

Community Care Fund - Public Consultation Sessions
Summary of Views and Suggestions

The Community Care Fund (CCF) held two public consultation sessions on 26 January and 5 February 2013 respectively to gauge public views on the existing assistance programmes and formulation of new programmes. Summary of views and suggestions from participants are as follows:

Views and Suggestions on Existing Assistance Programmes

1. School-based Fund for Cross Boundary Learning Activities

- (1) To introduce long-term initiatives as the one-off subsidy for cross-boundary learning activities is not able to provide much assistance to students from low-income families.

2. After-school Care Pilot Scheme

- (1) To provide subsidy for after-school care to parents direct through the approach of “money follows the users” so that parents can choose suitable services themselves and students from schools not included in the pilot scheme can benefit.
- (2) To strengthen cooperation with non-governmental organisations (NGOs), so as to increase the quota and extend the coverage of the pilot scheme and to meet the service demand from the needy families.

3. Elderly Dental Assistance Programme

- (1) To relax the eligibility criteria to allow more elders to benefit from the programme. In the long run, to consider providing funding to public hospitals for setting up more dental clinics to meet the demand for elderly dental service in the community.

4. Relocation Allowance for Eligible Residents of Sub-divided Units in Industrial Buildings Who Would Have to Move Out as a Result of the Buildings Department's Enforcement Action

- (1) As the income limit for one-person household is lower than the minimum wage level, reference should be made to the eligibility criteria of other programmes so as to relax the household income limit.
- (2) To raise the amount of allowance in order to relieve the economic pressure faced by those affected by the enforcement action.

5. Subsidy for Elderly Tenants in Private Housing

- (1) Some “hidden elders” did not apply for the programme as they may not be aware of the programme details and the application procedures.

6. Subsidy for Low-income Persons who are Inadequately Housed

- (1) To relax the eligibility criteria of the programme to allow tenants of subdivided units with individual entrance doors to benefit from the programme as long as they meet the specified household income and rental limits.
- (2) To allow discretion to benefit those who do not fully meet the eligibility criteria but are inadequately housed.
- (3) To differentiate “Sub-divided units” from individual flats by checking the database of the Land Registry.
- (4) To benefit households which are larger in size and reside in individual rental flats but not “sub-divided units” as long as they are inadequately housed.
- (5) To take into account the household members who are not Hong Kong residents (e.g. Two-way Exit Permit holders) when calculating the household income.
- (6) Under the existing arrangement, applicants are required to make a simple declaration on their living condition and income level only,

which may easily result in abuse. Applicants should be required to provide documentary proof on their income, so as to prevent abuse.

- (7) To define clearly that the authority of considering and approving the applications lies with the CCF Secretariat but not the community service units assisting in the implementation of the programme.
- (8) To enhance publicity through different channels to inform eligible applicants of programme details and application procedures.
- (9) To extend the programme or consider incorporating the programme into government's regular assistance and service programmes, and to raise the amount of subsidy to relieve the financial pressure faced by the families of those known as "n have-nots".
- (10) To conduct a mid-term review to obtain the views of the community service units assisting in the implementation of the programme and collect case information on application in various districts, with a view to making a detailed analysis on applicants' circumstances.

Formulation of New Assistance Programmes

1. Assistance for Elders and their Carers

- (1) To provide allowance for elders who live in self-financing institutions and are waiting for places of subvented elderly homes.
- (2) To provide subsistence allowance for carers who need to give up work for taking care of elders in their families, with a view to relieving their financial pressure.
- (3) To subsidise district-based programmes, so as to strengthen the care service for elders after discharged.

2. Support for the Mentally Handicapped, Patients and their Carers

- (1) To subsidise the services of nephrology day care centre to relieve the burden to renal patients and their families/carers.
- (2) To provide medical subsidy for the mentally handicapped and cancer patients, and cancel the requirement of applying allowance on household basis but allow them to apply for the subsidy on individual basis. And to provide subsidies to their carers.
- (3) To provide subsidy to the ex-mentally ill for home repairs and replacement of broken furniture, so as to improve the living environment of children in the household concerned.

3. Assistance for Ethnic Minorities (EM) and New Arrivals (NA)

- (1) To subsidise EM students to receive training for promotion of their physical development, and provide additional sports facilities and make improvement to the existing ones.
- (2) To provide training subsidy for EMs and NAs, so as to broaden their knowledge and improve their skills.

4. Assistance for the Underprivileged

- (1) To expedite the allocation of public housing and provide rental subsidies for those who wait for public housing for three years or above. To set the amount of subsidy in accordance with the household size, and to convert old buildings to “interim housing”.
- (2) To relax the eligibility criteria for food bank assistance to benefit more low-income families and to relieve the inflation pressure faced by them.
- (3) To provide home repair subsidies for squatters to improve their residences making reference to the approach of the “Home Environment Improvement Scheme for the Elderly”.

- (4) To provide funding by the “community-based” approach for NGOs, such as the service teams of Neighbourhood Level Community Development Projects, so as to provide district-based and suitable services for families of those known as “n have-nots”.
- (5) To provide subsidy for NGOs to encourage and train up more members of the public to engage in voluntary work and let them have direct contact with the underprivileged and understand the latter’s needs.
- (6) To provide funding for the 18 District Councils (DCs), with a view to providing direct assistance at district level for specific recipients according to the service need of the district concerned.
- (7) To have more contact with members in the community and frontline volunteers and listen to their views, so as to help the community in need more effectively. Apart from financial assistance, the culture of care should be nurtured in the community and the underprivileged should learn how to self help.
- (8) To provide transport subsidy for students who need to attend a school in another district because of the shortage of local school places.

Assistance Programmes and Operation of the CCF

- (1) The eligibility among assistance programmes should be consistent, for instance, the income limits for different programmes should not vary greatly.
- (2) In addition to the provision of basic assistance for the low-income group, there should be suggestions on long-term policy.
- (3) To enhance the cost-effectiveness of implementation of the CCF assistance programmes, such as by abstaining from asking NGOs or other organisations to implement the programmes.

- (4) To put the financial status of the CCF under public monitoring and set more clear guidance on how to make use of the CCF.
- (5) To enhance transparency by uploading the accounts of the CCF and the review reports of the assistance programmes on the website.
- (6) To analyse the information of the existing CCF assistance recipients, so as to provide policy suggestions to Commission on Poverty.
- (7) To consider increasing the incentives for the public to make donation to the CCF.