

Brief on ‘Training Subsidy Programme for Children on the Waiting List of Subvented Pre-school Rehabilitation Services’

Background and Objective

The assistance programme of the ‘Training Subsidy for Children on the Waiting List of Subvented Pre-school Rehabilitation Services’ (TSP) was launched by the Community Care Fund (CCF) in December 2011 with a view to enabling children from low-income families in need of rehabilitation services to acquire self-financing services run by Recognised Service Providers (RSPs) to facilitate their learning and development while waiting for subvented pre-school rehabilitation services. In view of the positive evaluation outcome, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) has regularised TSP from October 2014 so that children with special needs could continue to benefit from the programme. To further enhance the support for children on the waiting list for Special Child Care Centres (SCCC) [including Residential Special Child Care Centre (RSCCC)] service, these children can receive non-means-tested training subsidy with effect from 1 October 2017.

Target Beneficiaries

Child applicant shall meet ALL of the following criteria:

- a) under the age of six years and is on the waiting list for Central Referral System for Rehabilitation Services - Subsystem for Disabled Pre-schoolers (CRSRehab-PS);
- b) is not receiving any subvented pre-school rehabilitation services, including “Transitional Early Education and Training Centre” (Tran-EETC), “Transitional On-site Pre-school Rehabilitation Services”(Tran-OPRS) or On-site Pre-school Rehabilitation Services Waitee Services¹ (OPRS Waitee Services); and
- c) the monthly household income does not exceed 75% of the Median Monthly Domestic Household Income (MMDHI) based on the General Household Survey published by the Census and Statistics Department at the time of application. *[Not applicable to children on the waiting list for SCCC/RSCCC].*

Levels of Subsidy and Services

There are two subsidy levels for beneficiaries having different levels of disabilities:

- a) **Normal Level Subsidy (NLS)²**: Maximum subsidy level of \$3,549 per month for each beneficiary applying for EETC, IP or OPRS. The subsidy has already covered the following service components:
 - i. **Four sessions** of individual or group training/therapy services in **three hours** per

¹ Parents/guardians may apply TSP for children who are currently or going to use f OPRS Waitee Services. However, after receiving TSP, the child concerned will be discharged from OPRS Waitee Services while his/her waiting list position for On-site Pre-school Rehabilitation Services will not be affected.

² The training is mainly delivered by special child care worker. Therapist session may be arranged in accordance with the training needs of the beneficiary.

- month provided by special child care workers, clinical/educational psychologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists or speech therapists (including parallel groups with participation of parents/guardians/carers at the same time); and
- ii. **Six hours** of individual assessment and/or family support services provided by special child care workers, clinical/educational psychologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, speech therapists or registered social workers **in a year**.
- b) **Higher Level Subsidy (HLS):** Maximum subsidy level of \$6,904 per month for each beneficiary applying for SCCC (including RSCCC) service. The subsidy has already covered the following service components:
- i. **Six sessions** of individual or group training/therapy services in **six hours** per month provided by special child care workers, clinical/educational psychologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists or speech therapists (including parallel groups with participation of parents/guardians/carers at the same time) with at least **18 hours of therapeutic/training sessions** from occupational therapists, physiotherapists or speech therapists **every six months**; and
 - ii. **Six hours** of individual assessment and/or family support services provided by special child care workers, clinical/educational psychologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, speech therapists or registered social workers **in a year**.

The type of services an eligible child receives will be arranged according to the assessment proposed by the RSP with the consent of his/her parent/guardian.

Payment of Subsidy for Services

The training subsidy will not be released to parents/guardians directly, but to the RSPs. Any unused subsidy cannot be carried forward while compensatory sessions shall be arranged not later than six months from the date of leave/absence/lateness or before the beneficiary's discharge from the TSP, whichever is the earlier. In case a beneficiary is absent without leave application, no compensatory session will be arranged. The beneficiaries' eligibility for subsidy will be suspended if he/she has (1) absent without leave application for three consecutive sessions; (2) absent without leave application for four sessions within a training month for HLS recipients or three sessions within a training month for NLS recipients or (3) accumulated more than six compensatory sessions.

