

Operational Guidelines on Day Respite Service for the Elderly

(1) Introduction

All elderly day respite service units subvented by the Social Welfare Department (SWD) must make use of designated places or casual vacancies to provide day respite service for the elderly.

Day respite service for the elderly is a support service for carers aiming to provide temporary day care for elderly persons living in the community, thereby relieving the stress of the carers, and encouraging and helping elderly persons to age in place.

Service units providing day respite service for the elderly include subsidised Day Care Centres/Units for the Elderly¹ (DEs/DCUs); private residential care homes for the elderly² (RCHEs) under the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme (EBPS) providing designated residential respite service (including day respite service); and recognised service providers³ (RSPs) participating in the Community Care Service Voucher (CCSV) for the Elderly Scheme (CCSV Scheme) providing day respite service for the elderly. A list of these service units is available on the SWD website

(https://www.swd.gov.hk/en/pubsvc/elderly/cat_careersupp/drrr/dayrespite/).

(2) Target Service Users

Elderly persons who require short-term day care and meet the following conditions can be accepted for day respite service:

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- ¹ Some subsidised DEs/DCUs have designated day respite places (including value-added places committed by the operators in their proposals). At the same time, all subsidised DEs/DCUs shall make use of casual day care vacancies to provide day respite service.
 - ² Private RCHEs under the EBPS providing day/residential respite service for the elderly shall provide day respite service for elderly persons in need when vacancies arise in their designated residential respite places.
 - ³ RSPs under the CCSV Scheme providing day respite service for the elderly shall provide day respite service for elderly persons in need when vacancies arise in their day care centre service places.

- (1) aged 60 or above living in the community and not receiving residential care services;
- (2) in need of general personal care and/or limited nursing care service;
- (3) physically and mentally fit for communal living; and
- (4) the health condition and self-care ability meet the level of personal and/or nursing care rendered by the centres/units/residential homes that provide day respite service.

Users of day respite service do not need to be assessed under the Standardised Care Need Assessment Mechanism for Elderly Services and there are no restrictions on their living districts.

(3) Service Provision

To encourage more elderly persons in need to use the service, day respite service for the elderly may be applied for and used on a recurring basis. In general, an elderly person may use a cumulative maximum of 42 days of service within the preceding 12 months, which may be split into separate periods. Where an elderly person requires an extension of respite service due to special circumstances, the service unit concerned shall consult the SWD for discretionary consideration.

(4) Service Hours

Service units provide day respite service for the elderly during the following hours:

Service unit	Service hours
Subsidised DEs/DCUs	8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Mondays to Saturdays (excluding public holidays) (Note: Some DEs/DCUs provide extended hours service.)

Private RCHEs under the EBPS providing designated residential respite service (including day respite service)	8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Mondays to Sundays (including public holidays)
RSPs under the CCSV Scheme providing day respite service for the elderly	8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Mondays to Saturdays (excluding public holidays) (Note: Some RSPs provide extended hours service.)

(5) Application Procedures

- Elderly persons and/or their carers can directly approach the relevant service units for enquiries and applications, or be referred by social workers of Integrated Family Service Centres/Integrated Services Centres, Medical Social Services Units, elderly service units (such as District Elderly Community Centres and Neighbourhood Elderly Centres), or the Designated Hotline for Carer Support (Carer Hotline) (182 183).
- Elderly persons who wish to use day respite service provided by private RCHEs under the EBPS or RSPs under the CCSV Scheme may submit their applications one month before the intended date of service at the earliest. Where an elderly person needs to make a booking earlier due to special circumstances, the RSP may exercise discretion in accommodating the request. To support elderly persons and their carers in times of urgent needs, service units shall arrange immediate day respite service placements whenever casual vacancies are available.
- No medical examination is required for day respite service provided by subsidised DEs/DCUs or RSPs under the CCSV Scheme.
- Before using day respite service provided by private RCHEs under the EBPS, elderly persons are required to undergo a medical examination conducted by a registered medical practitioner, who shall complete the Medical Examination Form for Residents in Residential Care Homes for the Elderly⁴. In urgent or special circumstances where the elderly person is unable to undergo the medical examination prior to receiving the service,

⁴ RCHEs shall keep the medical examination records on file for the duration of their validity, so that they may be used if the elderly person returns for the service in future.

the RCHE should first provide the day respite service and arrange for the service user to complete the medical examination within three calendar days.

