

<b>Doc Type</b>	HA
<b>Paper No</b>	53/95
<b>Title</b>	Progress on the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on Housing for the Elderly
<b>CONTENTS</b>	<p>HA 53/95</p> <p>THE HONG KONG HOUSING AUTHORITY</p> <p>Memorandum for the Housing Authority</p> <p>Progress on the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on Housing for the Elderly</p> <p>PURPOSE</p> <p>To inform Members of the progress on the provision of housing and related services for the elderly.</p> <p>BACKGROUND</p> <p>Statistical Overview</p> <p>2. There are at present some 812,000 elderly persons in Hong Kong, representing 14% of the total population. The elderly population is expected to grow to 877,000 by 1997 and to over one million or 16% of the population by 2007.</p> <p>3. As at the first quarter of 1995, 350,000 (43%) elderly persons were living in public rental housing. In private housing, there are about 22,000 single elderly and 5,600 two person elderly non-owner-occupier households. Of these households, 22,300 fall below the Waiting List Income Limits and among them, 78% are one-person households.</p> <p>Ad Hoc Committee on Housing for the Elderly</p> <p>4. To fulfill the Governor's pledges on improving services for the elderly, the Housing Authority set up an Ad Hoc Committee on Housing for the Elderly (the Committee) in November 1993 to carry out an overall review of the provision of housing for the elderly. The Committee's recommendations are set out in Annex I. This paper reports progress on implementation of the recommendations.</p> <p>PROGRESS</p> <p>Supply and Demand</p> <p>5. It is estimated that the number of elderly to be rehoused from 1995/96 to 2000/01 would amount to around 30,600 (Annex II). Some 11,200 would be rehoused in accommodation specially designed for the elderly, whereas the remaining 19,400 would be accommodated through other types of housing for small households, including the use of vacated flats.</p> <p>Allocation</p> <p>6. In his 1993 Policy Address, the Governor pledged to rehouse by 1997 4,000 single elderly on the Waiting List (WL) as at the end of August 1993. Up to the end of August 1995, about 2,500 elderly have been rehoused. The Department is confident that the remaining 1,500 can be rehoused by 1997.</p> <p>7. Between the start of August 1993 and end of August 1995, a total of 9,488 new applications from elderly persons have been received. The effective demand (assumed to be 65%) is estimated to be about 6,200. It should be possible to provide rehousing for these applicants as well as those on the pipeline by 2000/01.</p> <p>Joint Assessment Panel</p> <p>8. A Joint Assessment Panel with representatives of Housing Department and Social Welfare Department was set up in August 1994 to assess the need and recommend suitable housing and related services to elderly applicants on the WL. About 3,500 singleton elderly aged 70 and above on the WL as at July 1994 are being screened in phases to assess their actual housing need. Those who are in need of special care and attention are referred to SWD for the appropriate type of accommodation. It is expected that screening will be completed in about 3 months.</p> <p>Rehousing Priorities</p> <p>9. Various elderly priority schemes have been introduced which also encourage and assist families to live with and take care of elderly parents/dependents.</p> <p>10. Following the recommendation of the Committee, housing allocation offered under the "Families with Elderly Persons Priority Scheme" (FEP) has been advanced by one more year to three years. Advancement of allocation by one year is also introduced to the "Special Scheme for Families with Elderly" (SFEP).</p> <p>11. Since July 1994, 1,639 families have been rehoused through the Elderly Persons Priority Scheme and 1,104 families have benefited from the FEP and SFEP Schemes.</p> <p>Housing Information Centres</p>

12. The Authority's Housing Information Centres (HIC) aim to assist elderly persons living in sub-standard private housing or who are affected by private redevelopment in making applications for PRH through WL. Since setting up of these HICs in September 1992, about 146,800 enquiries have been handled and 1,633 cases were referred to the other relevant Government departments for follow-up action.

13. HIC staff also operate an outreach service. Since March 1995, six tenement buildings affected by private redevelopment and 13 bedspace apartments have been visited and assistance given to elderly residents to apply for PRH.

