

**Subcommittee to Study the Transport Needs  
and Provision of Concessionary Public Transport Fares for  
Persons with Disabilities**

**Information for Meeting on 9 January 2006**

**Purpose**

This paper briefs Members on the current position of the Administration on provision of concessionary public transport (“PT”) fares for people with disabilities (“PWDs”) and sets out information on Disability Allowance, and estimated number of PWDs under different “Disability” definitions.

**Current position of the Administration**

2. The Government’s rehabilitation policy objectives are to develop a barrier-free physical environment and a transport system that meets the needs of PWDs so as to enhance their mobility and to facilitate their full participation and integration into the community.

3. Subsequent to the passing of the LegCo Motion Debate on “Facing up the needs of people with disabilities in using transport” on 19 October 2005, the Environment, Transport and Works Bureau has written to PT operators urging them to continue to improve the accessibility of their transport services to PWDs. The Bureau has also requested PT operators to consider the issue of providing fare concession to PWDs.

4. Regarding PT operators’ concern on the legal and financial considerations of providing fare concession to PWDs, the Administration will continue to work with them to identify feasible and acceptable solutions.

## **Roles of Environmental, Transport and Works Bureau (“ETWB”) and Health, Welfare and Food Bureau (“HWFB”)**

5. HWFB, as the policy bureau for promoting the interest and well-being of PWDs, will continue to provide effective measures to meet their essential transport needs. HWFB will maintain consultation with the PWDs, work closely with the Equal Opportunities Commission and ETWB in developing a proposal acceptable to parties concerned. ETWB will assist in the liaison with public transport operators and continue to encourage them to provide fare concession to PWDs having regard to their financial position and operating conditions. ETWB will also continue to request public transport operators to improve their facilities so as to enhance their accessibility to the PWDs.

### **Disability Allowance (“DA”)**

6. The DA is a monthly allowance provided to PWDs who are certified by a public medical officer to be in a position broadly equivalent to a person with a 100% loss of earning capacity with reference to the First Schedule of the Employees’ Compensation Ordinance, Cap. 282. The allowance is non-contributory and non-means tested. It is meant to provide some help to Hong Kong residents who are severely disabled and their families to cope with the special needs that may arise from severe disabilities, encourage families to take care of family members with severe disabilities and enable the beneficiary to make some contribution to the family budget.

7. A person is eligible for Normal DA if he/she is certified by the Director of Health, or the Chief Executive, Hospital Authority to be severely disabled and that the disabling condition will persist for at least 6 months. For Higher DA, he/she also needs to be certified to be in need of constant attendance from others and is not receiving care in a Government or subvented

residential institution (details of the eligibility criteria are set out in **Annex A**).

8. Since its introduction in 1973, the DA has been linked to the single person basic rate under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme which is determined on a basket of goods and services. The Higher DA was introduced in 1988 at twice of the rate of the DA (or Normal DA). There is no restriction on how DA is used and as a non-means testing scheme, the allowance is not directly related to the financial position of the applicant.

9. The rates of DA are adjusted according to the movement of the Social Security Assistance Index of Prices. The Finance Committee has approved the upward adjustment of DA rates with effect from 1 February 2006. The new rates of monthly payment are as follows:

Normal DA	\$1,125
Higher DA	\$2,250

### **Definition and Number of PWDs in Hong Kong**

10. Disability is defined in different context for different purposes. Definitions of Disability in different context together with the estimated number of PWDs are set out as follows –

#### *(1) Disability Discrimination Ordinance (“DDO”)*

11. The Disability Discrimination Ordinance (DDO) (Cap 487) enacted in 1995 stipulates that discrimination against a person on the ground of his/her disability in respect of the provision of goods, services and facilities, amongst others, is unlawful. With a view of maximizing the protection to cover all people with different types of disability and at all levels of severity,

the definition of disability under DDO is in very broad and general terms (please refer to **Annex B**).

