

The Third Meeting of the Community Care Fund Task Force on 4 July 2013

Summary of Discussion

The Community Care Fund (CCF) Task Force under the Commission on Poverty (CoP) held its third meeting on 4 July 2013. A summary of the discussion is as follows:

1. Members noted the progress report of the current CCF assistance programmes. Among them, the assessment panel for the “After-school care pilot scheme” held a meeting on 3 July to consider the applications submitted by schools or non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The CCF would later disburse the funds to the schools and NGOs whose applications were approved.
2. Regarding the “School-based fund (cross-boundary learning activities)”, Members agreed that in case the participating schools had not used the appropriated funds for 2012-13 due to cancellation of planned activities, the schools could retain such funds for use in 2013-14, i.e. the funds for both years might be used together in 2013-14.
3. Regarding the of “Training subsidy for children who are on the waiting list for subvented pre-school rehabilitation services” programme, Members agreed to accept a new round of applications from end-July to end-October 2013, as well as changing the beneficiary children’s “specified date” of being on the waiting list for subvented pre-school rehabilitation services to “on or before 30 June 2013”. In addition, the household income limits under the programme would be adjusted according to the median monthly domestic household income of Hong Kong for the first quarter of 2013.
4. Members supported the acceptance of a new round of applications for the “Special subsidy to persons with severe physical disabilities for renting respiratory support medical equipment” programme, as well as the provision of a special subsidy to persons with severe physical disabilities for purchasing medical consumables related to respiratory support medical equipment.
5. Members also supported the suggestions of lifting the age limit for target beneficiaries under the assistance programmes for persons

with severe physical disabilities and relaxing the income limit under the assistance programme for the severely disabled. The Social Welfare Department would look into the suggestions.

6. Members noted the evaluation reports on two programmes, namely the “Financial assistance for non-school-attending ethnic minorities and new arrivals from the Mainland for taking language examinations” and the “Subsidy for non-school-attending ethnic minorities and new arrivals from the Mainland participating in language courses”. These two programmes would be incorporated into the Home Affairs Department’s regular support services later.
7. Members discussed the investment strategy for the Government’s additional injection of \$15 billion into the CCF. Members proposed placing most funds with the Hong Kong Monetary Authority and investing the balance on fixed deposits in Hong Kong dollar and Renminbi. The proposal would be submitted to the CoP for consideration.
8. Members supported the proposals on the following three new assistance programmes:

- (a) Enhancement of the flat rate grant under the School Textbook Assistance Scheme (STAS)

It was proposed that an additional flat rate grant of \$500 or \$1,000 would be provided to students eligible for the STAS and students receiving the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance. It would be a one-year programme for the 2013/14 school year. The estimated expenditure of the programme would be \$292.36 million and around 348 000 students were expected to benefit from the programme.

- (b) Enhancement of the financial assistance for needy students pursuing programmes below sub-degree level

A tuition fee reimbursement mechanism and a flat rate academic expense grant were proposed to help eligible students from low-income families. It would be a one-year programme for the 2013/14 school year. The estimated expenditure of the programme would be \$65.51 million. The tuition fee reimbursement mechanism and the flat rate academic expenses

grant were expected to benefit around 3 600 and 7 800 students respectively.

(c) Subsidy for low-income persons who are inadequately housed

In 2012, the CCF rolled out two programmes to provide a one-off subsidy to benefit low-income tenants in private housing, namely the “subsidy for low-income elderly tenants in private housing” and the “subsidy for low-income persons who are inadequately housed”. Taking into account the experience of implementing these two programmes, the CCF Secretariat proposed launching a new programme which would cover the beneficiaries of the two programmes and also relax the definition of “inadequately housed” with a view to benefiting more needy people.

The proposals for the three new assistance programmes above would be submitted to the CoP for consideration and approval.