

Public housing resident convicted by court for false statement

A spokesman for the Housing Department (HD) today (April 8) reminded residents of public rental housing (PRH) estates to declare truthfully their income and assets.

A PRH resident living at Oi Man Estate in Ho Man Tin declared on a 2018 Income and Asset Declaration Form to have no average monthly interest, bonus and dividends derived from investments. Subsequent investigation revealed that the resident had earned a monthly dividend of approximately \$19,000 from an investment account. The resident was prosecuted by the HD for making a false statement knowingly, contrary to Section 26(1)(a) of the Housing Ordinance. The defendant was previously convicted by the presiding magistrate in Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts who considered a fine punishment could not reflect the gravity of the offence. After making reference to the probation report, the defendant was sentenced to 60 hours' community service order today.

The spokesman said that households living in PRH should complete their income and asset declaration forms accurately, which forms the foundation for the assessment of rent and their eligibility for continuing residence. Before making the declarations, households should read the contents and the completion guidelines of the income and asset declaration form carefully and compute their income and assets in accordance with the methods specified. Otherwise, they may be prosecuted for making a false statement knowingly, contrary to Section 26(1)(a) of the Housing Ordinance (if convicted, the maximum penalty is a \$50,000 fine and imprisonment for six months) or being prosecuted for neglecting to furnish information as specified in a declaration form, contrary to Section 27(a) of the Housing Ordinance (if convicted, the maximum penalty is a \$25,000 fine and imprisonment for three months). Notwithstanding the above, the HD will take action to recover the undercharged rent incurred due to the inaccurate information or even recover their PRH units.