12. There is presently **no** available estimate on the number of PWDs in Hong Kong under the above definition.

*(2) Central Registry for Rehabilitation under HWFB*

13. Established in 1982, the Central Registry for Rehabilitation (CRR) collects and compiles information on PWDs in Hong Kong for facilitating the planning and delivery of rehabilitation services and for research purposes. Registration is totally **on a voluntary basis**. To respect the privacy of PWDs and to avoid disturbances to them, registrants are **not** required to update their personal data regularly. As at October 2005, there were 127,959 registrants (including people with multiple disabilities), 92,200 (72%) of them are between the age of 15 and 64. Details with breakdown by age are at **Annex C**.

14. Since 1999, Registration Cards (RCs) have been issued to provide cardholders a documentary proof of his/her disability status when necessary. As at October 2005, 40,935 RCs have been issued, 32,644 (80%) of them are between the age of 15 and 64. Details with breakdown by age are at **Annex D**.

15. As regards the definition of disability for registration and issue of RCs, it draws reference to the Hong Kong Rehabilitation Programme Plan (1998/99 – 2002/03) and details are at **Annex E**.

16. Since July 2005, revamped RCs with improved security features have been introduced. A phased replacement programme will be arranged from 2006 onwards to replace the issued RCs.

*(3) Disability Allowance*

17. Details of DA are set out in paragraphs 6 to 8. As at

November 2005, there are 112,051 DA recipients, 53,088 (47%) of them are between the age of 15 and 64. Details with breakdown by age are at **Annex F**.

*(4) Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (“CSSA”) recipient with 100% disability*

18. The CSSA Scheme provides a safety net of last resort for those in need. Disabled recipients (i.e. with 100% loss of earning capacity according to the criteria in the First Schedule of the Employees’ Compensation Ordinance (Cap. 282)) are given a wide range of special grants to cover their special needs such as fares to and from hospital/clinic and other essential traveling expenses as well as costs of medical, rehabilitation, surgical appliances and hygienic items. The average payment to a single disabled CSSA recipient is \$3,716 per month.

19. As at November 2005, there are 91,400 disabled CSSA recipients receiving additional grants in view of their disability status and 40,039 (44%) of them are between the age of 15 and 64. The number of disabled CSSA recipients with breakdown by age is at **Annex G**.

*(5) Special Topics Report (“STR”) Number 28*

20. In August 2001, the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) published its Special Topics Report (STR) Number 28 on “Persons with disabilities and chronic disease”. The definition of disability, at **Annex H**, was drawn up with reference to the Hong Kong Rehabilitation Programme Plan (1998/99 – 2002/03) and having regard to the definitions adopted by other countries/territories for surveys of similar nature and in consultation with relevant parties in Hong Kong.

21. As regards “persons with chronic diseases”, it refers to those who required long-term medical treatment for 6 months or more. **Not** all persons with chronic diseases are disabled, and

C&SD confirmed that persons with chronic diseases and with the manifestation of disabilities in one form or more were counted as PWDs in the survey and reflected accordingly under the appropriate disability type.

22. It should be noted that the method of **self-reporting** was adopted for the survey, i.e. no medical certification on disability was requested.

23. According to the Report, the total number of PWDs was about 269,500, which did not include an estimated number of mentally handicapped persons, ranging between 62,000 and 87,000<sup>Note</sup>. There were about 882,700 persons with chronic illness. The quoted PWD figure includes the elderly (aged 65 and above) and school children of 11 and below who are already enjoying concessionary fare on PT services. Discounting these two groups of people, the figure of PWDs (excluding the mentally handicapped) is about 140,000. Adding the number of mentally handicapped, we estimate that there are about 220,000 PWDs on the basis of the findings of the Report between the age of 15 and 64. Detailed breakdown of PWDs by disability type are at **Annex I**.

24. A comparison table of the size of PWD population under different definitions is at **Annex J**.

Health, Welfare and Food Bureau  
Environment, Transport and Works Bureau  
January 2006

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<sup>Note</sup> Statistical assessment was made by C&SD to eliminate possible under-estimation of mentally handicapped through survey.

