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3 February 2021

Council Business Division 2  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
Legislative Council Complex  
1 Legislative Council Road  
Central, Hong Kong  
(Attn: Miss Connie AU)

Dear Miss AU,

**Evaluation report of the Community Care Fund assistance programme**

At the meeting of the Home Affairs Panel of the Legislative Council held on 21 December 2016, Members noted that the Community Care Fund would provide the evaluation reports of programmes to the Panel. The following four evaluation reports, which have been completed recently, are now attached for Members' information:

- (1) the evaluation report of the "Pilot Scheme on Providing Special Subsidy for Persons with Permanent Stoma from Low-income Families for Purchasing Medical Consumables";
- (2) the evaluation report of the "Pilot Scheme on Relaxing the Household Income Limit of the Fee-waiving Subsidy Scheme under the After School Care Programme for Low-income Families and Increasing Fee-waiving Subsidy Places";
- (3) the evaluation report of the "Pilot Scheme on Raising the Maximum Level of Disregarded Earnings for Recipients with Disabilities under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme"; and

- (4) the evaluation report of the “Subsidy for Persons Holding Non-local Qualifications to Conduct Qualifications Assessment”.

For enquiries, please feel free to contact the undersigned. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,



(Ms Iris WONG)

for Secretary for Home Affairs

c.c.

Secretary for Education (Attn: Ms Jeanne FUNG)

Director of Social Welfare (Attn: Ms Celia CHIU)

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**Community Care Fund  
Pilot Scheme on Providing Special Subsidy for  
Persons with Permanent Stoma from  
Low-income Families for Purchasing Medical Consumables  
Evaluation Report**

**Background**

The Community Care Fund (CCF) launched the “Pilot Scheme on Providing Special Subsidy for Persons with Permanent Stoma from Low-income Families for Purchasing Medical Consumables” (the Pilot Scheme) in 2017, which aims at providing persons with permanent stoma<sup>1</sup> from low-income families with a special subsidy to relieve their financial burdens in purchasing medical consumables and improve their quality of life.

**Implementation of the Pilot Scheme**

2. The three-year Pilot Scheme was launched in September 2017. With a total funding of \$50.64 million, the Pilot Scheme, administered by the Social Welfare Department (SWD), is expected to benefit about 1 500 persons. SWD issued letters in phases to invite applications from those who may fulfil the eligibility criteria. Eligible persons may also apply direct to SWD.

3. The upper limit of the monthly subsidy for the Pilot Scheme is set at \$1,000 by SWD, with reference to the monthly consumption of medical consumables by persons with permanent stoma estimated by a Medical Officer of public hospital. There are three levels of subsidy in the Pilot Scheme: those with monthly household income at or less than 100% of the relevant Median Monthly Domestic Household Income (MMDHI) receive a full grant of the subsidy at \$1,000 per month; those with monthly household income from more than 100% to 125% of the MMDHI receive three-quarters grant of the subsidy at \$750 per month; and those with monthly household income from more than 125% to 150% of the MMDHI receive a half grant of the subsidy at \$500 per month.

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<sup>1</sup> Under the Pilot Scheme, “stoma” refers to colostomy, urostomy and ileostomy, where the patients are required to wear stoma bags to collect wastes from the body. A stoma is regarded as permanent if there is no plan for closure as confirmed by a Medical Officer/Nurse of public hospital/clinic/Surgical Specialist on the Specialist Register of the Medical Council of Hong Kong (applicable only to applicants who have not received surgical treatments in a public hospital/clinic). A Medical Officer of a public hospital/clinic refers to one in a Specialist Out-patient Clinic (Surgery) under the Hospital Authority (HA), while a nurse of a public hospital/clinic refers to one in a Stoma and Wound Care Clinic under HA.

## Evaluation

4. SWD conducted an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Pilot Scheme in January 2020 and completed it in February. The evaluation mainly analysed the number of beneficiaries, the amount of subsidy disbursed, how the subsidy was used by the beneficiaries, feedback from the beneficiaries and those units which assisted in distributing application materials as well as enquiries and comments made by the public. The data for the evaluation was collected through the questionnaire survey conducted with the beneficiaries and those units which assisted in distributing application materials, and the public enquiries and comments received.

## Analysis of Evaluation Results

5. SWD has analysed the collected information and data for the evaluation as follows:

### (a) Statistical Data on Application and Profile of Beneficiaries

6. As at end-December 2019, SWD received 730 applications, among which 603 persons were assessed to be eligible and receiving subsidy on a quarterly basis, 74 persons were ineligible and 28 persons withdrew their applications. The remaining few applications which were received after the application deadline were still under processing. Among the 603 eligible applicants, 558 persons (92.5%) received a full grant of the subsidy at \$1,000 per month, 30 persons (5%) received three-quarters grant of the subsidy at \$750 per month and 15 persons (2.5%) received a half grant of the subsidy at \$500 per month.

7. Among the 603 eligible applicants, 517 persons were aged 60 or above, constituting 86% of all eligible applicants, with those aged between 60 and 69 being the largest group. The relevant statistical data is at **Attachment**.

### (b) Units which Assisted in Promotion and Distributing Application Materials

8. A total of 2 021 invitation letters were sent via Hong Kong Stoma Association and the self-help groups of stoma patients of North District Hospital and Tuen Mun Hospital to their members. Besides, Medical Social Services Units of public hospitals with Specialist Out-patient Clinics (Surgery) (13 Units), Stoma and Wound Care Clinics under HA (18 Units), Patient Resource Centres and Rehab Shops located at some public hospitals (18 Units) assisted in promoting the Pilot Scheme and distributing programme briefs and application forms. Eligible persons may obtain application forms from the CCF Team of SWD or the abovementioned units direct. Application forms can also be downloaded from SWD website.

