

政府總部
勞工及福利局
香港下亞厘畢道
中區政府合署



LABOUR AND WELFARE BUREAU
GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT

Central Government Offices
Lower Albert Road
Hong Kong

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5 May 2009

Miss Betty MA
Clerk to Panel on Welfare Services
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Central
Hong Kong

Dear Miss Ma,

**Survey Report on the
General Public's Perception of CSSA Recipients by Oxfam Hong Kong**

Thank you for your letter dated 6 April 2009, inviting our response to the captioned report.

A person may suffer financial hardship for various reasons such as old age, disability, illness, unemployment and low earnings. The Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme is designed to bring the income of such individuals up to a prescribed level to meet their basic needs. We are pleased that the survey by Oxfam Hong Kong showed that the public viewed the social security system in a positive light, whereas most of the respondents acknowledged that CSSA could help those with financial difficulties. In fact, apart from financial assistance, the CSSA Scheme also encourages and assists employable able-bodied adults to move from welfare to self-reliance. This is achieved by measures under the Support for Self-reliance Scheme, including the provision of employment assistance services and the Disregarded Earnings arrangements.

The Government has all along been actively disseminating information on CSSA to the general public. The Social Welfare Department (SWD) issues monthly reports on the latest CSSA statistics. Various pamphlets on the CSSA Scheme are also available to the public at District

Social Welfare Offices, Social Security Field Units and Integrated Family Service Centres. These pamphlets outline in clear and simple terms various arrangements under the CSSA Scheme, such as ways to encourage and assist CSSA recipients to move towards self-reliance and the social security appeal mechanism. All this information, as well as other publications and press releases on the CSSA Scheme, are uploaded onto the SWD website for easy access by the general public.

CSSA is a non-contributory social security scheme funded entirely by general revenue. Since it involves a huge amount of public funds, we must act with prudence to ensure the sustainability of this safety net. In view of this, the Government will, through various channels, continue to disseminate to the public the positive message that CSSA should be provided to those with genuine needs. In doing so, we will take into account and strive to balance the views in the community.

To ensure that CSSA is used to help those with genuine financial needs, CSSA applicants must undergo an income test. The applicants may need to provide as appropriate a declaration on their financial situation (not the “certificate for non-provision of financial support to parents” as mentioned in the survey report) in order to verify whether they have other sources of income, such as contribution from other family members.

SWD will continue to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of its services in preventing and combating CSSA fraud and abuse cases. Indeed, the Administration has reaffirmed that such cases do not constitute a serious problem under the current mechanism (accounting for only 0.4% of the total CSSA caseload). We hope that, through collaboration with the various sectors of the community, a positive attitude towards helping and encouraging people in need could be promoted, and appropriate assistance could be rendered.

Yours sincerely,



(Mrs Polly CHAN)
for Secretary for Labour and Welfare

c.c. Director of Social Welfare (Attn : Mr CHAN Wing-hoi)

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