

Shared stay-in senior care services now a mainstream option

Seniors can opt to share a home, with caregiving staff providing basic support

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More seniors who prefer to age in a community setting rather than in an institution will soon be able to share an HDB flat or private dwelling with other seniors, with basic support for daily living tasks provided by caregiving staff.

The Ministry of Health (MOH) announced on Dec 10 that the Shared Stay-in Senior Caregiving Services will become a mainstream model.

Interested companies can apply for support to facilitate their operations, including additional foreign worker quotas and more options to hire from non-traditional source countries.

They can apply for training subsidies for their caregiving staff, with up to 90 per cent of fees subsidised, MOH said.

The ministry and the Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) have published an industry-led Good Practice Guide for interested companies, clients and their families.

The new assisted living model adds to the options for seniors, which include nursing homes and Community Care Apartments,

which are HDB flats designed for seniors that provide support for assisted living.

Speaking at the 5th anniversary celebration of St Luke's ElderCare (SLEC) Residential-Based Services on Dec 10, Minister for Health Ong Ye Kung said the stay-in model makes more sense than each senior hiring a domestic caregiver.

"As Singapore's population ages, we recognise that seniors will increasingly have different needs and preferences... Wherever possible, we should support seniors to lead an active and independent life, because that is best for their well-being."

MOH's decision to mainstream the senior care model comes after a sandbox initiative was launched in September 2023 to test new care models, enhance support for families and help more seniors age within their communities.

The sandbox featured caregiving staff providing basic support for daily living tasks, meals, housekeeping and social activities to a group of seniors living in the same residence, mirroring how caregivers at home support their loved ones.

The outcomes of the sandbox have been encouraging, with five



Seniors exercising at St Luke's ElderCare (SLEC) Residence @ Ang Mo Kio on Dec 10. Speaking at the 5th anniversary celebration of SLEC's Residential-Based Services on Dec 10, Health Minister Ong Ye Kung said the shared stay-in model makes more sense than each senior hiring a caregiver. ST PHOTO: LIM YADHUI

companies - Red Crowns Senior Living, St Bernadette Lifestyle Village and its franchisees BlueAtria and Muein, and GROW - serving a total of 232 clients as of end-September 2025, MOH said.

Assisted living operators faced various challenges at the outset, before the sandbox initiative.

St Bernadette first started assisted living in Singapore in 2015, but could not scale its operations then due to a lack of manpower and other challenges.

Co-founder Belinda Wee said the manpower support in the sandbox meant that it was allocated one care staff for every three seniors, with a quota of 34 staff. This enabled it to scale to nine assisted living facilities in the past 18 months. The newest facility, in Duku Road, opened in June 2025.

Dr Wee added that the staff are not live-in foreign domestic workers, but trained employees who

may live off site.

Red Crowns Senior Living, which pioneered the concept of assisted living in HDB flats, was fined in 2024 for illegally hiring and deploying live-in migrant domestic workers to provide caregiving services at its facilities. It had to change its operating model to comply with the law on employment of foreign manpower.

MOH said seniors receiving care from the Shared Stay-in Senior Caregiving Services still require close involvement from family members, such as in the caregiving decision-making process for their loved ones.

At the same time, the operators and their caregiving staff must be responsible for delivering services safely and professionally. If a client requires a licensed care service, the operators must engage such services when requested by the family.

MOH said this collaborative approach among families, providers and caregiving staff is key to the success of the service.

The 5th anniversary celebration of SLEC Residential-Based Services was held at its first nursing home - the 189-bed SLEC Residence @ Ang Mo Kio.

By the end of 2026, it will have another two nursing homes. The three facilities will have a total capacity of more than 650 beds to meet growing demand.

Mr Ong, who is also Coordinating Minister for Social Policies, said MOH will continue to offer a diversity of care options for seniors. For those who require assisted living but choose to live in their own homes, MOH is enhancing the Home Personal Care service to better respond to their needs and provide more frequent support. This will be rolled out islandwide in early 2026.

As more caregiving options emerge, seniors may find themselves transiting from one care setting to another.

"When that happens, we must do our best to ensure that the process is smooth... (and) seamless," said Mr Ong. "A senior's health conditions... drug allergies and the medications they are taking must be known to the new care provider even before the senior arrives. Otherwise, care will be compromised."

In January 2026, MOH will table the Health Information Bill, which governs not only the sharing of patient data in clinical settings, but also community settings, he said. This will ensure that seniors transition across various care settings more seamlessly - without the need for repetitive questioning, data collection and tests.

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