

Community Care Fund
“Pilot Scheme on Providing Subsidy for Higher Disability Allowance
Recipients in Paid Employment to Hire Carers”
Evaluation Report

Purpose

This paper aims to report the implementation of the “Pilot Scheme on Providing Subsidy for Higher Disability Allowance Recipients in Paid Employment to Hire Carers” (Pilot Scheme) subsidised by the Community Care Fund (CCF), evaluation of its effectiveness, and the regularisation of the subsidy upon the completion of the Pilot Scheme.

Implementation

2. The Pilot Scheme was launched by the Social Welfare Department (SWD) in October 2016 to provide a monthly subsidy of \$5,000¹ for persons with disabilities (PWDs) eligible for Higher Disability Allowance (HDA) and engaged in paid employment (not applicable to persons engaged in self-employment or working from home) to hire carers to assist them in travelling between their homes and workplaces (not applicable to persons who work from home), with a view to encouraging them to stay in employment. Applications for the Pilot Scheme closed in end-March 2018.

3. With the approval of the Commission on Poverty in July 2019 and September 2020, the Pilot Scheme, initially lasted for three years, was extended for 12 months and 36 months respectively, till end September 2023 under the current mode of operation. Subsidy is provided to existing beneficiaries of the Pilot Scheme provided that they continue to meet the eligibility criteria.

4. As at end July 2023, SWD received 184 applications² for the Pilot Scheme, and 41 persons have been assessed as eligible and were given the

¹ The beneficiaries could, at the same time, make use of the HDA flexibly to cope with the other expenses arising from the hire of domestic helpers/expenses of other special needs.

² Majority of the applicants misunderstood that all existing HDA recipients were eligible for the Pilot Scheme; but they did not meet the application criteria of the Pilot Scheme since they had no employment or did not hire carer.

subsidy, with a total amount of subsidy disbursement of around \$11.33 million.

Consultancy Study

5. The Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB) commissioned the Hong Kong Polytechnic University in July 2020 to conduct a consultancy study on the needs and support to carers of elderly people and of PWDs in Hong Kong. Out of the eight areas under study, one included the evaluation of the Pilot Scheme and exploration of the way forward through focus group/interview (a total of 40 participants including PWDs, carers and stakeholders) and questionnaires (more than 430 participants including carers and nursing care professionals, etc.). In June 2022, the LWB released the report of “Consultancy Study on Needs and Support Required of Carers of Elderly Persons and of PWDs in Hong Kong” (Consultancy Study Report) submitted by the consulting team.

6. According to the Consultancy Study Report, the PWDs, their carers and the nursing care professionals who participated in the focus group/interview and questionnaires held very positive views on the Pilot Scheme. They considered that the Pilot Scheme was useful in facilitating PWDs’ joining the workforce with the provision of financial assistance. Besides, participants in the focus group were very positive about the assistance and care provided by domestic helpers. They considered that the Pilot Scheme had facilitated PWDs’ pursuit of employment and independent living to minimise reliance on family members.

Conclusion

7. As the Pilot Scheme has facilitated PWDs’ employment and integration into the society, and considering the findings of the Consultancy Study Report, the Government has regularised the subsidy under the Pilot Scheme since October 2023.

Labour and Welfare Bureau
Social Welfare Department
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