

LCQ10: Applications for Comprehensive Social Security Assistance from persons with less than seven years' residence in Hong Kong

Following is a question by the Hon Mrs Regina Ip and a written reply by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, in the Legislative Council today (January 30):

Question:

On December 17, 2013, the Court of Final Appeal ruled that the requirement for seven-year residence in Hong Kong (residence requirement) stipulated by the Government for the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme was unconstitutional, and the residence requirement was therefore restored from seven years to one year, which was the requirement before January 1, 2004. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council of the following, since the judgment was handed down:

- (1) the respective numbers of CSSA applications received and approved each year which were made by persons with less than seven years' residence in Hong Kong, as well as the respective percentages of such numbers in the total number of applications for the same year; and
- (2) the total amount of CSSA payment made each year to persons with less than seven years' residence in Hong Kong and its percentage in the total expenditure on CSSA payments for the same year?

Reply:

President,

Following the judgment handed down by the Court of Final Appeal on the judicial review regarding the residence requirement of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme, the Social Welfare Department restored the "one-year residence requirement", which was in effect before January 1, 2004, on December 17, 2013. As in the past, persons aged below 18 are exempted from the residence requirement of the CSSA Scheme.

My reply to the Member's question is set out below:

- (1) From the date of the judgment to 2017-18, the number of CSSA applications received and approved involving persons aged 18 or above and had resided in Hong Kong (HK) for less than seven years, and the percentages of the relevant application number in the total CSSA application number are as follows:

| Year | Number of CSSA applications received from persons who had resided in HK for less than seven years | Number of approved CSSA applications from persons who had resided in HK for less than seven years | Total number of CSSA applications | Percentage of CSSA applications from persons who had resided in HK for less than seven years in the total application number |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| 2013-14 (Since December 17, 2013) | 4 007 | 3 272 | 39 514 (Note 1) | 10.1 per cent |
| 2014-15 | 5 876 | 4 677 | 39 623 | 14.8 per cent |
| 2015-16 | 4 380 | 1 339 | 38 376 | 11.4 per cent |
| 2016-17 | 4 005 | 1 078 | 41 111 | 9.7 per cent |
| 2017-18 | 3 729 | 1 191 | 39 342 | 9.5 per cent |

(2) In 2013-14 to 2017-18, the estimated CSSA expenditures involving recipients who had resided in HK for less than seven years (CSSA is payable on a household basis and the relevant expenditures are rough estimates) and their percentages in total CSSA expenditure are as follows:

| Year | Expenditure (Note 2) (\$ million) | Percentage in total CSSA expenditure |
|---------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 2013-14 | 582 | 3.0 per cent |
| 2014-15 | 823 | 4.0 per cent |
| 2015-16 | 949 | 4.3 per cent |
| 2016-17 | 933 | 4.2 per cent |
| 2017-18 | 885 | 4.1 per cent |

Note 1: Number of applications in year 2013-14.

Note 2: The expenditure for 2015-16 includes the provision for two additional months of CSSA standard rate payment in that year, and the expenditure for 2013-14, 2014-15, 2016-17 and 2017-18 include the provisions for an additional month of CSSA standard rate payment in the respective years.