

# **THE HONG KONG HOUSING AUTHORITY**

## **Memorandum for the Housing Authority**

### **Provision of Housing for the Elderly in Public Housing Estates**

#### **PURPOSE**

To inform Members of the current situation and future plans for the provision of housing for the elderly in public housing estates in the light of the Government's strategic policy objectives.

#### **BACKGROUND**

2. 'Care for the Elderly' is one of the key strategic policy objectives of the Government. In his Policy Address October 1997, the CE has pledged the following commitments -

- We will review public housing allocation arrangements to encourage eligible family members to live with elderly members.
- We will expand our existing Housing for Senior Citizens Scheme to provide more specially designed rental housing units with warden service to able-bodied elderly persons not living with their families.

3. The Secretary for Health and Welfare further puts Governments' objectives in encouraging family support and increasing housing supply for the elderly in an action plan with four major initiatives. They are -

- To review the existing public housing allocation arrangements to encourage the family to live with their elderly members. In ten years, eligible families who wish to live with and care for their elderly members will only need to wait for about two years to be allocated a public rental flats.
- To encourage more eligible elderly people to register on the public rental waiting list (WL).
- To provide 30,000 public rental flats by 2001-02. In ten years, single elderly people will only need to wait for about two years to be allocated a flat.
- To expand our existing Housing for Senior Citizens (HSC) Scheme to provide more specially designed rental housing units with warden service to able-bodied elderly persons not living with their family. In ten years, elderly people will only need to wait for about two years to be admitted into a unit under the Scheme.

4. An Elderly Commission was set up in July 1997. It is chaired by Hon. Tam Yiu-chung with the Director of Housing as one of the member. As part of the work of the Commission, an Ad-hoc Committee under the chairmanship of Mr. Cheng Mo-chi is tasked with the study on residential care for the elderly. The Deputy Director/Works is a member of the Ad-hoc Committee. The terms of reference and membership of the Commission and its Ad-hoc Committee are at **Annexes I-IV**. While contributing to the work of the Commission and its Ad-hoc Committee, the department is keeping a watching brief of their development. Members' advice will be sought on any upcoming issues which may have implications on the Authority's policies and work.

5. Early in November 1993, the Housing Authority (HA) set up an Ad Hoc Committee on Housing for the Elderly chaired by Hon HUI Yin-fat to carry out an overall review of the provision of housing for the elderly. Since the publishing of the Final Report of the Ad Hoc Committee in 1994, HA has made two progress reports giving a full account on the implementation of the recommendations of the Report. The latest progress report was issued in October 1997 vide Paper No. HA 64/97.

### **Current Arrangements and Provisions**

6. Housing Authority fully recognises that the elderly are those among the needy groups. Various priority allocation schemes are in place to facilitate not only the elderly to gain access to public rental housing (PRH) but also their families who are willing to live and take care of their elderly dependents.

#### ***Priority Allocation Schemes***

##### **(a) Single Elderly Persons Priority Scheme**

Through this avenue, the elderly singletons can be rehoused within four years. If they are willing to accept Housing for Senior Citizen units, they can normally be rehoused within two years from registration. Since January 1985, 9,190 single elderly persons have been rehoused.

##### **(b) Elderly Persons Priority Scheme**

Two or more related or unrelated elderly who agree to live together may apply under this scheme. Allocation of public housing can normally be made within two years after registration. Since 1979, 13,440 allocations have been made.

(c) **Families with Elderly Persons Priority Scheme**

Under this scheme which commenced in 1982, families awaiting rehousing together with their elderly parents or dependent relatives will have their housing allocation advanced by three years. This scheme is targeted at families with elderly dependents aged 60 or above to facilitate their taking up the responsibility of care for their elderly. A total of 12,170 families have benefited from the scheme since implementation.

(d) **Special Scheme for Families with Elderly Persons**

This scheme was introduced in 1990 whereby young families could apply with their elderly parents or dependent relatives for two separate flats in the same block in new towns. An advancement in housing allocation by one year will be made. So far, 12 applicants have made use of this scheme.

