun District this afternoon (November 26).

Ms Leung chose to visit the district because of its high percentage of public housing and because a large number of its residents are new immigrants. The district is also susceptible to a high incidence of domestic violence and most victims of these cases are women.

Ms Leung first arrived at Tuen Mun Hospital where she received a briefing by representatives of a number of departments involved in dealing with domestic violence, including the Social Welfare Department, the Police and the District Office (Tuen Mun).

She also met the representatives of Tuen Mun Hospital and Harmony House, a voluntary organisation providing services to victims of domestic violence.

During the briefing, Ms Leung learnt that in the first 10 months of this year, there were 63 domestic violence cases in the district, representing an increase of 12 cases over the 51 cases recorded in 2003. Among the cases this year, 83% were serious assaults.

Ms Leung said domestic violence was a complex issue that required care and tact on the part of all personnel concerned, and it also required an inter-disciplinary approach.

The Secretary also reminded the district personnel to pay due attention to the observations and recommendations as set out in the newly released Report of Review Panel on Family Services in Tin Shui Wai. She hoped that the Government departments concerned would strive to strengthen the existing mechanism in planning, delivering and supporting family services.

After talking to a number of domestic violence victims in a private meeting, Ms Leung said she was privileged to have the unique opportunity of meeting with them, and sharing with them not only their traumatic experiences but how they and other

women in similar situations could be assisted by the community.

The Secretary then visited the Wu King Community Centre of the Tuen Mun District Women's Association where a number of employment training courses were being conducted. Ms Leung also met a group of service recipients at the Centre. She was pleased to learn that with the new knowledge they had acquired in the various courses, they were now better-equipped to find a new job.

Ms Leung concluded her visit with a discussion with a group of district leaders and representatives, including the chairman and members of the Tuen Mun District Council.

"We had a frank exchange of views on a range of issues that were of concern to the district. I will convey these views to the relevant bureaus for appropriate follow-up actions," she said.

Ms Leung added that the resources made available to Tuen Mun should be used flexibly so as to give due emphasis to some local issues such as domestic violence and community-building.

Before joining the Government in 1997, Ms Leung was the legal adviser to a number of non-governmental organisations working on women's issues, including, among others, domestic violence. She has continued to show a keen interest in these issues.

Ends/Friday, November 26, 2004

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