

CSSA caseload for July 2018

The overall Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) caseload in July showed a drop of 497 cases, representing a decrease of 0.2 per cent compared with that of June, according to the latest CSSA caseload statistics released by the Social Welfare Department today (August 22).

The total CSSA caseload at the end of July stood at 230 665 (see attached table), with a total of 332 960 recipients.

Analysed by case nature, all categories of cases recorded a decrease. Low-earnings cases registered a month-to-month decrease of 1.2 per cent to 3 955 cases while unemployment cases showed a drop of 0.6 per cent to 12 475 cases.

Ill health cases fell by 0.4 per cent to 23 383 cases. Old age cases, single parent cases and permanent disability cases dropped by 0.2 per cent to 143 774 cases, 25 763 cases and 17 000 cases respectively.

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Wednesday, August 22, 2018 is 104 (down 0.1 against yesterday's index).

Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected methamphetamine (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (August 21) seized about 2 kilograms of suspected methamphetamine with an estimated market value of about \$1.1 million in Yuen Long.

During an anti-narcotics operation conducted in Yuen Long yesterday night, Customs officers intercepted a man and inspected an express parcel he was carrying. An industrial metal roller was found with suspected methamphetamine concealed inside. The 42-year-old man was then arrested.

Investigation is ongoing.

Under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, trafficking in a dangerous drug is

a serious offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$5 million and life imprisonment.

Members of the public may report any suspected drug trafficking activities to the Customs 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).



Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors for 2019/20 cohort announced

The Government announced today (August 22) that under the Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors (SSSDP), a total of 3 236 subsidised places in 38 programmes will be provided by six post-secondary institutions for the cohort to be admitted in the 2019/20 academic year.

These 38 designated programmes fall under 10 disciplines that have been identified as having keen manpower demand, namely architecture and engineering, computer science, creative industries, financial technology, health care, insurance, logistics, sports and recreation, testing and certification, and tourism and hospitality.

The programmes and number of subsidised places under the SSSDP were determined by the Education Bureau in consultation with relevant policy bureaux and departments. Details of the participating institutions, the programmes and the number of subsidised places are listed in the Annex.

In the 2019/20 academic year, the annual subsidy amount for laboratory-based programmes will be increased from \$71,700 in the 2018/19 academic year to \$72,800 while that for non-laboratory based programmes will be increased from \$41,000 to \$41,700 according to the movement of the Composite Consumer Price Index.

The adjusted subsidy amounts are applicable to both new and continuing students meeting the criteria. The subsidy is tenable for the normal duration of the programmes concerned. Subsidised students will pay a tuition fee after

subsidy. Students in need may still apply for student financial assistance from the Student Finance Office in respect of the actual amount of tuition fee payable.

The SSSDP was launched in the 2015/16 academic year to subsidise students to pursue designated full-time locally accredited self-financing undergraduate programmes in selected disciplines. It will be regularised in the 2018/19 academic year with the number of subsidised places increased from about 1 000 per cohort to about 3 000 per cohort. Eligible continuing students of the designated programmes will also receive the subsidy from the 2018/19 academic year onwards. The Scheme aims to achieve the following objectives:

- (1) To increase the supply of subsidised undergraduate places by leveraging the supply of the self-financing sector;
- (2) To nurture talent in support of specific industries with keen demand for human resources;
- (3) To encourage the self-financing education sector to offer programmes in selected disciplines that meet Hong Kong's social and economic needs by providing targeted financial support; and
- (4) To support the healthy and sustainable development of the self-financing post-secondary education sector to complement the University Grants Committee-funded sector in broadening and diversifying study opportunities.

Allocation of the subsidised first-year intake places will mainly go through the Joint University Programmes Admissions System to ensure that eligible students are selected on a merit basis.

For more details of the SSSDP, please visit www.cspe.edu.hk/SSSDP.

SED on school circular on handling suspected cases of child abuse

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, at a media session after officiating at the opening ceremony of the 51st Joint School Science Exhibition today (August 22):

Reporter: But if the schools refuse to report those (child abuse) cases immediately, will there be any punishment?

Secretary for Education: I think in the past, we have said it very clearly that if the schools have noticed some abnormalities, they have a duty to

report to the relevant authorities. Under the same rationale, if they have noticed cases that are justified for reporting to the Police, they should do so.

Reporter: Why do you think it is necessary for the schools to report the cases immediately even without the parents' consent?

Secretary for Education: It depends on how serious the cases are, and if it is really necessary, and if it is threatening the safety of the children, I think that the schools should take necessary actions.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)