(c) Questionnaire Survey with the Beneficiaries

9. SWD conducted a telephone survey on 100 randomly selected beneficiaries (around 17% of the total number of beneficiaries) in January 2020, with a view to understanding their use of stoma bags and related medical consumables, use of subsidy, their care in daily living, as well as their comments on the Pilot Scheme.

(i) Use of Stoma Bags and Related Medical Consumables

10. 75% of the interviewees had been using stoma bags or related medical consumables for 3 years or above, while 22% had been using stoma bags or related medical consumables for 1 to 3 years. The interviewees also said that the expenses on stoma bags or related medical consumables were mainly borne by themselves (46%) or by their family members/relatives/friends living together or living away (35%).

(ii) Use of Subsidy and Care in Daily Living

11. After receiving the subsidy of the Pilot Scheme, 66% of the interviewees and their families still had to bear the additional spending on medical consumables, while 34% of the interviewees did not have to pay for any additional expenses. Most of the interviewees (25%) had to pay an additional expense of \$500 or below, followed by 21% of the interviewees who had to pay an additional expense of \$1,000 or above while 20% of the interviewees had to pay an additional expense of \$500 to \$1,000.

12. Almost all the interviewees were living in the community (including short-term hospitalisation), and only one interviewee was living in a residential care home. For care in daily living, 25% of the interviewees needed to be taken care of by others and the main carers were mostly their family members/relatives/friends living together. They also agreed that the Pilot Scheme could relieve their financial burdens in purchasing related medical consumables. 98% of the interviewees agreed that the Pilot Scheme rendered appropriate support to them in purchasing related medical consumables. A few interviewees expressed that the amount of subsidy of the Pilot Scheme was insufficient.

(iii) Comments on the Pilot Scheme

13. All the interviewees (100%) were satisfied with the overall arrangement of the Pilot Scheme. 26% of the interviewees made some comments, including 13% of the interviewees proposing to increase the amount of subsidy, 9% of the interviewees proposing to extend the subsidy period, and 4% of the interviewees respectively proposing to disburse subsidy on a monthly basis, disburse subsidy on a reimbursement basis, relax the asset limit

and strengthen publicity, etc.

(iv) Questionnaire Survey with Units which Assisted in Promotion and Distributing Application Materials

14. SWD conducted a questionnaire survey with all units which assisted in distributing application materials and received 16 responses in total. The majority of them introduced the Pilot Scheme to applicants through interviews with staff/medical officers or telephone enquiries. 11 interviewed units made a number of suggestions, including relaxing the eligibility criteria (such as covering persons with chronic wounds or temporary stomas), increasing the amount of subsidy, simplifying the application procedures, shortening the processing time, extending the Pilot Scheme, adding different publicity means and strengthening the enquiry hotline service. All the interviewed units agreed that the Pilot Scheme had helped relieve the financial burdens of the applicants and their families in purchasing related medical consumables, and they also expressed their willingness to provide continuous assistance to similar programmes.

(d) Public Enquiries and Comments

15. In the course of implementing the Pilot Scheme, SWD has set up an enquiry hotline to provide necessary support and information for persons concerned. As at end December 2019, SWD received a total of 1 166 enquiries on the Pilot Scheme, the majority of which concerned the eligibility criteria, application procedures, completion of application forms/submission of documents, application progress, etc. Some enquiries also provided comments on the Pilot Scheme, such as simplifying the application procedures and relaxing the eligibility criteria.

## **Conclusion**

16. The evaluation results showed that more than 80% of the beneficiaries were aged 60 or above, and more than 90% of the beneficiaries are receiving a full grant of the subsidy at \$1,000 per month. This reflected that most of the beneficiaries were from relatively low-income families, and the Pilot Scheme could render appropriate support to them. At the same time, over 70% of the interviewees had been using stoma bags or related medical consumables for more than three years, which indicated that they had long-term need of the subsidy from the Pilot Scheme. They hoped that the subsidy period of the Pilot Scheme could be extended or the Pilot Scheme be incorporated into the regular service of the Government.

17. Notwithstanding that more than 60% of the interviewees and their families still had to pay an additional expense for medical consumables

even with the subsidy from the Pilot Scheme, the majority of them agreed that the Pilot Scheme was able to relieve their financial burdens. Thus, some interviewees expressed their wish to that the amount of subsidy be increased.

18. Based on the above survey data and results analysis, the Pilot Scheme has achieved its purpose of relieving the financial burdens of persons with permanent stoma from low-income families, especially those who have been using stoma bag for a long period of time. Regularisation of the Pilot Scheme may continue to provide support to those in need.

19. It was announced in the 2019 Policy Address Supplement that the Pilot Scheme would be regularised. SWD expects that the regularised service can be implemented in March 2021. In the course of the implementation of the Pilot Scheme, SWD has launched a number of publicity initiatives, such as issuing press releases and uploading relevant information onto the websites of SWD and CCF. Other than those units as listed in paragraph 8 above which assisted in the promotion of the Pilot Scheme, posters were put up and publicity materials were distributed at District Social Welfare Offices of SWD and Home Affairs Enquiry Centres of the Home Affairs Department. The publicity means were primarily paper-based and relatively passive. As the actual number of beneficiaries falls below the target, SWD will consider different publicity avenues to diversify the publicity means upon regularisation of the Pilot Scheme. Moreover, to ensure that the beneficiaries of the Pilot Scheme can continue to receive support, there is a need to extend the Pilot Scheme in this transitional period to allow the eligible persons to receive the subsidy until the regularised service is implemented.

