

“Vaccine pass” extended to cover new RCHE and RCHD residents from March 14

â€‹The Government announced earlier that the "vaccine pass" arrangement will be extended to cover all persons to be newly admitted to the residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) and the residential care homes for persons with disabilities (RCHDs) for long-term abode. The Social Welfare Department (SWD) said today (February 4) that the relevant arrangement will be implemented in all RCHEs and RCHDs from March 14.

From March 14 onwards, all persons newly admitted to the residential care homes for long-term abode (excluding emergency or residential respite services) must have received at least the first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine in order to be admitted, unless COVID-19 Vaccination Medical Exemption Certificates issued by doctors can be produced to prove their unsuitability to receive vaccination. The newly admitted residents who have only received the first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine are still required to complete COVID-19 vaccination within eight weeks, counting from the day when the first dose of the vaccine is received (the first and the last day inclusive), in order to remain eligible for residing in the residential care homes.

The health and lives of the residents of RCHEs and RCHDs would be placed under serious threat if they are infected with COVID-19 virus. The Government has therefore been urging institutions to encourage their residents to get vaccinated as soon as possible with the Outreach Vaccination Arrangement for Residential Care Homes and the Assess and Vaccinate Programme. The SWD appeals to the operators/managers of all residential care homes to comply with the aforementioned requirements of the "vaccine pass" when they enter into admission agreements with new residents and make admission arrangements in order to build a barrier against the epidemic in the residential care homes and safeguard the health of the residents.

In view of the new measure and to ensure compliance with the relevant requirements among all residential care homes, the SWD has included relevant provisions in the Code of Practice for Residential Care Homes (Elderly Persons) and the Code of Practice for Residential Care Homes (Persons with Disabilities). The provisions, which will take effect on March 14, will be strictly enforced in all residential care homes.

The Government will continue to review the anti-epidemic measures from time to time and make adjustments to the policies and arrangements concerned in view of the development of the epidemic situation.