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LABOUR AND WELFARE BUREAU  
GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT

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6 July 2018

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

Dear Mr CHUI,

### **Enquiry about the Relevant Information on Carers' Allowance**

With reference to Hon Shiu Ka-chun's letter dated 28 June 2018 to the Secretary for Labour and Welfare requesting information on the Pilot Scheme on Living Allowance for Carers of Elderly Persons from Low Income Families (Pilot Scheme on Carers of Elderly Persons) and the Pilot Scheme on Living Allowance for Low-income Carers of Persons with Disabilities (Pilot Scheme on Carers of PWDs), the consolidated responses of the Labour and Welfare Bureau and the Social Welfare Department (SWD) are as follows.

#### **Response to Item 1**

2. The Government, through the Community Care Fund under the Commission on Poverty, launched the Pilot Scheme on Carers of Elderly Persons in June 2014, as well as the Pilot Scheme on Carers of Elderly Persons Phase II and the Pilot Scheme on Carers of PWDs in October 2016, each for a period of two years. The two pilot schemes aim to provide carers of elderly persons or persons with disabilities (PWDs) from low income families with an allowance to help supplement their living expenses, so that elderly persons or PWDs with long-term care needs may, with their carers' assistance, receive more proper home care and continue to live in a familiar community. When SWD was devising the amount of allowance under the Pilot Scheme on Carers of Elderly Persons, it was set at \$2,000 with reference to the standard rate for able-bodied adults aged under 60 under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme in 2014. The allowance is intended to help the needy

carers alleviate their families' financial burden. As regards the subsequent Pilot Scheme on Carers of PWDs, the amount of allowance was determined with reference to that of the Pilot Scheme on Carers of Elderly Persons.

3. The Government will soon launch the Pilot Scheme on Carers of Elderly Persons Phase III and the Pilot Scheme on Carers of PWDs Phase II in October 2018. Under the new phases of the two pilot schemes, the amount of allowance will be increased from the current \$2,000 to \$2,400 per month. If the carers have to take care of more than one elderly person or PWD at the same time, the amount of allowance will be increased from the current \$4,000 to \$4,800 per month. The increase is proposed having regard to the adjustment of the Median Monthly Domestic Household Income in the Report on General Household Survey.

4. When the Pilot Scheme on Carers of Elderly Persons was launched, in the absence of concrete information to accurately estimate the number of beneficiaries of the pilot scheme, SWD set 2 000 as the quota of beneficiaries for Phase I. Owing to the positive response of the Pilot Scheme on Carers of Elderly Persons Phase I, the quota for Phase II was therefore increased to 4 000. When implementing the Pilot Scheme on Carers of PWDs, the quota of beneficiaries was determined in accordance with that of the Pilot Scheme on Carers of Elderly Persons Phase I.

### **Response to Item 2**

5. SWD has issued 49 595 and 14 740 invitation letters under the two phases of the Pilot Scheme on Carers of Elderly Persons and the Pilot Scheme on Carers of PWDs respectively. As at 30 June 2018, 5 842 applications were received under the two phases of the Pilot Scheme on Carers of Elderly Persons, while 1 927 applications were received under the Pilot Scheme on Carers of PWDs, amongst which 3 966 and 1 520 applications were eligible and approved respectively. No applicants were unable to receive the allowance due to insufficient quota under the two pilot schemes.

### **Response to Item 3**

6. SWD does not have the figures on the number of successful applications under the two pilot schemes with a breakdown by household size. If age is taken as the basis, as at 30 June 2018, the numbers of successful applications under the two pilot schemes\* were set out below –



<b>Age of Carers</b>	<b>Number of Carers of Elderly Persons (Total for two phases)</b>	<b>Number of Carers of PWDs</b>
39 or below	263	435
40 – 49	776	353
50 – 59	1 385	427
60 – 69	1 092	263
70 or above	450	42
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 966</b>	<b>1 520</b>

\* The age of an applicant upon his/her submission of application was adopted.

#### **Response to Item 4**

7. As explained in paragraph 5 above, the majority of applications under the two phases of the Pilot Scheme on Carers of Elderly Persons and the Pilot Scheme on Carers of PWDs were approved. As at 30 June 2018, the reasons for and number of ineligible applications and carers withdrawing from the two pilot schemes were as follows –

<b>Reasons for Ineligible Applications</b>	<b>Number of Carers of Elderly Persons (Total for two phases)</b>	<b>Number of Carers of PWDs</b>
Carer receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA)/Old Age Living Allowance (OALA)/Disability Allowance	834	140
Household income exceeding the income limit	113	69
Elderly person(s)/PWD(s) being taken care of receiving residential care service/admitted to boarding school	121	67
Carer failing to provide required information for processing	152	18
Carer being unable to provide the minimum hours of caregiving work for the elderly person(s)/PWD(s) being taken care of	77	3
Carer/elderly person(s)/PWD(s) being taken care of not residing in Hong Kong/not being Hong Kong residents	23	12
Others	144	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 464</b>	<b>329</b>

<b>Reasons for withdrawing from the Pilot Schemes</b>	<b>Number of Carers of Elderly Persons (Total for two phases)</b>	<b>Number of Carers of PWDs</b>
Elderly person(s)/PWD(s) being taken care of started receiving residential care service/ admitted to boarding school	942	51
Elderly person(s)/PWD(s) being taken care of passed away	724	15
Carer started receiving CSSA/OALA	172	41
Carer/elderly person(s)/PWD(s) being taken care of having changing circumstances (including carer not making an application under the Pilot Scheme on Carers of Elderly Persons Phase II)	260	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>2 098</b>	<b>147</b>

### **Response to Item 5**

8. SWD does not have the figures on the number of cases under the two pilot schemes with a breakdown by the service providers responsible for handling the applications and their districts.

### **Response to Item 6**

9. It is not a requirement for the participating approved service providers to provide training courses for the carers under the two pilot schemes. The carers are free to decide whether to attend and select the relevant training courses. Each carer can apply for reimbursement of training fees not exceeding \$1,000 in total. As at 30 June 2018, there were 207 carers of elderly persons and 215 carers of PWDs who had applied for the training allowance, involving an expenditure of about \$68,000 and \$126,000.

### **Response to Items 7 and 8**

10. SWD has commissioned the Sau Po Centre on Ageing (CoA) of the University of Hong Kong to conduct a consolidated evaluation on the two pilot schemes, with a view to assisting the Government in mapping the way forward for both pilot schemes. Preliminary findings of the evaluation show that the carers

participating in the pilot schemes generally regarded the Government's granting of living allowance for carers of elderly persons or PWDs as a recognition of their contribution. At the same time, it also helped relief their stress from caregiving and improve the quality of life of the elderly persons and PWDs under care.

11. SWD has invited CoA to submit the evaluation report on the two pilot schemes in the third quarter of 2018. The Government will also conduct a detailed analysis based on the findings of the evaluation to formulate a long-term development plan and direction, including the eligibility criteria, the amount of allowance, and whether the two pilot schemes should be regularised, etc. At its meeting on 21 June 2018, the Commission on Poverty endorsed the extension of the two pilot schemes for a period of two years, i.e. from October 2018 to September 2020, so as to allow the Government to complete the relevant analysis.

Yours sincerely,



( Miss Cindy YU )

For Secretary for Labour and Welfare

c.c. Director of Social Welfare (Attn: Ms Patricia Woo,  
Mr Charles Leung)