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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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11 February 2019

Ms Wendy JAN
Clerk to Panel on Welfare Services
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central
Hong Kong

Dear Ms Jan,

**Supplements and Special Grants under
the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme**

I refer to the email from the Secretariat of the Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services to the Labour and Welfare Bureau dated 1 February 2019. The Panel will discuss the item of 'Review of Supplements and Special Grants under the CSSA Scheme' at its meeting on 11 February 2019. In the interest of time, I set out our response to the questions below—

- (1) to The CSSA Scheme is a household-based programme. The
- (3) Social Welfare Department (SWD) disburses standard rates, supplements and special grants to CSSA cases according to their respective number of family members as well as the needs of individual members. In this connection, SWD does not maintain the number of recipients under each of the supplements or special grants. SWD also does not maintain the statistics related to 'family carers' as stated in the question.

- (4) 'Disregarded earnings' (DE) refer to the earnings from employment that are disregarded when assessing the amount of assistance payable to recipients. DE is provided with a view to encouraging CSSA recipients to secure and sustain employment. SWD does not maintain the statistical breakdowns related to DE according to the number of eligible household members and the number of DE beneficiaries in a same household. In 2014-15 to 2018-19, the number of CSSA recipients benefitting from the DE arrangement by case nature is tabulated below –

Case Nature	Number of CSSA Recipients Benefitting from the DE Arrangement				
	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19 (as at end December 2018)
Elderly	2 545	2 540	2 440	2 370	2 345
Permanent Disability	3 110	3 072	3 022	2 930	2 882
Ill Health	2 530	2 437	2 356	2 334	2 242
Single Parent	5 605	4 781	4 341	3 866	3 453
Low Earnings	6 546	5 347	4 460	3 639	3 128
Unemployment	4 322	3 617	3 238	2 728	2 526
Others	196	148	153	148	154
Total	24 854	21 942	20 010	18 015	16 730

- (5) From January 2013 to November 2018, there were 95 774 attendances to the Integrated Employment Assistance Programme for Self-reliance under the CSSA Scheme. SWD does not maintain the statistical breakdown of the number of participants in accordance with the financial year, the number of persons whose payments were deducted because of their 'breach of undertaking' and the total amount of payment deducted as stated in the question.
- (6) According to SWD's records, the maximum levels of rent allowance (MRA) could cover the actual rent paid by the majority of CSSA households living in the public rental housing (97%) and 40% of those in private housing. The Director of Social Welfare may also exercise discretion to grant a rent allowance higher than the MRA to those CSSA households living in private housing but awaiting compassionate rehousing or subsidised elderly residential care places to cover their actual rent paid.

In order to relieve the financial burden of CSSA households living in rented private housing in face of rent increase, the Community Care Fund (CCF) implemented the programme entitled 'Subsidy for CSSA Recipients Living in Rented Private Housing' in 2011 and 2013 to 2016 to provide a one-off payment to CSSA households living in rented private housing and paying a rent exceeding the MRA under the CSSA Scheme. In 2017, the CCF relaunched and enhanced this programme to take into account the actual rent paid by eligible CSSA households in setting the amount of subsidy. Under the enhanced arrangements, the maximum level of subsidy available to eligible CSSA households is higher (the subsidy for one-person households increased from a one-off of \$2,000 to a maximum of \$3,400 per year; whereas that for two-or-more-person households increased from a one-off of \$4,000 to a maximum of around \$6,800 to \$11,900 per year depending on the number of household members), thereby reducing the gap between the actual rent paid by CSSA households and Government subsidy. The programme will last for two years. We will keep in view its implementation as the basis of a model for the possible regularisation of the programme in future.

We are happy to listen to the views of Members at the aforementioned meeting of the Panel on Welfare Services.

Yours sincerely,



(Ms Heidi IP)

for Secretary for Labour and Welfare

c.c.

Director of Social Welfare (Attn: Miss Rita LAU)