



Licensing Office of Residential Care Homes for the Elderly Scope of Service

1. The Residential Care Homes (Elderly Persons) Ordinance (hereunder named as the Ordinance), in full operation since 1 June 1996, provides for the regulation of residential care homes established for the care of elderly persons through a licensing scheme administered by the Director of Social Welfare. The purpose of the legislation is to ensure that the services received by residents in these homes are of standards that are beneficial to them physically, emotionally and socially.
2. Following the implementation of the licensing scheme, the Social Welfare Department established the Licensing Office of Residential Care Homes for the Elderly (hereunder named as LORCHE) in April 1995. Its duties include handling applications for licences/ renewal of licences for residential care homes for the elderly (hereunder named as RCHEs), monitoring the operation of RCHEs on an ongoing basis and providing guidance and advice to the operators of RCHEs to ensure that all RCHEs continuously comply with the licensing requirements stipulated in the Ordinance, its subsidiary legislation (namely the Residential Care Homes (Elderly Persons) Regulation) and the Code of Practice for Residential Care Homes (Elderly Persons) issued under the Ordinance. LORCHE comprises four professional inspectorate teams, responsible for conducting inspection in building safety, fire safety, health and care and social work.
3. LORCHE is also responsible for handling matters relating to health workers, which include:
 - vetting applications for organising health worker training courses submitted by training organizations;
 - establishing and enforcing a registration scheme for health workers under the Residential Care Homes (Elderly Persons) Regulation; and
 - monitoring the performance of health workers.
4. Apart from conducting routine inspection, LORCHE also enhances the monitoring and upgrading of service quality of RCHEs through various means, which include:
 - implementing the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme (EBPS) – through the purchase of places from private RCHEs to encourage private RCHEs to upgrade their service quality. The standards in space, staffing and health care services under EBPS are higher than those of the licensing requirements;
 - setting up notification mechanism with the Department of Health, the Hospital Authority and other relevant government departments for early identification and following up of problems of the RCHEs;
 - organising or promoting various training for the staff of RCHEs;
 - reviewing and updating the Code of Practice for Residential Care Homes (Elderly Persons) regularly;
 - issuing guidelines to RCHEs from time to time according to actual needs with a view to assisting RCHEs to improve their operational management and risk handling capability;
 - disseminating information on RCHEs to the public;
 - collecting views from the residents of RCHEs and their family members to identify room for improvement;
 - handling complaints against RCHEs and providing guidance and advice to RCHEs according to circumstances; and
 - taking prosecution actions against non-compliant RCHEs.
5. For enquiry or complaint on the service of RCHE, please contact LORCHE.
Office Hours: 8:45am to 6:00pm from Monday and Friday (except public holidays)
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