Social Welfare Department  
August 2020

**Pilot Scheme on Providing Special Subsidy for  
Persons with Permanent Stoma from  
Low-income Families for Purchasing Medical Consumables**

**Subsidy Profile of the Beneficiaries**

Grant of Subsidy	Number of Beneficiaries	Percentage
Full grant (\$1,000 per month)	558	92.5%
Three-quarters grant (\$750 per month)	30	5%
Half grant (\$500 per month)	15	2.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>603</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Age Profile of the Beneficiaries**

Age Group	Number of Beneficiaries	Percentage
0–19	1	0.2%
20–29	5	0.8%
30–39	3	0.5%
40–49	22	3.7%
50–59	55	9.1%
60–69	181	30.0%
70–79	179	29.7%
80–89	132	21.9%
90 or above	25	4.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>603</b>	<b>100%</b>



**Community Care Fund**  
**Pilot Scheme on Relaxing the Household Income Limit of the**  
**Fee-waiving Subsidy Scheme under the After School Care**  
**Programme for Low-income Families and Increasing**  
**Fee-waiving Subsidy Places**  
**Evaluation Report**

**Background**

After School Care Programme (ASCP) services and fee-waiving/reduction places have been in high demand among working families. As there are families with household income above 75% but not exceeding 100% of the relevant Median Monthly Domestic Household Income (MMDHI) yet not being able to benefit from the existing “Fee-waiving Subsidy Scheme under the ASCP” of the Social Welfare Department (SWD), a three-year “Pilot Scheme on Relaxing the Household Income Limit of the Fee-waiving Subsidy Scheme under the After School Care Programme for Low-income Families and Increasing Fee-waiving Subsidy Places” (the Pilot Scheme) was launched in October 2017 by the Community Care Fund (CCF) to strengthen support for low-income families.

**Implementation of the Pilot Scheme**

2. The Pilot Scheme is administered by SWD. In August 2017, SWD organised a briefing session to announce the details of the Pilot Scheme and kicked off a series of publicity activities<sup>1</sup>. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) participating in the “Fee-waiving Subsidy Scheme under the ASCP” were invited to join the Pilot Scheme. As at 31 May 2020, a total of 134 ASCP centres under 46 NGOs participated in the Pilot Scheme as ASPs. The parent/guardian of an eligible child could apply for the service during the implementation period of the Pilot Scheme by submitting a completed application form together with all necessary documents to an ASCP centre of an ASP for vetting. Payment of the fee-waiving subsidy under the ASCP will not be made directly by SWD to the parents/guardians of child beneficiaries. Applications will be vetted by ASCP centres of ASPs according to the following fee-waiving/reduction categories:

Full fee-waiving:	Families with monthly income at or below 55% of the MMDHI
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<sup>1</sup> Publicity activities included issuing press release, distributing the leaflets of the Pilot Scheme via District Social Welfare Offices of SWD and Home Affairs Enquiry Centres of the Home Affairs Department and uploading relevant information and application form onto SWD website and CCF website.

Half fee-reduction: Families with monthly income above 55% but not exceeding 75% of the MMDHI

One-third fee-reduction: Families with monthly income above 75% but not exceeding 100% of the MMDHI

3. As primary students are generally receiving full-time education, all parents have chosen to receive ASCP services under the Pilot Scheme in the late afternoon session<sup>2</sup>. Most ASCP centres under the Pilot Scheme operate between 3:30 pm and 7 pm. The amount of fee-waiving subsidy for a child beneficiary under the Pilot Scheme is set with reference to the “Fee-waiving Subsidy Scheme under the ASCP” and an additional one-third fee reduction subsidy. The subsidy amount of full fee-waiving/half fee-reduction/ one-third fee-reduction is \$900/\$450/\$300 respectively.

4. As at 31 May 2020, a total subsidy amount of about \$5.44 million had been paid.

## **Evaluation**

5. Making reference to the methodology adopted in the evaluation on the effectiveness of other CCF programmes, SWD commenced an evaluation on the effectiveness of the Pilot Scheme in December 2019 and the work was completed in March 2020. The effectiveness of the Pilot Scheme was analysed based on the feedbacks collected from parents/guardians of child beneficiaries and ASPs of the Pilot Scheme as well as the enquiries and suggestions made by the public, etc. Sources of information for the evaluation included quarterly statistical reports from ASCP centres of ASPs, questionnaire survey conducted on parents/guardians of child beneficiaries and on all ASPs, and public enquiries.

## **Analysis of the Evaluation Results**

### **(a) Statistical Data on Child Beneficiaries**

6. Subsidy payment is made by SWD to ASPs on a reimbursement basis according to the quarterly statistical reports from ASCP centres of ASPs. As at 31 May 2020, a total of 959 places were granted with fee waiving/reduction subsidy (including 621 full fee-waiving places, 188 half fee-reduction places, and 150 one-third fee-reduction places).

7. Among the child beneficiaries, the age group of 8 to 10 ranked the highest in number, accounting for 47%, followed by the age group of 6 to 7 and 11 to 12, accounting for 32% and 21% respectively. The child beneficiaries being eligible for fee waiving were mostly due to their parents/guardians being in

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<sup>2</sup> In general, the morning session runs from 8 am to 1 pm; the afternoon session from 1 pm to 6 pm and the late afternoon session from 3 or 4 pm to 7 or 8 pm and a few to 9 pm.

employment, accounting for 85%, or their parents/guardians proactively seeking open employment, accounting for 8% or other conditions (such as social or medical factors), accounting for 11%. Regarding the household income of families of child beneficiaries, the majority was  $\leq$  55% of the MMDHI, accounting for 65%. The child beneficiaries lived in various districts in Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories, with Kwun Tong, Islands, Tuen Mun and Kwai Tsing each accounting for 10% or above. For details, please see **Attachment**. There is no deadline for application for the Pilot Scheme. The number of child beneficiaries is expected to increase continuously till the end of the Pilot Scheme.