14. Upon the recommendation of the Committee, two HICs previously annexed to District Offices have moved to ground floor private premises, one in Wanchai and another in Yaumatei. The Department is planning to expand the scheme to Hung Hom/Tokwawan and to districts with high concentration of elderly people and old tenements such as Kowloon West and Hong Kong East in the coming years.

#### Estate Liaison Officers (ELOs)

15. The ELO Scheme provides valuable and proactive services to elderly tenants. The scheme has won favourable comments from its clients and the public. There are plans to extend the service to ten estates a year for five years starting from 1994/95. The possibility of engaging non-government organizations (NGO) in providing ELO service is being considered together with the proposal to contract out the management of HSCs (see paragraph 18 below).

#### Emergency Alarm System

16. Emergency alarm sets are installed free of charge for public housing elderly tenants who are Comprehensive Social Security Allowance recipients and living alone. However, the system requires extra housing staff support and is therefore implemented only in estates where ELOs are working. The present alarm raising rate maintains at a relatively low level of 0.5% a year. In an effort to switch to other systems without relying on ELOs, the Department is researching into other more cost-effective systems that can work on their own by taking advantage of modern electronic technique.

#### Expanded Steering Group

17. The Steering Group on Estate Liaison Officers and Emergency Alarm System has been revamped with expanded responsibility and membership. It would review elderly housing designs and services and facilities provided for the elderly in existing estates.

#### Management of Housing for Senior Citizens (HSCs)

18. With a view to putting the management of HSCs in the hands of professionals, NGOs have been invited to tender their proposals for managing them. As a trial scheme, the proposed contracting out of management services will be practised in four HSCs -- two on On Yam Estate and the other two on Yiu Tung Estate.

#### Information and Publicity

19. In order to disseminate information to the elderly, a 3-month roving exhibition commenced in November 1994 in districts with high concentration of elderly people to publicize and promote the priority schemes for the elderly. In addition, publicity is issued through printed and electronic media from time to time. A total of 50,000 information kits have been distributed to the elderly applicants since commencement of the exhibition.

20. The application form used by the elderly in the application for various priority schemes has also been redesigned to capture more precise information so that actual housing need can be assessed at an early stage.

#### Other Suggestions to Assist the Elderly

##### Rent Assistance

21. In the Rent Assistance Scheme, preferential treatment has been given to elderly households. The qualifying threshold of rent-to-income ratios for elderly households have been reduced to 20% and 25% for rent reductions of 25% and 50% respectively. Moreover, households are not required to move to cheaper accommodation. About 400 elderly households have benefited under the scheme. Further improvements to the scheme are being considered.

##### Laundry Facilities

22. The Department recognises that elderly persons may have difficulty in using the traditional 'pole socket' laundry facility, and pulley/nylon-string aluminium replacements are now supplied in all HSC. For existing flats where 'pole sockets' are still in use, the Department has in the past installed, free of charge, aluminium laundry racks at the request of single elderly tenants who cannot afford to pay the cost. About 1,000 laundry racks have been installed for such tenants. The Department now proposes to provide aluminium laundry racks to the remaining all-elderly households. About 33,000 elderly households will benefit from this new initiative. Based on the estimated cost of \$800 for each laundry rack, the financial implication for the proposed installation is \$26.4M. The improvement programme will be completed within six months in this fiscal year.

##### Handrails

23. To facilitate the mobility of elderly tenants, handrails are provided in the corridor of Annex blocks to standard Harmony blocks, and the corridor of the wing of the mother block linked with the Annex block. In future HSC and small household blocks, handrails will also be provided in the corridors. Over the past three years, some 63 handrail projects have been undertaken in common areas and 192 handrails installed inside flats. One of these projects was carried out in So Uk Estate with handrails installed to staircases in open space outside five domestic blocks funded by EMAC. New handrails will continue to be supplied subject to local need and space available.

##### Lift Services

24. In new housing dedicated to the elderly, lift services are provided irrespective of the height of the building. In view of an increase in the proportion of elderly in some existing low-rise blocks, the Department is also considering the provision of lift service, where technically feasible, to blocks of seven storeys with a life span of at least seven years after completion of the lift installation. The pilot lift installation at Azalea House, So Uk Estate, was very well received by tenants. A feasibility study on lift installation in some 30 blocks is underway.