## **Annex A**

### **Eligibility Criteria for Disability Allowance (“DA”)**

#### **(a) Normal Disability Allowance**

- (i) Certified by the Director of Health or the Chief Executive of the Hospital Authority (or under exceptional circumstances by a registered medical practitioner of a private hospital) to be severely disabled<sup>Note</sup>; and
- (ii) The disabling condition will persist for at least 6 months.

#### **(b) Higher Disability Allowance**

- (i) In addition to meeting the eligibility criteria for Normal Disability Allowance above, the applicant must be certified by the Director of Health or the Chief Executive of the Hospital Authority (or under exceptional circumstances by a registered medical practitioner of a private hospital) to be in need of constant attendance from others in his/her daily life; and
- (ii) The applicant is not receiving care in a government or subvented residential institution (including a government subsidized place in a contract home or purchased from a residential care home for the elders under the Bought Place Scheme or the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme) or a medical residential institution under the Hospital Authority.

Note:

This includes

- A profoundly deaf person who is certified to be suffering from a perceptive or mixed deafness;
- A person whose physical/mental impairments or medical conditions have fallen into the one of the following categories (which have been defined as 100% loss of earning capacity in the First Schedule of Employees' Compensation Ordinance (Cap. 282) –
  - (i) loss of functions of two limbs;
  - (ii) loss of functions of both hands or all fingers and both thumbs;
  - (iii) loss of functions of both feet;
  - (iv) total loss of sight
  - (v) total paralysis (quadriplegia)
  - (vi) paraplegia
  - (vii) illness, injury or deformity resulting in bed-ridden;
  - (viii) any other conditions resulting in total disablement;

Where an applicant's physical/mental impairments or other medical conditions have not fallen into any of the categories above, a medical assessment should be carried out to determine if the applicant is 'severely disabled'.



**Annex B**

**Disability Discrimination Ordinance (Cap. 487)**  
**Definition of “Disability”**

“Disability”, in relation to a person, means –

- (a) total or partial loss of the person’s bodily or mental functions;
- (b) total or partial loss of a part of the person’s body;
- (c) the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness;
- (d) the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness;
- (e) the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person’s body;
- (f) a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
- (g) a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person’s thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment or that results in disturbed behaviors, and

includes a disability that –

- (i) presently exists;
- (ii) previously existed but no longer exists;
- (iii) may exist in the future; or
- (iv) is imputed to a person.

**Annex C**

**Central Registry for Rehabilitation**

**Number of Registrants with Breakdown by Disability**

**(as at October 2005)**

Type of Disability	Number of Registrants			Total
	Below age 15	15-64	Aged 65+	
Hearing impairment	494	8,893	3,144	12,531
Visual impairment	213	4,624	7,739	12,576
Physical handicap	766	22,967	28,495	52,228
Mental handicap	2,573	27,004	327	29,904
Mental illness	18	11,777	4,175	15,970
Autism	1,089	1,559	1	2,649
Speech impairment	729	2,482	56	3,267
Visceral disability/ chronic illness	310	12,894	2,529	15,733
<b>Total</b> <sup>Note</sup>	<b>6,192</b>	<b>92,200</b>	<b>46,466</b>	<b>144,858</b>

- Notes:
1. Total number of registrants is **127,959**. The total number of registered disabilities is larger than the number of registrants because some registrants are with multiple disabilities.
  2. Elderly people aged 65 or above and school children aged 11 and below are already enjoying public transport fare concession. Only breakdown on the number of persons below age 15 is available in the Census and Statistics Department Special Topics Report No 28.

