

## Social Welfare

*The government is committed to assisting those in need. The scope and extent of Hong Kong's welfare services have steadily evolved over the years, with total recurrent government expenditure on social welfare increasing by around 40 per cent in the past decade.*

The Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB) is responsible for formulating social welfare policies and overseeing their implementation by the Social Welfare Department (SWD). The Social Welfare Advisory Committee, the Elderly Commission, the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee, and the Women's Commission advise the government on welfare policies.

In 2012-13, the SWD's total recurrent expenditure was \$42.4 billion, of which \$28.5 billion (67.2 per cent) was for financial assistance payments, \$10.2 billion (24.1 per cent) for recurrent subventions to non-governmental organisations (NGOs), \$1.1 billion (2.6 per cent) for other payments for welfare services, and the remaining \$2.6 billion (6.1 per cent) for departmental expenditure.

### Major Social Welfare Initiatives

#### **Relief Measures**

To help those in need, in July the SWD provided one additional month's standard rate payment for recipients of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) and one additional month's allowance for recipients of Old Age Living Allowance (OALA), Old Age Allowance (OAA) and Disability Allowance (DA).

#### **Old Age Living Allowance**

With effect from 1 April, the SWD implemented OALA under the Social Security Allowance (SSA) Scheme for Hong Kong elderly persons aged 65 or above who need financial support.

#### **Guangdong Scheme**

With effect from 1 October, the SWD's Guangdong Scheme provides OAA for eligible Hong Kong elderly persons who reside in Guangdong.

### ***Pilot Scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly***

In 2013, the SWD was allocated \$380 million from the Lotteries Fund to implement the first phase of the Pilot Scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly (which lasts for two years). The scheme's innovative 'money-follows-the-user' funding approach allows eligible elderly persons to use the vouchers to choose the services that suit their individual needs.

### ***Support Programme for Employees with Disabilities***

The SWD's Support Programme for Employees with Disabilities, launched in June, provides employers of persons with disabilities with a one-off subsidy up to \$20,000 for each such employee to procure assistive rehabilitation devices and/or workplace modifications to facilitate their employment and enhance their work efficiency.

### ***Licensing Scheme for Residential Care Homes for Persons with Disabilities***

The Residential Care Homes (Persons with Disabilities) Ordinance came into full operation on 10 June. The SWD is responsible for monitoring the operation of residential care homes for persons with disabilities (RCHDs). As at December 2013, the government has purchased 245 places in six private RCHDs under the pilot Bought Place Scheme to increase the supply of subsidised residential care services and help the market develop more service options for persons with disabilities.

### ***Lump Sum Grant Subvention System***

The government, together with the welfare sector, continued to work closely with the Lump Sum Grant (LSG) Steering Committee to implement the LSG Independent Review Committee's recommendations, including in 2013 the launch of Phase 2 of the Social Welfare Development Fund and the consultation with the sector on the preliminary framework of the Best Practice Manual.

## **Social Welfare Programmes**

### ***Family and Child Welfare***

The SWD and NGOs provide a variety of family and child welfare services.

#### ***Family Services***

The SWD provides services for families in need at three levels. At the primary level, attempts are made through early detection, public education, publicity and empowerment to prevent family problems. In 2013, the SWD produced a new series of docu-dramas jointly with the Radio Television Hong Kong to promote harmonious family life and to encourage members of the public to seek early assistance when necessary. The SWD also operates a departmental hotline to provide service information, counselling and other forms of assistance.

At the secondary level, 65 Integrated Family Service Centres across all districts in Hong Kong and two integrated services centres in Tung Chung provide support services, ranging from developmental programmes to intensive counselling.

At the tertiary level, specialised services, including crisis intervention, are provided for cases of domestic or sexual violence, family crisis or custody dispute.

### *Services for Children*

The SWD provides 3,665 residential places and various welfare services for children and young persons who need care or protection owing to serious family, behavioural or emotional problems. The SWD also works with three NGOs accredited under the Adoption Ordinance to arrange local or overseas adoption for children abandoned by their parents or whose parents are unable to support them.

