

“Vaccine pass” arrangement for staff members of welfare service units subsidised or subvented by SWD

In view of the growing number of infection cases involving mutant strains of COVID-19 with high transmissibility in the world, the Government has implemented the "vaccine pass" arrangement in government buildings and offices starting from February 16. The Social Welfare Department (SWD) today (February 18) announced that the "vaccine pass" arrangement will be implemented among staff members of the welfare service units subsidised or subvented by the SWD in two phases.

The "vaccine pass" arrangement is applicable to all persons who are employed by subsidised or subvented organisations/welfare service units to perform duties at their premises, the homes of service users or other venues. It is also applicable to persons, including full-time, part-time and relief staff, who provide services through hire-of-service contracts set up with subsidised or subvented organisations/welfare service units. Phase I will come into force from March 14 onwards, covering not only all staff members providing integrated home care services, enhanced home and community care services, home care services for persons with severe disabilities, integrated support services for persons with severe physical disabilities, professional outreaching team services for private residential care homes for persons with disabilities and residential child care services for children under 6, but also those staff serving in day care centres/units for the elderly, service units recognised by the Pilot Scheme on Multi-disciplinary Outreaching Support Teams for the Elderly and the Pilot Scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly as well as community rehabilitation day centres. Phase II, which is going to cover all staff members of subsidised or subvented welfare service units providing services other than those mentioned above, will take effect starting from April 1.

Starting from the dates specified above, except for those who can produce valid medical proof of their unsuitability to receive COVID-19 vaccines due to health reasons, all service providers are required to have received at least the first dose of COVID-19 vaccine in order to be eligible for performing duties or providing services in subsidised or subvented welfare service units. Staff members who have only received the first dose of COVID-19 vaccine are still required to receive the second dose within eight weeks, counting from the day of receiving the first dose of the vaccine (the first and the last day inclusive), in order to remain eligible for performing duties and providing services in the service units.

Staff members who are unfit for COVID-19 vaccination due to health reasons with relevant proof provided by doctors are required to undergo testing once every seven days. The samples must be collected by using combined nasal and throat swabs and must not be taken by the person to be tested. The test results should also be presented to the

organisations/service units for record purposes.

The SWD urges the organisations/service units to remind their staff members who have not yet received vaccination to get vaccinated as early as possible in order to provide better protection for the service users.