

Community Care Fund rolls out Assistance Programme to Improve the Living Environment of Low-income Subdivided Unit Households

The following is issued on behalf of the Community Care Fund Secretariat:

The Community Care Fund (CCF) rolled out the Assistance Programme to Improve the Living Environment of Low-income Subdivided Unit Households today (June 30). It aims at improving the living environment of low-income households living in subdivided units (SDUs), and strengthening their connection with community services/resources. This two-year programme is administered by the Social Welfare Department (SWD). To this end, the Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS) has been entrusted as the approved service provider to co-ordinate the implementation of the programme and partner with non-governmental organisations as approved agents to implement the programme.

Eligible households will be entitled to a one-off subsidy in kind according to the number of their household members. The ceiling of the subsidy in kind is set at \$8,500 for one-person households, \$10,000 for two-person households, \$11,500 for three-person households and \$13,000 for four-or-more-person households respectively. The subsidy in kind can be used to cover three groups of items for (1) carrying out minor improvement/repair works; (2) purchasing furniture and household goods; and/or (3) pest control services. The households may, based on their practical situations and needs, choose one or more of the above groups. The programme is expected to benefit about 24 000 SDU households.

Beneficiary households shall meet the following criteria:

- (i) living in SDUs;
- (ii) meeting the income requirement; and
- (iii) having at least one household member as a Hong Kong resident.

As for income limits, households in receipt of any one of the following schemes are deemed to have met the requirement of the programme as they have already met the corresponding means tests under such schemes:

- (i) Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme;
- (ii) Normal Old Age Living Allowance and Higher Old Age Living Allowance under the Social Security Allowance Scheme;
- (iii) Working Family Allowance Scheme;
- (iv) Individual-based Work Incentive Transport Subsidy Scheme;
- (v) School Textbook Assistance Scheme; or
- (vi) Kindergarten and Child Care Centre Fee Remission Scheme.

The programme also covers low-income SDU households currently not

receiving assistance from the Government under the six existing schemes as aforementioned. The relevant income limits are set at 75 per cent of the relevant median monthly domestic household incomes of economically active households. There were no asset limits imposed for the programme.

Applicants may obtain the programme brief and application form through the approved agents in the course of the programme, and submit the completed application form together with all necessary documents by post or by hand to the respective approved agents for vetting. The approved agents will process the applications with the information submitted by the eligible SDU households, and will also conduct home visits to assess applicants' home environment in order to affirm the applicants' eligibility. The subsidy in kind can be used within the six-month effective period, starting from the submission of the completed application form with all necessary documents. The staff of the approved agents will discuss with and assist the eligible households to select and place orders for the goods and services required with reference to the diversified and flexible "prescribed checklist of improvement items".

The approved agents will also introduce various poverty alleviation measures as well as community services and resources to SDU households, helping connect or refer needy SDU households to relevant organisations or units for assistance and support. SDU households interested in joining the programme may approach the respective approved agents for enquiries.

Members of the public may obtain further details of the above programme at the CCF website (www.communitycarefund.hk), the SWD website (www.swd.gov.hk) or the HKCSS website (www.hkcss.org.hk). They may also reach the HKCSS on 2876 2461 or the CCF Team of the SWD on 3422 3090 for enquiries during office hours.