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## Response Statement

### Against Child Abuse welcomes the Report by The Law Reform Commission

ACA welcomes the Report released on 10 September 2021 by The Law Reform Commission of Hong Kong (LRC) on Causing or Allowing the Death or Serious Harm of a Child or Vulnerable Adult.

The LRC recommends the introduction of a new offence of “failure to protect a child or vulnerable person where the child's or vulnerable person's death or serious harm results from an unlawful act or neglect.”

ACA also agrees with the recommendation by LRC that the Government should review the maximum penalty for the offence of ill-treatment or neglect of a child under section 27 of the Offences against the Person Ordinance (Cap 212) with a view to increasing it as appropriate.

It is a long-awaited report since the Commission started working on the subject in 2006. Over the years, members of the society have painfully encountered tragic incidents.

The recommendation has taken “Child’s Best Interest” as core value. The Report reminds members of the society that Child Protection is a responsibility shared by all.

Legislation for the offence offers a higher degree of protection in situations where vulnerable children are not able to speak and fend for themselves. The recommendation offers incentives for early prevention and intervention before tragedies happen.

ACA hopes the Government accept the recommendation in the Report, fast-track it through the necessary procedures and have the law enacted. This will then be a step forward in the development of child protection in Hong Kong. Let us hope children will be protected, and that the proposed law, an effective deterrent to potential offenders, will not need to be invoked.

Against Child Abuse

11 September 2021