

SWD announces restricted visiting arrangement for RCHs and RCHDs

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) announced today (May 6) that, in light of the latest epidemic situation, a restricted visiting arrangement will be implemented starting from May 13 in the residential care homes for the elderly and the residential care homes for persons with disabilities, on the premise that infection-preventive measures are observed to protect the health of residents and staff members of residential care homes (RCHs).

The persons-in-charge of the RCHs must ensure that, on the day of the visit, there are no residents or staff members having infected with COVID-19 or having been identified as close contacts. Except for official visitors, the RCHs must confirm that the visitors and the residents concerned have complied with relevant requirements in order to conduct the visit. Relevant records should also be kept by the RCHs. The relevant requirements are listed below:

(A) Visitors

- must have completed at least two doses of COVID-19 vaccine and present records to the RCHs; and must have obtained negative results from COVID-19 rapid antigen tests (RAT) (please refer to www.coronavirus.gov.hk/rat/eng/rat.html) conducted at the designated area of the RCHs prior to the visit; and
- if either the visitor or the resident concerned has not taken COVID-19 vaccine due to health reasons with written proofs provided by doctors, must have obtained negative results from polymerase chain reaction-based nucleic acid tests for COVID-19 within 48 hours as well as negative RAT results conducted at the designated area in the RCHs prior to the visit.

(B) The residents concerned

- must have completed at least two doses of COVID-19 vaccine, or have not taken COVID-19 vaccine due to health reasons with written proofs provided by doctors.

For those visitors/residents concerned who are recovered patients of COVID-19 within three months (starting from the 14th day after receiving confirmation of infection), they will be exempted from the above vaccination and/or testing requirements when they conduct the visits.

Completion of a COVID-19 vaccination course in general refers to having received two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine at least 14 days prior to the visit. For persons previously infected with COVID-19, completion of a vaccination course means having received one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine at least 14 days prior to the visit. For persons who received COVID-19 vaccines in places outside Hong Kong and have received all of the recommended dose(s) of a COVID-19 vaccine at least 14 days prior to the visit, they will also be

regarded to have completed the vaccination course of the relevant COVID-19 vaccine, subject to the vaccine used being included on the list of vaccines recognised for specified purposes as published on www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/list_of_recognised_covid19_vaccines.pdf.

In addition, for persons who need to conduct emergency visits based on compassionate grounds but did not complete/have not completed the COVID-19 vaccination course or have not obtained negative results from polymerase chain reaction-based nucleic acid tests for COVID-19 within 48 hours, they must obtain negative results from RAT conducted in the designated area of the RCHs before the visit. They are also required to submit negative test results from polymerase chain reaction-based nucleic acid tests for COVID-19 to the RCHs within two days after the visit.

RCHs are reminded to continue to enhance their communication with the residents and their relatives on the visiting arrangement and relevant measures. They should also visit the dedicated webpage on COVID-19 (www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/index.html) from time to time to keep a close watch on the Government's latest public health information.