

**Legislative Council Panel on Manpower
Subcommittee to Study the Setting Up of
an Unemployment Assistance System in Hong Kong**

Follow-up to Issues Raised at Meeting on 13 April 2021

The Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme

To give more targeted support for the unemployed and their families who face immediate economic difficulties amid the pandemic, the Government launched the time-limited ‘Special Scheme of Assistance to the Unemployed’ (the Special Scheme) under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme. Specifically, the CSSA asset limits for able-bodied persons are temporarily relaxed by 100% for one year from June 2020 to May 2021. Furthermore, during the six months from April to September 2021, the cash value of insurance policies of able-bodied CSSA applicants will not be counted as assets for a grace period of one year. There has been a significant increase in CSSA unemployment cases. In end-March 2021, the CSSA unemployment caseload was 19 810, recording about 60 per cent increase as compared with that of early 2020.

The Working Family Allowance Scheme

In order to assist households facing underemployment amid the pandemic, the Government will reduce the Working Family Allowance (WFA) working hour requirements for non-single parent households for the claim months from June 2021 to May 2022, which include substantially reducing the working hour requirement for Basic Allowance from 144 to 72 hours per month, and reducing the working hour requirement for Medium Allowance from 168 to 132 hours per month, so that more low-income households will be eligible for WFA or some existing beneficiaries can get slightly higher allowance. It is roughly estimated that an additional 24 000 households would benefit from this time-limited arrangement.