The SWD also provides day child care services to support parents who cannot take care of their children temporarily for work or other reasons. The SWD and the Education Bureau subsidise some stand-alone Child Care Centres and some Kindergarten-cum-Child Care Centres to provide regular and full-day services. The SWD also funds 434 Occasional Child Care Service places and 1,230 Extended Hours Service places at these centres. The Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project provides at least 720 subsidised places, comprising flexible home-based and centre-based child care services for families in need throughout the territory.

### *Social Security*

The CSSA and SSA schemes form the mainstay of Hong Kong's social security system, supplemented by three accident compensation schemes: the Criminal and Law Enforcement Injuries Compensation (CLEIC) scheme, the Traffic Accident Victims Assistance (TAVA) scheme and Emergency Relief. These schemes are administered by 39 Social Security Field Units and two centralised offices.

#### *The CSSA Scheme*

The non-contributory CSSA scheme is means-tested and applicants must satisfy a residence requirement. It provides cash assistance to people suffering from financial hardship to enable them to meet basic needs. At year-end, there were 260,774 CSSA cases involving 394,907 beneficiaries. The scheme's total expenditure in 2013 was \$20.1 billion, an increase of 2.2 per cent over the previous year.

The Portable CSSA scheme allows elderly people who have received CSSA continuously for at least one year to continue receiving assistance in Guangdong or Fujian Province if they choose to retire there.

#### *Employment Assistance Programmes*

The SWD's Integrated Employment Assistance Programme for Self-reliance (IEAPS) assists able-bodied unemployed CSSA recipients aged 15 to 59 and single parents and child carers on CSSA with their youngest child aged 12 to 14 to find employment and become self-reliant. At year-end, 14,294 CSSA recipients had participated in the IEAPS.

#### *The SSA Scheme*

The non-contributory SSA scheme provides elderly people and persons with severe disabilities with cash allowances to meet their special needs. It comprises OALA, OAA, Normal DA and

Higher DA. OALA is also meant to supplement the living expenses of elderly people aged 65 or above who are in need of financial support. At year-end, 704,372 people were receiving SSA, with total expenditure in 2013 of \$17.3 billion, an increase of 67.3 per cent over 2012.

### *Accident Compensation Schemes*

The CLEIC scheme (which paid out \$5.34 million in 2013) offers financial assistance on a non-means-tested basis to those injured (or to their dependants in the case of death) as a result of a crime of violence, or by a law enforcement officer using a weapon in the execution of his duty. The TAVA scheme, which paid out \$208.1 million in 2013, provides financial assistance on a non-means-tested basis to people injured (or to their dependants in the case of death) in road traffic accidents regardless of who is responsible for the accident.

### *Emergency Relief*

Emergency relief in the form of meals or cash-in-lieu of meals and other necessities is given to victims of natural or other disasters. Grants from the Emergency Relief Fund are paid to eligible victims or in the case of death to their dependants. Emergency relief was given to 439 victims of 15 disasters in 2013.

### *Social Security Appeal Board*

The Social Security Appeal Board considers appeals against the SWD's decisions on CSSA, SSA and TAVA and ruled on 369 appeals in 2013.

### *Prevention of Fraud and Abuse*

To preserve the integrity of the social security system and ensure the proper use of public funds, the SWD's Special Investigation Section prevents and combats fraud and abuse of social security assistance. The public can make reports via a special hotline. At year-end, 268 abusers had been jailed, bound over, ordered to perform community service, fined, or given warnings.

### *Services for the Elderly*

The government encourages and assists elderly persons to lead active and healthy lives. The SWD provides various community care and support services for them so that they may continue living in their homes or familiar surroundings. For elderly persons who have long-term care needs but cannot be adequately taken care of at home, the SWD provides subsidised residential care services.

The SWD subsidises the Opportunities for the Elderly Project run by community organisations to make life more meaningful for elderly persons. In 2013, government grants totalling \$4 million subsidised 263 programmes.

The SWD has issued Senior Citizen Cards to about 1.47 million elderly persons in Hong Kong over the years, allowing them to enjoy concessions, discounts and priority service provided by various companies, organisations and government departments.

