

(Translation)

Motion on
“Comprehensively reviewing the Disability Allowance scheme”
moved by Hon WONG Kwok-hing
at the Council meeting of 9 November 2011

Motion as amended by Hon WONG Sing-chi, Hon TAM Yiu-chung and Hon Ronny TONG

That, given that Hong Kong’s existing Disability Allowance (‘DA’) scheme was formulated in 1973 and, after some 30 years of operation, the protection provided by the scheme has become outdated; some people with disabilities (‘PWDs’) (such as people with loss of one limb) are even not entitled to the allowance and not issued with the Registration Card for People with Disabilities because the scheme was inflexible, thus rendering them unable to enjoy MTR half-fare concessions for PWDs, this Council urges the Administration to comprehensively review the DA scheme, so as to meet the needs of society today; the relevant review should include:

- (a) to review the criteria for the granting of DA, including granting an allowance proportionate to the degree of disability of the applicant;
- (b) to consider including professional social workers’ ‘whole-person assessment’ as one of the criteria in the vetting and approval process, rather than relying solely on medical practitioners for determining applicant’s eligibility or otherwise based on the degree of disability of the applicant;
- (c) to review the Medical Assessment Form and the checklist used for assessing a DA applicant’s degree of disability, and clearly specify the definition of and criteria on ‘visceral diseases’;
- (d) to comprehensively review the definition of ‘severely disabled’ under the existing DA scheme, and relax the criteria in the First Schedule to the Employees’ Compensation Ordinance (Cap. 282 of the Laws of Hong Kong), i.e. a degree of disability broadly equivalent to a 100% loss of earning capacity, so as to strengthen the protection of PWDs;
- (e) to comprehensively review the applicability of the various public transport concessions available at present to PWDs and the payment arrangements; and

- (f) to apply the concept of Portable Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme to DA and remove the permissible limit of absence from Hong Kong, so that eligible PWDs residing in Guangdong and Fujian can also receive DA; and
- (g) to allow elderly recipients of DA to receive the Old Age Allowance at the same time; and
- (h) to include proof of disabilities as an eligibility criterion for approving compassionate rehousing to public rental housing ('PRH'), so that PWDs can be rehoused to PRH units as early as possible and resolve their housing difficulties.