

For information
on 23 July 2015

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
PANEL ON WELFARE SERVICES**

**Issues relating to Service Quality and Monitoring
of Private Residential Care Homes**

Purpose

This paper sets out the measures to enhance the service quality of and the monitoring of private residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) and residential care homes for persons with disabilities (RCHDs).

Overview

2. As at end-June 2015, there were 735 RCHEs in Hong Kong including 545 private RCHEs, 39 self-financing RCHEs, 127 subvented RCHEs and 24 contract RCHEs. These RCHEs altogether offered 73 449 places, serving about 61 000 elderly persons.

3. Also as at end-June 2015, there were 311 RCHDs in Hong Kong including 68 private RCHDs, 18 self-financing RCHDs and 225 subvented RCHDs. These RCHDs altogether provided 16 637 places, serving about 15 900 persons with disabilities.

Licensing System

4. The Social Welfare Department (SWD) administers a licensing system to regulate RCHEs under the Residential Care Homes (Elderly Persons) Ordinance (Cap. 459) (the RCHE Ordinance) and its subsidiary legislation, complemented by the Code of Practice for Residential Care

Homes (Elderly Persons) issued under section 22(1) of the RCHE Ordinance. SWD also administers a licensing system to regulate RCHDs under the Residential Care Homes (Persons with Disabilities) Ordinance (RCHD Ordinance) (Cap. 613) and its subsidiary legislation, complemented by the Code of Practice for Residential Care Homes (Persons with Disabilities) issued under section 23(1) of the RCHD Ordinance.

5. The two sets of Code of Practice set out the principles, procedures, guidelines and standards for the operation, keeping, management or other control of RCHEs and RCHDs respectively. They also set out detailed requirements in relation to the licence, building and accommodation, safety and fire precautions, floor space, furniture and equipment, management, staffing, health and care services, infection control, nutrition and meals, cleanliness and sanitation, social care, etc. The latest versions for these two sets of Code of Practice are available on SWD's website for public reference.

Measures to enhance the service quality and monitoring of private residential care homes in recent years

6. Measures to enhance the service quality and monitoring of private RCHEs and RCHDs in recent years are set out in paragraphs 7-26.

Enhanced Bought Place Scheme / Bought Place Scheme

7. SWD has since 1998 purchased places from RCHEs under the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme (EBPS) with a view to upgrading the service standard of private homes through enhanced service requirements in terms of staffing and space standards. This also helps increase the supply of subsidised places so as to reduce elderly persons' waiting time for subsidised care-and-attention places.

8. A major characteristic of EBPS is that once a private RCHE participates in the scheme, the same enhanced standards (e.g. staffing and bed spacing requirements) will apply to the entire home (including non-subsidised places), hence making the scheme an effective means of

encouraging private RCHEs to enhance their service quality. As at 30 June 2015, there were 143 private RCHEs participating in the scheme, providing a total of 7 895 subsidised places. Of these, 4 496 were EA1 places (with higher staffing and bed spacing requirements) and 3 399 EA2 places.

9. In order to further encourage RCHEs to participate in accreditation or assessment programmes, SWD awards additional scores to those RCHEs which have passed accreditation or assessment in the EBPS purchase exercise.

10. In October 2010, a four-year Pilot Bought Place Scheme was launched to encourage private RCHDs to upgrade their service quality by enhancing the staffing ratio and per capita space standards. The Government regularised the scheme in 2014-15, with the number of subsidised places in each participating private RCHD raised from 55% to 70% of its total recognised capacity. As at 30 June 2015, there were nine private RCHDs participating in the Bought Place Scheme (BPS), providing a total of 450 bought places.

Enrolled Nurse (EN) Training Programme

11. To alleviate the shortage of nurses in the welfare sector, the SWD has collaborated with the Hospital Authority since 2006 to organise the two-year EN (General) / EN (Psychiatric) Training Programme for the Welfare Sector. A total of 14 training classes have been organised so far, providing about 1 800 training places. Another 920 training places will be provided in the coming years. The training programme is fully subsidised by SWD. The trainees are required to sign an undertaking to work in the welfare sector for two consecutive years after graduation. Among the graduates of the first nine classes, over 90% joined the social welfare sector after graduation.

