

Implementation of Old Age Living Allowance under Guangdong Scheme and Fujian Scheme and one-year special one-off arrangement

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) announced today (October 31) that the Old Age Living Allowance (OALA) (including Normal OALA and Higher OALA) will be implemented under the Guangdong (GD) Scheme and the Fujian (FJ) Scheme with effect from January 1, 2020. Applications will be accepted starting from tomorrow (November 1) to allow sufficient time for elderly persons to submit applications.

An SWD spokesman said, "The OALA under the GD Scheme and the FJ Scheme provides a normal-rate monthly allowance currently at \$2,675 or a higher-rate monthly allowance currently at \$3,585 to eligible Hong Kong elderly persons aged 65 or above who choose to reside in GD or FJ without the need to return to Hong Kong each year (see Annex). The amount of allowance will be adjusted annually in accordance with the established mechanism."

The existing means-tested Old Age Allowance (OAA) applicable for applicants aged 65 to 69 under the GD Scheme and the FJ Scheme will be replaced by OALA from January 1, 2020. The provision of the non-means tested OAA for applicants aged 70 or above under the GD Scheme and the FJ Scheme will continue.

The spokesman added, "A special one-off arrangement will be put in place in the first year of implementing the OALA under the GD Scheme and the FJ Scheme (i.e. from January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2020). This allows elderly persons who have already resided in GD or FJ and satisfied all other eligibility criteria, but fail to meet the requirement of having resided in Hong Kong continuously for at least one year immediately before the date of application, to benefit from the OALA under the GD Scheme/FJ Scheme without having to return to and stay in Hong Kong for one year. However, these applicants must have resided in GD (only applicable to the GD Scheme)/FJ (only applicable to the FJ Scheme) for at least one year immediately before the date of application (with a grace period of 56 days during the one-year period), and they have to provide documentary proof of their residential addresses in the province concerned (such as rental receipts and electricity bills).

"It is worth noting that the special one-off arrangement will also be applicable to the OAA under the GD Scheme and the FJ Scheme during the same one-year period. Hong Kong elderly persons aged 70 or above residing in GD or FJ, if not applying for OALA, may apply for OAA through the special arrangement."

Elderly persons who intend to apply for OALA under the GD Scheme/FJ

Scheme may return the completed application form with copies of supporting documents and two recent photos by post to the Social Security Field Unit (Guangdong Scheme and Fujian Scheme) at Unit 2110-2111, 21/F, Landmark North, 39 Lung Sum Avenue, Sheung Shui, New Territories, Hong Kong. Upon receipt of an application, the SWD will make an appointment with the applicant for an interview and to complete the application procedures at the Field Unit in person. Eligible elderly persons will receive Normal OALA/Higher OALA from the date of implementation of OALA under the GD Scheme and the FJ Scheme, or the date of receipt of application, or the date of eligibility, whichever is the latest. Elderly persons who wish to apply for OAA under the GD Scheme/FJ Scheme through the special one-off arrangement may make their applications to the SWD starting from tomorrow. The SWD will process the relevant applications from the implementation date of the special one-off arrangement (i.e. January 1, 2020).

The SWD has appointed the International Social Service Hong Kong Branch as the implementation agent for the OALA under the GD Scheme and the FJ Scheme. The agent will assist applicants who are unable to travel to Hong Kong owing to health reasons in completing application procedures, conducting interviews and case reviews, handling enquiries and more.

The application form and application guidance notes can be downloaded from the SWD's GD Scheme website (www.swd.gov.hk/gds) and FJ Scheme website (www.swd.gov.hk/fjs), and are available at all social security field units in Hong Kong as well as designated venues in GD and FJ (including the Government's Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Guangdong and its Shenzhen Liaison Unit and Fujian Liaison Unit). Applicants may also obtain the application form and guidance notes from the Social Security Field Unit (Guangdong Scheme and Fujian Scheme) by phone or by post.

For enquiries, please visit the above websites or call the GD Scheme and FJ Scheme enquiry line at 3105 3266.