

**Society for Community Organization**

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**Submission to LegCo on**

**Humanitarian Assistance for Non-refoulement Claimants in Hong Kong**

**Low or no rental assistance to refugee children**

This submission refers to the Panel on Welfare meeting on 13 January 2014, Item IV on Ways to improve situation of mandated refugees, torture claimants and asylum seekers in Hong Kong.

SoCO would like to draw members' attention to the plight of children:

**Rental assistance for children**

Currently asylum seeking or refugee children do not receive the same amount of rental assistance as children under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA).

Under the CSSA scheme, rental allowance is provided based on the number of eligible persons in the family, which includes adults and children.

**Table 1. Special grants payable to able-bodied adults/children**

Number of persons	Maximum level per month (\$)
1	1,440
2	2,905
3	3,795
4	4,035
5	4,045
6 or above	5,055

- 1. Refugee children below 3 years generally do NOT receive any rental assistance, unless the family has been deemed to be a vulnerable case, such as a single parent family or family with medical needs. However under the CSSA scheme, all children, no matter age, will receive assistance.**

Example comparing refugee assistance with CSSA

Thus a refugee family comprising 2 adults and 1 child under 3 years would receive \$2,400 (2 x \$1,200). However, a similar family composition under the CSSA scheme would be eligible for \$3,795. **This is a difference at \$,1395.**

- 2. Refugee children between 3-18 years receive half the house rent given to adults. Thus they only receive \$600.**

Example comparing refugee assistance with CSSA

A refugee family comprising an adult with a child would thus receive (\$1,200 + \$600) \$1,800. However, such a family composition under the CSSA scheme would receive \$2,905, **a difference at \$1,105.**

The above examples clearly show that refugee and asylum children are treated differently than children under the CSSA scheme. The government should immediately change its policy and ensure that all children, no matter immigration status, are treated equally.

**Recommendations**

1. The rental assistance provided to families with children should be no less than that given to families under the CSSA scheme.

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