(b) Questionnaire Survey on Parents/Guardians of Child Beneficiaries

8. In January 2020, SWD conducted a telephone survey on 100 randomly selected parents/guardians of child beneficiaries (about 10% of the total) to collect information on their financial conditions, family needs, and their feedback on the Pilot Scheme. Among the parents/guardians of child beneficiaries interviewed, 86% agreed that the child beneficiaries were under proper care under the Pilot Scheme which facilitated them in engaging in work, seeking open employment, participating in employment retraining courses/job attachment, etc; 90% agreed that the Pilot Scheme could relieve the families/relatives' financial burden in respect of ASCP-related expenses; and 93% agreed that the Pilot Scheme could provide appropriate support to the child beneficiaries in areas of skills learning/social activities. Most of the interviewees were satisfied with the overall arrangement of the Pilot Scheme, accounting for 96%. Besides, 42% of the interviewees reflected their opinions on the Pilot Scheme. These include relaxing the eligibility requirement, increasing the number of ASCP places, increasing the amount of subsidy and streamlining the application/vetting procedures and arrangement of ASCP centres, such as matching their operating hours with after-school hours, extending their operating hours on weekday evenings, Saturdays and Sundays, etc.

9. Among the interviewees, 30% of the child beneficiaries/families indicated that they had special needs, with the majority coming from single-parent families, accounting for 50% of those families with special needs, followed by child beneficiaries with intellectual/health problems, child beneficiaries having siblings with less than satisfactory intellectual/ health/mental conditions and child beneficiaries with special education needs, accounting for 20%, 17% and 7% respectively. The survey also collected statistics on the economic conditions and service needs of the child beneficiaries before receiving subsidy from the Pilot Scheme. Overall speaking, 70% of the interviewees indicated that they had to bear the fees of the ASCP before receiving subsidy from the Pilot Scheme, 5% revealed that the fees were paid by family members living together, while 27% of the child beneficiaries had not received services of ASCP before receiving subsidy under the Pilot Scheme.

10. After receiving subsidy under the Pilot Scheme, 52% of the interviewees, who were granted full fee-waiving, still have to pay the remaining

fees for the ASCP services. Among them, the interviewees having to pay the remaining fees of \$400 to \$600 and over \$600 accounted for 27% and 31% respectively. Among the interviewees under full fee-waiving/fee reduction having to pay the remaining fees of the ASCP, 42% expressed that the amount of subsidy was not enough while 6% had no opinion on the amount.

(c) Questionnaire Survey on ASPs

11. SWD conducted a questionnaire survey on the 46 ASPs under the Pilot Scheme and all of them completed the questionnaires. Among them, 91% agreed that the Pilot Scheme, with additional fee-reduction places, was able to benefit more children with appropriate care and support, so that their parents/guardians could continue with their employment, job-seeking or participating in employment re-training courses/job-attachment, etc.; 78% agreed that relaxing the household income limit could relieve the financial burden of low-income families with household income marginally above 75% but not exceeding 100% of the relevant MMDHI; while 74% agreed that relaxing the household income limit under the Pilot Scheme could encourage the above mentioned low-income families to make use of ASCP services. Besides, 57% of the interviewed ASPs indicated that the overall arrangement by SWD (including the briefing session, service specifications, application and notification of approval as ASPs, etc.) was proper, whereas 41% had no views. Some opinions given by the ASPs included streamlining the application/vetting procedures, streamlining the administrative procedures and relaxing the eligibility criteria, etc. Overall speaking, most interviewed ASPs, accounting for 61%, were satisfied with the operation of the Pilot Scheme; 24% had no views and 76% expressed their wish to take part in similar programmes.

12. The survey also collected statistics of the service provision of ASCP centres operated by the ASPs for child beneficiaries with special education needs. Overall speaking, 85% of ASPs being interviewed indicated their ASCP centres had provided ASCP services for child beneficiaries with special education needs. 33% of them provided ASCP services for children with special education needs, constituting about 20% to 30% of the total number of child beneficiaries, followed by 26% of interviewed ASPs providing ASCP services with 10% to 20% children having special education needs out of the total number of child beneficiaries.

(d) Public Enquiries and Suggestions

13. SWD has set up a hotline during the implementation of the Pilot Scheme with a view to providing required information and support to the public. As at 31 May 2020, a total of 327 enquiries were received on the Pilot Scheme and the main concerns were about the eligibility criteria, followed by matters related to the completion of application forms /documents required and application procedures. Some enquirers also provided their feedbacks on increasing the amount of fee-waiving subsidy and streamlining the application/vetting procedures, etc.

## **Conclusion**

14. Based on the findings of the survey, both the parents/guardians of child beneficiaries and ASPs agreed that the Pilot Scheme was effective. The survey also revealed that many families of child beneficiaries had special needs, such as being single-parent families, child beneficiaries having special education needs/being in poor health condition or child beneficiaries with siblings having intellectual/health and mental concerns, etc. Therefore, ASCP services not only provided proper care for the child beneficiaries, but also gave support for families with special needs and relieved their financial burden, especially for those having children with special education needs.

