

CE visits Social Security Field Unit in Tseung Kwan O (with photos/video)

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, visited the Social Welfare Department's (SWD) Social Security Field Unit in Tseung Kwan O this afternoon (April 17) to encourage the department's personnel who have handled a large number of applications and enquiries in relation to social security programmes amid the epidemic in recent months.

Mrs Lam was briefed by staff members of the unit on its work in recent months, in particular the rising number of applications since early March. She also spoke with colleagues and listened to their views. She pointed out that the severe situation of novel coronavirus infection in the past few months has caused serious impacts on various sectors in Hong Kong, presenting many families and individuals with financial difficulties, and that it is a good time for various social security programmes including Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) and the Old Age Living Allowance to demonstrate their function as a social safety net. In addition, the Government announced the second round of the Anti-epidemic Fund and other relevant measures worth \$137.5 billion last week to ease the plight of members of the public. One of the measures is the temporary relaxation of the asset limits for able-bodied applicants of CSSA by 100 per cent for six months to support the unemployed.

Mrs Lam expressed her gratitude to the SWD's staff members for their tireless joint efforts to deal with the heavy workload so that people facing financial difficulties can be provided with cash subsidies as soon as possible to meet their basic needs. She said she believed that the department would adopt corresponding measures to support colleagues including internal manpower redeployment and hiring of additional staff, consolidating workflow and streamlining work procedures to address any possible further increase in workload and enable the department to speed up processing of applications so that assistance can be rendered to people in need as soon as possible.

"During the SARS period, I was the Director of Social Welfare and SWD colleagues' spirit of relieving people's burdens during difficult times made me proud. I encourage colleagues to assist people in need to apply for social security with empathy to help them overcome adversity," Mrs Lam said.

