

THE HONG KONG HOUSING AUTHORITY**Memorandum for the Commercial Properties Committee****Review on Letting of Commercial Properties to
Non-Government Organisations for Disabled Persons****PURPOSE**

To inform Members the progress on letting of commercial premises to non-government organizations (NGOs) and to seek approval for extension of the scheme.

BACKGROUND

2. Members may recall that during the Committee meeting on 8 June 1995, approval was given to let commercial premises at market rent to NGOs to promote and provide supported employments for the disabled persons through on-the-job training and supervision (Paper No. CPC 29/95 at **Annex I**). A ceiling of five direct allocations to NGOs for an initial period of two years to test the effectiveness of the scheme was set. The Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS) agreed to coordinate among member agencies by referring leasing proposals to the Director of Social Welfare (DSW) for endorsement. Subject to DSW's recommendations, which should include, inter alia, the experience and track records of the NGOs and the training given to disabled employees, the Department would proceed with subsequent letting.

IMPLEMENTATION

3. Over the past two years, a number of commercial premises including shops/shopstalls in existing estates and new shopping centres were suggested to the NGOs for their consideration. A total of three tenancies were let at market rents to ----- NGOs for various trades with details at **Annex II**.

EVALUATION

4. Business has commenced on all of the commercial premises let to the NGOs concerned with satisfactory performance. A total of 20 disabled persons have been employed to practise salesmanship. The scheme has proved to be successful because the NGOs have managed to operate these premises in a business-like manner while the working attitude of disabled employees is fully appreciated by customers. No adverse comments have been received from estate residents on their business conduct.

FEEDBACK FROM HKCSS AND NGOs

5. Feedback from member agencies of the HKCSS reveals that they prefer commercial premises in relatively new estates with good pedestrian flow to ensure better business turnover. Direct allocation of commercial properties under this scheme is welcomed by both HKCSS and NGOs.

RECOMMENDATION

6. In view of the encouraging results, the Department takes the view that direct allocation of shops and market stalls at market rent to NGOs should continue. To make the supported Employment Scheme for Disabled Persons more successful, it is recommended that an annual quota of five allocations is to be set aside for such allocation.

PRESUMPTION

7. It is not thought that Members will object to the recommendation in paragraph 6. If no objection or request for discussion is received by the Committees' Secretary **by noon on 3 February 1998**, Members' endorsement will be presumed and appropriate action taken.

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