

政府總部
勞工及福利局
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政府總部



LABOUR AND WELFARE BUREAU
GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT

Central Government Offices
Tim Mei Avenue
Tamar, Hong Kong

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12 June 2018

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

Dear Mr CHUI,

**Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services
Follow-up Actions for Meeting on 9 April 2018**

At the meeting of the Panel on Welfare Services on 9 April 2018, Members requested the Administration to provide written responses to the following issues raised by the Society for Community Organization –

- (a) the number of additional subvented hostel places provided by the Administration for street sleepers since 2013;
- (b) when the Administration would provide separate statistics on the homeless people staying overnight in 24-hour fast-food restaurants and on street sleepers;
- (c) when the Administration would be able to make housing arrangements for all the 1 091 street sleepers registered in the Street Sleepers Registry of SWD (as at end-February 2018);
- (d) whether the Administration would deploy medical staff to provide outreaching services for street sleepers; and

- (e) why the short-term relief for low-income households not living in public housing and not receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (commonly known as the "N have-nots households") would only be provided in the 2018-2019 financial year.

After consulting the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB), the Food and Health Bureau (FHB) and the Housing Department (HD), our consolidated reply is as follows –

As regards (a) and (b) above, to address the emergency and short-term accommodation needs of street sleepers, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) increased the subvented hostel places by 20 through allocation of additional resources in the past five years. The SWD will continue to keep in view closely the demand for hostel places so as to conduct service planning and increase subvented hostel places. To keep track of the social welfare support service demand of street sleepers, the SWD has set up a computerised Street Sleepers Registry (SSR) to capture street sleepers' particulars through the SWD's service units and the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) specialised in serving street sleepers. Since the service teams of these NGOs provide support services for street sleepers of various locations, including those staying overnight in 24-hour fast-food shops, and that the SSR has already included information of those staying in 24-hour fast-food shops, the SWD has no plan to capture separate statistics on the item concerned.

As regards (c) above, the SWD provides appropriate social welfare support service to street sleepers, and address street sleepers' short-term transitional accommodation needs through emergency shelters and short-term hostels. During the street sleepers' stay in hostels, the social workers responsible for their cases will assist them in identifying long-term accommodation or appropriate residential care services, including renting private tenements, etc. The relevant service teams can also help street sleepers in need to apply for the Emergency Fund for paying rental deposit, rent, removal and other related rental expenses, etc., so as to assist them in implementing their long-term accommodation plans. On the other hand, the HD advised that street sleepers, just like other citizens, can apply for public rental housing (PRH) to meet their housing needs as long as they meet the eligibility criteria. For those who have imminent and long-term housing needs on medical reasons or social grounds but have no other feasible means to solve their housing problems, they may approach the SWD for relevant welfare or assistance. The SWD will assess each case and recommend persons with special imminent needs to the HD for early allocation of PRH through "Compassionate Rehousing" applications.

As regards (d) above, the FHB advised that the Hospital Authority and the Department of Health have no plan to deploy medical staff to provide outreaching services for street sleepers.

As regards (e) above, the HAB advised that the "One-off living subsidy for low-income households not living in public housing and not receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA)" programme (the Programme), which has been launched thrice by the Community Care Fund (CCF) in December 2013, January 2015 and January 2016 respectively in the light of the short-term relief measures introduced by the Budget released in the financial year of the launch, provided a one-off cash subsidy to the "N have-nots households" who could not benefit from such measures. The 2018-19 Budget delivered by the Financial Secretary (FS) proposed an array of measures to share the fruits of our economic success with the community. Having listened to the views of the public and various political parties, the FS announced on 23 March 2018 the introduction of the Caring and Sharing Scheme (the Scheme) under which an eligible person will receive a sum of \$4,000 or the difference between \$4,000 and the amount of tax concession and/or rates concession received. The Government seeks to share the fruits of economic success with more people in the community. Not only does the Scheme go along the direction of sharing, it also responds to public aspirations and strikes a balance among the views from different sectors. As such, the CCF does not plan to launch the Programme again to provide a cash subsidy for low-income "N have-nots households" not living in public housing and not receiving CSSA. The CCF will continue to collect views from the public and stakeholders, and consider introducing other programmes to support the underprivileged and grassroots families.

Yours sincerely,



(Eugene WAN)
for Secretary for Labour & Welfare

c.c.

Secretary for Home Affairs (Attn: Ms Rebecca WAN)
Secretary for Food and Health (Attn: Ms Janet SHUM)
Director of Housing (Attn: Mr Rayson CHAN)
Director of Social Welfare (Attn: Ms PANG Kit-ling)