

Operational Guidelines on Emergency Placement in Residential Care Services for Elders

(1) Service Objectives

Emergency placement is provided in residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) and nursing homes (NHs) to offer temporary or short-term residential care service for elders. It serves the objective of preventing the elders from risks until their next-of-kin are located for the elders' restoration to families, or other alternatives are arranged.

The target group of the service is elders who require immediate short-term residential care placement on a temporary basis.

(2) Provision of Emergency Places

Emergency placement service is provided in subvented RCHEs and NHs in the form of designated places in the following types of service –

- (a) Nursing Home (NH);
- (b) Care & Attention (C&A) Home; and
- (c) Home for the Aged (H/A)¹.

List of these homes can be downloaded from SWD Homepage at <http://www.swd.gov.hk/> by clicking on Public Services, then Services for the Elderly and then Emergency Placement.

(3) Criteria for Admission

Elders aged 65 years or above² who meet the admission criteria of

¹ Emergency placement of Homes for the Aged (H/A) will be phased out when all RCHEs providing H/A emergency placement have started the programme to convert H/A places, including emergency places, into care and attention places providing continuum of care.

² Persons aged between 60 and 64 may apply if there is a proven need.

RCHE/NH³, the conditions (f) and (g) below, and one or more of the conditions (a) to (e) below may be accepted for emergency placement –

- (a) homeless without the prospect of immediate restoration to family; or
- (b) evicted (or facing imminent eviction) from the accommodations for various reasons; or
- (c) fit for discharge from hospital upon completion of medical treatment yet having difficulty in taking care of oneself or having no suitable care-givers to attend to; or
- (d) in acute immediate need of alternative placement due to relationship problem at existing residence and in weak health⁴ to the extent that immediate removal/transfer is necessary to avoid risks to lives, such as elder abuse cases; or
- (e) unable to be taken care of by care-givers owing to acute unforeseeable crisis situation such as hospitalisation or imprisonment of care-givers or sudden deterioration of the elderly person's health conditions which cannot be coped with by the care-givers and community support services with the result that the elderly person's continuous stay in his/her home will pose dangers to his/her health; and
- (f) certified free from contagious diseases; and
- (g) mentally fit for communal living and having no persistent tendency to violence, self-destruction/self-injury or disruptive behaviour.

Emergency placement of Care and Attention Homes caters for elders who have not yet reached the nursing home care level.

³ Referring workers may make reference to MDS-HC in determining the type of service required, although MDS-HC assessment is not necessary for admission to emergency placement.

⁴ Please refer to the respective criteria for admission to different types of residential service.

(4) Referral Procedures

- (a) The referring worker should contact the Superintendent or designated staff of the target RCHE/NH for checking the availability of emergency placement and discussion on the reasons for referral.

(The vacancy position of emergency places in individual homes can be viewed on the SWD Homepage at <http://www.swd.gov.hk/> by clicking on Elderly Service and then Emergency Placement Service. The vacancy position will be regularly updated by Elderly Branch/SWD based on notification of admission and discharge of cases from RCHEs/NHs providing emergency places.)

- (b) The referring worker should complete the Application Form for Emergency Placement Service for Elders (Form EP-1), and send to the target RCHE/NH by facsimile transmission as soon as possible. The application will take effect upon the RCHE/NH's receipt of the completed Form EP-1.
- (c) In the absence of a thorough assessment on the health conditions of the applicant for admission on an emergency basis, the referring worker should arrange for the applicant to receive chest X-ray and a simple medical examination and provide the report to the RCHE/NH within three working days. A medical enquiry form (MEF-A) can be downloaded from SWD homepage for admission purpose. More detailed examination may be required if the situation warrants. In case of difficulty, the referring worker may discuss with the RCHE/NH for further arrangement.
- (d) For special cases requiring late admission outside office hours, the referring worker should make prior arrangement with the home. Due to the urgency of these cases, admission of the elder to emergency placement should be completed as soon as possible, and in any case not later than three working days from the date of application.

(5) Duration of Stay

- (a) The period of stay should not exceed three months, other than very exceptional circumstances for which the referring worker would have to provide justifications as well as a prospective discharge plan. Emergency placement should not be taken as a solution to meeting the long-term placement needs of elders.
- (b) To apply for extension of stay in an emergency place, the referring worker should complete an application form (Form EP-2) and send to the home concerned 2 weeks before the expiry of the 3-month period, with a copy to Elderly Branch/SWD.

(6) Follow-up Actions

- (a) The referring worker is responsible for the welfare and discharge plan of the elder throughout the period while the latter is occupying an emergency place. The home concerned should be kept informed of any change in circumstances.
- (b) For cases reported to have lost the identity card or pending verification of identity, the referring worker is responsible for follow-up on related issues. Application for temporary cash grants from charitable/trust funds may be considered for elders who are lacking financial means to meet daily expenses during their stay in the RCHEs/NHs.⁵
- (c) In situations where the receiving RCHE/NH or referring worker encounters difficulties during the period when the elder is occupying an emergency place. Advice may be sought from Elderly Branch/SWD in the interpretation of guidelines whenever necessary.

⁵ There are four major charitable trust funds, namely Tang Shiu Kin & Ho Tim Charitable Fund, Li Po Chun Charitable Trust Fund, Brewin Trust Fund and Kwan Fong Trust Fund for the Needy, available at the service units of the Social Welfare Department and some subvented Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (applicable to Li Po Chun Charitable Trust Fund and Brewin Trust Fund). Application may be made through these service units, in accordance with the General Guidelines on Management of Charitable/Trust Funds.

(7) Notification of Admission and Discharge

To facilitate regular updating of the vacancy position of individual RCHEs/NHs, the receiving RCHE/NH should report admission and discharge of cases by completing Form EP-3 and Form EP-4 respectively. The forms should be sent to Elderly Branch/SWD by facsimile transmission within three working days.

(8) Fee-charging

Elders occupying emergency placement are exempted from payment of service fees for the first three months of stay, in order to allow adequate time for arrangement of financial and other forms of assistance, if required. Full payment will start from the fourth month onwards for the services they receive, according to the standard monthly fees for the respective types of home.

(9) Enquiry

For any enquiry relating to the service, please contact the Elderly Branch on telephone number 2892 5280 and 2892 5214.

Elderly Branch
Social Welfare Department
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