Community Care Fund  
Brief on Pilot Scheme on Living Allowance for  
Low-income Carers of Persons with Disabilities

1. **Background and Objectives**

The Community Care Fund (CCF) launches the “Pilot Scheme on Living Allowance for Low-income Carers of Persons with Disabilities” (the Pilot Scheme) in October 2016, which aims at providing carers of persons with disabilities from low-income families with a living allowance to help supplement their living expenses so that persons with disabilities in need of long-term care may, with the help of their carers, receive proper care and remain living in the community. The Pilot Scheme, administered by the Social Welfare Department (SWD), will end in late September 2018.

2. **Eligibility Criteria**

An applicant, who is the carer providing care for the person(s) with disabilities, must meet **ALL** of the following criteria:

- the person(s) with disabilities being taken care of must be living in Hong Kong and on the waiting lists for any specified rehabilitation services (Note 1) subsidised by SWD, for special school with boarding placement under the Education Bureau (EDB) or for infirmary service of the Hospital Authority (HA) on or before 31 March 2017;

- the person(s) with disabilities being taken care of must be living in the community without using any residential care services (RCS) / infirmary services / boarding service of special school (Note 2) or undergoing long-term hospitalisation (Note 3) while the carer is applying for and receiving the allowance;

- the carer must be capable of taking up the care-giving role (Note 4) and is providing at least 80 hours of care-giving work per month; or not less than a total of 120 hours per month for taking care of more than one person with disabilities at the same time; (Note 5)

- the carer must be a Hong Kong resident living in Hong Kong and not engaged in any form of employment relationship with the person(s) with disabilities under his/her care;

- the carer must not be a recipient of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA), Old Age Living Allowance (OALA) or allowance in respect of taking care the same person with disabilities under the “Pilot Scheme on Living Allowance for Carers of Elderly Persons from Low-income Families” of CCF; and

- the carer is from a low income family [i.e. the monthly household income, excluding assets, of the carer and the family members living with him/her (Note 6) does not exceed the specified income limit applicable to the corresponding household size. Please refer to the table below for the monthly household income limit].

**Monthly Household Income Limit**
(The income limit is set with reference to 75% of the Median Monthly Domestic Household Income published in the Report on General Household Survey for the Third Quarter of 2015 by the Census and Statistics Department and is applicable throughout
3. **Application Procedures**

- Starting from May 2017, SWD will issue letters to the persons with disabilities who are on the waiting lists for specified subsidised RCS/day rehabilitation training services managed by the Central Referral System for Rehabilitation Services (CRS Rehab) of SWD, or on the waiting lists for specified community care services (CCS) managed by service operators, or on the waiting lists for special school with boarding placement under the EDB or infirmary service of HA on or before 31 March 2017, to invite their eligible carers to participate in the Pilot Scheme. An application form will be enclosed in each invitation letter;

- The Pilot Scheme is expected to benefit about 2,000 carers. For each person with disabilities invited to participate in the Pilot Scheme, only one carer can apply for and receive the allowance. If a person with disabilities has more than one carer, the carers must decide among themselves who should apply for and receive the allowance;

- Each applicant is required to submit the completed application form together with all necessary documents below by post or by hand to the CCF Team of SWD on or before 1 August 2017 (postmark date will be taken as submission date):
  - copies of identification documents of the carer and his/her family members living with him/her in Hong Kong;
  - a copy/copies of the identification document of the person(s) with disabilities being taken care of; and
  - a copy of the document of the bank account specified by the carer for receiving allowance through autopay (must be a local Hong Kong Dollar sole-name savings/current account, with the name of the account holder and the account number clearly shown on the document, which can be a bank statement or the first page of a bankbook, but copy of an Automatic Teller Machine Card will not be accepted).

