

# Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme

provides a safety net for those  
who cannot support themselves  
financially



## INTRODUCTION

This pamphlet outlines the main features of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme including eligibility criteria, types of payment, application procedures and other related information.

A person may suffer financial hardship for various reasons such as old age, disability, illness, unemployment and low earnings. The CSSA Scheme is designed to bring the income of such individuals and families up to a prescribed level to meet their basic needs. This Scheme is administered by the Social Welfare Department (SWD) to provide a safety net for those who cannot support themselves financially. It is non-contributory but means-tested.



## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To be eligible for assistance, an applicant must satisfy the following conditions:

### Residence requirements

The applicant must satisfy the following residence requirements :

- (A) he/she must have been a Hong Kong resident for at least seven years; and
- (B) he/she must have resided in Hong Kong continuously for at least one year immediately before the date of application (absence from Hong Kong up to a maximum of 56 days during the one-year period is treated as residence in Hong Kong).



#### Notes

- (1) Persons whose presence in Hong Kong is unlawful or persons who are permitted to stay in Hong Kong for a purpose other than residence (for example, imported workers or visitors ) are excluded from the Scheme.
- (2) Persons who have become Hong Kong residents before 1 January 2004 are exempted from the residence requirement in (A) above.
- (3) Hong Kong residents aged below 18 are exempted from the residence requirements in (A) and (B) above.
- (4) In exceptional circumstances, CSSA may be granted at the discretion of the Director of Social Welfare to a person who does not satisfy the residence requirements.

### Financial tests

The applicant must pass both the income and assets tests. If the applicant is living with any other family members, the application has to be made on a household basis. The total income and assets of all family members in the same household are taken into account in determining the family's eligibility for assistance.



#### (A) Income Test

The applicant and his/her family will be eligible for CSSA if their total assessable monthly household income is insufficient to meet their total monthly needs as recognized under the Scheme. When assessing a family's resources, training allowance and earnings from employment of those meeting the prescribed criteria can be disregarded up to a prescribed level. (The provision of disregarded earnings is only applicable to cases that have been on CSSA for not less than three months.)

## **(B) Assets Test**

The total value of the capital assets (i.e. properties, cash, savings, investments, and other realizable assets) held by the applicant and his/her family members must not exceed the prescribed limit.

## **Additional criteria for able-bodied adults**

A person aged 15-59 in normal health has to meet one of the following conditions :

- (A) not being available for work for reasons acceptable to the SWD (for example, students and persons who have to look after young children or sick or disabled family members at home); or
- (B) working full-time and earning a reasonable wage as defined by the SWD; or
- (C) in the case of being unemployed or working part-time or earning less than a reasonable wage as defined by the SWD, actively seeking full-time jobs and participating in the Support for Self-reliance (SFS) Scheme of the SWD (See Note).



Those aged below 15 or aged 60 or above are not subject to the above-mentioned requirements.

(Note : The SFS Scheme is designed to encourage and assist able-bodied unemployed persons and low-income persons without a full-time job to seek full-time employment and move towards self-reliance. For more information, please refer to the pamphlet on SFS or get in touch with any Social Security Field Unit.)

## **TYPES OF PAYMENT**

Payments can be broadly classified into three categories :

### **Standard rates**

Standard rates are paid to different categories of applicants to meet their basic needs.

### **Supplements**

#### **(A) Long-term supplement**

An annual long-term supplement is payable to families involving any member who is old, disabled or medically certified to be in ill-health for the replacement of household and durable goods if they have received assistance continuously for 12 months or more. The amount payable depends on the number of such eligible members in the family.

#### **(B) Single parent supplement**

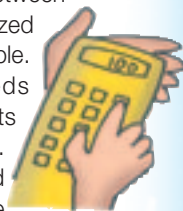
A monthly single parent supplement is payable to single parent families to recognize the special difficulties which single parents face in bringing up a family.

## Special grants

Special grants are payable to meet the specific needs of applicants. They include payments to cover rent, school fees and school-related expenses, essential travelling expenses, medically-recommended diet, cost of medical and rehabilitation appliances. Able-bodied adults/children are only entitled to rent allowance, water/sewage charge allowance, grant to cover schooling expenses for children, grant to cover child-care centre fees and burial grant.