***Enhancement Schemes for Elderly Sitting Tenants***

To encourage families to take care of their elderly members, the following enhancement schemes for sitting tenants were introduced in 1990 -

(a) **Addition**

Young families in new town are encouraged to add elderly parents or relatives from other public housing estate or the private sector, and apply for transfer to larger flats if the overall size of the family so warrants. Similarly, elderly parents or relatives in new towns may add their children or close relatives living in urban estates and apply for larger flats in new towns. So far, 65 families have benefited from this arrangement.

(b) **Transfer**

Elderly parents or dependent relatives in urban estates can apply for transfer to estates in new towns nearer to their children or close relatives and take up separate flats within the same block. Similarly, young families in urban estates are allowed to transfer to estates in new towns nearer to their elderly parents or dependent relatives. So far, 216 families have been arranged transfer to gain larger space.

*Housing Types*

Broadly speaking, there are two main types of housing for the elderly in public rental estates, i.e. HSC which provide hostel type accommodation and small self-contained flats.

(a) **HSC**

It is an accommodation with warden services to attend emergency situation and to organize recreational activities for the residents. There are three types of HSC developed with different designs and with sharing communal services.

**i. Housing for Senior Citizens Type 1 (HS1)  
(conversion flats in lower floors of standard domestic blocks)**

This is the earliest type of Housing for Senior Citizens. Each HS1 premises provides accommodation for 130 to 150 senior citizens in groups of two to three by converting the standard 2-bedroom or 3-bedroom flats of the standard housing blocks.

**ii. Housing for Senior Citizens Type 2 (HS2)  
(above commercial podium or carpark)**

It is a low-rise development located above commercial podium or carpark so as to maximize land resources. The design is based on a modular concept being able to suit restricted sites with noise constraints. Each module is a cluster of bedrooms and communal facilities grouped around a courtyard with the bedrooms facing internally.

**iii. Housing for Senior Citizens Type 3 (HS3)  
(located in lower floors of the Small Households Developments)**

It is located in the lower floors of the Small Households Developments (SHD) providing 120 to 150 units for the premises. The design is based on two standard modular flats which can be arranged differently to suit small sites.

**(b) Small Self-contained Flats**

The other main stream of housing provision for the senior citizens is the small self-contained flats which come with their own kitchen and bathroom. They are provided through new construction or existing construction by refurbishment of vacated flats in old estates.

**i. New Construction**

There are currently 6 different flat types provided through Harmony Block, New Harmony Annex Block (HAX) and SHD.

**(a) Harmony Block One Person Flats**

The Harmony Block one person flats were the first purpose-designed small self-contained flats introduced in 1989.

**(b) Harmony Annex Block - Options 1 to 4 (HAX)  
One or Two (1/2P) Person and Two Person (2P) Flats**

It is a 21-storey block with 140 to 180 self-contained flats designed to link to Harmony Blocks for economy and efficiency. The annex block will share the lift, water and electricity supply with the 'Mother' Harmony block.

Though the flats of Harmony Annex blocks are for general allocation to 1P or 2P households, they have been specifically designed to meet the needs of senior citizens and be able to provide wheelchair access with minimum conversion.

**(c) Small Households Developments**

**One or Two (1/2P) Person; Two Person (2P) and Wheelchair Flats**

The SHD is up to 21-storey consists of special designed self-contained flats for the elderly and a small number of family flats and wheelchair units. HS3 with warden service can be located at lower floor of the SHD.

**ii. Existing Construction**

In order to cater for the immediate great demand of housing for the elderly, short-term solutions by converting suitable under-utilized premises and refurbishment of vacant flats in existing public housing estates into housing or related services for the senior citizens are adopted.

A summary of housing provision is at **Annex V** and typical floor plans for each type of these accommodation are at **Annex VI**.

