

For information  
on 19 February 2013

**Legislative Council  
Panel on Manpower  
and  
Panel on Welfare Services**

**Manpower Situation of Residential Care Homes for the Elderly**

**Purpose**

This paper informs Members of the manpower situation of residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) in Hong Kong.

**Background**

2. At present, manpower provision of all licensed RCHEs is bound by statutory requirements as stipulated in the Residential Care Homes (Elderly Persons) Ordinance (Cap. 459) and the Residential Care Homes (Elderly Persons) Regulation (Cap. 459A). For RCHEs offering subsidised places, they are subject to the service/contractual requirements as well. Details are elaborated in the ensuing paragraphs.

**(A) Statutory Requirements for all RCHEs**

3. The minimum staffing requirements of each type of staff of the respective type of RCHEs are set out in Schedule 1 of Cap. 459A. Details are as follows:

<b>Type of Staff</b>	<b>Type of RCHEs<sup>1</sup></b>		
	<b>Care and Attention Home (C&amp;A Home)</b>	<b>Aged Home</b>	<b>Self-care Hostel</b>
Home manager	1 home manager	1 home manager	1 home manager
Ancillary worker	1 ancillary worker for every 40 residents or part thereof between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m.	1 ancillary worker for every 40 residents or part thereof between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m.	1 ancillary worker for every 60 residents or part thereof between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m.
Care worker (CW)	a. 1 CW for every 20 residents or part thereof between 7 a.m. and 3 p.m.;  b. 1 CW for every 40 residents or part thereof between 3 p.m. and 10 p.m.;	No CW is required	No CW is required
	c. 1 CW for every 60 residents or part thereof between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m.		

---

<sup>1</sup> As at end of December 2012, there were a total of 750 licensed RCHEs, of which 731 were C&A homes, 18 were aged homes and 1 was self-care hostel.

Type of Staff	Type of RCHEs <sup>1</sup>		
	Care and Attention Home (C&A Home)	Aged Home	Self-care Hostel
Health worker (HW)	Unless a nurse is present, 1 HW for every 30 residents or part thereof between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m.	Unless a nurse is present, 1 HW for every 60 residents or part thereof	No HW is required
Nurse	Unless an HW is present, 1 nurse for every 60 residents or part thereof between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m.	Unless an HW is present, 1 nurse	No nurse is required

Note :As an additional requirement for a C&A home or an aged home, any two persons, being a home manager, an ancillary worker, an CW, an HW or a nurse, shall be on duty between 6 p.m. and 7 a.m.

4. Respective types of RCHEs should at all times meet the above minimum staffing requirements. For those RCHEs which provide nursing home places, they also have to be registered under the Hospitals, Nursing Homes and Maternity Homes Registration Ordinance (Cap. 165) enforced by the Department of Health and are required to meet the staffing standard under that Ordinance too.

**(B) Service / Contractual Requirements for RCHEs offering subsidised places**

Subvented / Contract RCHEs

5. Subvented/contract RCHEs, in addition to the minimum staffing standard as specified under Cap. 459A, are required to comply with the staffing provision under the “essential service requirements” of the Funding and Service Agreements (FSA) or the service contracts signed between the RCHE operators and the Social Welfare Department (SWD) respectively. Such staffing requirements include registered social worker, qualified nurse and professional therapist, e.g. physiotherapist (PT) or occupational therapist (OT). For subvented/contract RCHEs providing nursing home places, additional professional and paramedical provisions, for instance, medical practitioners, dispensers and dieticians are also required under FSAs /service contracts.

## Private RCHEs under the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme

6. Private RCHEs participating in the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme (EBPS) are required to have an enhanced staffing standard exceeding the minimum staffing standard under Cap. 459A. In addition, once a private RCHE participates in EBPS, the specified standard will apply to the entire home regardless of the number of places purchased by SWD. There are two categories of homes under EBPS, i.e. EA1 homes and EA2 homes. EA1 homes are subject to higher staffing standard requirements which include nurse and PT.

## **SWD's measures in increasing the manpower supply for RCHEs**

7. The Administration fully understands the manpower demand of the RCHE sector. To this end, SWD has put in place the following measures to increase the manpower supply with a view to enhancing the service quality of the sector:

### Enrolled Nurse (EN)

8. To alleviate the shortage of ENs in the welfare sector, SWD, in collaboration with the Hospital Authority, has implemented the EN Training Programme for the Welfare Sector (the Training Programme) since 2006. The training fee is fully sponsored by SWD and all trainees have to sign an undertaking to work for the welfare sector for at least two years after satisfactory completion of the training. By mid-February 2013, 12 classes under the Training Programme have been launched, providing a total of about 1 500 training places. As far as the first four classes are concerned, over 90% of the graduates have been employed to work in the welfare sector.

