

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

A spokesperson from the Social Welfare Department (SWD) today (July 14) said that SWD's units providing direct services to members of the public, including social security field units, will continue with their normal services, but services which may cause the gathering of people and increase the risk of infection will be suspended. Regarding the welfare services subsidised by the SWD, details of the arrangements from July 15 are as follows:

(1) All aided child care centres, day care centres or units 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 a need for these services may contact the centres or service units concerned in advance.

(2) Apart from (a) and (j) which are provided as normal, the other services will be provided on a limited scale as stated below, with groups (except those conducted through visual or online means) and mass programmes suspended:

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

Areas within the above service units designated for public use, such as resource corners and game corners, will temporarily be closed.

(3) Centre-based services subsidised by the SWD, such as district elderly community centres, neighbourhood elderly centres, social and recreational centres for persons with disabilities, integrated children and youth services centres, children and youth centres and community centres, will only operate on a limited scale (such as meal service provided by elderly centres and standardised care need assessment for elderly services) in order to reduce the risk of infection arising from the gathering of people. Groups (except those conducted through visual or online means), mass programmes and drop-in service will not be provided at this stage.

(4) Operators of pre-school rehabilitation services (including special child care centres) may arrange appropriate modes of individual training, such as centre-based training, e-learning and home training, for service users having regard to their circumstances and their parents' preference. Special child care centres, though with classroom training and child care service suspended, will remain open depending on the situation to serve those in special need.

(5) The SWD-subsidised multi-disciplinary outreaching support teams for the elderly and professional outreaching teams for private residential care homes for persons with disabilities will stop providing rehabilitation training and social functions at residential care homes.

(6) For other services not covered by (1) to (5) above, non-governmental organisations operating them may decide whether to continue to provide them under their respective Funding and Service Agreements having regard to their circumstances.

The aforementioned arrangements will continue until further notice. Service operators should keep their service users informed of the latest arrangements and provide suitable personal protective equipment for their staff having regard to the relevant guidelines issued by the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health. They should step up measures to prevent communicable diseases, including keeping the premises clean, requiring service users and staff to wear masks and to wash hands with alcohol-based handrub, and enhancing measures on the screening of body temperature.

Regarding the SWD's own services, the SWD will continue to provide its services through various means. However, services which may cause the gathering of people and increase the risk of infection, such as groups (except those conducted through visual or online means), mass programmes, resource corners and game corners, will be suspended. Service users may call the hotline number 2343 2255 for enquiries.

The SWD will continue to monitor the situation and work with stakeholders, with a view to providing public services for the needy as circumstances permit.