## **FUTURE PROVISIONS**

7. To meet the housing needs of the elderly, we have set our targets on four major areas for the next five years.

### **(a) Flat Supply**

The first objective is to provide sufficient suitable public rental flats for the elderly. Over the next five year period from 1997/98 to 2000/01, it is anticipated that 32,500 new 1P flats and HSC units will be completed for allocation to 1P households including the elderly. Over the same period, an estimated of 11,800 old flats would be vacated to provide additional supply. Correspondingly, the estimated number of elderly singletons to be rehoused would amount to around 31,900. Details of the estimation are given at **Annex VII**.

As shown from the projection, the anticipated supply would be sufficient to meet the overall demand from 1P elderly households in terms of number of flats. The provision of 30,000 public rental flats by 2001-02 to expedite rehousing of single elderly people within two years over the next ten years could be met as pledged, provided the elderly are not particularly choosy in their choice of location.



(b) **Facilities and Service**

To meet the expectations and changing need of the elderly in their aging process, HA has committed to improving the standard facilities and service for elderly housing. For those older estates which are not earmarked for redevelopment but having high population of elderly tenants, some improvements in service provision are required. Consistent with the established policy, HA would make available premises in estates for setting up community support services for the elderly such as social centres, day care centres, health centres, and care and attention units etc. to be run by voluntary agencies. Measures to convert some under-utilised premises and vacant bays in the old housing estates into residential flats or premises for establishing housing-related services are on-going strategy. In support of the Secretary for Health and Welfare in expanding private residential care homes for the elderly (RCHE), a pilot scheme on leasing vacant premises in five estates to private RCHE operators on commercial basis is under active consideration. In addition, HA will explore the possibility of providing a purpose-built premises on an estate for the same purpose.

(c) **Promoting Co-Residence**

In line with our policy and the Government's objective to encourage family support, HA will review the existing priority allocation for families with elderly based on equitable allocation of available housing resources. Given the average waiting time for ordinary WL applicants will be reduced to under five years by 2001 resulting from the overall increase of flat supply, it follows that eligible families who wish to live with their elderly members will have their waiting time shortened to two years within the pledged time frame.

(d) **Access to Public Housing**

At present, there are already five Housing Information Centres (HICs) in operation to help elderly people living in sub-standard private accommodation to register on the WL. We will continue to set up more HICs in districts with high density of elderly population to facilitate them to apply for housing. As targeted, we will set up one additional HIC within this year.

**INFORMATION**

8. This paper is issued for Members' information.

---0---0---0---

File Ref. : HD(H)APP/A 5/8/8

Date : 3 March 1998

**Annex VII**

**Projected Supply and Demand of 1P Elderly Households for the Years 1997/98 - 2001/02 (as at September 1997)**

	<b>97/98</b>	<b>98/99</b>	<b>99/00</b>	<b>00/01</b>	<b>01/02</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b><u>Supply</u></b>						
New Supply	4801	3047	5331	10136	3427	<b>26742</b>
HSC	2127	1164	1048	1227	197	<b>5763</b>
Sub total :	6928	4211	6379	11363	3624	<b>32505</b>
Vacant Flats	3368	1494	1477	1700	3779	<b>11818</b>
Total :	10296	5705	7856	13063	7403	<b>44323</b>
<b><u>Demand</u></b>						
Non-elderly	3355	1942	2502	3100	1532	<b>12431</b>
<b>Balance for Elderly</b>	<b>6941</b>	<b>3763</b>	<b>5354</b>	<b>9963</b>	<b>5871</b>	<b>31892</b>

Note :

- (i) The supply of 1P accommodation includes all singleton units (17m<sup>2</sup>), 2P units (22m<sup>2</sup>) endorsed for allocation to 1P households and HSC (new and converted).
- (ii) New supply in 1997/98 includes new flats carried over from 1996/97.
- (iii) The estimated vacant flats supply in 1997/98 includes flats carried over from 1996/97.
- (iv) The implementation of TENANTS PURCHASE SCHEME may lead to adjustment of vacated flats supply.