15. It was announced in the 2019 Policy Address that the Government would implement a host of enhancement measures. These include adding 2 500 full fee-waiving places, relaxing application eligibility, increasing subsidy level, providing extra subsidy for children with special education needs and streamlining means-test procedures, etc. in order to enhance the ASCP. At the same time, the Pilot Scheme will also be regularised. SWD plans to implement the above measures in the third quarter of 2020-21. As the period of subsidy for child beneficiaries under the Pilot Scheme will end by September 2020, the level of fee-waiving/reduction for the last quarter of the Pilot Scheme is recommended to be maintained during the transition period to the related new measures, so that eligible children may continue to receive subsidy until their first application for the enhanced service is approved. This is to ensure their continued receipt of ASCP services during the transition period.

16. The views of some parents/guardians over the increase of the amount of subsidy and streamlining of administrative and vetting procedures may have reference value in the formulation of the implementation details of the regularised scheme. They will also be beneficial to the enhanced ASCP services and the strengthening of support to needy families.

Social Welfare Department  
August 2020

## Attachment

### **Pilot Scheme on Relaxing the Household Income Limit of the Fee-waiving Subsidy Scheme under the After School Care Programme for Low-income Families and Increasing Fee-waiving Subsidy Places**

#### **Statistical Data on Child Beneficiaries and Profile of Approved Service Providers (as at 31 May 2020)**

(a) Household Income Condition (Note 1)

Household Income	Number of Beneficiaries	Percentage (%)
Families with monthly income $\leq$ 55% of the MMDHI	621	65%
Families with monthly income >55% to 75% of the MMDHI	187	19%
Families with monthly income >75% to 100% of the MMDHI	151	16%

Note 1: Based on the MMDHI category of the families of child beneficiaries according to the latest result of vetting/review made by ASCP centres.

(b) Age Profile of the Child Beneficiaries (Note 2)

Age Group	Number of Beneficiaries	Percentage (%)
6-7	304	32%
8-10	453	47%
11-12	202	21%

Note 2: The age of the children is based on the time when they are receiving/last received ASCP services.

(c) Criteria for Fee-waiving/reduction

Criteria Met by Parents/Guardians of Children Receiving ASCP Services (more than one option can be chosen) (Note 3)	Number of Beneficiaries	Percentage (%)
engaged in employment	814	85%
participating in employment retraining courses	6	1%
participating in the Special Job Attachment Scheme	0	0%
proactively seeking open employment	77	8%
others (e.g. social or medical factor, etc.)	108	11%

Note 3: As more than one option can be chosen for the reasons of child beneficiaries to receive ASCP services, the total percentage may not be equal to 100%.

(d) Session of ASCP services Joined by the Child Beneficiaries

Session of Services	Number of Beneficiaries	Percentage (%)
Morning session	0	0%
Afternoon session	0	0%
Late Afternoon session	959	100%

(e) Meal service

Meal service	Number of Beneficiaries	Percentage (%)
Meal service included	26	3%
Meal services excluded	933	97%

(f) Utilisation of Fee-waiving/Reduction Subsidy By District

District	Number of Beneficiaries	Percentage (%)
Central & Western	8	1%
Southern	59	6%
Islands	125	13%
Eastern	29	3%
Wan Chai	1	0%
Kowloon City	30	3%
Yau Tsim Mong	30	3%
Sham Shui Po	47	5%
Kwun Tong	154	16%
Wong Tai Sin	45	5%
Sai Kung	4	0%
Sha Tin	64	7%
Tai Po	40	4%
North	12	1%
Yuen Long	79	8%
Tsuen Wan	35	4%
Kwai Tsing	97	10%
Tuen Mun	100	11%

**Community Care Fund**  
**Pilot Scheme on Raising the Maximum Level of Disregarded Earnings for**  
**Recipients with Disabilities under the**  
**Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme**  
**Evaluation Report**

**Background**

The Community Care Fund (CCF) has launched a “Pilot Scheme on Raising the Maximum Level of Disregarded Earnings for Recipients with Disabilities under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme (Pilot Scheme) since 2016 to encourage recipients with disabilities under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme to secure employment. Under the Pilot Scheme, CSSA recipients with disabilities who are currently employed are encouraged to look for jobs with higher salaries, while those who are currently unemployed are encouraged to join the labour force.

**Implementation of the Pilot Scheme**

2. The three-year Pilot Scheme launched in October 2016 with the total funding provision of \$47.25 million and is anticipated to benefit about 3 000 persons per month. The Pilot Scheme is administered by the Social Welfare Department (SWD). The Commission on Poverty approved in July 2019 to extend the Pilot Scheme under the current mode of operation for 12 months to end-September 2020 for further review.

3. Disregarded Earnings (DE) refers to the earnings from employment that are disregarded when assessing the amount of assistance payable to a CSSA recipient. Under the CSSA Scheme, all categories of recipients in cases which have been on CSSA for not less than two months are eligible for the DE benefits. The current arrangement is that the first \$800 of the monthly earnings from employment of a CSSA recipient is totally disregarded, while up to half of the next \$3,400 of his/her earnings (i.e., \$1,700) is also disregarded, adding up to a total of \$2,500 per month at the maximum.