### *Community Care and Support Services*

At year-end, the SWD was supporting 126 service teams (including integrated home care services teams, enhanced home and community care services teams, support teams for the elderly and a home help team) and 67 day care centres or units for the elderly to provide support services for those living at home. The SWD's Pilot Scheme on Home Care Services for Frail Elders supports elderly persons and their carers and the SWD also supports 210 elderly centres (including District Elderly Community Centres, Neighbourhood Elderly Centres and Social Centres for the Elderly) and a holiday centre for the elderly. The SWD's Improvement Programme of Elderly Centres was established in 2012 to enhance the physical setting and facilities of 237 elderly centres across the territory within six years. By year-end, about \$200 million had been approved to upgrade 64 elderly centres.

### *Residential Care Services*

At year-end, there were 25,896 subsidised residential care places in Hong Kong, including 220 self-care hostel places and home-for-the-aged places, 22,532 care-and-attention places (of which 7,618 were purchased from private residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs)), and 3,144 nursing home places (of which 161 were purchased from self-financing nursing homes).

RCHEs are licensed under the Residential Care Homes (Elderly Persons) Ordinance. The SWD monitors the service provided and seeks to help improve RCHEs through the issue of practice guides and provision of staff training, ensuring that elderly residents will receive proper care. To improve drug management in residential homes and enhance the quality of elderly care, the government launched a pilot scheme in June 2010 to provide RCHEs with visiting pharmacist services. Altogether 79 RCHEs have benefited from the scheme.

### *Rehabilitation Services*

To help persons with disabilities integrate into society and fully develop their capabilities, government departments and NGOs provide a variety of rehabilitation services to meet their different needs. These services are co-ordinated by the Commissioner for Rehabilitation on the advice of the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee.

### *Services for Children with Disabilities*

At year-end, there were 1,860 integrated programme places in kindergarten-cum-childcare centres, 1,757 places in special childcare centres (including 110 residential places), and 2,628 places in early education and training centres for children with disabilities. In addition, 64 places in small group homes were provided for mildly mentally handicapped children who could not be adequately cared for by their families.

### *Services for Adults with Disabilities*

To develop their potential, 1,633 supported employment places were made available for persons with disabilities to work in open settings with support and assistance, 432 places were created under the 'On the Job Training Programme for People with Disabilities' and 311 places were made available for young persons with disabilities or early signs of mental illness under the 'Sunnyway – On the Job Training Programme for Young People with Disabilities'. There were 5,051 places provided in sheltered workshops for those not yet ready to compete for open

employment. There were also 453 places in integrated vocational training centres and 4,257 places in integrated vocational rehabilitation services centres.

Over \$65 million was allocated to 24 NGOs under the Enhancing Employment of People with Disabilities Through Small Enterprise Project to enable them to set up 84 small businesses providing over 630 job opportunities for persons with disabilities. In tandem, the Marketing Consultancy Office (Rehabilitation) assisted vocational rehabilitation services units in developing their marketing and business strategies and employment-aided services.

Day activity centres provided 4,801 places where persons with intellectual disabilities were trained to live independently. There were 7,972 places in hostels and care homes providing residential care services for persons with disabilities who were unable to live independently in the community, or whose families could not care for them adequately, and 245 residential places were provided under the pilot Bought Place Scheme for private residential care homes for persons with disabilities. Elderly blind persons were provided with 825 places in care homes. For discharged mental patients, 1,509 places were provided in halfway houses and 1,507 in long stay care homes.

#### *Professional Back-up and Support Services*

Support services provided by clinical psychologists, occupational therapists and physiotherapists are available to persons with disabilities in rehabilitation day centres and hostels. Speech therapy is available to children attending pre-school rehabilitation centres.

A range of community support services is available to persons with disabilities and their families/carers including ex-mentally ill persons living in the community. These include district support centres for persons with disabilities, community rehabilitation day centres, integrated community centres for mental wellness, day care services for persons with severe disabilities, specialised home-based training and support services, community-based support projects and rehabilitation services for persons with visceral disability or chronic illnesses.

Residential respite services for persons with disabilities, occasional child care service for pre-schoolers with disabilities and parents/relatives resource centres are also available. In addition, there are social and recreational centres for persons with disabilities to encourage them to participate in community leisure activities.

