

**Community Care Fund**  
**“Pilot Scheme on Living Allowance**  
**for Low-income Carers of Persons with Disabilities”**  
**Evaluation Report**

**Purpose**

This paper aims to report the implementation, evaluation of effectiveness and the arrangement for regularising the “Pilot Scheme on Living Allowance for Low-income Carers of Persons with Disabilities” (the Pilot Scheme) under Community Care Fund (CCF).

**Implementation of the Programme**

2. The Pilot Scheme was launched in October 2016 to provide carers of persons with disabilities (PWDs) from low-income families with a living allowance to help supplement their living expenses so that PWDs in need of long-term care may, under the help of their carers, receive proper care and remain living in the community.

3. The Pilot Scheme was implemented in three phases. Phase III of the Pilot Scheme ended in September 2023. The eligibility criteria for Phase III of the Pilot Scheme are at **Appendix**.

4. The implementation of Phase III of the Pilot Scheme generally followed the operating mode of Phase II, with the following improvement measures:

- (i) **Number of carer beneficiaries:** Provide an additional 1 000 places in Phase III of the Pilot Scheme, bringing the total number of carer beneficiaries under the three phases of the Pilot Scheme to 3 500;
- (ii) **Care-giving hours:** Countable care-giving hours covered situations where the PWDs being taken care of had undergone long-term hospitalisation (i.e. continuous in-patient treatment for more than three months) or the PWDs being taken care of were temporarily away from Hong Kong with the carers while the carers continue to provide care (not exceed 30 days at a time under Phase III of the Pilot Scheme);
- (iii) **Frequency of interviews and/or home visits:** Frequency of interviews and/or home visits provided by Approved Service Providers (ASPs) is adjusted from once a month in the first 6 months to once a month in the first 4 months, and thereafter from once a quarter to once every 4 months;
- (iv) **Service fee for ASPs:** In accordance with the adjustment of the frequency of interviews and/or home visits provided by ASPs, the service fee payable to

ASPs for serving each carer is adjusted from \$600 per month for the first 6 months to \$600 per month for the first 4 months, and the service fee payable per month from the 7<sup>th</sup> month onwards (i.e. \$360) was payable from the 5<sup>th</sup> month onwards; and

- (v) **Expanding the use of training fee:** The use of training fee is expanded to cover expenses incurred by carers attending trainings (e.g. expenses on respite services).

5. In each phase of the Pilot Scheme, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) has issued letters to PWDs who had been on the waiting lists for specified services by a specific date to invite their carers to participate in the Pilot Scheme. In Phase III of the Pilot Scheme, 1 224 carers were assessed as eligible (of which 54 cases took care of two PWDs at the same time). From October 2016 to July 2023, a total of 3 548 carers had been assessed to be eligible for receiving the living allowance, among which 2 373 carers were still receiving the living allowance as at end-July 2023, while the remaining 1 175 carers had ceased participating in the Pilot Scheme due to various reasons (such as the PWDs being taken care of were admitted to residential care services/passed away or the carers had started receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance/Old Age Living Allowance, etc.).

6. Parents/Relatives Resource Centres (PRCs), District Support Centres for PWDs (DSCs), Integrated Community Centres for Mental Wellness (ICCMWs), Day Activity Centres (DACs), Sheltered Workshop (SWs) and Integrated Vocational Rehabilitation Services Centre (IVRSCs) were invited to be ASPs in the Pilot Scheme. In Phase III of the Pilot Scheme, a total of 69 services units (including 15 PRCs, 16 DSCs, 24 ICCMWs, 4 DACs, 8 SWs and 2 IVRSCs) located in all districts throughout the territory were ASPs. Since the commencement of the Pilot Scheme, these ASPs have provided 3 548 eligible carers and 3 466 PWDs being taken care of with the necessary support and follow-up services, including referral/arrangement of training, home visits to follow up the caregiving situation, emotional counselling to carers when necessary, etc.

7. As at end-July 2023, around \$420.6 million of subsidy had been disbursed under the Pilot Scheme, including around \$366.22 million on the carer living allowance, \$0.4 million on training fee for the carers and \$53.98 million on service fee for ASPs.

### **Consultancy Study by the Sau Po Centre on Ageing of the University of Hong Kong (CoA)**

8. SWD commissioned the CoA to conduct a Consultancy Study on “Pilot Scheme on Living Allowance for Low-income Carers of Persons with Disabilities” and “Pilot Scheme on Living Allowance for Carers of Elderly Persons from Low-income Families” (the Consultancy Study) to evaluate the effectiveness of the

Pilot Schemes. The Final Report of the Consultancy Study was completed in March 2022. The findings suggested that the Pilot Schemes were effective in supporting carers to continue taking care of the elderly persons and PWDs such that they could remain living in the community.

