

## Brief on “Stepping Stone” - Pilot Scheme on “Subsidy to Encourage Employment of Disabled Recipients under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme”

### 1. Background and Objective

The Government launched the “Stepping Stone” - Pilot Scheme on “Subsidy to Encourage Employment of Disabled Recipients under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme” (“the Pilot Scheme”) subsidised by the Community Care Fund (“CCF”) in September 2024 for three years, to provide an additional employment subsidy of \$500 per month to employed disabled CSSA recipients. The Pilot Scheme aims to encourage disabled CSSA recipients who are capable of working to engage with the community, encouraging them to maximise their potentials. The Pilot Scheme is administered by the Social Welfare Department (“SWD”).

### 2. Target Beneficiaries and Eligibility Criteria

- The beneficiaries of the Pilot Scheme are disabled CSSA recipients engaged in paid employment, who must meet the following eligibility criteria:
  - ✧ Receiving CSSA and medically certified to be disabled<sup>1</sup>; and
  - ✧ Engaging in paid employment in the month calculating the employment subsidy<sup>2</sup>.

### 3. Disbursement of Subsidy

- Under the Pilot Scheme, each eligible disabled CSSA recipient will receive an additional employment subsidy of \$500 per month during their employment period.
- Eligible disabled CSSA recipients are **not required** to submit an application for the Pilot Scheme. SWD will confirm their eligibility based on their disability status and the latest reported employment income as recorded in the Computerised Social Security System (CSSS)<sup>3</sup> before arranging for the disbursement of the employment subsidy.
- The employment subsidy payable to the eligible disabled CSSA recipients will be deposited into their valid bank accounts designated for receiving CSSA payments on a quarterly basis via autopay.
- A notification letter detailing the arrangements and specifics of the Pilot Scheme, including the arrangement for subsidy payment, will be issued to the beneficiary. Under the Pilot Scheme, subsidy will be calculated for the month in which the beneficiary meets all the eligibility criteria during the subsidy period (i.e. from September 2024 to August 2027).

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<sup>1</sup> Referring to CSSA recipients who have been medically assessed and certified by doctors of public hospitals or clinics to be 50% disabled, 100% disabled or requiring constant attendance.

<sup>2</sup> Under the Pilot Scheme, the income from employment refers to the earnings from employment reported by disabled recipients under the CSSA Scheme, which also includes the incentive payments received for attending training programmes at Integrated Vocational Rehabilitation Services Centres or Work Extension Programmes.

<sup>3</sup> If the CSSA applicant or their guardian/appointee/agent fails to promptly notify their respective Social Security Field Units (SSFU) about changes in the circumstances of the disabled CSSA recipient, resulting in their employment status/employment income information as recorded in the CSSS not being updated and thus rendering them unable to receive the employment subsidy, SWD will disburse the employment subsidy to the eligible disabled CSSA recipient starting from the month in which updated information is reported to the respective SSFU.

The subsidy for the first quarter (i.e. from September to November 2024) will be disbursed by the end of December 2024 the earliest.

- If the beneficiary ceases to receive CSSA, or is no longer medically certified to be disabled, or stops engaging in paid employment, they will become ineligible for the employment subsidy under the Pilot Scheme starting from the month following such changes. Should the individual meet the eligibility criteria again during the implementation period of the Pilot Scheme (i.e. from September 2024 to August 2027), based on their disability status and the latest reported employment income as recorded in CSSS, SWD will resume disbursing the employment subsidy to which they are entitled.

#### **4. Responsibilities of the CSSA Applicant/Guardian/Appointee/Agent**

- SWD confirms the beneficiary's eligibility for the Pilot Scheme based on their disability status and the latest reported employment income<sup>3</sup> as recorded in CSSS. If there are any changes in the disabled CSSA recipient's circumstances (including their employment status and/or source of income), they or their guardian/appointee/agent must inform their respective Social Security Field Unit as soon as possible.
- Any beneficiary found to have received an overpayment of subsidy under the Pilot Scheme must refund the overpaid amount to SWD.

#### **5. Enquiries**

- **Community Care Fund Team, SWD**

Address : Room 1007, 10/F, Wu Chung House,  
213 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai, Hong Kong  
Telephone : 3422 3090  
Fax : 3427 9890  
Email : [ccfenq@swd.gov.hk](mailto:ccfenq@swd.gov.hk)  
Office Hours : Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. (Lunch break from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m.)  
(except public holidays)  
SWD Hotline : 2343 2255  
SWD Website : [www.swd.gov.hk](http://www.swd.gov.hk)  
CCF Website : [www.communitycarefund.hk](http://www.communitycarefund.hk)