

SHA: Territory-wide programme against youth drug abuse launches in August
(with photos)

The Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Tsang Tak-sing, said today (July 31) that the year-long Community Programme against Youth Drug Abuse would be launched in all the 18 districts starting from August.

Targeted at young people who are at risk or have abused drugs, the programme will be implemented by the 18 District Offices under the Home Affairs Department, with the assistance of the Social Welfare Department.

Mr Tsang said the programme would reach out to young people through the outreach network of non-governmental organisations. Various healthy activities that appeal to youngsters would be offered under the programme to help them make better use of their time and develop positive values to say no to drugs.

While visiting a halfway house set up by Operation Dawn Hong Kong in Wong Tai Sin, Mr Tsang said: “Young people often encounter different problems about family, study and interpersonal relationships when they are growing up. They will also meet various challenges and temptations. Helping young people nurture positive values towards life and providing support to them to help them resist drugs with strong determination are of paramount importance.

“The anti youth drug campaign is imperative. It calls for a concerted effort from all sectors of the community and every citizen to help young people keep away from drugs by showing care and love to them. The Community Programme against Youth Drug Abuse is a result of cross-sector co-operation. I am glad to see that the district councils and various professional and district organisations, as well as commercial organisations have joined the programme as supporting partners,” he said.

The programme’s supporting partners include district councils, the Hong Kong Medical Association, district organisations (such as sports associations, religious organisations, schools, parent-teacher associations, hospitals and non-governmental organisations) and commercial organisations.

Under the programme, a wide range of activities which appeal to youngsters (such as ball games, wushu, rock climbing, dancing, music and drama), and vocational training courses (such as beauty care, sales and hair dressing) will be offered.

Counselling services, fitness tests and treatment will also be arranged for young people if necessary.

Meanwhile, publicity and public education activities will be launched in the districts, including seminars and sharing sessions for parents and teachers to enhance their understanding of the causes of the youth drug problem, help them identify the physical symptoms of drug taking and ways to tackle the problem.

The Government has already allocated \$9 million to the 18 districts for implementing the programme.

Apart from the newly launched programme, the Home Affairs Department together with the 18 District Offices will organise more than 5,300 activities under this year's Summer Youth Programme, which include activities carrying the anti drug theme.

Mr Tsang's visit to the halfway house, together with some 20 young people, is one of the activities organised under the Central and Western District's Summer Youth Programme. The visit is aimed at enhancing the youths' understanding of the harmful effects of drugs and drug treatment, and encouraging them to learn to accept others.

Mr Tsang and the participating youngsters listened to the sharing by the residents of the halfway house. Mr Tsang said he was glad to learn that with sheer determination, the residents had successfully resisted drugs. He encouraged them to adopt a positive attitude towards life and paint their future bright with their heads up. He also urged the young participants to care more about their family and classmates and help spread the anti-drug message by setting a good example to their peers.

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