

SWD highly concerned about incident of suspected abuse of service users by RCHD staff

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) stated today (October 23) that it is highly concerned about an incident of suspected abuse of service users by a staff member of a residential care home for persons with disabilities (RCHD). The RCHD and the organisation concerned have been requested to conduct a thorough investigation and submit improvement plans to avoid similar incidents from happening again and protect the well-being of service users.

The subject RCHD submitted special incident reports to the Licensing Office of Residential Care Homes for Persons with Disabilities of the SWD in August, reporting that a male staff member was suspected of having abused two service users while he was on duty. The RCHD had made a report to the Police and terminated the employment of the relevant staff member. The male staff member concerned had been arrested by the Police. Legal proceedings are underway.

The SWD took immediate follow-up actions upon noting the incident, including deployment of officers to conduct an unannounced inspection at the RCHD as well as requesting the operator to handle the incident in a serious manner and suitably follow up on the emotional and welfare needs of the two victims and their families.

To express deep concern over the incident, the Labour and Welfare Bureau and the SWD met with the Council of Management and the management of the operator and received a briefing about the handling of the incident. A warning letter has also been issued by the SWD to the operator, which is required to submit a detailed investigation report and implement a series of improvement measures to ensure proper care and protection for the service users and prevent similar incidents. These measures include a manpower review by the operator, enhancement of supervision by management officers on the operation of the RCHD, provision of strengthened guidance and training for frontline staff and persistent supervision over the work ethics of staff members.

The SWD noted that the operator has formed an independent review committee to look into its measures to protect service users. The SWD looks forward to the early completion of the review and the implementation of the improvement measures in a serious manner.

To enhance RCHDs' vigilance and raise the understanding of RCHD staff members on the prevention and handling of abuse incidents, the SWD hosted a sharing session on October 9 for management officers and staff members of all RCHDs on protecting residents from being abused. Relevant training will continue to be provided to the staff of RCHDs. Meanwhile, the SWD has strengthened the requirement on RCHDs' monitoring and review of CCTV to

further safeguard the well-being of the service users.

The SWD will continue to monitor the operation and service quality of the RCHD concerned and urge the RCHD to earnestly implement the improvement measures.