

**Existing mechanism to guard against abuse of  
the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance**

Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) is designed to provide financial assistance for those encountering economic difficulty to meet their basic and essential needs. The CSSA payable is the difference between the recognized needs under the Scheme and the applicant/household's assessable income (including income from a job). Therefore, it is possible for an employed person to be eligible for CSSA if his income is deemed insufficient to meet his/his household's basic and essential needs. In order to encourage recipients to move towards self-reliance, part of their wage can be disregarded in respect of the calculation of CSSA assistance (up to a maximum of \$1,805 per month).

2. The Social Welfare Department (SWD) conducts case reviews to see if there are any changes in the CSSA recipients' circumstances which might have affected the amounts of assistance paid/payable. On the other hand, CSSA recipients are required to report to the SWD any changes of their employment status or income. Failing to do so may lead to overpayment which must be refunded to the Department.

3. SWD has also set up Special Investigation Teams to investigate suspected fraud cases and conduct data matching to prevent abuses. The Department is currently developing a risk management framework to enhance the effectiveness of fraud prevention.

4. If a person knowingly or wilfully makes any false statement or withhold any information for the purpose of obtaining CSSA payment, he will be liable to prosecution. In the first eight months of the 2002-03 financial year, there were 280 established cases of fraud, involving an overpayment of \$15.8 million.