

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.

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 above¹ who meet the admission criteria of RCHE/NH², the conditions (f) and (g) below, and one or more of the conditions (a) to (e) below may be accepted for emergency placement –

¹ Persons aged between 60 and 64 may apply if there is a proven need.

² 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.

- (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 health³ 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.

(4) Referral Procedures

- (a) The referring worker should click the link to “Vacancy Enquiry System for Residential Respite Service for Persons with Disabilities, Residential

³ Please refer to the respective criteria for admission to different types of residential service.

Respite Service for the Elderly and Emergency Placement for the Elderly” (<https://www.vesrrsep.swd.gov.hk>), for vacancy information of Emergency Places in subvented residential care homes for the elderly and subvented nursing homes, and contact the Superintendent or designated staff of the target RCHE/NH to confirm the availability of emergency placement, and discuss the reasons for referral and suitability for admission.

- (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) 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 :
- Due to the urgency of these cases, the referring worker should make prior arrangement with the home while the admission of the elderly persons 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.
 - For elderly persons or their families in urgent need of short-term residential care service during non-office hours, they may consider the Residential Respite Service for the Elderly **instead of Emergency Placement for the Elderly**, and approach the private residential care homes for the elderly under the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme providing designated residential respite place for the arrangement with a daily fee of \$62. Non-office hours are (i) Monday

to Saturday, from 5pm to 9am of the following day, and (ii) Sunday and Public Holidays, from 9am to 9am of the following day.

(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.⁴

⁴ 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.

- (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.

(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 through the “Vacancy Enquiry System for Residential Respite Service for Persons with Disabilities, Residential Respite Service for the Elderly and Emergency Placement for the Elderly” (<https://www.vesrrsep.swd.gov.hk>).

(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 2961 7252 and 2961 7556.

Elderly Branch
Social Welfare Department
January 2022