

Community Care Fund Digital Television Assistance Programme open for applications

Hong Kong will enter an era of full digital TV broadcasting on December 1 (00.00 hours) this year. To underpin the implementation, the Government launched today (January 14) the Community Care Fund Digital Television Assistance Programme to help analogue TV households in need to obtain digital TV receivers, so that they can continue to access local free TV programmes. The programme is open for applications from today.

The programme has secured about \$450 million from the Community Care Fund and will be administered by the Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS). Eligible analogue TV households can choose one of the following digital TV receivers according to their family needs: a set-top box, a 24-inch digital TV set or a 32-inch digital TV set.

The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Edward Yau, said, "The implementation of full digital TV broadcasting marks a new milestone in Hong Kong's broadcasting industry. According to the latest survey, the digital TV penetration rate has been further enhanced, with over 90 per cent of Hong Kong households already switched to digital TV, while the number of households receiving analogue TV broadcasting has dropped from 7 per cent to 4 per cent (around 100,000 households) over the past two years. These figures show that most of the Hong Kong residents are ready for full digital TV broadcasting.

"We care about the small number of households who are still watching analogue TV, mostly grass-roots and elderly households. We want to help them through the programme. Application procedures are designed with a view to bringing convenience to the public. They are very simple. Analogue TV households who are benefiting from specified social assistance programmes or of low-income will not be required to go through additional means testing," he said.

Mr Yau added that to streamline the procedure, the electrical appliances contractor will liaise with the applicant and arrange one-stop services, including delivery and installation of a digital TV receiver as well as disposal of the old analogue TV set, within eight weeks after receipt of an application. More than 80,000 households are expected to benefit from the programme.

For details of eligibility, please refer to part one of the application form attached.

The Chief Executive of the HKCSS, Mr Chua Hoi-wai, said that a total of 100 service units across 18 districts operated by non-governmental organisations will assist in handling the applications, with staff answering

enquiries on the spot. The member organisations of the HKCSS will also utilise their community networks to introduce the programme to targeted beneficiaries. The HKCSS will brief the District Councils on the programme details as necessary.

Application forms for the Community Care Fund Digital Television Assistance Programme can be obtained from the 100 district service units which assist in implementing the programme and the Home Affairs Enquiry Centres in the 18 districts, or downloaded from the programme website (digitaltv.hkcass.org.hk/en/). Completed forms should be submitted to the service units or by post. The assistance programme will run until July 15, 2021. For details, please visit the dedicated website or call 2922 9230.