4. **Vetting of Applications**

- Applications will be vetted by SWD. After completion of the vetting procedures, SWD will refer the eligible carers to approved service units (service units) (i.e. Parents/Relatives Resource Centres, Integrated Community Centres for Mental Wellness or Parents/Relatives Resource Centres for Ex-mentally Ill Persons or District Support Centres for Persons with Disabilities) which assist in the implementation of the Pilot Scheme for follow-up prior to issuing notification letters with application results to the applicants. The allowance may be payable to eligible applicants starting from May 2017 at the earliest.
In making an application, the applicant is not required to submit relevant proof of income. SWD will conduct random checks in the course of processing the application or releasing payment of allowance, when the relevant persons will be required to provide detailed information of their financial position together with relevant documents for verification.

5. Guidance Notes on Application and Receipt of Allowance

Receiving Carer Support Services

- SWD will refer the eligible carers to service units, which will follow-up and provide carer support services. Based on the residential district of the person with disabilities under care or the corresponding unit of the responsible social worker, etc., SWD will allocate a suitable service unit to the carer and the person with disabilities under his/her care.

- While receiving the allowance, the carer and the person(s) with disabilities under his/her care are required to meet with the social worker of the service unit on a regular basis (including interviews and/or home visits) and receive support services provided by the service unit.

- At the first meeting with the social worker of the service unit, the carer is required to give details of the day-to-day care provided to the person(s) with disabilities concerned by completing the Declaration of Carers of the Persons with Disabilities and returning it to the service unit for record purpose.

- The carer is required to submit a self-certified Record of Hours of Care-giving (Note 7) to the service unit on or before the prescribed date each month for arranging payment of the allowance.

- The social worker of the service unit will regularly meet with the carer and the person(s) with disabilities under his/her care to learn more about the person(s) with disabilities and the care-giving capabilities of the carer, so as to provide appropriate counselling to strengthen/enhance the care-giving capabilities of the carer. The social worker may also provide assistance and counselling based on the welfare needs and the care plans of the person(s) with disabilities and the carer, and refer them to appropriate community support services as and when necessary.

- The social worker of the service unit, while maintaining liaison with the social worker responsible for handling the application of rehabilitation services of the person(s) with disabilities, would also communicate with the relevant service units providing CCS, so as to ensure that the person(s) with disabilities receive appropriate service packages.

- Except for home relocation of the disabled person, SWD generally would advise the carer to continuously receiving support services provided by the same service unit. If a person with disabilities has to change to another service unit due to home relocation, his/her carer should submit an application supported with relevant information (such as the new residential address) to the serving service unit. The service unit will transfer such information to SWD for arranging case transfer to another service unit for follow-up. Unless the arrangement of another service unit has been formally confirmed by SWD, the serving service unit shall continue to provide carer support services for the case concerned.
Enrolling in Training Programmes for the Carers and Participating in the Evaluation Study

- The service units will introduce/select suitable training programmes for the carer or advise him/her to enroll in specific training programmes based on the conditions of the person(s) with disabilities under his/her care for enhancement of care-giving capabilities.

- The number of hours spent on attending carer training can be counted as care-giving hours. The service unit, where necessary, will provide the carer with appropriate assistance, such as arranging respite services or volunteer visits for the person(s) with disabilities being taken care of, so that the carer can attend training or be temporarily relieved from the pressure of providing long-term care for the person(s) with disabilities.

- If the carer has enrolled in fee-charging training programmes for carers, a total of up to $1,000 training fee could be reimbursed under the Pilot Scheme. The carer should submit the original receipt of the fees paid for the training courses to his/her service unit and apply for reimbursement of such fees on an accountable basis. Upon confirmation of the application, such fees will be reimbursed and directly credited by SWD to the carer’s bank account for receiving the allowance payment.

- Carers should cooperate with SWD/the evaluation study group commissioned by SWD in the opinion survey and evaluation study conducted under the Pilot Scheme.

Payment of Allowance

- If an eligible carer has been providing the minimum required hours of care-giving for the person(s) with disabilities under his/her care at the start of the application period of the Pilot Scheme (i.e. May 2017), the allowance may be payable starting from May 2017 the earliest and end in September 2018 the latest.

- The self-certified “Record of Hours of Care-giving” must be completed and submitted to the service unit on or before the date prescribed by the service unit every month so that the allowance for the last calendar month can be paid during the month. Otherwise, the payment of allowance will be made at a later date (please refer to the example in Note 8).