(6) Fees

Service Unit	Fee⁵
Subsidised DEs/DCUs, and private RCHEs under the EBPS providing day respite/residential respite service for the elderly	\$41.5 per day (The fee is calculated based on the number of days of service used. Any part of a day will be counted as one full day.)
RSPs under the CCSV Scheme providing day respite service for the elderly	\$21 per session (The fee is calculated based on the number of sessions attended. Each session lasts five hours. Any period of less than five hours will be counted as one full session.)

Adjustments to the above fees shall be subject to the latest announcement issued by the SWD.

(7) “Vacancy Enquiry System for Respite Services/Emergency Placement” (Enquiry System)

The SWD has set up an online Enquiry System (<https://www.ves.swd.gov.hk/en>) to facilitate individuals in need/referring social workers in checking the availability of respite service places at any time. Service units shall proactively

⁵ Service users are not required to pay a deposit or make a payment in lieu of notice of service withdrawal. The service fee already covers basic day care and nursing services for the elderly, including meal services (breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks), rehabilitation exercises, personal and nursing care, and all incidental items and services provided as appropriate, etc. If a service unit charges for additional services, care items or consumable items required to meet an elderly person’s special personal care needs, such additional charges should not include general services and basic facilities that are provided under the day respite service. The service unit must ensure that all information provided is accurate and transparent, clearly specifying all charge items and related details, so that service users and their carers, caseworkers, the SWD, and the public are informed of the relevant arrangements, and service users can make informed choices on whether to purchase additional services or items.

update the vacancy information on the Enquiry System in a timely manner (i.e. within one working day), so that applicants/referring social workers have access to accurate information.

(8) Points to Note

To ensure that elderly persons and their carers receive appropriate support, all service units shall take note of and comply with the following requirements:

- (1) **Streamline the application procedures as far as possible**, for example, by conducting assessments via telephone or video call, without requiring a prior in-person meeting with the service applicant;
- (2) **Applicants** of day respite service provided by subsidised DEs/DCUs or RSPs under the CCSV Scheme **are not required to undergo medical examination**. For day respite service provided by private RCHEs under the EBPS, if applicants **experience difficulties in completing the medical examination** prior to receiving the service, the **RCHEs should proactively provide the necessary assistance** so that they can access the respite service in a timely manner. In urgent or special circumstances where the elderly person is unable to undergo the medical examination prior to receiving the service, the RCHE should first provide the day respite service and arrange for the service user to complete the medical examination within three days. Service units **should not impose additional examinations** (such as chest X-rays) **beyond the basic medical examination**. Justifications should be provided, and prior approval from the SWD should be obtained if additional examinations are required;
- (3) Service units should **make good use of the applicants' medical records, including those in the Electronic Health Record Sharing System**, to understand the applicants' medical history and care needs, and, where feasible, use such records as a substitute for additional medical examinations;
- (4) **Provide regular training to frontline staff** to ensure that they can respond

to enquiries in a friendly and professional manner and provide accurate information on vacancy status, application procedures and service details;

- (5) **Proactively update the vacancy information on the “Vacancy Enquiry System for Respite Services/Emergency Placement” in a timely manner** so that applicants have access to accurate information;
- (6) **Fully utilise designated respite places and casual vacancies** to provide respite services;
- (7) **Properly maintain all application information**, as well as records of applications processed, accepted or rejected by the service units;
- (8) **Establish a pre-registration mechanism** for applicants to complete registration procedures in advance, and set up a waiting list for respite services so that waitlisted applicants can be notified immediately when vacancies arise, thereby making good use of vacant service places;
- (9) **Arrange transport for service users.** Service units with their own vehicles should, as far as possible, use them to provide transport for respite service users. Service units without vehicles should **proactively seek assistance from the Carer Hotline 182 183** to provide transport subsidies and/or escort services for service users in need; and
- (10) Step up the publicity and promotion of respite services by regularly **organising visits and experiential activities in collaboration with district organisations/service units**, so as to enhance carers’ understanding of and confidence in respite services, and to allow the elderly persons concerned to adapt to the respite service environment at an early stage, thereby encouraging them to make use of respite services.

Elderly Branch
Social Welfare Department
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