**Annex D**

**Central Registry for Rehabilitation**

**Number of Registration Cards (RCs) issued**

**with breakdown by disability(as at October 2005)**

Type of Disability	Number of Cardholders			Total
	Below age 15	15-64	Aged 65+	
Hearing impairment	369	<b>3,987</b>	487	4,843
Visual impairment	212	<b>1,796</b>	570	2,578
Physical handicap	572	<b>3,864</b>	311	4,747
Mental handicap	2,479	<b>9,430</b>	38	11,947
Mental illness	12	<b>4,181</b>	392	4,585
Autism	1,070	<b>920</b>	0	1,990
Speech impairment	744	<b>2,444</b>	59	3,247
Visceral disability/ chronic illness	297	<b>12,247</b>	2,719	15,263
<b>Total</b> <sup>Note</sup>	<b>5,755</b>	<b>38,869</b>	<b>4,576</b>	<b>49,200</b>

- Notes: 1. Total number of RCs issued is **40,935**, **32,644** of them are between the age of 15 and 64.
2. The total number of registered PWDs is larger than the number of RCs issued because some cardholders are with multiple disabilities.
3. Elderly people aged 65 or above and school children aged 11 and below are already enjoying public transport fare concession. Only breakdown on the number of persons below age 15 is available in the Census and Statistics Department Special Topics Report No 28.

**Annex E**

**Central Registry for Rehabilitation**  
**Definition of “Disability”**

According to Hong Kong Rehabilitation Programme Plan (1998/99 – 2002/03), disability refers to one of the following eight conditions causing loss in bodily or mental functions –

- (a) autism – people who have been diagnosed as being autistic under the criteria laid down in the World Health Organization’s International Classification of Diseases, 10<sup>th</sup> Edition;
- (b) hearing impairment – people who have been diagnosed as having a hearing loss of 26 dB or greater;
- (c) mental handicap – people who have been diagnosed as having significant sub-average intellectual functioning, that is IQ 70 or below, and concurrent deficits or impairments in meeting standards expected for their age by their cultural groups in certain skill areas;
- (d) mental illness – people who suffer from a range of disorders due to their predisposition and/or physical, psychological and social factors. These lead to acute or chronic disturbances which are emotional, intellectual and/or behavioral and are accompanied, when the illness is serious, by distortions of personality and social relationships;
- (e) physical handicap – people who have disabilities of orthopaedic, musculoskeletal, or neurological origin which mainly affect locomotor functions,

and constitute a disadvantage or restriction in one of more aspects of daily living activities;

- (f) speech impairment – people who cannot communicate effectively with others, or whose speech difficulty draws undue attention to their speech acts to such an extent that affects their academic, emotional and social development;
- (g) visceral disability – people who have disability resulting from diseases or the respective treatment. The disability, not being limited to locomotor functions in nature, constitutes disadvantages or restrictions in one or more aspects of daily living activities; and
- (h) visual impairment – people who have a visual acuity of 6/18 (0.33) or worse for the better eye with correcting glasses, or have a constricted visual field in which the widest field diameter subtends an angular subtends of 20 degrees or less, irrespective of the visual acuity.

**Annex F**

**Disability Allowance (“DA”)  
Number of Recipients with Breakdown by Age  
(as at November 2005)**

<b>Scheme type</b>	<b>Number of Recipients</b>			<b>Total</b>
	Below age 15	15-64	Aged 65+	
Normal DA	6,018	<b>49,333</b>	42,313	97,664
Higher DA	866	<b>3,755</b>	9,766	14,387
Total	6,884	<b>53,088</b>	52,079	112,051

Note: Elderly people aged 65 or above and school children aged 11 and below are already enjoying public transport fare concession. Only breakdown on the number of persons below age 15 is available in the Census and Statistics Department Special Topics Report No 28.

**Annex G**

**Comprehensive Social Security Allowance (“CSSA”) Scheme  
Number of Recipients with 100% Disability  
with breakdown by age  
 (as at November 2005)**

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Number of Recipients</b>			<b>Total</b>
	Below age 15	15-64	Aged 65+	
100% disabled	1,873	<b>37,311</b>	34,203	73,387
Requiring constant attention	285	<b>2,728</b>	15,000	18,013
<b>Total</b>	2,158	<b>40,039</b>	49,203	91,400

Notes:

1. Elderly people aged 65 or above and school children aged 11 and below are already enjoying public transport fare concession. Only breakdown on the number of persons below age 15 is available in the Census and Statistics Department Special Topics Report No 28.
2. Traveling expenses are included in the standard rates under CSSA.