Application Status on Central Referral System for Rehabilitation Services

Children joining the TSP will continue to remain on the waiting list of the CRSRehab-PS. When they are admitted to the placement under CRSRehab-PS, they will no longer be eligible for subsidy under the TSP. If the beneficiaries decide to decline the offer of placement under CRSRehab-PS, they may continue to receive subsidy under the TSP until the 1st September after they have attained the age of 6 or their admission to primary/special school, whichever is the

earlier. Their application will then be removed from the waiting list of CRSRehab-PS, except for applicants of Tran-EETC or Tran-OPRS who may remain on the waiting list for SCCC or RSCCC upon declining the offer of transitional service.

Application Procedures

SWD will issue invitation letters to parent(s)/guardian(s) of children on the waiting list for subvented pre-school rehabilitation services for TSP application. The original copy of the completed application form together with a copy of supporting documents can be submitted by post or by hand to Rehabilitation and Medical Social Services Branch of SWD or through the online submission service. No fee will be charged for the application.

List of supporting documents:

- ◆ the child applicant's birth certificate/identification document;
- ◆ identification document of the parent or guardian (not required to submit the document if the person concerned is a SWD social worker); and
- ◆ Annex of "Notification of Successful Application Certificate" issued by SWD to Comprehensive Social Security Assistance recipients (if applicable).

Parents/guardians have to choose a maximum of three service units operated by RSPs in order of priority for the child concerned in the application. SWD will, as far as possible, arrange an RSP for an eligible child according to the preference of the parents/guardians taking the actual service quota available into consideration. The child should receive services from a single service unit so as to receive progressive and continuous training under a stable learning environment. Under special circumstances, such as change of residence, necessitating a change of the RSP, the parents/guardians must apply to SWD via the existing RSP.

When no suitable vacancy providing comprehensive services at a higher subsidy level is available, children eligible for a higher level of subsidy may choose to receive services from an RSP providing services at a lower subsidy level but the maximum subsidy provided will be capped at the lower level. When a vacancy becomes available, the parents/guardians of the child concerned may opt to continue with the existing services or to transfer to another RSP offering services at a higher subsidy level for more comprehensive support.

Information provided by parents/guardians in the applications for their children must be true, correct and complete. In case of any changes of the relevant information, they should report the change to SWD as soon as possible. If overpayment is certified by SWD, the parents/guardians concerned should refund the overpaid amount/pay the fees charged for the overused services.

Means Test

For those families whose child is on the waiting list for EETC, IP or OPRS, means test will be conducted by SWD to determine the child applicant's eligibility for service. The monthly

household income should not exceed 75% of the MMDHI based on the General Household Survey published by the Census and Statistics Department at the time of application.

Income test is on a family basis that comprises the child's father, mother, brother or sister living together with the child concerned in Hong Kong (including legally recognised adoptive parents/children and illegitimate children with proof of parentage).

The monthly household income refers to the average monthly income for the three months preceding the submission date of the application (for income not paid on a monthly basis, e.g. double pay and bonus etc., it should be spread over the period concerned for calculation) which includes:

- a) Earnings from employment: salary, double pay/leave pay, job allowance, bonus/commission/tips, income from rendering services and profits from business, etc.
- b) Other income: contribution from children and relatives/friends, alimony, monthly pension/widow's and children's compensation, payout from the annuity scheme(s), profits from investment, interests from fixed deposits, stocks and shares, rental income, etc.

Income excludes employee's mandatory contribution to the Mandatory Provident Fund Scheme, financial assistance provided by the Government, charitable donations and financial assistance from assistance programmes of CCF.

Vetting of Applications

In making the application, the parent/guardian has to provide information on their family income in the application form but submission of relevant income proofs is not required. SWD will conduct random checks in the course of processing the application or after arranging relevant services, and the parent/guardian of the child concerned must provide detailed income information and any other relevant documents for verification.

Enquiry

Rehabilitation and Medical Social Services Branch (LTTC Office)

Social Welfare Department

Address : Room 118, 1/F, Lady Trench Training Centre,
44 Oi Kwan Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong

Tel. No. : 3791 2711

Fax No. : 3791 2140

Email : tspenq@swd.gov.hk

Office Hours : Monday to Friday from 9 am to 5 pm
(Lunch break from 1 pm to 2 pm)

SWD Website : www.swd.gov.hk

e-Submission link : <https://eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/swd053/en/>

**The applicant should report to the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) immediately in case anyone offers to assist in application for placement in return for remuneration. Any person who attempts bribery shall be guilty of an offence. SWD will refer the case to ICAC for investigation.*