

Rescued child beggars can stay in Social Welfare homes

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PETALING JAYA: Children rescued from begging activities can be temporarily placed in shelter homes or places of safety run by the Social Welfare Department.

“There are many operations on begging activities carried out by the department - either routinely, ad hoc or with other agencies.

“If the children are involved in

begging activities, this will be managed either under the Child Act or the Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Anti Smuggling of Migrants Act 2007 (ATIPSOM),” it said in an e-mail interview.

The department was responding to queries by *The Star* on children being exploited for begging.

The Star yesterday reported about syndicates exploiting children by sending them to beg or sell trinkets such as religious books or

flowers in the streets of Kuala Lumpur, including Masjid India.

Bukit Aman CID Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants Division principal assistant director ACP Maszely Minhad had said those buying such items or giving donations to these children were only feeding the syndicates.

The division had carried out a special operation against street beggars during Ramadan, even busting the gangs at their residenc-

es in Ampang.

Those caught exploiting children could be charged under Section 14 of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants Act 2007, and face up to 20 years’ jail and a fine of up to RM1mil if convicted.

The department said under ATIPSOM, the enforcement officers could either be the police, Immigration or the Labour Department who would rescue the children to be placed in shelter homes

or places of safety run by it.

“In summary the department’s function is to provide shelter to these children,” it said.

It also said that under the Child Act, any person caught exploiting children for begging activities could be charged under Section 32 and face a fine of up to RM50,000 or jail of not more than 20 years or both and community work.

They might also be required to do community work, it said.