**Special Topics Report Number 28, 2000**  
**by the Census and Statistics Department**

**Definition of “Disability”**

Under the survey framework, “persons with disabilities” were defined as those who –

- (a) had been diagnosed by qualified health personnel (such as practitioners of Western medicine and Chinese medicine, including herbalists, bone-setters and acupuncturists) as having one or more of the following 7 conditions; or
- (b) had perceived themselves as having one or more of the first 4 of the following 7 conditions which had lasted, or were likely to last, for a period of 6 months or more at the time of enumeration:
  - (i) restriction in body movement – those who had been diagnosed as being physically handicapped under medical assessment tests or perceived themselves as having long-term difficulty in movement of upper/lower limb or other parts of the body;
  - (ii) seeing difficulty – those who had been diagnosed as being blind or having low vision under medical assessment tests or perceived themselves as having long-term difficulty in seeing with one eye or both eyes whether with or without correcting glasses/contact lenses;
  - (iii) hearing difficulty – those who had been diagnosed as having hearing impairment under medical assessment tests or perceived themselves as having long-term difficulty in hearing;
  - (iv) speech difficulty - those who had been diagnosed as having speech impairment



under medical assessment tests or perceived themselves as having long-term difficulty in speaking and being understood by others;

- (v) mental illness - those who had been diagnosed as being mentally ill under medical assessment tests (including ex-mentally ill) or had been/were receiving some form of rehabilitation services;
- (vi) autism - those who had been diagnosed as being autistic under medical assessment tests; and
- (vii) mental handicap - those who had been diagnosed as being mentally handicapped under medical assessment tests.

**Annex I**

**Special Topics Report Number 28, 2000  
by the Census and Statistics Department**

**Breakdown of People with Disabilities Surveyed**

Type of disability	Total number of disabilities	Number of people		
		Below age 15 <sup>(1)</sup>	Aged 15-64	Aged 65+ <sup>(1)</sup>
Restriction in body movement	103,500	1,800	<b>40,600</b>	61,100
Seeing difficulty	73,900	2,100	<b>21,100</b>	50,700
Hearing difficulty	69,700	1,900	<b>28,600</b>	39,200
Speech difficulty	18,500	3,200	<b>11,100</b>	4,200
Mental illness	50,500	800	<b>38,000</b>	11,700
Autism	3,000	1,200	<b>1,800</b>	0
<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>319,100</i>	<i>11,000</i>	<i><b>141,200</b></i>	<i>166,900</i>
Mental handicap	62,000 – 87,000	NA	<b>74,500<sup>(2)</sup></b>	NA
Total	393,600	11,000	<b>215,700<sup>(3)</sup></b>	166,900

**say 220,000**

- Notes:
1. Only breakdown on the number of persons below age 15 is available in the Special Topics Report, but not the number of persons aged 11 or below. Elderly people aged 65 or above and school children aged 11 and below are already enjoying public transport fare concession.
  2. 74,500 people with mental handicap are taken in the calculations.
  3. This figure includes double counting for people with multiple disabilities.

**Summary of estimated size of population  
Under different definitions of people with disabilities (“PWDs”)**

Estimate \ Source of definition	Disability Discrimination Ordinance	Central Registry for Rehabilitation Cardholders	Recipients of Disability Allowance	Recipients of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance with 100% disability	Special Topics Report No 28, Census and Statistics Department
PWDs - overall	-	40,935	112,051	91,400	269,500
PWDs aged 15-64 <sup>Note</sup>	-	32,644	53,088	40,039	220,000
Remarks	-	Registration on voluntary basis	-	-	Self-reporting methodology

Note: Elderly people aged 65 or above and school children aged 11 and below are already enjoying public transport fare concession. Only breakdown on the number of persons below age 15 is available in the Census and Statistics Department Special Topics Report.