#### INFORMATION

25. This paper is for Members' information and may be discussed at the meeting on 28 September 1995 if Members so wish.

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File Ref.: HD(H) APP/A 5/8/8  
Date : 22 September 1995  
Annex II

Number of Elderly Singletons to be Rehoused from 1995/96 to 2000/01

Categories	95/96	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	Total	(%)
Redevelopment	2,071	2,566	2,594	2,142	5,808	4,653	19,834	(64)
THA	324	442	98	-	-	-	864	(3)
Squatter	383	386	284	212	170	155	1,590	(5)
Minor Cat & Trawling	391	391	391	391	391	391	2,346	(8)
Waiting List	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	6,000	(20)
Total (100)	4,169	4,785	4,367	3,745	7,369	6,199	30,634	(100)

Annex I

Summary of the Recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on Housing for the Elderly

#### 1. Rehousing Priorities

- to give priority in rehousing

- (a) elderly persons rendered homeless.
- (b) elderly persons affected by redevelopment, squatter and THA clearance.
- (c) backlog of 4,000 elderly on the Waiting List.
- (d) elderly coming forward through Waiting List.

#### 2. Continuous Monitoring Demand

- to monitor the demand from elderly living in private sector and the provision of services to the sitting elderly tenants.

#### 3. Bedspace Apartment Dwellers and Street Sleepers

- HA should render assistance to these people in terms of rehousing if they can demonstrate genuine needs for immediate assistance as recommended by SWD.

#### 4. Elderly Displaced by Private Redevelopment

- the Housing Information Centres (HIC) should take a proactive role to help elderly persons in applying for public rental housing through WL.

#### 5. Measures to Increase Supply

##### New Construction

- composite housing blocks for small households including elderly.
- Housing for Senior Citizens on low-rise estate buildings.
- infill sites for small households including the elderly.
- annexes to Harmony blocks to increase supply of small flats.

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- refurbished housing block included in redevelopment programmes for providing flats in convenient urban locations.

#### Land Policy

- involvement of private developers to provide housing and related services for the elderly.

#### Planning

- review of flat mix and planning standard to increase the provision of flats to the elderly.

#### Management Transfer

- creation of suitable vacancies through transfer exercises.

### 6. Improvements to Allocation Process

#### Joint Assessment Panel

- to establish a joint panel with SWD to assess the needs of the elderly.

#### Priority Schemes

- to introduce priority schemes to the elderly by advancement of allocation.

### 7. Improvement to Existing Services

#### Estate Liaison Officers

- to consider engaging the expertise of Non-government Organizations (NGO).

#### Emergency Alarm System

- to look out for introducing a more sophisticated communication system connected to a centralized monitoring system.
- to consider making the system a standard feature in elderly housing.

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### Management of Housing for Senior Citizens (HSC)

- to put warden and social services in HSC in professional hands by contracting out such services to NGOs.

#### Working Group to Review Facilities and Services for the Elderly

- to revamp the existing Steering Groups on Estate Liaison Officers and Emergency Alarm System.

### 8. Sites for Elderly Housing

- HA to negotiate with Government for additional sites for development of elderly housing.
- to identify the following for housing for the elderly

- ? small urban sites
- ? vacant sites adjoining existing estates
- ? sites on low rise structures
- ? sites for annex blocks
- ? reuse of blocks for redevelopment
- ? under-utilized premises and vacant bays

### 9. Design of Elderly Housing

- in designing the elderly housing, should consider

- \* social mix
- \* provision of facilities
- \* maximization of site potential
- \* integrated approach in design
- \* design specifications

### 10. Information and Publicity

- to expand HICs which will include Elderly Information Desks.
- to re-design the information materials and to step up publicity especially in the private sector.
- to organize a roving exhibition.

11. Other Suggestions to Assist the Elderly

- community support for elderly rehoused to new environment
- rent assistance to the elderly
- rent subsidy
- commitment of the private developers to rehouse the elderly

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