#### *Financial Assistance for Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) Patients*

At year-end, 890 applications to the Trust Fund for SARS by eligible individuals and/or their families had been approved since its establishment in 2003, with cumulative payments of about \$214 million.

#### *Medical Social Services*

Medical social workers are stationed in public hospitals and some specialist clinics to provide assistance and services for patients and/or their families with welfare needs, helping them recover and reintegrate into society. Medical social workers dealt with about 170,403 cases in 2013.

### ***Services for Offenders***

The SWD performs a number of statutory functions and provides community-based and residential services to help people who have committed crimes reintegrate into the community and become law-abiding citizens.

The probation service helped 4,639 offenders during the year and arrangements were made for 2,129 offenders placed on Community Service Orders (CSOs) to perform unpaid community work under supervision. Probation officers assess and report to the courts on an offender's suitability for a probation order and/or a CSO, and supervise those under the orders. The officers also prepare reports on long-term prisoners and petitioners being considered for early release.

In the light of positive results, a pilot project launched in 2009 at two probation offices to provide more focused, structured and intensive treatment programmes for convicted young drug offenders aged below 21 was extended territory-wide to all seven Magistrates' Courts from December 2013.

The Tuen Mun Children and Juvenile Home, with 388 places, provides educational, pre-vocational and character training for juvenile offenders as well as children and young persons with behavioural and/or family problems.

The Correctional Services Department and the SWD jointly run the Young Offender Assessment Panel, providing the courts with professional views on sentencing options for offenders aged 14 to below 25, and the Post-Release Supervision of Prisoners Scheme, which assisted 775 discharged prisoners to rehabilitate and reintegrate into the community in 2013. The SWD funds an NGO to offer hostel and supportive services to ex-offenders.

### ***Services for Young People***

The objective of welfare services for young people is to help those aged between six and 24 become mature, responsible and contributing members of society. NGOs provide a range of preventive, supportive and remedial services to achieve this goal.

#### ***Integrated Children and Youth Services Centres***

At year-end, there were 138 Integrated Children and Youth Services Centres (ICYSCs), providing centre-based services, outreach services and school social work services to address young persons' developmental needs.

#### ***Outreaching Services***

The 19 youth outreaching teams provide services for high-risk youths and deal with juvenile gang issues. Eighteen designated ICYSCs provide outreaching services at night to help youths who loiter at neighbourhood black-spots get back on the right track.

#### ***Services for Juvenile Delinquents***

Five Community Support Service Scheme teams operated by NGOs assist young persons who are subject to the Police Superintendent's Discretion Scheme (PSDS). The Family Conference Scheme, run jointly by the SWD and the Hong Kong Police Force, assists juveniles cautioned

under the PSDS for the second time or in need of the services of three or more parties. Social workers, police officers, teachers and parents of these young persons work together to decide what is best for them.

### *Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Services*

At year-end, the SWD was subventing 14 residential drug treatment and rehabilitation centres (DTRCs) and halfway houses, 11 counselling centres for psychotropic substance abusers and two centres for drug counselling. In 2013, 23 licences and 17 certificates of exemption for DTRCs were issued or renewed under the Drug Dependent Persons Treatment and Rehabilitation Centres (Licensing) Ordinance.

### *School Social Work Service*

At year-end, 566 school social workers were provided to 470 secondary schools to help students with academic, social and emotional problems and to maximise their educational opportunities.

### *PATHS to Adulthood: A Jockey Club Youth Enhancement Scheme*

The Positive Adolescent Training through Holistic Social Programmes (PATHS) to Adulthood: A Jockey Club Community-Based Youth Enhancement Programme, a three-year project funded by the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust, was launched in January to promote the holistic development of junior secondary students into responsible young adults.

### *District Support Scheme for Children and Youth Development*

The SWD allocates \$15 million annually to provide direct cash assistance and implement projects through NGOs under the District Support Scheme for Children and Youth Development, addressing the developmental needs of disadvantaged children and young persons which cannot be met by their families or the mainstream education system.