4. Under the Pilot Scheme, the maximum level of DE is raised such that the first \$1,200 of the monthly earnings from employment of a disabled CSSA recipient will be totally disregarded, while up to half of the next \$5,600 of his/her earnings (i.e., \$2,800) will also be disregarded, adding up to a total DE of \$4,000 per month at the maximum. The difference between the raised DE and the recipient’s earnings already been disregarded under the current DE arrangement of the CSSA Scheme is the amount of “additional DE” payable to a beneficiary under the Pilot Scheme. Each eligible person can hence receive a monthly subsidy of \$1,500 at the maximum and the subsidy is disbursed on a quarterly basis. A CSSA recipient with



disabilities must meet the following criteria in order to benefit from the Pilot Scheme:

- (i) he/she is receiving CSSA and medically certified to be disabled or in ill-health;
- (ii) he/she is engaged in paid employment and entitled to the DE arrangement under the CSSA Scheme; and
- (iii) he/she is medically certified to be disabled or in ill-health continuously while enjoying the raised DE under the Pilot Scheme.

5. Eligible CSSA recipients with disabilities are not required to submit applications. SWD will assess the amount of “additional DE” payable to the recipients under the Pilot Scheme based on their earnings from employment which recorded in the Computerised Social Security System (CSSS). Having verified relevant details of the cases, SWD will deposit on a quarterly basis the payments of the “additional DE”, in the form of a subsidy, directly into the bank accounts that the eligible CSSA recipients use for receiving CSSA payments.

### **Evaluation Study**

6. Making reference to the methodology adopted in the evaluation on the effectiveness of other CCF programmes, SWD commenced the evaluation on the effectiveness of the Pilot Scheme in January 2020 and was completed in March 2020. The effectiveness of the Pilot Scheme was mainly evaluated through analysing the number of beneficiaries, the amount of subsidy disbursed, how the subsidies were used by beneficiaries, feedbacks from beneficiaries as well as the enquiries and comments from public. The data was collected based on the record of the CSSA recipients’ earnings from employment which recorded in the CSSS, through the surveys conducted with beneficiaries and from the public enquiries and comments received.

### **Analysis of Evaluation Results**

7. SWD has analysed the collected information and data for the evaluation. The results of the evaluation are as follows:

(a) Statistical Data on the Beneficiaries

8. During the implementation period of the Pilot Scheme since 2016, SWD verified the eligibility of 8 229 persons by virtue of the data in the CSSS, and paid the subsidy to eligible beneficiaries accordingly. As at the end-December 2019, a total of about \$37.19 million was disbursed to eligible CSSA recipients with disabilities.

(b) Survey on the Beneficiaries

9. SWD conducted telephone survey to 100 beneficiaries in January 2020 by random sampling, with a view to understanding their use of subsidy and their

comments of the Pilot Scheme.

(c) Satisfaction on the Pilot Scheme which encouraging CSSA recipients with disabilities to join the labour force

10. According to the evaluation report, up to 81% interviewees agreed that the Pilot Scheme could encourage CSSA recipients with disabilities who are currently unemployed to join the labour force or those who are employed to look for jobs with higher salaries, while minority of the interviewees (6%) disagreed with it. The remaining of the interviewees (13%) had no other comments on the Pilot Scheme.

(d) Use of Subsidy<sup>1</sup>

11. After acquiring the subsidy of the Pilot Scheme, majority of the interviewees (92%) spent the “additional DE” on daily living expenses, while 25% of the interviewees spent the subsidy on job-related expenses (such as meals, travelling expenses). The remaining 17% of the interviewees spent the subsidy on rental expenses.

(e) Comments on the Pilot Scheme

12. Majority of the interviewees (93%) were satisfied with the arrangement of the Pilot Scheme. Among the 100 interviewees, 29% of them expressed some comments, it included 16% of them wished to increase the subsidy amount, 8% of them proposed to relax the eligibility criteria, suggested a monthly disbursement of subsidy and increased the publicity, another 7% of them respectively proposed to extend the subsidy period and the Pilot Scheme be regularised, etc.

(f) Public Enquiries and Comments

13. In the course of implementing the Pilot Scheme, SWD has set up an enquiry hotline to provide support and information regarding the Pilot Scheme to the concerned public. As at end-December 2019, SWD has received a total of 2 254 enquiries on the Pilot Scheme, the majority of which were concerned about eligibility criteria, subsidy amount, subsidy payment date and acknowledgement of receipt of the subsidy. Some enquiries also provided comments on the Pilot Scheme such as proposing to increase subsidy amount and change disbursement schedule to a monthly basis.

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<sup>1</sup> Under the above item (d) and (e), an interviewee may put forward more than one view and each view would be categorised and counted. As the percentages in respect of various views were calculated with 100, being the total number of interviewees, taken as the base, they may not add up to 100%.

## Conclusion

14. Based on the above survey data, more than 80% of the surveyed CSSA recipients with disabilities agreed that the Pilot Scheme can encourage persons with disabilities to look for jobs with higher salaries, and those who are currently unemployed to join the labour force. At the same time, more than 90% of the interviewed CSSA recipients with disabilities were satisfied with the arrangement of the Pilot Scheme, and some recipients also hoped that the subsidy period of the Pilot Scheme can be extended or regularised. In this regard, it is believed that the arrangement of raising the maximum level of DE can provide financial incentives for CSSA recipients with disabilities to encourage them to seek employment and continue to work, which also reflects that the Pilot Scheme has facilitated employment of persons with disabilities to some extent.

15. After acquiring the subsidy of the Pilot Scheme, more than 90% of the interviewed CSSA recipients with disabilities mainly used it in daily livings, job-related expenses and rental expenses. Although some recipients expressed their hope to increase the subsidy amount, it is believed that the Pilot Scheme can alleviate their financial burden to some extent.

16. Based on the above survey data and results analysis, the Pilot Scheme is conducive to encouraging those who are employed to look for jobs with higher salaries, and those who are currently unemployed to join the labor force. The regularisation of the arrangement on raising the DE will provide continuous support on the needs of those concerned.