9. The Consultancy Study found the “Pilot Scheme for Low-income Carers of Persons with Disabilities” effective in improving the perceived health of both carers and PWDs concerned, and in improving the well-being and relationship of the carers and PWDs, which in turn, enhanced the carer’s caregiving capacity to care for PWDs in the community. Besides, the findings suggested that the support such as emotional support and information provided by the ASPs had reduced the caregiving burden and improved the caregiving skills of carers.

## **Conclusion**

10. The Pilot Scheme helped improve the quality of life of the PWDs being taken care of, alleviate the carers’ stress from caregiving and facilitate PWDs to live in the community. In view of the effectiveness of the Pilot Scheme in supporting the low-income carers of PWDs throughout the years, the Government has regularised the allowance under the Pilot Scheme in October 2023. The monthly allowance has increased from \$2,400 to \$3,000, and it is expected to benefit around 5 000 carers of PWDs.

Labour and Welfare Bureau  
Social Welfare Department  
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## **Appendix**

### **Phase III of the Pilot Scheme on Living Allowance for Low-income Carers of Persons with Disabilities Eligibility Criteria**

Carers of persons with disabilities (PWDs) applying for the living allowance of the Pilot Scheme must meet the following criteria:

- (i) The PWDs being taken care of must be living in Hong Kong and on the waiting lists for any specified rehabilitation services<sup>Note 1</sup> subsidised by Social Welfare Department (SWD), for special school with boarding placement under the Education Bureau (EDB) or for infirmary service of the Hospital Authority (HA) on or before 31 March 2020;
- (ii) The PWDs being taken care of must be living in the community without using any residential care services (RCS)/boarding service of special school/infirmary service<sup>Note 2</sup>;
- (iii) The carer must be capable of taking up the care-giving role<sup>Note 3</sup> and is providing at least 80 hours of care-giving work<sup>Note 4</sup> per month; or not less than a total of 120 hours per month for taking care of more than one PWD who meets the above-mentioned criteria at the same time;
- (iv) The carer must be a Hong Kong resident living in Hong Kong and not engaged in any form of employment relationship with the person(s) with disabilities being taken care of;
- (v) The carer must not be a recipient of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance or Old Age Living Allowance or the living allowance under the “Pilot Scheme on Living Allowance for Carers of Elderly Persons from Low Income Families” for taking care of the same PWD; and
- (vi) The carer is from a low-income family, i.e. the monthly household income of the carer and the household members residing with the carer does not exceed the specified income limit applicable to the corresponding household size, excluding assets. (Please refer to the table below for the monthly household income limit)

#### **Monthly Household Income Limit**

The income limit is set with reference to 75% of the 2019 Median Monthly Domestic Household Income (MMDHI) of economically active households published by the Census and Statistics Department and is applicable throughout the whole period of Phase III of the Pilot Scheme.

Household size	Monthly household income limit (\$)
1	15,100
2	22,000
3	26,800
4	33,500
5	40,200*
6 or above	42,900*

\* The monthly household income limit for household size of 5 and 6 or above is set with reference to the MMDHI for household size of 5 and 6 or above published in the Report on General Household Survey for the Fourth Quarter of 2017.

**Note 1:** Specified rehabilitation services refer to subsidised RCS/day rehabilitation training services with waiting lists managed by the CRSRehab of SWD, including hostels for severely physically handicapped persons, hostels for severely mentally handicapped persons, hostels for moderately mentally handicapped persons, care-and-attention (C&A) homes for severely disabled persons, C&A homes for the aged blind, long-stay care homes, residential special child care centres, day activity centres, sheltered workshops and special child care centres, as well as community care services (CCS) with waiting lists managed by service operators, including home care service for persons with severe disabilities and integrated support service for persons with severe physical disabilities.

**Note 2:** The PWDs being taken care of who are receiving CCS and/or day rehabilitation training services while on the waiting lists for specified subsidised RCS are also eligible for Phase III of the Pilot Scheme.

**Note 3:** The carer must be aged 15 or above and capable of taking up the caregiving role. In general, a person who is assessed under the Standardised Care Need Assessment Mechanism for Elderly Services to be of moderate or severe level of impairment, or is on the waiting lists for any specified rehabilitation services subsidised by SWD, special school with boarding placement under EDB or for infirmary services of HA, or is a recipient of DA, is not deemed to be a fit and capable carer and is therefore not be eligible for the carer allowance of Phase III of the Pilot Scheme.

**Note 4:** The care provided by the carer to the PWD(s) refers to independent activities of daily living, such as meal preparation, home making, medication management, purchase of daily necessities, escort, etc. and/or personal care and assistance in activities of daily living required by the PWDs concerned, such as moving, dressing, toileting, personal hygiene, etc. For some carers taking care of the PWDs with behavioral or emotional problems, the time needed to calm down the PWDs before the above daily living care can be provided may be counted as care-giving hours. In addition, the number of hours for the carer to attend training can also be counted as care-giving hours.