

Raising social security payments and providing CSSA and OALA recipients with municipal solid waste charging subsidy

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) announced today (January 29) that starting from February 1 this year, it would raise the standard payment rates under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme as well as the rates of the Old Age Allowance (OAA), Old Age Living Allowance (OALA) (including OAA and OALA under the Guangdong Scheme and Fujian Scheme) and Disability Allowance (DA) under the Social Security Allowance (SSA) Scheme.

An SWD spokesman said, "On December 8 last year, the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council gave approval for the Government to adjust the above rates upwards by 3.3 per cent with effect from February 1 this year in accordance with the established mechanism, i.e. on the basis of the year-on-year rate of change of the Social Security Assistance Index of Prices. The above adjustment will benefit around 1.5 million people."

The spokesman added, "According to the established mechanism, the Government adjusts the maximum rent allowance (MRA) under the CSSA Scheme taking into account the year-on-year rate of change of the Consumer Price Index (A) rent index for private housing. Although the MRA should be adjusted downwards correspondingly starting from February 1 this year according to the relevant mechanism, the Government will continue to maintain the MRA at the current levels (see Annex I), as the difficult global economic environment may continue to weigh on Hong Kong's economy, and CSSA recipients remain one of the most economically vulnerable groups."

The adjusted CSSA standard payment rates and the SSA rates of allowances are set out in Annex II.

Separately, to tie in with the implementation of municipal solid waste (MSW) charging, the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council has also given approval for the provision of a subsidy of \$10 per person per month to CSSA and OALA recipients, originally effective from April 1, 2024, having regard to their financial needs. As the Environment and Ecology Bureau announced on January 19, 2024, that the statutory commencement date of MSW has changed to August 1, 2024, the above MSW charging subsidy will take effect from August 1, 2024, accordingly.

CSSA and SSA recipients may contact their respective social security field units or call the SWD hotline 2343 2255 for enquiries.