

Guidelines on Fees and Charges in Residential Care Homes for the Elderly

Operators and home managers of residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) shall strictly adhere to paragraphs 8.3 and 8.4 of Chapter 8 in the Code of Practice for Residential Care Homes (Elderly Persons) and the following guidelines on handling fees and charges –

- (1) RCHEs shall explicitly specify the amount (i.e. the exact amount per month/per time/ per item in HK dollar) of home fees and other charge items (including services or goods) and list the charges to set out clearly all the chargeable items and the charging criteria with the actual amount/unit cost [RCHEs are strictly prohibited from adopting a pricing method without specifying the actual amounts, such as “charging the total Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) (including Residential Care Supplement) payment as the home fee”, “charging a fee equivalent to the CSSA amount”, “charging a fee equivalent to the price under the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme (EBPS)/Pilot Scheme on Residential Care Service Voucher for the Elderly (the Voucher)”, etc.]. RCHEs should also display a clear list of charges at prominent places in the RCHEs to facilitate access of residents, family members and other people.
- (2) RCHEs shall give the latest schedule of fees and charges to the residents and/or their guardians/guarantors/family members/relatives prior to admission and clearly explain to them details of the charges.
- (3) RCHEs shall state the following items clearly in the admission agreement –
 - (a) fee-charging regulations of the RCHE;
 - (b) home fees payable by the resident (i.e. the exact amount per month in HK dollar) and the specific amounts (i.e. the exact amount per month/per visit/per service/ per item in HK dollar) for items of payable fees for different services/goods (e.g. transportation fees for attending medical appointment, escort fees for attending medical treatment, dressing charges, diaper fees, nutritional milk product charges, air-conditioning fees, etc.) and the detailed information of such charges;
 - (c) arrangement of charging a deposit;
 - (d) deadline for payments and arrangement for handling overdue payments;
 - (e) fee-charging arrangement for residents with long-term hospitalisation;
 - (f) arrangement for collection/refund of payment for discharge (e.g. leaving the RCHE, death, etc.), including the home fee/deposit/other paid fees, non-refundable fees and the processes and procedures for refund of payment; and
 - (g) arrangement for fee adjustment, etc.
- (4) During the procedures of admission, RCHEs shall explain clearly all the terms in the admission agreement, in particular those in relation to collection/refund of payment, to the residents and/or their guardians/guarantors/family members/relatives.

- (5) The admission agreements shall be signed by RCHEs and the residents and/or guardians/guarantors/family members/relatives for confirmation. The residents/guardians/guarantors/family members/relatives who sign(s) the admission agreements shall have sufficient cognitive ability to state that they understand and accept the contents and conditions of the agreement. Any revision (including the formulation of new payable items and fee adjustment) shall be effective only after being signed and confirmed by the RCHEs and the residents and/or guardians/guarantors/family members/relatives. The follow-up arrangement in the case of the residents/guardians/guarantors/family members/relatives disagreeing to the RCHEs' proposed fee adjustment should also be stated in the admission agreements.
- (6) RCHEs shall provide the residents and/or guardians/guarantors/family members/relatives with a copy of the signed admission agreements for their retention.
- (7) Upon receipt of payment, RCHEs shall immediately issue an official receipt bearing the name and/or business stamp of the RCHEs to the residents/guardians/guarantors/family members/relatives that indicates clearly the payer, date of payment, payee, items of payment, payment period and amount paid. RCHEs should properly keep records of different payments made by the residents, amounts paid by the RCHE on the residents' behalf and receipts, etc.
- (8) RCHEs may encourage residents to pay home fee by autopay for clear transactions and maintenance of records.
- (9) Residents receiving CSSA payment or their appointees are obliged to keep proper management of the CSSA payment received for paying home fees and other charges. In case of non-payment of home fees and other charges by the residents receiving CSSA payment or their appointees, RCHEs may contact the respective staff of the social security field units of the Social Welfare Department, which the latter will recover and deduct the overpayment or proceed with other appropriate arrangements.
- (10) RCHEs should keep clear, accurate records of each resident's care necessities and consumables (e.g. diaper usage, including the number of changes and quantities) and ensure that the fees charged to residents are calculated correctly. In general, RCHE's should charge fees on the same standards for all residents (including recipients of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance). Moreover, RCHEs should clearly inform residents and/ or guardians/ guarantors/ family members/ relatives that they have the right to purchase the required necessities for the resident by themselves.

- (11) RCHEs should inform the affected residents and/or their guardians/guarantors/family members/relatives in writing of any proposed increase in fees or charges for any service or goods (including monetary adjustment due to inflation or change of residents' health condition) at least 30 days prior to the effective date and shall be effective only after being signed and confirmed by the RCHEs and the residents and/or guardians/guarantors/family members/relatives.

- (12) RCHEs are forbidden to draw on the long-term supplement and/or the additional standard rate payments (if applicable) released to CSSA recipients for supplementing their home fees and/or service charges.