Navigation Scheme for Young Persons in Care Services

12. To encourage young persons to join the elderly long-term care service sector, the Government, with an allocation from the Lotteries Fund, launched a “first-hire-then-train” pilot project (the Pilot Project) in

2013. Young persons were hired to take up care work in RCHEs. Apart from receiving on-the-job training, these young employees were provided with subsidies from the Government to pursue a two-year part-time course. The Pilot Project was implemented in two phases, providing a total of 200 training places. Given the positive responses to the Pilot Project, the Government has earmarked \$147 million to launch the Navigation Scheme for Young Persons in Care Services (the Navigation Scheme) and to expand it to cover rehabilitation services, providing a total of 1 000 places in the coming few years. SWD has now selected five non-governmental organisations to implement the Navigation Scheme, with recruitment of young persons thereunder has started since July 2015.

Dementia Supplement (DS)

13. DS has been provided as additional support for elderly persons with dementia, as confirmed by the Psychogeriatric Teams (PGTs) or Community Psychiatric Teams (CPTs) of the Hospital Authority (HA), in subvented RCHEs and RCHDs as well as private RCHEs participating in EBPS. With the DS allocation, the RCHEs and RCHDs concerned may employ additional professional staff, including occupational therapists, nurses and social workers, etc., or purchase relevant professional services. In 2015-16, DS amounting to \$226.15 million, including \$219.8 million for RCHEs and \$6.35 million for RCHDs, is being provided for 261 eligible RCHEs and 21 eligible RCHDs in respect of about 5 700 beneficiaries.

Infirmity Care Supplement (ICS)

14. ICS is an additional resource to support frail elderly persons living in subvented RCHEs and RCHDs as well as private RCHEs participating in EBPS who have been medically assessed to be in need of infirmity care, as confirmed by the Community Geriatric Assessment Teams of HA. ICS is intended to be an allowance for existing staff (including physiotherapists, occupational therapists, nurses, health workers, care workers and workmen) or for the employment of qualified staff, including the purchase of professional services. In 2015-16, ICS amounting to \$113.96 million, including \$104.6 million for RCHEs and

\$9.36 million for RCHDs, is being provided for 131 eligible RCHEs and 9 RCHDs in respect of about 1 800 beneficiaries.

Training for enhancing the services of RCHEs and RCHDs

15. To enhance the knowledge and skills of RCHE staff in taking care of elderly residents, starting from 2008, the Licensing Office of Residential Care Homes for the Elderly (LORCHE) and the Department of Health (DH) have been providing training workshops for RCHE staff. Training topics include drug safety, palliative care, fall prevention, dementia care, skin care, prevention of elderly abuse, handling of accidents, specialised nursing care, management of work stress, etc. From 2008 to end June 2015, about 12 259 RCHE staff attended the training workshops.

16. In collaboration with the Centre for the Prevention of Health, DH and HA, LORCHE has been jointly organising training on infection control for RCHE frontline staff with topics on prevention of communicable diseases, updated knowledge on infection control, practical information on preventive measures and the reporting mechanism in handling disease outbreak in RCHEs. In 2014, 12 sessions were held and about 1 834 RCHE staff attended.

17. To address the needs for enhancing the management skills of operators and home managers of RCHEs, SWD is working out additional training packages in collaboration with the Employees Retraining Board (ERB) and the Qualifications Framework Secretariat covering topics on effective management, staff work ethics, crisis management etc. with a view to improving the management quality of RCHEs.

18. For RCHD staff, SWD, in collaboration with DH and relevant professionals, has been organising training programmes, covering subjects such as infection control, management of psychotropic drugs and understanding the social, recreational and developmental needs of persons with disabilities, etc. Infection control officers and relevant staff of RCHDs have been briefed with infection control, principles in handling psychotropic drugs, hygiene and health care issues. So far, about 800 RCHD staff have participated in these training programmes

annually.

19. To tie in with the implementation of the licensing system for RCHEs and RCHDs and to enhance the caring skills of the RCHE/RCHD staff, SWD invites training institutes to organise a series of health worker (HW) training courses applicable to RCHEs and RCHDs in accordance with relevant requirements. These include the HW Training Course for RCHEs/RCHDs, Bridging Courses for HWs, and the Combined HW Training Course which is applicable to both RCHDs and RCHEs. ERB also provides training places to encourage the existing RCHE / RCHD staff and HWs who are interested to work in RCHDs to enroll for the course on Module Certificate in Upgraded Caring Skills for HWs in RCHDs. Currently, 37 training institutes have obtained SWD's approval for organising 67 training courses applicable to RCHEs, whereas 21 training institutes have also obtained SWD's approval for organising 68 training courses applicable to RCHDs. Up till now, LORCHE has arranged registration for more than 19 120 HWs who completed the HW training courses in accordance with the RCHE Regulation. The Licensing Office of Residential Care Homes for Persons with Disabilities (LORCHD) has arranged registration for more than 2 240 HWs who completed the HW training courses in accordance with the RCHD Regulation.