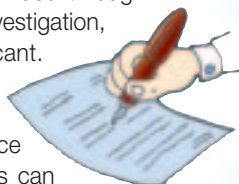
### AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE PAYABLE

The amount of assistance is determined by the resources and needs of an individual applicant or the applicant's family. The difference between the applicant's/family's assessable income and total recognized needs under the Scheme is the amount of assistance payable. Recognized needs include the basic and special needs recognized under the Scheme in terms of various payments which the applicant and his family members are entitled to. Assessable income includes earnings from employment and other income less the amount of earnings/training allowance that can be disregarded.



### APPLICATION PROCEDURES

A person can make an application directly to a Social Security Field Unit near to his place of residence by phone, by fax, by post or in person. An application can also be made through a referral to the SWD by another government department or a non-governmental organization. Upon receipt of an application, staff of the SWD will conduct investigation and verification of the applicant's circumstances and information provided through office interview and home visit. After completion of investigation, a formal notification letter will be sent to the applicant. All application procedures are processed in Hong Kong. Under normal circumstances, and if the applicant or his/her guardian/appointee can produce all the necessary information, the application process can be completed within four weeks.



### COMMENCEMENT DATE OF ASSISTANCE

Payment will be calculated from the date of receipt of the application by the SWD (or the date of application or referral if the application is referred by another organization) or the date of eligibility, whichever is the later. Able-bodied unemployed



adults aged 15-59 are required to participate in the SFS Scheme as a condition of receiving assistance. Their monthly entitlement normally starts one month after the date of application. However, in genuine hardship cases, the Director of Social Welfare may, at his discretion, make payment from the date of application.

## PAYMENT METHOD

Payment is usually credited to the applicant's/guardian's/appointee's designated bank account monthly. Under exceptional circumstances, special delivery of cash directly to the applicant can be arranged. For urgent cases, cash payment may be paid to the applicant at the Social Security Field Unit.



## PERSONS UNFIT TO APPLY

If an applicant is aged below 18 without a parent or legal guardian or is an adult aged 18 or above who has been medically certified to be unfit to make a statement on his/her own, an appointee will be appointed by the Director of Social Welfare to act on his/her behalf.

## PERMISSIBLE LIMITS OF ABSENCE FROM HONG KONG

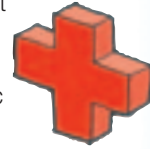
A recipient's temporary absence from Hong Kong in a payment year (which is counted from 1 July to 30 June of the following year) not exceeding the permissible limits as specified below will not affect the amount of assistance payable :

- (A) 180 days a year for recipients who are aged 60 or above or disabled;
- (B) 60 days a year for other recipients. If these recipients leave Hong Kong for more than 60 days in a year for special reasons, the Director of Social Welfare may, at his discretion, extend the permissible limit up to a maximum of 90 days.



## WAIVER OF MEDICAL CHARGES

Each successful applicant is given a Certificate of CSSA Recipients (for Medical Waiver) which contains the particulars of the applicant and other eligible members of the family, if any. With this Certificate, the applicant and any other eligible members of the family can apply for waiving of medical charges at a public hospital (including the Accident & Emergency Department) or clinic in Hong Kong.



## PORTABLE COMPREHENSIVE SOCIAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE (PCSSA)

Elderly CSSA recipients who intend to take up permanent residence in Guangdong can apply for PCSSA. Applicants meeting the prescribed criteria are allowed to continue to receive their monthly standard rate payment and annual long-term supplement during their stay in Guangdong. For more detailed information, please get in touch with any Social Security Field Unit.



## APPEALS

If an applicant disagrees with a decision made by the SWD, he/she has the right to lodge an appeal with the Social Security Appeal Board, which is composed of non-officials appointed by the Chief Executive. An appeal must be lodged within four weeks immediately following the date of notification of the decision from the Director of Social Welfare. Enquiries about appeal procedures can be made to any Social Security Field Unit.



## RESPONSIBILITIES OF APPLICANT / GUARDIAN / APPOINTEE

The applicant or his/her guardian/appointee must provide true information to the SWD. In case of change in circumstances (such as change in employment or income, increase or decrease in the number of family members, absence from Hong Kong exceeding the permissible limit, etc.), the applicant or his/her guardian/appointee must make a report to the SWD immediately so that payment adjustment can be made. Willfully giving false information or withholding information in order to obtain assistance by deception is a criminal offence. In addition to being disqualified for CSSA, the applicant or his/her guardian/appointee may be liable to prosecution

under the Theft Ordinance (Cap. 210 of the Laws of Hong Kong). The SWD conducts reviews, random checks and data matching with other Government Departments and organizations to establish the applicant's continued eligibility for assistance and to cross-check the information given by the applicant or his/her guardian/appointee.

## OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

"A Guide to CSSA", which provides more detailed information on the Scheme, is available at any Social Security Field Unit for public reference. Leaflets on residence requirements/asset limits/disregarded earnings/standard rates/rent allowance are also obtainable.



## ENQUIRIES

For more information about the CSSA Scheme, please visit our Departmental Homepage at <http://www.info.gov.hk/swd>. Enquiries about the CSSA Scheme may be made to the Departmental Hotline Service Unit (Telephone no. 2343 2255, Fax no. 2763 5874) or the nearest Social Security Field Unit.

## REPORTING SUSPECTED FRAUD AND ABUSE CASES

If you have any information on any person who may have obtained CSSA by deception, please report to our Social Security Field Units, Fraud Investigation Teams, Report Fraud Hotline 2332 0101 directly or send the Information Form on Fraudulent Claims for CSSA to us.

### Addresses and telephone numbers of Social Security Field Units

| Office   | Address   | Tel.No.   |
|--|---|-----------|
| <b>Hong Kong</b>                                       |   |           |
| Central and Western/Islands Social Security Field Unit | 3/F, Tung Che Commercial Centre, 246 Des Voeux Road West                          | 2546 8003 |
| Chai Wan Social Security Field Unit                    | Level 3, Government Offices, New Jade Garden, 233 Chai Wan Road                   | 2557 7868 |
| Causeway Bay Social Security Field Unit                | Room 1105-1107, 11/F, Stanhope House, 734-738 King's Road, North Point            | 2562 4788 |
| Wan Chai Social Security Field Unit                    | Room 2201, 22/F, Southorn Centre, 130 Hennessy Road, Wan Chai                     | 2835 1907 |
| Aberdeen Social Security Field Unit                    | Unit 1105, 11/F, Tower A, Southmark, 11 Yip Hing Street, Wong Chuk Hang, Aberdeen | 2554 6324 |
| Pokfulam Social Security Field Unit                    | Unit 1522, 15/F, Tower A, Southmark, 11 Yip Hing Street, Wong Chuk Hang, Aberdeen | 2554 6323 |

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| <b>East Kowloon</b>                          |   |           |
| Lam Tin<br>Social Security Field Unit        | G/F, Ping Mei House, Ping Tin Estate,<br>Lam Tin                                | 2346 7583 |
| Ngau Tau Kok<br>Social Security Field Unit   | Room 16-19, 17/F, Nan Fung Commercial<br>Centre, 19 Lam Lok Street, Kowloon Bay | 2750 2659 |
| Sau Mau Ping<br>Social Security Field Unit   | Shop CX 310, 3/F, Sau Mau Ping<br>Shopping Centre, Sau Ming Road                | 2348 9312 |
| Kwun Tong<br>Social Security Field Unit      | Unit 1301-1305, Tower II, World Trade Square,<br>123 Hoi Bun Road, Kwun Tong    | 2775 1158 |
| San Po Kong<br>Social Security Field Unit    | Unit 701, 7/F, Stelux House,<br>698 Prince Edward Road East,<br>San Po Kong     | 2322 9999 |
| Tseung Kwan O<br>Social Security Field Unit  | Room 304-307, 3/F, Po Ning House,<br>Po Lam Estate, Tseung Kwan O               | 2701 8843 |
| Tsz Wan Shan<br>Social Security Field Unit   | Unit 101, Lung Cheung Office Block,<br>138 Lung Cheung Road, Wong Tai Sin       | 2327 5002 |
| Wong Tai Sin<br>Social Security Field Unit   | Unit 103-106, 1/F, Stelux House, 698<br>Prince Edward Road East, San Po Kong    | 2382 3738 |
| <b>West Kowloon</b>                          |   |           |
| Kowloon City<br>Social Security Field Unit   | Unit 2, 2/F, Chung Hwa Plaza,<br>5B-5F Ma Hang Chung Road, To Kwa Wan           | 2760 1679 |
| To Kwa Wan<br>Social Security Field Unit     | 7/F, To Kwa Wan Government Offices,<br>165 Ma Tau Wai Road, To Kwa Wan          | 2365 0530 |
| Sham Shui Po<br>Social Security Field Unit   | Room 804-805, Tower 1, Cheung Sha Wan<br>Plaza, 833 Cheung Sha Wan Road         | 2725 6381 |
| Shek Kip Mei<br>Social Security Field Unit   | 6/F, West Coast International Building,<br>290-296 Un Chau Street, Sham Shui Po | 2776 3443 |
| Lai Chi Kok<br>Social Security Field Unit    | Room 801-803, Tower 1, Cheung Sha Wan<br>Plaza, 833 Cheung Sha Wan Road         | 2720 8613 |
| Yau Tsim<br>Social Security Field Unit       | G/F, Yau Ma Tei Carpark Building,<br>250 Shanghai Street                        | 2384 6707 |
| Mong Kok<br>Social Security Field Unit       | 22/F, One Mongkok Road Commercial<br>Centre, 1 Mongkok Road, Mongkok            | 2396 4052 |
| <b>New Territories East</b>                  |   |           |
| Fanling<br>Social Security Field Unit        | 2/F, North District Government Offices,<br>3 Pik Fung Road, Fanling             | 2675 1624 |
| Sheung Shui<br>Social Security Field Unit    | Shop 202, 2/F, Tin Ping Shopping Centre,<br>Tin Ping Estate, Sheung Shui        | 2682 4853 |
| Tai Po (South)<br>Social Security Field Unit | 4/F, Tai Po Complex,<br>8 Heung Sze Wui Road, Tai Po                            | 3183 9305 |

