

# Government to introduce incentive scheme to encourage provision of residential care homes for persons with disabilities in new private developments

A spokesman for the Labour and Welfare Bureau today (December 13) said that an Incentive Scheme to Encourage Provision of Residential Care Homes for Persons with Disabilities in New Private Developments (Incentive Scheme for RCHDs) will be introduced on December 20 to provide incentives for private developers to provide RCHDs in their new private developments to increase the supply of RCHDs.

The spokesman said, "Despite the Government's ongoing efforts to increase the provision of subsidised residential care places through different measures, there is still a long-standing shortage of RCHDs. With the ageing population, the number of applicants on the waiting list and the waiting time for subsidised RCHD places are expected to continue to increase. On the other hand, with the ageing population of residents in RCHDs, their service needs become more uniform and more similar to those of residents in residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs), allowing possible economy of scale in operating RCHDs. In view of this, the Government has decided to model on the existing Incentive Scheme to Encourage Provision of RCHE Premises in New Private Developments for private RCHEs, and launch a similar scheme for RCHDs to incentivise private developers to provide RCHDs in new private developments, with a view to helping improve the waitlisting situation of subsidised RCHD places in the long run."

Under the Incentive Scheme for RCHDs, there are standing parameters. Private developers, in the course of land transactions relating to lease modification, land exchange or private treaty grant for new private developments (excluding industrial developments), will be exempted from payment of land premium for one eligible RCHD premises in each development project, subject to a total maximum gross floor area (GFA) of the RCHD premises of 5 400 square metres.

During the first three years of the Scheme, the Government will also pilot the enhanced parameters. There will be no limit on the number of RCHD premises eligible for land premium payment exemption in each development project, and the maximum total GFA of RCHDs will be relaxed from 5 400 sq m to 12 000 sq m or 10 per cent of the total permissible GFA under lease, whichever is the greater, and the total GFA of the eligible RCHD premises will be exempted under lease and will not be counted in the original total GFA of the entire project under lease, allowing the developers to use the original GFA for other purposes. The enhanced parameters will be reviewed after three years.

Apart from introducing the Incentive Scheme for RCHDs, the Government will continue to make its best endeavours to increase the supply of subsidised RCHD places through different measures. Relevant measures include reserving premises equivalent to about 5 per cent of the total domestic GFA in future public housing development projects for different welfare uses, on the premise that the public housing supply and other ancillary facilities will not be affected; developing government buildings with different types of welfare facilities as well as stand-alone welfare blocks on suitable "Government, Institution or Community" sites; incorporating the population-based planning standard of residential care services for persons with disabilities in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines; and incorporating land sale conditions in suitable land sale sites to require private developers to construct RCHDs, and return such RCHDs to the Social Welfare Department (SWD) as Government Accommodation, etc.

The Lands Department and the SWD will issue a Practice Note and a Guidance Note respectively later this month to help the industry understand the details of the Incentive Scheme for RCHDs.