

Introduction

This pamphlet explains the main features of the Social Security Allowance Scheme which includes Normal Old Age Allowance, Higher Old Age Allowance, Normal Disability Allowance and Higher Disability Allowance.

The Scheme is non-contributory. It is designed to provide a monthly allowance to Hong Kong residents who are 65 years of age or above or who are severely disabled to meet special needs arising from old age or disability.

Except for the Normal Old Age Allowance, the allowances paid under the Scheme are non-means-tested.



Eligibility Criteria

A person is eligible for an allowance under the Scheme if he/she:

(a) satisfies the following residence requirements:

- (1) he/she must have been a Hong Kong resident for at least seven years; and
- (2) 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).

Note :

- (i) 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.
- (ii) Persons who have become Hong Kong residents before 1 January 2004 are exempted from the residence requirement in (1) above.
- (iii) Hong Kong residents aged below 18 applying for Disability Allowance are exempted from the residence requirements in (1) and (2) above.
- (iv) In determining whether an applicant has resided in Hong Kong continuously for at least one year immediately before the date of application, consideration can be given to disregarding absences arising from full-time study (for Disability Allowance applicants only) or paid work outside Hong Kong during the one-year period, subject to there being sufficient documentary proof. Where an applicant has been absent from Hong Kong for more than 56 days during the one-year period because of the need to receive medical treatment outside Hong Kong, the Director of Social Welfare can consider exercising his discretion to disregard the absences exceeding the 56-day limit, subject to the reason for and evidence of receiving medical treatment outside Hong Kong being established.

(b) continues to reside in Hong Kong;

(see “Permissible limit of absence from Hong Kong during receipt of allowance” at page 4)

(c) is not in receipt of any other allowance under the Scheme or assistance under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme;

(d) is not being detained in legal custody or admitted to a penal institution; and

(e) fulfils the following eligibility criteria required by the individual allowance:

(1) Normal Old Age Allowance

- he/she is aged between 65-69 and is having an income and assets below the prescribed limits (information on the levels of resources limits is obtainable from any social security field unit of the Social Welfare Department).

(2) Higher Old Age Allowance

- he/she is aged 70 or above.

(3) Normal Disability Allowance

- he/she is certified by the Director of Health or the Chief Executive, Hospital Authority (or under exceptional circumstances by a registered medical practitioner of a private hospital) to be severely disabled (see definition of 'severely disabled' at Annex on page 7); and
- his/her disabling condition will persist for at least 6 months.

(4) Higher Disability Allowance

- in addition to meeting the eligibility criteria for Normal Disability Allowance above, he/she must be certified by the Director of Health or the Chief Executive, Hospital Authority (or under exceptional circumstances by a registered medical practitioner of a private hospital) to be in need of constant attendance from others in his/her daily life; and
- he/she is not receiving care in a government or subvented residential institution (including a government subsidized place in a contract home or purchased from a residential care home for the elders under the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme) or a medical residential institution under the Hospital Authority, or boarding in a special school under the Education Bureau.

Note :

If a Higher Disability Allowance applicant is receiving care in the above residential institution/medical residential institution or boarding in a special school under the Education Bureau at the time of application, he/she will only be given Normal Disability Allowance. As for a Higher Disability Allowance recipient, his/her allowance will be adjusted to Normal Disability Allowance if he/she has received care in a residential institution/medical residential institution or boarded in a special school under the Education Bureau for more than 29 days at a time.

Application Procedures

The applicant or his/her relative/friend can make an application directly to a social security field unit near to his/her place of residence by phone, by fax, by e-mail, by post or in person. An application may also be made through a referral to the Social Welfare Department by another government department or a non-governmental organization. The applicant can also download the "Social Security Allowance Application Form" from the Social Welfare Department website (<http://www.swd.gov.hk>) and return the completed application form together with photocopies of relevant supporting documents to the Social Security Field Unit by post or in person.

As soon as an application is received, an officer of the Social Welfare Department will make arrangements for an interview with the applicant. After completion of investigation,

a formal notification letter will be sent to the applicant. All the application procedures are to be processed in Hong Kong. It will speed up the process of an application if the applicant or his/her guardian/appointee can produce the following documents during the interview:

- (1) relevant documents confirming the applicant's age and residence in Hong Kong (e.g. Hong Kong Identity Card, Birth Certificate, or other acceptable proofs of identity and travel documents, etc.);
- (2) for Disability Allowance application, in addition to the above documents, any previous hospitalization records or hospital/clinic attendance cards to facilitate the arrangement of a medical assessment.

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.

Payment of Allowance and Rate of Allowance

Payment will be calculated from the date of receipt of application by the Department (or the date of application or referral if the application is referred by another organization) or the date of eligibility, whichever is the later. Allowances are paid monthly at a flat rate to eligible applicants. Leaflets on the rates of allowance are obtainable on request.

