

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)652/19-20(05)

Ref : CB2/PL/WS

Panel on Welfare Services

**Information note prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 9 March 2020**

**Welfare support for the elderly, the chronically-ill, persons with
disabilities and the grass-roots under the novel coronavirus epidemic,
as well as anti-epidemic measures taken by subvented
non-governmental organizations and service operation of
these non-governmental organizations**

Welfare support under the novel coronavirus epidemic

The Chief Executive announced on 5 February 2020 that the Administration would set up an Anti-epidemic Fund in order to enhance the capability of government bureaux and departments as well as other relevant parties in combating the novel coronavirus epidemic and provide assistance or relief to enterprises and members of the public hard hit by the epidemic. One of the measures to be implemented under the Fund is to provide a special allowance for eligible Working Family Allowance and Student Financial Assistance households,¹ with a view to helping targeted low-income households to weather the deteriorating economic and employment conditions as a result of the epidemic. The relevant funding proposal was approved by the Finance Committee on 21 February 2020.

2. According to the Administration, in view of the tight global supply of surgical masks, about 1.6 million surgical masks donated by private organizations to the Government have been passed to non-governmental organizations ("NGOs") for distribution to the underprivileged, especially

¹ Please refer to Enclosure B15 of the Administration's paper on the Anti-epidemic Fund (LC Paper No. FCR(2019-20)46) for details of the special allowance:
<https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr19-20/english/fc/fc/papers/f19-46e.pdf>.

the elderly.²

Anti-epidemic measures taken by subvented non-governmental organizations and service operation of these subvented non-governmental organizations

3. To minimize risks of novel coronavirus infection and its spreading in local community, the Social Welfare Department ("SWD") has notified organizations operating subsidized social welfare services, including residential care homes and day care centre services, that the Administration would provide them with additional resources to strengthen the cleaning and disinfection of the premises of their service units. SWD has also reminded them to conduct body temperature checks for residents, working staff and visitors.

4. In addition, SWD has, through two tranches at an estimated expenditure of \$13.8 million and \$14.6 million respectively, provided grants at \$5,000 or \$3,000 per service unit under each tranche for some 2 100 subsidized service units as well as nearly 900 private and self-financing residential care homes for the elderly and residential care homes for persons with disabilities, etc. to procure personal protective equipment and sanitizing items in order to combat the epidemic. SWD has also advised the operators of residential care homes (both subsidized and non-subsidized) and the relevant home-based service units in writing that special grants may be provided for them to hire relief workers or pay overtime allowances arising from some of their regular staff being put under quarantine or self-isolation arrangements as a result of their return to Hong Kong from the Mainland during the period from 27 January to 29 February 2020. Funding of \$124.5 million has been earmarked to cover some 1 380 service units. Besides, the Administration has set aside about 1 million surgical masks of the Government stock monthly for nursing staff of public and private residential care homes.

5. According to the Administration, while ensuring that essential and urgent services are maintained, SWD has from time to time adjusted the scale of operation of subsidized welfare facilities by reducing the scale of or suspending certain services in order to reduce the risk of infection arising from the gatherings of people. In this connection, SWD has issued a number of press releases in January and February 2020 to announce

² For details of the distribution work of donated surgical masks, please refer to the press release of the Government at:
<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202002/18/P2020021800009.htm>.

special arrangements for subsidized welfare services, including service suspension or provision of limited services for certain centres and suspension of groups and programmes.³

6. The Administration will brief the Panel on Welfare Services on the welfare support for the elderly, the chronically-ill, persons with disabilities and the grass-roots under the novel coronavirus epidemic, as well as anti-epidemic measures taken by subvented NGOs and service operation of these NGOs at the meeting on 9 March 2020.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
3 March 2020

³ For details of the special arrangements, please refer to the press releases of the Government at:

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202001/28/P2020012800751.htm>;

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202002/01/P2020020100458.htm>;

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202002/07/P2020020700672.htm>;

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202002/11/P2020021100544.htm>;

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202002/13/P2020021300490.htm>; and

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202002/28/P2020022800467.htm>.