

CCF to provide subsidies for inadequately housed low-income persons and owners' corporations of old buildings

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

The Steering Committee on the Community Care Fund (Steering Committee) today (May 23) endorsed two new assistance programmes to provide subsidies for low-income persons who are inadequately housed and owners' corporations (OCs) of old buildings.

The CCF has set aside about \$91 million to provide a one-off allowance for low-income persons who are inadequately housed. The amount of assistance is \$3,000 for one-person households, \$6,000 for two-person households, and a uniform \$8,000 for three-or-more-person households.

The CCF expects to start accepting applications for the programme from this October. About 13,000 households (nearly 30,000 people) are estimated to benefit under the programme.

The beneficiaries must be renting on a monthly basis rooms/cubicles, cocklofts or bedspaces in private buildings (excluding industrial and commercial buildings), or temporary housing. Those who are homeless are also eligible.

The income of the applicants must not exceed the specified household income limit, with the rent not exceeding the specified limit. They should not be recipients of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) and not own any property in Hong Kong.

The Steering Committee also approved a programme to subsidise the OCs of old buildings with a view to improving building management. The maximum amount of subsidy for each OC is \$20,000 in three years. Items eligible for subsidy include registration fees for the establishment of OCs, procurement fees for third party risks insurance, routine inspection expenses for fire services installations and electrical and mechanical equipment, and expenses for clearing fire escapes once a year. The subsidy will help enhance the safety of the occupants and members of the public.

The target beneficiaries should be OCs of residential or composite buildings aged 30 years or above. The average rateable value of the residential units of buildings in

the urban areas should not exceed \$120,000, while that of buildings in the New Territories should not exceed \$92,000. The CCF has reserved \$68 million to implement the programme, which is expected to benefit more than 3,000 OCs. Applications are expected to open this October.

In addition, the Steering Committee supported the incorporation of several CCF assistance programmes into the Government's regular assistance and service programmes.

The CCF's Medical Assistance Programme second phase subsidises patients with financial difficulties to use self-financed drugs under the Samaritan Fund (SF). To benefit more patients, the Hospital Authority (HA) plans to incorporate the Medical Assistance Programme second phase into the regular mechanism of the SF in the second half of this year, lowering the patient contribution ratio from a maximum of 30 per cent to a uniform rate of 20 per cent.

Separately, relevant bureaux or departments are actively exploring the incorporation of three other programmes into the Government's regular assistance, namely the "Training Subsidy for Children who are on the Waiting List of Subvented Pre-school Rehabilitation Services", "Subsidy for Tenant Purchase Scheme Flat Owners on CSSA" and "Subsidy to meet lunch expenses at schools for primary students from low-income families" (lunch subsidy).

The Steering Committee endorsed that the CCF should continue to fund the lunch subsidy programme for eligible students in the coming academic year, before the Government concludes its study on regularising the programme in 2013-14.

At the meeting today, the Steering Committee also approved the widening of the scope of the School-based Fund (Cross Boundary Learning Activities) to subsidise students from low-income families in representing Hong Kong to participate in cross boundary competitions.

The CCF Medical Assistance Programme first phase subsidises HA patients in using specified self-financed cancer drugs. The number of cancer drugs to be covered by the Programme will be increased from six to nine to help more needy patients.

Since its establishment, the CCF has launched a total of 17 assistance programmes in education, home affairs, medical and welfare areas to support different groups of

people, including the elderly, children, low-income persons, new arrivals, persons with disabilities, 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.

Ends/Wednesday, May 23, 2012

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