### *Child Development Fund*

The \$300-million Child Development Fund (CDF) provides children from disadvantaged backgrounds with more personal development opportunities. Through the CDF projects, participants draw up and implement their own development plans and learn to accumulate savings and intangible assets (such as a positive attitude, personal resilience and capacity and social networks), thus preparing them for their long-term development. By the end of 2013, 40 projects had been launched, benefiting more than 4,000 children aged between 10 and 16.

### **Clinical Psychological Services**

In 2013, 73 clinical psychologists in the SWD and NGOs provided 2,588 psychological assessments and 17,779 treatment sessions for 3,926 cases presenting psychological or psychiatric disorders.

### **Voluntary Work**

The Steering Committee on Promotion of Volunteer Service promotes sustained volunteering under the theme 'Volunteering – New Attitude to Life' and encourages volunteers to integrate



the core values and spirit of voluntary work into their daily lives. By year-end, over 2,500 organisations and more than 1.2 million individuals had registered for voluntary service at the SWD's 'Volunteer Movement' website.

### **Subventions and Service Monitoring**

Recurrent subventions were given to 171 NGOs to provide social welfare services in accordance with government policies. Capital grants from the Lotteries Fund were allocated to NGOs on the advice of the Lotteries Fund Advisory Committee to meet NGOs' non-recurrent commitments. The Service Performance Monitoring System keeps track of the output, outcome and service quality of subvented units, according to 16 well-defined service quality standards and specific funding and service agreements, through regular self-assessment reports submitted by NGOs and review/surprise visits conducted by the SWD.

The Lump Sum Grant Independent Complaints Handling Committee handles complaints related to the use of subventions and service quality that cannot be satisfactorily addressed at the NGO level.

### **Social Welfare Development Fund**

A \$1 billion Social Welfare Development Fund (launched in January 2010 for implementation in three three-year phases from 2010-11 to 2018-19) supports all subvented NGOs in carrying out training and professional development programmes, business system upgrading projects and service delivery enhancement studies. About \$263 million was approved for 150 NGO applications under Phase 1. Phase 2 (2013-14 to 2015-16) was launched in January 2013 and at year-end about \$200 million had been approved for 144 NGO applications.

### **Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged**

The Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged promotes tripartite partnership among the welfare sector, the business community and the government in helping the disadvantaged. Donations in money and in kind from the business sector are matched dollar-for-dollar by the government to enable NGOs to carry out social welfare projects. By year-end, 146 NGOs had obtained matching grants totalling over \$269 million to implement 626 welfare projects, benefiting over 1 million disadvantaged persons since the fund was established in 2005.

### **Community Investment and Inclusion Fund**

The \$300 million Community Investment and Inclusion Fund (CIIF) was established in 2002 to implement diversified social capital development projects in the community, promote trust and reciprocity between the public and different sectors, and build a cross-sectoral collaborative platform and mutual help network so as to build a caring Hong Kong. In January, the government injected an additional \$200 million to the fund. By year-end, the CIIF had allocated around \$300 million to 268 approved projects, involving 450,000 project participants (including 50,000 volunteers) and about 7,000 collaboration partners building 1,600 mutual support networks.

## **Elderly Commission**

The Elderly Commission advises the government on policy and services for the elderly. It places emphasis on promoting 'active ageing' and advising on the means to enhance further long-term care services for the elderly.

In the 2013-14 school year, the Elder Academy Scheme (jointly launched by the commission and the government), had 108 academies operating, with 101 in schools and the rest in tertiary education institutions.

At the community level, the Neighbourhood Active Ageing Project encourages care and love for elderly persons and reaches out to elderly people who are unfamiliar with the existing network of community support. Sixty-nine district projects to foster harmonious family relations and enhance neighbourhood support networks are being carried out from 2012 to 2014.

## **Women's Commission**

The Women's Commission promotes the well-being and interests of women in Hong Kong. It advises the government on policies related to women to ensure that women's perspectives are taken into account in the formulation of government policies.

The commission comprises 24 members. The chairperson is a non-official member. Through the provision of an enabling environment, empowerment of women, and public education, the commission aims 'to enable women in Hong Kong to fully realise their due status, rights and opportunities in all aspects of life.'