- A monthly allowance of $2,000 will be disbursed to each carer after the service unit has reviewed his/her hours of care-giving provided; if a carer has to take care of more than one person with disabilities who meet the eligibility criteria and the carer is considered by the service unit to be capable of taking care of more than one person with disabilities at the same time, a maximum of $4,000 per month will be given (Note 9).

- If there is any change in the family or health conditions of the carer/the person(s) with disabilities being taken care of resulting in the loss of eligibility for allowance (e.g. the person with disabilities has admitted to RCS/infirmary service/boarding service of special school/passed away/left Hong Kong/undergone long-term hospitalisation, or the carer being a recipient of CSSA/OALA/Disability Allowance (DA)/left Hong Kong, etc.) during the period of receiving the allowance, the carer must notify SWD or his/her service unit immediately so as to cease the payment of allowance. The payment of allowance to the carer will cease from the calendar month following the circumstantial
change of the carer/person(s) with disabilities.

- For each person with disabilities, only one carer can apply for the allowance at any one time. If a carer has ceased to receive allowance before the expiry of the Pilot Scheme, another eligible carer may apply afresh to the CCF Team of SWD for allowance within 3 months. If the eligibility of the new applicant is confirmed, the payment of allowance may be made to him/her from the eligible month to September 2018 the latest. (The eligible month of the new carer refers to the month in which SWD receives the application from him/her, or the month following the cessation of the allowance payable to the previous carer, whichever is the later.)

- If the carer is unable/does not need to provide any care to the person(s) with disabilities for a period of time in a certain calendar month due to certain reasons (e.g. the carer/the person(s) with disabilities being temporarily absent from Hong Kong or hospitalised for in-patient treatment, or the person(s) with disabilities being admitted to residential care homes for respite services, etc.) leading him/her not meeting the required minimum hours of care-giving per month, the carer will not be granted the allowance for the month concerned. Nevertheless, if the carer still meets the required minimum hours of care-giving per month (no care-giving hour will be counted during the period when the person with disabilities under care is admitted to residential care homes for respite services or when the carer/person(s) with disabilities is/are temporarily absent from Hong Kong), he/she will be given the allowance for the month concerned.

6. **Responsibilities of the Applicant**

Applicant has to read carefully the “Declaration and Undertaking by Applicant” (Part 5) of the application form and sign for confirmation when submitting the application form. Information provided by the applicant must be true and complete. In case of any change of the relevant information, the applicant must notify the CCF Team of SWD or his/her service unit as soon as possible. The applicant must provide detailed information for verification when SWD conducts random checks on his/her case. Any amount verified by SWD as overpayment will have to be returned.

7. **Enquiries**

- Community Care Fund Team, Social Welfare Department
  
  Address: Room 1007, 10/F
  Wu Chung House
  213 Queen’s Road East, Wan Chai
  Hong Kong
  
  Tel. No.: 3422 3090
  Fax No.: 3427 9890
  Email: ccfenq@swd.gov.hk
  Office Hours: Monday to Friday from 9 am to 6 pm
  (Lunch break from 1 pm to 2 pm)
  (Except public holidays)

- SWD Hotline: 2343 2255
- SWD Website: www.swd.gov.hk
- CCF Website: www.communitycarefund.hk
Notes

Note 1: Specified rehabilitation services refer to subsidised RCS/day rehabilitation training services with waiting lists managed by the CRS Rehab of SWD, including hostels for severely physically handicapped persons, hostels for severely mentally handicapped persons, hostels for moderately mentally handicapped persons, care-and-attention (C&A) homes for severely disabled persons, C&A homes for the aged blind, long-stay care homes, residential special child care centres, day activity centres, sheltered workshops and special child care centres, as well as CCS with waiting lists managed by service operators, including home care service for persons with severe disabilities and integrated support service for persons with severe physical disabilities.

Note 2: The persons with disabilities being taken care of who are receiving CCS and/or day rehabilitation training services while on the waiting lists for specified subsidised RCS are also eligible for the Pilot Scheme.

