



13 JULY 2023

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **RAISING OF PER CAPITA INCOME BENCHMARK FOR COMCARE ASSISTANCE**

From 17 July 2023, the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) will raise the per capita household income (PCHI) benchmark for ComCare from the current  $\leq \$650$  to  $\leq \$800$ .

2 ComCare Short-to-Medium-Term Assistance (SMTA) provides temporary financial assistance to lower-income households who are temporarily unable to work, or are earning a low income and require assistance. The PCHI benchmark indicates the approximate income level at which households could qualify, and is not a criterion that automatically qualifies a household for SMTA. Eligibility for SMTA is based on a holistic assessment by Social Service Offices (SSOs), and those with income below what they require for their basic needs may qualify. Households are also assessed on factors such as their savings level and availability of family support. The current household income benchmark for SMTA will be removed, and only the PCHI benchmark will be used as the latter more accurately reflects basic living expenses, which vary according to household size.

3 The revised PCHI benchmark of  $\leq \$800$  will also apply to other ComCare schemes that take reference from the SMTA income benchmark, from 17 July 2023:

- a. ComCare Interim Assistance, which provides immediate financial assistance to those who require urgent and temporary financial relief.
- b. ComCare Long-Term Assistance (LTA), which provides assistance over a longer period of time, to persons who are permanently unable to work due to old age, illness or disability, and have little or no means and family support. Elderly persons whose children have PCHI  $\leq \$800$  may be eligible for LTA.

4 More information on ComCare schemes is available on <https://msf.gov.sg/what-we-do/comcare>. Households in need of assistance can apply for ComCare online via SupportGoWhere ([go.gov.sg/SMTA](https://go.gov.sg/SMTA)) or in person at any SSO ([go.gov.sg/ssolocator](https://go.gov.sg/ssolocator)). Those

**TO BE EMBARGOED TILL 13 JULY 2023, 6PM**

who need help completing the online application form can call the ComCare call hotline (1800-222-0000), email [Ask\\_SSO@msf.gov.sg](mailto:Ask_SSO@msf.gov.sg), or approach their nearest SSO for assistance.

**ISSUED BY  
MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT**

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **1. How will current ComCare SMTA beneficiaries be affected by the changes?**

There will be no impact on current ComCare SMTA beneficiaries, who will continue to receive assistance based on their last assessed household circumstances.

### **2. I applied for ComCare SMTA before 17 July 2023 but was unsuccessful. Should I reapply now since my income is below the revised ComCare income benchmark?**

No, unless there have been changes in your household circumstances. The ComCare income benchmark indicates the approximate income level at which a household could be eligible for ComCare SMTA. It is not a criterion that automatically qualifies a family for ComCare SMTA. Eligibility for SMTA still depends on the SSO's assessment of the applicant's income against expenditure for their basic living expenses, and SMTA will be provided for those assessed unable to afford their basic living expenses.

### **3. When was the last time the ComCare income benchmark was revised? How does MSF ensure the income benchmark remains relevant?**

The ComCare income benchmarks were last revised in 2014. The benchmarks were next raised from monthly HHI  $\leq$  \$1,700 to monthly HHI  $\leq$  \$1,900, and monthly PCHI  $\leq$  \$550 to monthly PCHI  $\leq$  \$650.

The Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) reviews the ComCare income benchmark every two to three years, taking into consideration data on expenditure for basic living needs from the Department of Statistics, projected inflation, and views from social service professionals who work closely with lower-income households.

MSF last raised cash assistance rates for SMTA and LTA households from 1 August 2022.

### **4. What assistance do ComCare households receive? Is this support sufficient?**

ComCare SMTA beneficiaries receive:

- Cash assistance that covers the shortfall in income to meet their basic living expenses. The amount of cash assistance provided varies as it is customised based on the household's composition, needs, and income. For example, households with members who are temporarily unemployed with no income and have more dependants will need more assistance than households that require support to supplement their income from work and have fewer dependants.
- Financial assistance to offset their household bills (for example, HDB rental, utilities, service and conservancy charges). These are credited directly to billing agencies.
- Other assistance including assistance for medical bills, employment assistance (for example, job search, training), and referrals to other government agencies and

community partners for other needs, such as to Family Service Centres for casework and counselling. Eligible ComCare families with children attending Government or Government-aided schools will also automatically qualify for MOE's Financial Assistance Scheme.

ComCare LTA beneficiaries

- Receive a fixed monthly cash assistance based on their household size (for example, a single-person household will receive monthly cash assistance of \$640).
- Are automatically eligible for other Government assistance such as free medical care at public healthcare institutions.
- Receive support from Government schemes for the elderly, such as the Pioneer and Merdeka Generation Packages, and the Silver Support Scheme, as many beneficiaries are seniors.
- Receive community support such as befriending services by Lion Befrienders and social activities at Senior Activity Centres.

ComCare IA recipients may receive cash assistance, supermarket vouchers, or food rations, depending on their household's circumstances.

## TRANSLATED TERMS

English	Mandarin	Malay	Tamil
ComCare Short-To-Medium-Term Assistance	社区关怀计划 中短期援助	Bantuan Jangka Pendek hingga Jangka Sederhana ComCare	காம்கேர் குறுகிய - நடுத்தர கால உதவி
ComCare Long-Term Assistance	社区关怀计划 长期援助	Bantuan Jangka Panjang ComCare	காம்கேர் நீண்டகால உதவி
ComCare Interim Assistance	社区关怀计划 临时补助	Bantuan Sementara ComCare	காம்கேர் இடைக்கால உதவி