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LABOUR AND WELFARE BUREAU  
GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT

Central Government Offices  
Tim Mei Avenue  
Tamar, Hong Kong

本函檔號 Our Ref.: LWB T4/18/29

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15 August 2018

Clerk to Panel on Welfare Services  
Legislative Council Complex  
1 Legislative Council Road  
Central Hong Kong  
Mr Colin CHUI

Dear Mr Chui,

**Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services  
Follow-up to Meeting on 19 March 2018**

At the meeting of the Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Welfare Services on 19 March 2018, the Panel requested the Government to provide supplementary information on the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme. I am authorised to reply as follows.

**Weighting System of the Social Security Assistance Index of Prices (SSAIP)**

The SSAIP is compiled by the Census and Statistics Department to reflect the impact of price changes on CSSA recipients insofar as the items of goods and services covered under the CSSA standard rates are concerned. The SSAIP comprises a basket of goods and services, a weighting system (i.e. relative importance of individual items of goods and services covered by the Index), and the monthly average retail prices of individual items of goods and services. The weighting system is updated every five years in accordance with the data obtained from the Household Expenditure Survey on CSSA Households in order to

accurately capture the latest expenditure pattern of CSSA recipients as well as the impact of price changes. The current weighting system adopts 2014/15 as the base year. Details on the updating of the weighting system are set out in an article titled 'The Social Security Assistance Index of Prices' published in the November 2016 issue of the Hong Kong Monthly Digest of Statistics, which is included in LegCo Paper CB(2)149/16-17(03) (Annex 2 of the paper).

### **Further views on the CSSA Scheme put forward by attendees**

Attendees of the meeting of the Panel on Welfare Services put forward their comments on the CSSA Scheme. Regarding specific arrangements for the CSSA Scheme (including a review of the CSSA Scheme, CSSA payment rates, rent allowance, one-household requirement, disregarded earnings, mechanism for medical assessment, as well as disbursement of special grants), the Government's position is set out in the papers provided to the Panel on 1 December 2017 and 17 April 2018 (via LegCo Paper CB(2)449/17-18(01) and LegCo Paper CB(2)1227/17-18(01) respectively). As regards the other comments, our response is summarised below –

#### CSSA standard rates

Regarding enquiries on the basket of goods and services covered by the SSAIP, as mentioned above, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) updates the weighting system of the SSAIP every five years in order to better capture the latest expenditure pattern of CSSA recipients as well as the impact of price changes. When we compare the average monthly CSSA payments with the average monthly expenditure of non-CSSA households in the lowest 25% expenditure group, the former is higher in all household sizes.

#### Special grant to cover costs of medical, rehabilitation, surgical appliances and hygienic items

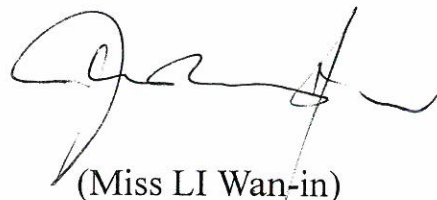
Regarding enquiries on the special grant to cover costs of medical, rehabilitation, surgical appliances and hygienic items under the CSSA Scheme (such as whether the grant covers charges to repair wheelchairs, and SWD officers' handling of applications for the grant), the grant is to cover the purchase and repair of the necessary medical, rehabilitation, surgical appliances and hygienic (e.g. wheelchairs, hearing aids, stoma bags, diapers, etc.). Under the existing arrangement, recipients

who are elderly, disabled or medically certified to be in ill-health and wish to apply for the relevant special grant have to be assessed and recommended by doctors, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, or prosthetists of the Department of Health or the Hospital Authority; or occupational therapists or physiotherapists of SWD or non-governmental organisations subvented by SWD.

The appeal mechanism for CSSA

Regarding the appeal mechanism for CSSA, under the existing arrangement, if an applicant disagrees with a decision made by SWD in handling his / her CSSA application, he / she may lodge an appeal to the Social Security Appeal Board (SSAB) within four weeks immediately following the date of notification issued by SWD. The SSAB is an independent body. Its Chairman and Members are non-officials appointed by the Chief Executive.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Li Wan-in', written in a cursive style.

(Miss LI Wan-in)

for Secretary for Labour and Welfare

c.c.

Director of Social Welfare

(Attn: Miss Rita LAU, Mr Andrew KWAN)