Note :

A monthly transport supplement is payable to eligible Disability Allowance applicants who are in the age group of 12 to 64 to encourage them to participate more in activities away from home, thereby enhancing their integration into society. It is paid at a flat rate together with the allowance to eligible Disability Allowance applicants.

Payment Method

Allowance is usually credited to the applicant's/guardian's/appointee's designated bank account (joint bank account is not accepted) once a month. Under exceptional circumstances, special delivery of cash directly to the applicant can be arranged.

Permissible Limit of Absence from Hong Kong during Receipt of Allowance

Where a recipient has resided in Hong Kong for not less than 90 days in a payment year, his/her temporary absences from Hong Kong will not affect the payment of allowance on condition that the total number of days of absence in the year does not exceed 240 days (applicable to payment years commencing on or after 1 October 2005).

If a recipient has resided in Hong Kong for less than 90 days in a payment year, he/she is not entitled to any 'absence' allowance in that year. In other words, he/she is eligible to receive allowance only for the periods during which he/she has resided in Hong Kong.

Note :

- (i) For the purpose of calculating a recipient's absence from Hong Kong, the first payment year refers to the 12-month period from the date when the recipient starts to receive allowance. For example, if a person started to receive allowance from 3 October 2005, the first payment year is from 3 October 2005 to 2 October 2006, the second payment year from 3 October 2006 to 2 October 2007 and so forth.
- (ii) Subject to there being sufficient documentary proof, consideration can be given to disregarding a recipient's absences from Hong Kong arising from paid work outside Hong Kong.
- (iii) Where a recipient's total number of days of absence from Hong Kong in a payment year has exceeded the permissible limit because of the need to receive medical treatment outside Hong Kong, the Director of Social Welfare can consider exercising discretion to disregard absences exceeding the permissible limit on condition that the recipient has resided in Hong Kong for not less than 90 days in that payment year and that he/she can provide sufficient reason for and evidence of receiving medical treatment outside Hong Kong.
- (iv) Consideration can also be given to disregarding a Disability Allowance recipient's absences from Hong Kong arising from full-time study on condition that there is sufficient documentary proof.

Other Welfare Needs

If, during the course of enquiries into an application for Social Security Allowance, it becomes apparent that the applicant has other welfare needs (e.g. financial assistance or other welfare services), the Social Welfare Department will look into these needs and render appropriate assistance.

Appeals

If an applicant disagrees with a decision made by the Social Welfare Department, he/she may lodge an appeal at the Social Security Appeal Board, which is an independent body comprising 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 the appeal procedures can be made to any social security field unit.

Responsibilities of the Applicant / Guardian / Appointee

The applicant or his/her guardian/appointee must provide true, correct and complete information to the Social Welfare Department. In case of any change in circumstances, such as change of address, admission to or discharge from a government or subvented residential institution or a medical residential institution under the Hospital Authority, or boarding or no longer boarding in a special school under the Education Bureau (applicable to Higher Disability Allowance applicants only) and absence from Hong Kong exceeding the permissible limit, the applicant or his/her guardian/appointee should report the change immediately to the concerned Social Security Field Unit of the Social Welfare Department. The Department conducts data matching periodically with other government departments and organizations (including the Immigration Department, Treasury, Correctional Services Department, Land Registry, Companies Registry, the Hospital Authority and Transport Department) to cross-check the information given by the applicant or his/her guardian/appointee. The Department will also conduct checks on targeted Old Age Allowance/Disability Allowance cases through home visits. The applicant or his/her guardian/appointee should cooperate fully with the visiting officers of the Department.

Enquiries

Enquiries about the Social Security Allowance Scheme may be made at the social security field units. For further information on other social security schemes, please visit our Departmental Homepage at <http://www.swd.gov.hk>.

Reporting Suspected Fraud and Abuse Cases

A person who knowingly or wilfully provides false statement or withholds any information in order to obtain the allowance by deception commits a criminal offence. Reports of suspected fraud and abuse cases can be made through the Social Welfare Department's special hotline 2332 0101.

