

## LCQ 21: Youth Hostel Scheme

Following is a question by the Hon Vincent Cheng and a written reply by the Acting Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Jack Chan, in the Legislative Council today (May 4):

Question:

The Government announced the implementation of the Youth Hostel Scheme (YHS) in the 2011-2012 Policy Address, under which non-governmental organisations would be fully funded by the Government to construct youth hostels on sites owned by them. So far, seven projects have been launched under YHS. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) as it has been reported that only one project has been completed since the launch of YHS, of the reasons for the delay in each of the remaining projects;

(2) whether it knows, as at February this year, the number of persons who have moved into the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups Youth Hostel PH2 in Tai Po under YHS, as well as the following information on each tenant: age, monthly income, total value of assets, reasons for moving in, term of residence, and whether they have applied for public rental housing (set out in a table);

(3) of the following information on each of the six projects under YHS that have not yet been completed: (i) the latest progress, (ii) the anticipated completion date, and (iii) the latest estimated number of hostel places (set out in the table below); whether it has drawn up a timetable for such projects; if not, of the reasons for that, and how it expedites the delivery of such projects;

Project	(i)	(ii)	(iii)
(a) Po Leung Kuk's project in Yuen Long	ã€€	ã€€	ã€€
(b) Tung Wah Group of Hospitals' project in Sheung Wan	ã€€	ã€€	ã€€
(c) The Hong Kong Association of Youth Development's project in Mong Kok	ã€€	ã€€	ã€€
(d) The Hong Kong Girl Guides Association's project in Jordan	ã€€	ã€€	ã€€
(e) The Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Welfare Council Limited's project in Yuen Long	ã€€	ã€€	ã€€
(f) The Salvation Army's project in Wan Chai	ã€€	ã€€	ã€€

(4) given that one of the objectives of YHS is to enable young people to

accumulate savings to pursue their medium-term aspirations in personal development, whether the Government will, in the light of the time required for the completion of the six yet-to-be-completed projects, introduce other measures to assist young people in buying homes and accumulating savings; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(5) whether it has plans to launch more projects under YHS; if so, of the details and timetable; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

To meet the aspirations of some working youth in having their own living spaces and to unleash the potential of development sites, the Government has introduced the Youth Hostel Scheme (YHS) under which non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are fully funded by the Government to construct youth hostels on their under-utilised sites and, upon completion, operate the youth hostels on a self-financing basis.

A total of seven projects are currently in progress under the YHS, namely The Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups' (HKFYG) youth hostel on Po Heung Street, Tai Po, which has been completed and has commenced operation; Po Leung Kuk's youth hostel in Ma Tin Pok, Yuen Long, the construction of which is nearing completion; The Hong Kong Girl Guides Association's project in Jordan and Tung Wah Group of Hospitals' project in Sheung Wan, both of which are under construction; as well as The Hong Kong Association of Youth Development's project in Mong Kok, the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Welfare Council Limited's project in Yuen Long, and the Salvation Army's project in Wan Chai, all three of which are under planning. These projects can provide a total of over 3 400 youth hostel places.

Having consulted the Transport and Housing Bureau, our consolidated reply to the various parts of the question raised by the Hon Vincent Cheng is as follows:

(1) and (3) The HKSAR Government has been actively taking forward the YHS. The above projects vary in size, building design and technical requirements, involving different planning and land procedures. For example, since the location of a project is close to declared monuments, it was necessary to conduct heritage impact assessment and undergo related consultation procedures. In addition, under the principle of "single site, multiple use", some projects aim to provide other self-financed facilities or government-funded facilities in addition to the youth hostel on the site. The NGOs responsible for the operation therefore needed time to complete the preparation and planning works for each of these facilities. The Home Affairs Bureau has been assisting individual NGOs in liaising with the relevant government departments to resolve technical issues and expedite the projects' progress. We will continue to work closely with the relevant NGOs to assist them in taking forward the projects.

The latest progress, number of hostel places and anticipated completion dates of the individual youth hostel projects are at Annex.

(2) HKFYG's youth hostel in Tai Po was completed and came into operation in March 2020, providing 80 hostel places. As at February 2022, a total of 90 young people are living/have lived in the youth hostel. According to the information provided by HKFYG, the average age of tenants is 25. The average monthly income and average total asset value are \$18,435 and \$116,704 respectively. Around 60 per cent of tenants have been living in the youth hostel since 2020 and the remaining tenants have lived for around one to two years. Around 30 per cent of young people have lived in the youth hostel because they want to have more personal space and achieve personal development. Around 25 per cent of them have lived in the youth hostel because of career or study needs. The remaining young people have lived in the youth hostel mainly due to a crowded living environment at home. Tenants are required to inform HKFYG and move out of the youth hostel within a reasonable period if they are allocated public rental housing, but they are not required to report to HKFYG in advance in respect of their applications for public rental housing.

(4) Housing is not an issue for the youth only, but one that concerns the Hong Kong community as a whole. In view of the serious shortage of land supply, the Government has been taking various measures to identify land for housing development and make better use of the current resources in order to enrich the housing ladder. Apart from implementing the Home Ownership Scheme, we have also introduced the "Starter Homes" pilot projects, regularised the Green Form Subsidised Home Ownership Scheme and the White Form Secondary Market Scheme, and accelerated the sale of unsold flats in the Tenant Purchase Scheme estates, etc. in recent years, with a view to supporting the Hong Kong people (including the youth) to achieve home ownership.

(5) The policy objective of the YHS is to better utilise the land held by the NGOs to provide an alternative to meeting the aspirations of some working youth in having their own living space, as well as to enable these young tenants to accumulate savings to pursue their medium term aspirations.

We will announce details of new projects when they are ready. We will closely monitor society's demand for youth hostels, progressively implement the individual projects and continue to liaise with NGOs that have expressed interest in the YHS, with a view to providing more youth hostel places.