On the commission's advice, the government has gradually introduced gender mainstreaming in different policy areas to provide an enabling environment. A Gender Mainstreaming Checklist was drawn up to help civil servants take a systematic approach in assessing the needs and perspectives of both men and women when formulating government policies. Gender-related training has also been provided to over 7,000 civil servants of different grades and ranks since 2001. All bureaus and departments have their own Gender Focal Points through which matters concerning gender mainstreaming can be channelled.

The commission has implemented various initiatives to help women realise their potential, including the Capacity Building Mileage Programme (CBMP) aimed at enhancing women's self-confidence, learning abilities and life skills. The CBMP is carried out in collaboration with the Open University of Hong Kong, a radio station and over 70 women's groups and NGOs. By the end of 2013, the CBMP enrolments had exceeded 67,000, in addition to the large audience reached through relevant radio programmes. Face-to-face courses taught in English and Putonghua were offered from March to encourage applications from ethnic minority women and newly arrived women.

The Funding Scheme for Women's Development, launched in 2012, provides annual funding of \$2 million for women's groups and NGOs providing women's services to organise relevant programmes and activities at regional and district levels.

The LWB and the commission (in collaboration with the Census and Statistics Department) are conducting a survey of the circumstances surrounding women's decision to take part in or withdraw from the workforce, and of the factors which would attract them to join or rejoin the workforce. The survey is expected to be completed by the end of 2014.

### **Rehabilitation Advisory Committee**

The Rehabilitation Advisory Committee (RAC) is the principal advisory body to the government on the well-being of persons with disabilities and the development and implementation of rehabilitation policies and services in Hong Kong. RAC sub-committees look into specific areas of concern, such as access, employment and public education.

The RAC and its sub-committees are chaired by non-officials, and all members are appointed in their personal capacities by the Chief Executive. To ensure that the interests of persons with disabilities are represented, the RAC's membership includes persons with different disabilities, parents of persons with disabilities, representatives of self-help organisations for persons with disabilities and NGOs providing rehabilitation services, as well as academics, community and business leaders, professionals and other persons who have an interest in the well-being of persons with disabilities. Representatives of relevant government bureaux and departments also serve as ex-officio members to provide the necessary support to the RAC and follow up on issues it raises.

Through its sub-committee on public education, the RAC co-ordinates the implementation of various public education programmes on rehabilitation. In 2013, 50 public education programmes were organised by the government and NGOs to promote the spirit of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and cross-sectoral collaboration in building an equal and inclusive society. Territory-wide publicity activities were also launched to support World Mental Health Day and the International Day of Disabled Persons.

The RAC collaborates with different sectors, including the District Councils and the business and welfare sectors, to promote the working capabilities of persons with disabilities and the employment support services provided by government departments and rehabilitation organisations for such persons. The RAC also assists the government in promoting and monitoring the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Hong Kong.

### **Community Care Fund**

The Community Care Fund (CCF) was established in 2011 to assist people facing economic difficulties, especially those who fall outside the social safety net or who are within the safety net but have special circumstances that are not covered. It has been integrated into the work of the Commission on Poverty (CoP) since 2013. The CCF has launched 24 assistance programmes which have benefited over 600,000 people, involving a total commitment of around \$2.9 billion. In addition, the CCF introduces programmes on a pilot basis to help the government identify those suitable for incorporation into the government's regular assistance programme. Three programmes have been incorporated into the regular assistance programme so far.

Taking into account the views of the public and stakeholders, the CCF will, in collaboration with other task forces under the CoP, draw up more programmes to help the underprivileged and low-income families.

**Websites**

Child Development Fund: [www.cdf.gov.hk](http://www.cdf.gov.hk)

Community Care Fund: [www.communitycarefund.hk](http://www.communitycarefund.hk)

Community Investment and Inclusion Fund: [www.ciif.gov.hk](http://www.ciif.gov.hk)

Elderly Commission: [www.elderlycommission.gov.hk](http://www.elderlycommission.gov.hk)

Labour and Welfare Bureau: [www.lwb.gov.hk](http://www.lwb.gov.hk)

Social Welfare Department: [www.swd.gov.hk](http://www.swd.gov.hk)

Volunteer Movement: [www.volunteering-hk.org](http://www.volunteering-hk.org)

Women's Commission: [www.women.gov.hk](http://www.women.gov.hk)