

## **Community Care Fund - Public Consultation Sessions**

### **Summary of Views and Suggestions**

The Community Care Fund (CCF) held two public consultation sessions on 1 and 4 March 2014 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:

#### **Existing Assistance Programmes**

##### **1. After-school Care Pilot Scheme (the Scheme)**

- (1) To regularise the Scheme, increase the quota for after-school care services, extend the child care service hours and provide such services during school holidays as well as weekends to meet the demand from families in need.
- (2) To provide extra allowance and enhance the support in staffing establishment to participating schools so as to relieve teachers of the pressure arising from additional administrative workload in implementing the Scheme.
- (3) To allow the use of community halls by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or local bodies in a specified period to provide after-school care services.
- (4) To strengthen the cooperation with NGOs and extend the Scheme to cover child-minding services, student interest classes and tutorial classes with a view to unleashing the female labour force.
- (5) To enhance the support to NGOs, e.g. strengthening the establishment of administrative staff.

##### **2. Elderly Dental Assistance Programme**

- (1) To set up more public dental clinics in various districts and increase the service quota to benefit more elders in need.
- (2) To expand the scope of assistance in providing dental services to the elders with more suitable services, such as treatment of acute dental diseases, prescription for pain relief, teeth extraction, etc.

### **3. One-off Living Subsidy for Low-income Households Not Living in Public Housing and Not Receiving CSSA**

- (1) To increase the amount of subsidy, extend the programme or consider the incorporation the programme into the Government's regular assistance and service programme with a view to relieving the financial pressure of the "n have-nots" families.
- (2) The programme now provides a flat-rate subsidy to eligible households with three or more members. The amount of subsidy should be calculated on a pro-rata basis in accordance with the number of eligible household members when the programme is re-launched.
- (3) To set up a discretion mechanism to benefit also the low-income families who are unable to meet the requirement of rental limit under the programme but are confirmed to be in financial need by the service units which assist in implementing the programme.
- (4) To implement rental control and provide rent subsidy in the long run to help those households suffering from exorbitant rents so as to solve the problem of working poor.

### **4. Subsidy for Owners' Corporations of Old Buildings**

- (1) To strengthen publicity in districts to make more local people aware of the details of the programme and the channels for submitting their applications.
- (2) To extend and enhance the programme, including raising the average rateable value limit of residential units in urban areas, increasing the amount of subsidy, expanding the scope of subsidy to cover additional expenses incurred for the maintenance of lifts and the pay rise of security guards due to the introduction of statutory minimum wage.
- (3) To conduct evaluation of the effectiveness of the programme and to extend the scope of subsidy to cover the costs of home renovation and building maintenance for the elders.

### **5. Subsidy to Meet Lunch Expenses at Schools**

- (1) To expand the scope of the programme to cover students receiving half-rate grant under the student financial assistance schemes.

## **Formulation of New Assistance Programmes**

### **1. Assistance to patients and persons with disabilities**

- (1) To subsidise the adult patients of Attention Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD) in financial difficulty to settle the medical expenses so that they can be assessed and treated by private psychiatrists as early as possible. To subsidise social welfare agencies and work with patients' self-help groups to provide suitable treatment and emotional support services to those patients.
- (2) To help reduce the financial burden of those squint and double vision sufferers in financial difficulty by subsidising them on a reimbursement basis to pay for special glasses and lenses and to receive psychological services.
- (3) To provide financial assistance to students with special education needs so that they can learn more effectively; and to increase the number of special school places for children with disabilities.
- (4) To provide financial assistance to tertiary students with disabilities who are in financial difficulty to ease their burden of borrowing loan from the Student Financial Assistance Agency. Cash subsidy should also be provided to them to help meet their living expenses other than tuition fees.
- (5) To subsidise dementia patients in financial difficulty to acquire specialist services.
- (6) To subsidise persons with disabilities to seek treatment by Chinese medicine practitioners on a reimbursement basis.

### **2. Assistance to carers of children and persons with disabilities**

- (1) Prior to the change of the home-based child carer service from volunteer work to paid work, the CCF should disburse additional subsidy to the carers so that their salaries can reach the statutory minimum wage level. This will help promote the development of the industry and meet the needs of child-minding in the community.
- (2) To provide subsidy to child carers in financial difficulty to compensate for their loss of time, money and employment opportunities when fulfilling

their responsibilities and to relieve their financial burden.

- (3) To provide pre-school education support and subsidy to women of low-income families who have given up their work to take care of their young children, so that they can rejoin the labour market and help ease the financial burden of the families.
- (4) To provide allowance to carers of persons with disabilities so as to relieve their financial pressure.

### **3. Assistance to the elders**

- (1) To provide additional medical subsidy to low-income elders on top of the health care vouchers so as to ease their financial burden.
- (2) To subsidise NGOs to enhance their carer services and social centre services provided for elders in financial difficulty in the neighbourhood.
- (3) To speed up the provision of residential care home services for the elders given the ageing population.

### **4. Assistance to the disadvantaged and low-income families**

- (1) To provide medical subsidy to low-income people so that they can receive timely and appropriate treatment as appropriate and prevent their health conditions from deteriorating.
- (2) To give due regard to the family problems of low-income people and provide them with emotional and psychiatric counselling and support in addition to financial assistance, so as to promote harmony in the family.
- (3) The Low-income Working Family Allowance proposed by the Government will not provide subsidy to one-person households. The CCF should continue to provide assistance to “n have-nots” one person households e.g. introducing a dedicated assistance scheme for them.
- (4) To provide a domestic removal subsidy to low-income or single-parent families.

### **Operation of the CCF**

- (1) To draw up a set of clearer criteria for the assistance programmes so that the public at large can have a better understanding of their eligibility.
- (2) To expand the funding sources to ensure the sustainability of the operation of the CCF.
- (3) Apart from providing one-off subsidies to people in need, the Government should also introduce a long-term policy to tie in with the CCF.

### **Other Comments/Suggestions**

- (1) To introduce a subsidy to encourage childbirth given the ageing population.
- (2) To allocate some of the CCF resources to provide support to rural or squatter areas where community facilities and social welfare services are inadequate.
- (3) To provide low-cost recreational sports activities at community halls across the territory to benefit low-income persons.
- (4) To introduce a scheme about friendly neighbourhood to promote harmony in the community.