Note 3: If the persons with disabilities being taken care of have been receiving in-patient treatment at a hospital for more than three months, they are regarded as undergoing “long-term hospitalisation” and are therefore not eligible for the Pilot Scheme. If these persons with disabilities (including those who have been invited but have never submitted applications or whose applications have been approved but allowance payments have been suspended due to hospitalisation) are discharged from hospital and live in the community without using any RCS/infirmary service/boarding service of special school before the Pilot Scheme ends in September 2018, the carers concerned can contact the CCF Team of SWD for making application/re-application. The subsidy period for eligible carers will end in September 2018 the latest.

Note 4: Any person who is under the age of 15, or has been assessed under the Standardised Care Need Assessment Mechanism for Elderly Services to be of moderate or severe level of impairment, or is on the waiting lists for any specified rehabilitation services, special school with boarding placement under the EDB or for infirmary services of HA, or is a recipient of DA, will not be deemed to be a fit and capable carer and therefore will not be eligible for the carer allowance.

Note 5: The care provided by the carer to the persons with disabilities refers to independent activities of daily living, such as meal preparation, home making, medication management, purchase of daily necessities, escort, etc. and/or personal care assistance in activities of daily living required by the person with disabilities concerned, such as moving, dressing, toileting, personal hygiene, etc. For some carers taking care of disabled persons with behavioural or emotional problems, the time needed to calm down the persons with disabilities before the above daily living care can be provided may be counted as care-giving time. In addition, the number of hours for the carer to attend training can also be counted as care-giving hours.

Note 6: It refers to a household covering people with close economic ties (but excluding economic ties arising from employment relationship) and living with the applicant in the same premises in Hong Kong. This will include family members and those who share or are obliged to share the provisions for a living. Such family member(s) and/or person(s) must be Hong Kong resident(s). The monthly household income refers to the average monthly income for the three months prior to the month when the application is submitted (e.g. If the application is submitted in May 2017, the average monthly income from February to April 2017 should be declared, excluding any income received out of those three months). For income not paid on a monthly basis, e.g. double pay, bonus, stock dividend, etc, it should be spread over the period concerned for calculation. Income includes the following items:

1. Employment earnings: salary, double pay/leave pay, work allowance, bonus/prize/commission/tip, income from rendering services, profits from business, etc.
2. Other income: contributions from children, financial assistance from relatives/friends, alimony, monthly pension/widow’s and orphans’ payment or pensions, profits from investment, interest income from fixed deposits and stock dividends, rental income, etc.
but **excludes** employee’s mandatory contributions to the Mandatory Provident Fund scheme, financial assistance provided by the Government, charitable donations, financial assistance from other assistance programmes under CCF, etc.

**Note 7:** Social workers of the service units will provide such forms when meeting with the carers. The number of hours to be recorded in the “Record of Hours of Care-giving” is based on one calendar month. The last day of each month is regarded as the end of that calendar month.

**Note 8:** Example of the payment of allowance:
It is prescribed by the service unit handling Carer A’s case that the carer must submit in person the certified “Record of Hours of Care-giving” on or before the 6th day of each month. If the “Record of Hours of Care-giving” for November is submitted by Carer A to his/her service unit on 3 December and verified by the service unit, he/she will receive the allowance for November from SWD by end-December. However, if the “Record of Hours of Care-giving” for November is submitted by Carer A to his/her service unit only on 7 December, he/she will not receive the allowance for November until end-January; if he/she then submits the “Record of Hours of Care-giving” for December on time in January (i.e. on or before 6 January), he/she will receive the allowance for these two calendar months, November and December, at the same time in end-January.

**Note 9:** Only one carer of each person with disabilities being taken care of can apply for the allowance at any one time. The persons with disabilities who benefit from this Pilot Scheme cannot at the same time benefit from the “Pilot Scheme on Living Allowance for Carers of Elderly Persons from Low-income Families”, nor the “Pilot Scheme on Providing Subsidy for Higher Disability Allowance Recipients in Paid Employment to Hire Carers” under CCF. The allowance paid under this Pilot Scheme will be counted as family income under the Low-income Working Family Allowance Scheme.