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| Tai Po (North)<br>Social Security Field Unit     | Shop B, G/F, Mei Sun Building,<br>4-20 Kau Hui Chik Street, Tai Po                   | 2665 3717 |
| Sha Tin (South)<br>Social Security Field Unit    | Room 834, 8/F, Sha Tin Government Offices,<br>1 Sheung Wo Che Road, Sha Tin          | 2158 6720 |
| Sha Tin (North)<br>Social Security Field Unit    | Room 511-518, 5/F, Citimark, 28 Yuen<br>Shun Circuit, Siu Lek Yuen, Sha Tin          | 2605 2112 |
| Yuen Long (East)<br>Social Security Field Unit   | 6/F, Yuen Long Government Offices and Tai<br>Kiu Market, 2 Kiu Lok Square, Yuen Long | 2477 2351 |
| Yuen Long (West)<br>Social Security Field Unit   | 3/F, Yuen Long Government Offices and Tai<br>Kiu Market, 2 Kiu Lok Square, Yuen Long | 2443 2500 |
| Tin Shui Wai<br>Social Security Field Unit       | G/F, Wah Yuet House & Wah Yat House,<br>Tin Wah Estate, Tin Shui Wai, Yuen Long      | 2443 2604 |
| <b>New Territories West</b>                      |  |           |
| Kwai Chung (East)<br>Social Security Field Unit  | Room 1712-1722, 17/F, Metroplaza, Tower 1,<br>223 Hing Fong Road, Kwai Chung         | 2428 4444 |
| Kwai Chung (South)<br>Social Security Field Unit | Room 3507-3517, 35/F, Metroplaza, Tower 1,<br>223 Hing Fong Road, Kwai Chung         | 2429 2614 |
| Kwai Chung (West)<br>Social Security Field Unit  | 8/F, Kwai Hing Government Offices,<br>166 Hing Fong Road, Kwai Chung                 | 2422 9510 |
| Tsuen Wan<br>Social Security Field Unit          | 14/F, Tsuen Wan Government Offices,<br>38 Sai Lau Kok Road, Tsuen Wan                | 2417 6316 |
| Tuen Mun<br>Social Security Field Unit           | 4/F, Tuen Mun Government Offices,<br>1 Tuen Hi Road, Tuen Mun                        | 2441 7910 |
| Butterfly<br>Social Security Field Unit          | Unit 11-18, 27/F, Tuen Mun Parklane Square,<br>2 Tuen Hi Road, Tuen Mun              | 2469 4424 |
| Tai Hing<br>Social Security Field Unit           | 3/F, Tai Hing Government Offices,<br>16 Tsun Wen Road, Tuen Mun                      | 2467 2927 |
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Social Security Appeal Board/Fraud Investigation Teams/  
 Performance Management Team/Data Matching Team/  
 Report Fraud Hotline/Departmental Hotline Service Unit

|                                    |   |                        |
|------------------------------------|---|------------------------|
| Social Security Appeal Board       | 24/F, Southorn Centre, 130 Hennessy Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong   | 2835 1946              |
| Fraud Investigation Team (1) & (2) | Room 1002, 10/F, Skyline Tower, 39 Wang Kwong Road, Kowloon Bay | 2382 8073              |
| Performance Management Team        |   | 2782 0187              |
| Data Matching Team                 |   | 2735 1256              |
| Report Fraud Hotline               |   | 2332 0101              |
| Departmental Hotline Service Unit  | Facsimile No.   | 2343 2255<br>2763 5874 |
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