### Paramedical Staff

9. To alleviate the recruitment and retention difficulties of paramedical staff faced by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and EBPS EA1 homes, SWD sought an additional provision of \$285 million for providing additional funding for three years from 2009-10 to 2011-12 to enable NGOs and EBPS EA1 homes to offer more competitive salaries for recruitment and retention of paramedical staff or hire of such services. Additional resources of \$356 million was sought again for a further period of three years from 2012-13 to 2014-15 to continue such support to the sector. The unit subsidy of EA1 homes was raised in 2011-12 for the homes to employ staff or hire professional service to provide physiotherapy training and rehabilitation service to frail elders.

## OT and PT

10. With the support of the University Grants Committee, the student intakes of Bachelor of Science (Hons) OT and Bachelor of Science (Hons) PT programmes have been increased by 44 places (i.e. from 46 to 90 places) and 40 places (i.e. from 70 to 110 places) per cohort in the 2012-15 triennium. The Hong Kong Polytechnic University has also implemented a two-year entry level Master in Occupational Therapy (MOT) programme and a two-year entry level Master in Physiotherapy (MPT) programme from January 2012 onwards on a self-financing basis. To encourage graduates from the MOT and MPT programmes to join the welfare sector, SWD has implemented the Training Sponsorship Scheme through providing funding support for NGOs so that the NGOs could sponsor a total of 59 students enrolled in these two programmes. These 59 students have undertaken to serve the sponsoring NGOs for no less than two consecutive years immediately after graduation.

## HW

11. It is specified in Cap. 459 that only HWs registered under Cap. 459A can be employed as HW in RCHEs. To qualify for the HW registration, a person should have completed an approved training course and satisfy the Director of Social Welfare that he is a suitable person to be so registered. As of 1 January 2013, there were around 12 200 registered HWs in Hong Kong.

12. Training courses for HWs are being offered by different training bodies in Hong Kong. All these courses have been approved by the Director of Social Welfare in accordance with the requirement under Cap. 459A with standardised training content, training hours and format of assessment. As of 1 January 2013, there were 31 training bodies, including NGOs and tertiary institutions, organising 54 approved training courses for HWs for RCHEs. More than 1 500 HWs are trained by these training bodies annually to meet the manpower demand of the RCHE sector. In 2012-13, 16 out of the 54 approved courses were funded by the Employees Retraining Board (ERB) while others were offered on a self-financing basis.

## CW

13. According to Cap. 459A, CW means any person, other than an ancillary worker, HW or nurse, responsible for rendering daily and personal care to the residents. The job duties of CWs are to carry out the personal care schedule designed by a nurse or HW and to provide round-the-clock daily personal care services to the residents. There is no specific qualifications requirement for the

post of CW. As of 1 January 2013, around 8 600 CWs were employed by RCHEs in Hong Kong. Of these, some 4 900 were working in private RCHEs (about 57%) and around 3 700 in subvented, self-financed or contract RCHEs (about 43%).

14. Although there is no compulsory training for CWs required by law, CWs are encouraged to receive training relevant to their duties. In practice, SWD requires EBPS homes to ensure 75% of their CWs have received relevant training with a view to upgrading the service standards of these private homes.

15. Various training bodies provide training courses or topical training courses on elderly care for CWs. For instance, ERB offers training course on “Diploma in Health Worker Training”, “Certificate in Care Worker Training” and “Certificate in Elderly Home Care Training” for in-service CWs or interested persons. In 2012-13 (up to December 2012), about 1 300 trainees attended the above ERB training courses<sup>2</sup>. Separately, SWD and DH have been jointly providing training for RCHE care staff including CWs on a regular basis. About 2 100 care staff of RCHEs attend these training annually.

### **Other initiatives to help address the manpower shortage of the paramedical and care staff**

16. Apart from the above measures, the Administration has launched the following initiatives to help address the manpower shortage of the paramedical and care staff:

- (i) setting up of the Steering Committee on Strategic Review on Healthcare Manpower Planning and Professional Development (the Steering Committee): the Steering Committee, chaired by the Secretary for Food and Health, is conducting a strategic review of healthcare manpower planning and professional development in Hong Kong. It will put forward recommendations on how to cope with anticipated demand for healthcare manpower, strengthen professional training and facilitate

---

<sup>2</sup> There was no class of the course on "Certificate in Elderly Home Care Worker Training" during the said period.

professional development having regard to the findings of the strategic review; and

- (ii) development of the Qualifications Framework (QF) for the elderly services sector: the Education Bureau has assisted the elderly care service sector to set up an Industry Training Advisory Committee (ITAC) in February 2012 to implement QF in the sector. QF will help establish an accessible articulation pathway to promote lifelong learning with a view to enhancing the quality of the local workforce. Specifically, ITAC will draw up Specifications of Competency Standards for the sector, setting out the skills, knowledge and outcome standards required of employees in different functional areas, and providing a basis for course providers to design training courses to meet the needs of the sector.

### **Advice Sought**

- 17. Members are invited to note the content of this paper.

**Social Welfare Department  
February 2013**