

Full rent exemption scheme for elderly under-occupation households extended to more elderly households

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Housing Authority:

The Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) Subsidised Housing Committee (SHC) today (December 8) decided to regularise a scheme whereby under-occupation (U0) public rental housing (PRH) households whose family members are all aged 70 or above (U070+ households) are allowed to enjoy full rent exemption upon their transfer to suitably sized units, as well as enhance the scheme and extend the coverage to more households of people aged 70 or above.

"A trial scheme was introduced by the Housing Department last year aiming at a more rational use of housing resources by encouraging U070+ households who are exempted from the U0 policy to surrender large-sized PRH units to the HA," a spokesman for the HA said.

"The SHC endorsed today the extension of the scheme to cover elderly households whose family members are all aged 70 or above residing in Housing for Senior Citizens of Type I Design (HS1) and non-self-contained Converted One-Person (C1P) units even though they are not formally classified as U0 households. This aims to encourage households to move voluntarily to self-contained PRH flats and speed up the conversion processes of HS1 units and C1P units to normal PRH flats which were endorsed by the SHC in 2006 and 2000 respectively," the spokesman said.

Housing for Senior Citizens was introduced in the 1990s as a hostel type of PRH accommodation with the provision of 24-hour welfare worker service for the elderly. HS1 is the earliest type of such housing design. As for C1P units, they came from PRH flats which had been converted into one-person units through internal partitioning to meet the demand in the past.

Under the enhancements endorsed today, applicants will be offered wider district choice. The households will have a maximum of three housing offers of either new or refurbished units in their residing estates or an estate in the same PRH Application District, instead of the same District Council (DC) district as allowed in the trial period of the scheme.

"We noted that some applicants requested to be allocated a flat in an estate where their offspring resided but such estates were not located within the same DC district where the applicants were living. Widening district choice to the same PRH Application District, i.e. Urban, Extended Urban, New Territories or Islands, allows for better family support for the applicants," the spokesman said.

The existing annual quota of 300 units for the scheme and the provision of Domestic Removal Allowance will be maintained. About 20 000 U070+

households, 390 households residing in HSI units and 140 households of C1P units will be eligible for the scheme.

Under the current UO policy, UO standards vary with the household sizes. For example, a one-person household living in a unit with an internal floor area larger than 25 square metres is classified as a UO household. Households with disabled members or elderly members aged 70 or above are excluded from the UO list.

At today's meeting, the SHC endorsed the continuation of the current UO Policy, UO standards and Prioritised UO thresholds. The HA will conduct a review of the scheme and UO policy in 2023.