17. In the 2019 Policy Address, the Government has put forward a host of improvement measures to enhance the CSSA Scheme, including, among others, raising the monthly maximum amount of DE by 60% from \$2,500 to \$4,000 per month (i.e. the same DE arrangement as that of the Pilot Scheme) as well as increasing the maximum level of earnings to be totally disregarded from a new job from the first month's income to the first two month's income every two years. The proposals for funding allocation were approved by the Legislative Council Finance Committee on 29 May 2020 and the Government will implement the relevant measures as soon as possible. In this connection, the Government proposes to further extend the Pilot Scheme for four months from October 2020 to end-January 2021 under the current mode of operation.

Social Welfare Department  
August 2020

# **Community Care Fund Subsidy for Persons Holding Non-local Qualifications to Conduct Qualifications Assessment Evaluation Report**

## **Purpose**

This paper sets out the evaluation results of the Community Care Fund (CCF) Assistance Programme “Subsidy for persons holding non-local qualifications to conduct qualifications assessment” (the Programme) and the arrangements for incorporating the Programme into the Government’s regular assistance programme.

## **Background**

2. The Commission on Poverty approved in May 2017 the implementation of the Programme for three years with funding from the CCF to alleviate the financial burden of needy persons by settling their qualifications assessment fees when such persons apply for qualifications assessment for general purpose conducted by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ). The Programme, implemented by the Education Bureau (EDB) and the HKCAAVQ, was subsequently launched in September 2017.

## **Implementation of the Programme**

3. Target recipients of the Programme are persons fulfilling the following eligibility criteria:

- A. holding non-local qualifications which have not yet been assessed by the HKCAAVQ;
- B. being one of the following categories of Hong Kong residents<sup>1</sup>:

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<sup>1</sup> Persons from the following categories are excluded:

- i. persons and their dependants admitted into Hong Kong under the Capital Investment Entrant Scheme; or
- ii. persons and their dependants admitted into Hong Kong under the Quality Migrant Admission Scheme; or
- iii. persons admitted into Hong Kong for employment as imported workers under the Supplementary Labour Scheme; or
- iv. persons admitted into Hong Kong under the Working Holiday Scheme; or
- v. persons and their dependants admitted under the following immigration policies/arrangements: training, study, employment or investment under the General Employment Policy, employment under the Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals, employment under the Immigration Arrangements for Non-local Graduates, or employment under the Admission Scheme for the Second Generation of Chinese Hong Kong Permanent Residents; or
- vi. foreign domestic helpers; or

- (a) holders of Hong Kong permanent identity cards; or
  - (b) persons who have come from the Mainland to Hong Kong for settlement on “Permit for Proceeding to Hong Kong and Macao” (commonly known as One-way Permit) but not yet obtained Hong Kong permanent identity cards; or
  - (c) ethnic minorities who are holders of Hong Kong identity cards and (i) have the right to land; or (ii) on unconditional stay in Hong Kong; or (iii) permitted to stay in Hong Kong as dependants (and their sponsors are Hong Kong permanent residents, or non-permanent residents with the right to land or on unconditional stay in Hong Kong), but have not yet obtained Hong Kong permanent identity cards; and
- C. being the applicants and/or their spouses who have passed the means-test establishing eligibility for assistance under any of the specified assistance schemes provided below and receiving assistance:
- (a) Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme; or
  - (b) Low-Income Working Family Allowance Scheme (renamed as Working Family Allowance (WFA) Scheme from April 2018 onwards); or
  - (c) Work Incentive Transport Subsidy (WITS) Scheme; or
  - (d) School Textbook Assistance (TA) Scheme (for full grant only); or
  - (e) Kindergarten and Child Care Centre Fee Remission Scheme (KCFRS) (for full or 3/4 remission).

4. Applicants for the Programme are required to submit to the HKCAAVQ, in addition to the necessary documents for qualifications assessment, an application form for the Programme. They are also required to provide supporting documents proving their eligibility for the Programme. They need not pay the qualifications assessment fees when they are confirmed eligible for the Programme. The assessment fees for the completed cases for the Programme are settled by the EDB on a quarterly basis.

5. When the Programme commenced in September 2017, information about the Programme (including the eligibility criteria and the application procedures), the application form and the frequently-asked questions were uploaded onto the websites of the HKCAAVQ and/or the EDB. Leaflets for promoting the Programmes were prepared in Chinese, English, and six other language versions (i.e. Bahasa Indonesia, Hindi, Nepali, Tagalog, Thai, and Urdu). The leaflets and the application forms were delivered to the Home Affairs Enquiry Centres of the Home Affairs Department and the Regional Education Offices of the EDB for distribution to the public. The leaflets and the application forms were also delivered to non-governmental organisations serving ethnic minorities and new arrivals for distribution to the service users.

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vii. visitors; or

viii. persons whose travel documents are endorsed with a condition of stay specifying “Employment is not permitted”.

6. As at end April 2020, there was a total of 152 completed cases of qualifications assessment under the Programme. The relatively small number of beneficiaries could be attributed to factors such as no strong correlation between being financially needy and holding non-local qualifications, and that persons with non-local qualifications may have possessed further local qualifications and/or accumulated working experience which result in their previous non-local academic attainment playing a less essential role in employment. According to the records in the HKCAAVQ's database, most of the beneficiaries (approximately 80%) of the Programme were assessed with an overall qualification meeting the standard of Level 4 and Level 5<sup>2</sup> (33.6% and 46.1% respectively) of the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework [Table 1 of the *Appendix*].

