

One-off ex-gratia cash allowance for locally confirmed COVID-19 patients opens for application from today

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) today (November 27) announced that the one-off ex-gratia cash allowance for locally confirmed COVID-19 patients is open for eligible Hong Kong residents to apply from today. The one-off ex-gratia allowance of \$5,000 aims to remove the concern of potentially infected persons from coming forward to take COVID-19 tests that they would suffer from financial hardship whilst being hospitalised in public hospitals for COVID-19 treatment.

Applicants have to meet the following eligibility criteria:

- they are Hong Kong residents who are confirmed by the Department of Health to have contracted COVID-19 locally on or after November 22, 2020; and
- they are currently employed but not entitled to paid sick leave or are self-employed and face financial hardship whilst being hospitalised in public hospitals for COVID-19 treatment.

Applicants are not required to undergo any specific means test, but they have to declare that they meet the aforementioned eligibility criteria and provide basic information about their current employment. The SWD will assess the applications and may seek to verify relevant information with concerned government departments, the Hospital Authority and/or the applicants' employers as appropriate.

Eligible applicants may apply for the ex-gratia allowance starting from today through medical social workers of the hospitals where they are receiving or have received treatment for COVID-19. Applicants may submit the applications themselves or, if need be, appoint a family member/relative or agent to submit applications on their behalf. For applicants who cannot complete their applications whilst receiving treatment, they may do so as soon as possible after they have been discharged from hospital.

For enquiries, applicants, or their appointed family member/relative or agent, may contact the medical social services units of respective hospitals during office hours. For contact information of the related medical social services units, please refer to the Annex.