Enhancing the Monitoring of RCHEs and RCHDs

20. To ensure that RCHEs comply with the licensing requirements, the LORCHE of SWD inspects RCHEs, pursuant to section 18 of the RCHE Ordinance. LORCHE comprises four professional inspectorate teams with 36 staff, including social work and nursing staff as well as officers seconded from the Buildings Department (BD) and the Fire Services Department (FSD). They conduct surprise inspections at RCHEs, covering aspects such as drug management, personal care services, infection control, handling of accidents, environmental hygiene, meals and staffing, etc. At present, LORCHE conducts on average seven surprise inspections at each private RCHE per year. In addition to the inspections conducted by these four teams, six officers at the rank of Senior Social Work Officer or Social Work Officer conduct audit checks through surprise inspections at the RCHEs randomly assigned to them by

computer to ensure the quality of inspections.

21. LORCHE adopts a risk-based approach in conducting inspections and accords priority to complaints handling. After conducting inspection at an RCHE, LORCHE will adjust the frequency of inspections having regard to the number and nature of non-compliant items identified during the inspection to ensure that the non-compliant items are timely rectified.

22. RCHEs are required by LORCHE to rectify irregularities detected during inspections. Depending on the severity of the irregularities, advisory or warning letters are issued to non-compliant RCHEs. Under the RCHE Ordinance, SWD may issue a direction to the RCHE to direct remedial measures. If the RCHE fails to comply with a direction given, prosecution action may be taken. From 2010-11 to 2014-15, as an annual average, LORCHE conducted 4 750 inspections at private RCHEs, and issued to them 2 950 advisory letters and 350 warning letters. During the same period, 31 private RCHEs were successfully prosecuted, involving 44 offences.

23. LORCHD is responsible for enforcing the provisions stipulated in the RCHD Ordinance, the RCHD Regulation and the Code of Practice for RCHDs. LORCHD comprises four professional inspectorate teams with 12 staff, including social workers and nurses as well as officers seconded from the BD and the FSD. The inspectorate teams conduct surprise inspections at RCHDs in respect of building safety, fire safety, health care and home management, so as to ensure that all RCHDs comply with the statutory requirements of staffing, space and layout, building structure, precautionary measures and quality of care, etc. In addition to the inspections conducted by these four teams, three officers at the rank of Senior Social Work Officer or Social Work Officer conduct audit checks through surprise inspections at the RCHDs randomly assigned by computer to ensure the quality of inspections. At present, LORCHD conducts on average seven surprise inspections at each private RCHD per year, and maintains communication with the sector to assist RCHDs in improving their service quality and meeting the relevant requirements.

24. LORCHD also adopts a risk-based approach in conducting inspections and accords priority to complaints handling. If an RCHD is not in full compliance with the licensing requirements, LORCHD will, depending on the severity of the irregularities, issue an advisory or warning letter to that RCHD, requiring it to make improvements within a specified period. Inspectors of LORCHD will follow up on the case and review the situation. Since the commencement of the RCHD Ordinance in November 2011 until 30 June 2015, LORCHD conducted 1 485 inspections at private RCHDs, with an annual average of about 540, and issued to them 524 advisory letters and one warning letter.

Financial Assistance Scheme for Private RCHDs

25. SWD has introduced the Financial Assistance Scheme (FAS) to facilitate private RCHDs issued with Certificates of Exemption to comply with the licensing requirements on building and fire safety. The FAS subsidises eligible private RCHDs to carry out improvement works and the maximum grant allocated to each private RCHD is 60% of the total recognised cost of the improvement works. As at 30 June 2015, 35 RCHDs submitted the FAS applications. SWD continues to closely liaise with these RCHDs to review possible plans, measures and works completion dates for completing the rectification works to meet the licensing requirements as soon as possible.

Other Measures

26. SWD also seeks to enhance the service quality and monitoring of RCHEs and RCHDs through establishing an information exchange mechanism between LORCHE/LORCHD and DH/HA for prompt identification of and follow-up on problem areas; promulgating guidelines on work practice for improving the operation and risk management of RCHEs and RCHDs; and uploading relevant information of the homes on its website to enhance transparency.

Advice Sought

27. Members are invited to note the content of this paper.

**Labour and Welfare Bureau
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