

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**1. What are the enhancements to ComCare Long-Term Assistance (LTA)?**

With effect from 1 August 2022, MSF will increase the revised monthly cash assistance rates for LTA. The changes are summarised in the table below:

LTA Household type	Existing rates	New rates (From 1 August 2022)
1-person	\$600	\$640
2-person	\$1,000	\$1,080
3-person	\$1,400	\$1,510
4-person	\$1,750	\$1,930

2. How much cash assistance do ComCare Short-To-Medium-Term Assistance (SMTA) households receive? What is the extent of increase?

While LTA provides fixed monthly cash assistance, SMTA beneficiaries receive cash assistance that covers their shortfall in income to meet their basic living expenses. The amount of cash assistance provided varies as it is customised based on the SMTA household's composition, needs and income. For example, households with members who are temporarily unemployed with no income will need more assistance than households that require support to supplement their income from work.

In addition to cash assistance, SMTA households may also receive financial assistance which are credited directly to relevant agencies to offset their household bills (e.g. HDB rental, utilities, service and conservancy charges). In this review, we have also raised the amount of utilities assistance that SMTA households can receive.

SMTA households may also receive assistance with medical bills, employment assistance (e.g., job search, training), and referrals to other government agencies and community partners for other needs. Families with young children under SMTA may also benefit from infant and childcare subsidies, while those with school-going children can tap on MOE's Financial Assistance Scheme.

Most SMTA households can expect to receive an increase in cash assistance from 1 August 2022. For example, a 4-person household with one working adult, one full-time homemaker, and two children in primary school can expect an increase of about \$130 per month in SMTA cash assistance. The household may additionally receive assistance for utility bills, service and conservancy charges, and both children will also automatically qualify for the Ministry of Education's Financial Assistance Scheme.

3. How was the review of ComCare assistance rates conducted?

MSF reviews the ComCare assistance rates and eligibility criteria every two to three years. The latest review referenced data from the Department of Statistics on lower-income families' expenditure on essentials for daily living. Domain experts in areas such as transport expenses, and community stakeholders who work closely with lower-income families, were also consulted for the review.

4. Is ComCare support sufficient?

In determining the cash assistance quantum, Social Service Offices (SSOs) assess the household's income and expenses, and provide assistance based on the shortfall in income required to meet their basic needs. While there are guidelines for assessment, SSOs exercise flexibility to better cater to the diverse needs and circumstances of each household.

Other than monthly cash assistance for basic living expenses (e.g., food, clothing and transport), SSOs may also provide ComCare households with assistance for household bills and medical bills and refer them to other government agencies and community partners for other forms of support they may need (e.g., finding employment, counselling). ComCare households may also receive financial support through other schemes. For example, LTA beneficiaries who are seniors may also receive support from Government schemes for the elderly, such as the Pioneer Generation Package and Silver Support Scheme.

5. Will existing ComCare beneficiaries receive higher ComCare assistance as well?

All existing Long-Term Assistance (LTA) beneficiaries who remain on LTA will receive the higher cash assistance rates from 1 August 2022 onwards.

Current SMTA beneficiaries who apply to renew their existing assistance on or after 1 August 2022 will receive cash assistance based on the revised rates. The revised rates will also apply to applicants whose assistance is approved on 1 August 2022 or after.

Current beneficiaries whose SMTA started before 1 August 2022 would have also benefitted from the additional flexibility that SSOs have been exercising since 4 April 2022, to provide ComCare beneficiaries with more cash assistance to cope with increases in the costs of basic necessities.

Households that are facing financial difficulties can approach their nearest SSOs for assistance. The SSOs will assess the household's needs and circumstances, and provide the required assistance accordingly.

6. How will the Government support the lower-income in view of rising inflation?

The Government has been monitoring the impact of inflationary pressures, particularly on lower-income households and individuals. Budget measures to help Singaporean households amid the global rise in prices, such as the Community Development Council (CDC) vouchers meant for rollout in the second half of 2022, were brought forward in May 2022 and given out recently to help families with their daily expenses.

Similarly, in April 2022, MSF also implemented temporary measures to provide more financial support for ComCare recipients who require it. For instance, the Social Service Offices (SSOs) will provide a minimum of six months of support to new ComCare Short-to-Medium-Term Assistance (SMTA) clients, or a minimum of three months of additional support to existing SMTA clients, who apply for SMTA or renewal of their assistance between 4 April and 30 September 2022.

MOF has also announced additional support for lower-income households to meet the rise in cost of living, such as the GSTV – Cash Special Payment and Household Utilities Credit.

These measures aim to further help lower-income households to tide through this period of price increases. As the global and domestic economic situation evolves, we will continue to review our measures to calibrate the level of support required.