

## Community Care Fund to launch three new assistance programmes

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The following is issued on behalf of the Community Care Fund Secretariat:

The Steering Committee on the Community Care Fund (the Steering Committee) endorsed at a meeting today (February 20) the launch of three new assistance programmes - to provide a subsidy to needy low-income elderly people for dental services; to subsidise low-income elderly tenants in private housing; and to introduce an after-school care pilot scheme for Primary One to Secondary Three students of low-income families.

The Community Care Fund (CCF) has set aside \$100 million to subsidise needy elderly people on low incomes for purchasing dentures and other necessary dental services. The programme is expected to benefit about 11 000 elderly people. Each beneficiary can receive up to \$8,765.

The beneficiaries must be aged 60 or above and not be recipients of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA). They should be users of the "Integrated Home Care Services" or "Enhanced Home and Community Care Services" subvented by the Social Welfare Department (SWD) as at December 31, 2011 and should be paying the Level 1 or Level 2 fee charge of the above two home-based services when applying for assistance through this CCF programme. They will have lost all or some of their teeth or will be suffering from dental illness and encountering difficulties in eating or chewing, and should be willing to accept the subsidy for denture fixing or other dental services provided by the CCF. They should also be preliminarily assessed as requiring and being suitable for receiving dentures or other dental services. The programme is expected to be rolled out in the third quarter of this year.

The Steering Committee also approved the provision of a one-off allowance to low-income elderly tenants in private housing to relieve their pressure in view of rising inflation and cyclical rental increases. The amount of assistance for elderly people living alone is \$4,000, \$8,000 for two-person elderly households, and a uniform \$12,000 for three-or-more-person elderly households. The CCF has set aside \$50 million for the programme, and about 9 700 households (about 11 900 persons) of elders are expected to benefit.

Beneficiaries must be aged 65 or above. They should be elderly people living

alone, or two-person elderly-households or three-or-more-person elderly households, with income not exceeding the specified household income limit applicable to the relevant household size. They should be non-CSSA recipients and not own any property in Hong Kong. They should also be renting private housing with the rent not exceeding the specified limit. The programme is expected to be rolled out this July.

The Steering Committee also endorsed the introduction of an after-school care pilot programme to subsidise schools and non-government organisations (NGOs) to identify the most needy students who are in primary one to secondary three and come from low-income families. The programme aims to co-ordinate and integrate after-school learning and support activities for consolidating students' classroom learning, alleviating the pressure of working parents in pushing their children to do homework, and reducing the chance of students picking up bad habits after school.

The CCF has reserved \$40 million to implement the pilot programme. The target beneficiaries should be primary one to secondary three students from public sector schools (including special schools) and Direct Subsidy Scheme schools. They should mainly come from families receiving CSSA or receive full fee reimbursement from the student financial assistance schemes of the Student Financial Assistance Agency. Schools and NGOs participating in the programme have discretion to include other needy students, but the number of these students should not exceed 25 per cent of the total number of students.

The after-school care pilot programme will last for one academic year from September 2012 to July 2013.

Since its establishment in 2010, the CCF has launched a total of 15 assistance programmes on education, home affairs, medical and welfare areas to support different groups of people, including the persons with disabilities, the elderly, children, new arrivals, patients and ethnic minorities. In addition, the CCF rolled out a programme last October to provide a one-off allowance of \$6,000 to new arrivals.

The CCF will continue to launch other assistance programmes to help the underprivileged and low-income families in the community.

Ends/Monday, February 20, 2012

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