

Special arrangements for subsidised welfare services and services of Social Welfare Department

In view of the latest situation, the Government has announced that the special work arrangement for government departments will be extended up to and including February 23 in order to reduce social contacts and the risk of the spread of the novel coronavirus in the community. A spokesperson for the Social Welfare Department (SWD) today (February 13) announced the special arrangements for the welfare services subsidised by the SWD and its own services from February 17 to March 1.

Details of the special arrangements are as follows:

(1) All aided child care centres, day care centres for the elderly, sheltered workshops, integrated vocational rehabilitation services centres, integrated vocational training centres and day activity centres will suspend their service delivery. These centres will, however, remain open depending on the situation to serve those in special need. Individual service users who have the need for the services mentioned may contact the centres or service units concerned in advance.

(2) Apart from (a) and (j), which will be provided as normal, the other services will be provided on a limited scale as stated below:

- a. All residential care services;
- b. Integrated Family Service Centres (only providing casework service);
- c. Integrated Services Centres (only providing casework service);
- d. Short-term Food Assistance Service;
- e. Integrated Home Care Services (only providing meal, escort, nursing and administration of medicine services);
- f. Enhanced Home and Community Care Services (only providing meal, escort, nursing and administration of medicine services);
- g. Home Care Service for Persons with Severe Disabilities (only providing escort, nursing and administration of medicine services);
- h. Integrated Support Service for Persons with Severe Physical Disabilities (only providing escort, nursing and administration of medicine services);
- i. Visiting Medical Practitioner Service for Residential Care Homes;
- j. Hotline services; and
- k. Humanitarian Assistance for Non-refoulement Claimants.

(3) Centre-based services subsidised by the SWD, such as district elderly community centres, neighbourhood elderly centres, social and recreational centres for the disabled, integrated children and youth services centres, children and youth centres and community centres, will not be open to the public to reduce the risk of infection arising from gatherings of people. These centres will, however, provide services on a limited scale (such as

meal services provided by elderly centres).

(4) For other services not covered by (1) to (3) above, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) operating them may decide whether to continue to provide them under their respective Funding and Service Agreements having regard to their circumstances.

These arrangements should continue up to and including March 1, except for aided child care centres which will basically suspend their service delivery as stated above up to and including March 15. NGOs should keep their clients informed of their specific arrangements.

Regarding the SWD's own services, while departmental hotline services and services of Tuen Mun Children and Juvenile Home will be in operation as normal, other services such as Integrated Family Service Centres, Family and Child Protective Services Units and Social Security Field Units will only be provided on a limited scale (e.g. groups and programmes, as well as extended hours service, will be suspended). To reduce the risk of infection arising from gatherings of people, service users are advised to contact the staff of the service units by telephone in advance, so that interviews can be scheduled as appropriate. Members of the public may call the hotline number 2343 2255 for enquiries.