7. The funding provision for the Programme was \$8.67 million, with a total amount of \$8.4 million for disbursement and \$0.27 million as administrative fees. As at end April 2020, the total subsidy disbursed is around \$360,000 (payment for some completed cases has not been made as qualifications assessment fees are paid to the HKCAAVQ on a quarterly basis). The total administrative expenditure is around \$257,000, including about \$250,000 for upgrading HKCAAVQ's computer system to process online applications from the Programme applicants and about \$7,000 for the production of the multilingual leaflets to promote the Programme.

### **Evaluation of Programme Effectiveness**

8. The major objective of the Programme is to provide a subsidy for needy persons to apply for qualifications assessment conducted by the HKCAAVQ, as there have been views that some non-local qualification holders might have not applied for qualifications assessment due to financial difficulty. In fact, in a questionnaire survey<sup>3</sup> conducted on the Programme, eight respondents out of 13 indicated that they would not pay for the qualifications assessment by themselves if they failed to meet the eligibility for the CCF subsidy [Table 2 of the *Appendix*]. Although the response rate of the questionnaire was not high, it at least indicates that a portion of the financially needy persons holding non-local qualifications would only proceed with qualifications assessment when the subsidy is granted. The CCF subsidy has been a suitable form of financial assistance for them.

9. The two-and-a-half years' experience shows that the Programme could help persons with non-local qualifications seek further study or employment that is

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<sup>2</sup> The Qualifications Framework in Hong Kong is a 7-level hierarchy covering qualifications in the academic, vocational, professional, and continuing education sectors. Commonly used award titles for Level 4 and Level 5 are "Associate Degree" and "Bachelor's Degree" respectively. For further information of all 7 levels, please refer to the diagram following Table 1 of the *Appendix*.

<sup>3</sup> A questionnaire is distributed to the beneficiaries around six months after the release of their qualifications assessment results. This is an anonymous survey collecting information including basic personal information of the beneficiaries, their purposes and views of conducting qualifications assessment. As at end April 2020, 109 questionnaires have been issued and 13 completed questionnaires have been returned.

commensurate with their abilities or education standard by having their non-local qualifications properly recognised. Most of the respondents to the abovementioned questionnaire survey made use of the qualifications assessment results for further study and/or employment and they considered qualifications assessment useful for such purposes [Table 3 of the Appendix]. The success rate in using the qualifications assessment results for further study or employment is also encouraging [Table 4 of the Appendix].

10. As regards the administrative procedures for the Programme, persons applying for the subsidy are not required to go through a separate means-test. Their eligibility was linked to their recipient status under any of the five specified assistance schemes they have already applied for. These five specified assistance schemes can basically cater for different categories of persons having financial needs, including working families (e.g. WFA recipients) or individuals (e.g. WITS recipients) with low income, working families with children (e.g. recipients of WFA, TA and KCFRS), and those in need of instant relief to support their living (e.g. CSSA recipients).

11. Most of the respondents to the questionnaire survey expressed that they learned about the Programme through the leaflets and the websites of HKCAAVQ and the EDB [Table 5 of the Appendix]. The provision of the Programme information and the application form online is thus considered convenient for applicants. The HKCAAVQ has been assessing the eligibility of applications under the Programme since September 2017 and has accumulated adequate experience. The arrangement of reimbursing assessment fees to the HKCAAVQ on a quarterly basis is also appropriate and smooth.

## **Conclusion**

12. The Programme rendered appropriate assistance to persons with non-local qualifications when they applied for qualifications assessment. It has also met its objective and is in line with the aims of the CCF. The Programme will be incorporated into the Government's regular assistance programme starting from September 2020.

13. The administrative arrangements and the eligibility requirements for the applicants will remain unchanged for the regularised assistance. Further information and the application arrangements regarding the regularised assistance will be released on the websites of the HKCAAVQ and the EDB.

Education Bureau  
August 2020

**Summary of Findings  
(as at end April 2020)**

**Part A: Total No. of Beneficiaries and their Qualifications Assessment Results**

Table 1: Qualifications assessment results of 152 beneficiaries

Qualifications assessed to be pitched at:	Number of Beneficiaries (% ^)
i. Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (QF) @:	
Level 7	1 (0.7%)
Level 6	4 (2.6%)
Level 5	70 (46.1%)
Level 4	51 (33.6%)
Level 3	10 (6.6%)
Level 2	3 (2.0%)
Level 1	0 (0%)
ii. Senior Secondary (S4-S6)	9 (5.9%)
iii. Junior Secondary (S1-S3) or below	0 (0%)
iv. Others (e.g. unrecognised or professional qualifications)	4 (2.6%)

^ Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

@ Award titles for different levels of the QF are provided as follows:





## Part B – Findings of Questionnaire Survey

Questionnaires issued: **109**  
 Questionnaires returned: **13**

Table 2: Willingness to pay qualifications assessments fees if ineligible for CCF subsidy

Willingness to pay qualifications assessment fees	Number of Respondents
Yes	5
No	8

Table 3: Usefulness of qualifications assessment for further study/employment

Views	Number of Respondents
Useful	10
Not useful	2
No comments	1

Table 4: Results of application for further study/employment

Purposes	Number of Respondents
For application for further study	5
Application successful	3
Application unsuccessful	2
For application for employment	8
Application successful	6
Application unsuccessful	2

Table 5: Means of learning about the Programme (can choose more than 1 item)

Means	Number of Respondents
Websites of CCF and relevant departments/organisations	7
Programme leaflets	4
Friends, family members or colleagues	3
Mass media (including newspaper and radio)	1
Non-governmental organisations	0