Definition of 'Severely Disabled'

A person will be considered as severely disabled within the meaning of this Scheme if he/she is certified by the Director of Health or the Chief Executive, Hospital Authority (or under exceptional circumstances by a registered medical practitioner of a private hospital) as falling into one of the following categories :

(a) Disabling Physical Condition or Blind

This means that a person is in a position broadly equivalent to a person with a 100% loss of earning capacity according to the criteria in the First Schedule of the Employees' Compensation Ordinance (Cap. 282) :

- (1) Loss of functions of two limbs
- (2) Loss of functions of both hands or all fingers and both thumbs
- (3) Loss of functions of both feet
- (4) Total loss of sight
- (5) Total paralysis (quadriplegia)
- (6) Paraplegia
- (7) Illness, injury or deformity resulting in being bedridden
- (8) Any other conditions including visceral diseases resulting in total disablement

(b) Disabling Mental Condition

This means that a person is suffering from a mental condition which produces a degree of disability broadly equivalent to that in category (a) above :

- (1) Organic brain syndrome
- (2) Mental retardation
- (3) Psychosis
- (4) Neurosis
- (5) Personality disorder
- (6) Any other conditions resulting in total mental disablement

(c) Profoundly Deaf

This means that a person, who suffers from a perceptive or mixed deafness with a hearing loss of 85 decibels or more in the better ear for pure tone frequencies of 500, 1,000 and 2,000 cycles per second, or 75 to 85 decibels with other physical handicaps such as lack of speech and distortion of hearing.



Office	Address	Tel No.
Tai Po (South) Social Security Field Unit	4/F, Tai Po Complex, 8 Heung Sze Wui Street, Tai Po Market, Tai Po	3183 9302
Tai Po (North) Social Security Field Unit	4/F, Tai Po Government Offices Building, 1 Ting Kok Road, Tai Po	2665 2612
Sha Tin (South) Social Security Field Unit	Room 834, 8/F, Sha Tin Government Offices, 1 Sheung Wo Che Road, Sha Tin	2158 6721
Sha Tin (North) Social Security Field Unit	Unit 1, M/F, Yu Chui Shopping Centre, 2 Ngau Pei Sha Street, Siu Lek Yuen, Sha Tin	2605 2112
Yuen Long (East) Social Security Field Unit	6/F, Yuen Long Government Offices and Tai Kiu Market, 2 Kiu Lok Square, Yuen Long	2477 2351
Yuen Long (West) Social Security Field Unit	3/F, Yuen Long Government Offices and Tai Kiu Market, 2 Kiu Lok Square, Yuen Long	2443 2500
Tin Shui Wai (South) Social Security Field Unit	G/F, Yiu Fung House, Tin Yiu Estate, Tin Shui Wai	3595 2351
Tin Shui Wai (North) Social Security Field Unit	G/F, Wah Yuet House, Tin Wah Estate, Tin Shui Wai	2443 2604

New Territories West

Kwai Chung (East) Social Security Field Unit	5/F, Kwai Hing Government Offices, 166-174 Hing Fong Road, Kwai Chung	2421 1028
Kwai Chung (South) Social Security Field Unit	Room 101, G/F, King Fat House, Cheung Fat Estate, Tsing Yi	2429 2614
Kwai Chung (West) Social Security Field Unit	8/F, Kwai Hing Government Offices, 166-174 Hing Fong Road, Kwai Chung	2422 9510
Tsuen Wan Social Security Field Unit	14/F, Tsuen Wan Government Offices, 38 Sai Lau Kok Road, Tsuen Wan	2417 6316
Tuen Mun Social Security Field Unit	4/F, Tuen Mun Government Offices, 1 Tuen Hi Road, Tuen Mun	2441 7910
Butterfly Social Security Field Unit	Unit 11-18, 27/F, Tuen Mun Parklane Square, 2 Tuen Hi Road, Tuen Mun	2467 3189
Tai Hing Social Security Field Unit	Room 304, 3/F, Tai Hing Government Offices, 16 Tsun Wen Road, Tuen Mun	2467 2927

Social Security Appeal Board / Fraud Investigation Teams / Target Investigation Team / Data Matching Team / Debt Recovery Team / Report Fraud Hotline / Departmental Hotline Service Unit

Social Security Appeal Board	24/F, Southern Centre, 130 Hennessy Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong	2835 1946
Fraud Investigation Teams Target Investigation Team Data Matching Team	Room 1002, 10/F, Skyline Tower, 39 Wang Kwong Road, Kowloon Bay	2382 8073 2782 0187 2735 1256
Debt Recovery Team	Room 924, 9/F, Yaumatei Carpark Building, 250 Shanghai Street, Yau Ma Tei, Kowloon	3575 8044
Report Fraud Hotline		2332 0101
Departmental Hotline Service Unit		2343 2255
	Facsimile No.	2763 5874

Opening Hours of Social Security Field Units / Social Security Appeal Board / Fraud Investigation Teams / Target Investigation Team / Data Matching Team / Debt Recovery Team / Report Fraud Hotline

Monday to Friday : 8:45 am to 1:00 pm
2:00 pm to 6:00 pm

Saturday, Sunday and Public Holidays : Closed

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Social Security Allowance Scheme

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Normal Old Age Allowance, Higher Old Age Allowance, Normal Disability Allowance and Higher Disability Allowance

公共福利

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