

THE HONG KONG HOUSING AUTHORITY

Memorandum for the Rental Housing Committee

Phasing Out of the Scheme on Estate Social Service for the Elderly

PURPOSE

To inform Members of the phasing out of the Scheme on Estate Social Service for the Elderly, commonly referred to as the Estate Liaison Officer (ELO) Scheme.

BACKGROUND

2. Following a successful trial in two estates in August 1990, the ELO Scheme was extended through a gradual process from 1992 to 1996 to 26 public rental housing (PRH) estates as shown at [Annex A](#). The scheme aims to reach out to the elderly tenants, particularly those living alone, identify their needs and refer needy cases to the relevant government departments or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for assistance. The ELOs further promote the establishment of mutual care network and encourage volunteer service amongst the elderly themselves. They also liaise and educate neighbours in handling situations where alarm is triggered by the emergency alarm system (EAS).

3. In November 1996, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) in conjunction with the NGOs launched a territory-wide experimental project known as Social Networking for the Elderly (SNE). In October 1998, a replacement project, the Support Teams for the Elderly (STE) was introduced. It aimed to strengthen social networking service and enhance community support for the single and vulnerable elderly persons living in both public and private housing. The support teams also promoted volunteerism among the elderly. As at June 2002, 37 STEs were set up in Multi-service Centres for the Elderly under the auspices of SWD.

4. In view of the SWD's implementation of STE, the availability of an EAS Grant^{Note 1} for elderly tenants to acquire EAS services in the market since May 1996 as well as the need for the Housing Department (HD) to focus on its core businesses, the HD has withheld extension of the ELO Scheme since November 1996.

NEED FOR A REVIEW

5. Over the years, the number of estates with ELO service has been declining as a result of -

- (a) completion of Comprehensive Redevelopment Programme;
- (b) takeover of management responsibility by Owners' Corporations in Tenants Purchase Scheme estates; and
- (c) transfer of the estate management work to Property Services Companies under the Phased Service Transfer Scheme.

6. Given that elderly tenants can have easy access to the support services provided by EAS suppliers in the market, and special grant is available for eligible tenants, ELO's role in educating neighbours to offer assistance to the elderly tenants at times of emergency is diminishing.

7. Although ELOs have been providing valuable services for the elderly tenants, the SWD's enhanced social networking and services for the elderly such as counselling, financial assistance, home help service, institutional care, day care, social and recreational programmes, etc. are considered more comprehensive and direct in addressing the various needs of the elderly in PRH estates.

8. The HD has in recent years rolled out a number of initiatives to enhance the efficiency and quality of management services for its tenants. With limited resources, the HD has to accord priority to the estate management works. Despite that ELO services are welcomed by the elderly, for the reasons stated above it is more desirable for such services to be provided by social work professionals and HD's role should become a service facilitator.

^{Note 1} Qualified elderly persons living in PRH estates may receive an EAS grant either from SWD if they are Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) recipients or from HD if they are non-CSSA recipients.

ACTION TAKEN

9. In view of the availability of the enhanced networking service provided by STEs and other home-based services rendered by the SWD and the NGOs, both the SWD and the HD have agreed to phase out the ELO Scheme, with HD management staff continuing to maintain close contact with the elderly tenants and to make referrals to appropriate agencies on a need basis.

10. To allow sufficient time for the SWD to strengthen its support to the STEs, the two departments have agreed to phase out the ELO Scheme in two batches by 30 September 2002 and 31 March 2003 respectively. Details of the phasing-out schedule is shown at [Annex B](#).

CURRENT POSITION

11. The first phase of the Phasing-out Programme was completed smoothly in five estates on 30 September 2002^{Note 2}. So far, no problem has been encountered. According to the schedule, the ELO Scheme in the remaining ten estates will be phased out by 31 March 2003. The HD staff will continue to work closely with SWD and NGOs in taking care of the well being of the elderly tenants upon withdrawal of the ELO teams.

FINANCIAL, STAFFING AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) IMPLICATIONS

12. Upon completion by end of March 2003, the phasing-out programme will result in an annual saving of \$20.9M starting from 2003/04. Also, after completion of the whole phasing-out programme, deletion of relevant posts (including eight Assistant Housing Managers and 24 Housing Officers) will be arranged with staff redeployed. There is no IT implication.

PUBLIC REACTION AND PUBLICITY

13. Given that all the remaining ten estates with ELO service are covered by the social networking service and the community support provided by STEs, the caring of elderly tenants will not be affected by the phasing out of the ELO Scheme. Moreover, SWD has agreed to strengthen the support to

^{Note 2} ELOs from estates where ELO service has ceased have been redeployed to other management functions with their ELO posts frozen.

STEs upon such phasing out so that no elderly tenants in PRH estates would be denied of the elderly services available to other elderly persons in the community. We shall emphasize that the first phase of the phasing-out programme has been implemented smoothly and successfully. Regular contacts with the elderly tenants have been and will be maintained by the management staff. Apart from this, a close link with the SWD and the NGOs for providing various kinds of services to the elderly tenants is also in place. The HD will also sustain its efforts in supporting and facilitating the SWD's dedicated networking and outreaching services delivered through STEs to our elderly tenants.

INFORMATION

14. This paper is issued for Members' information.

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List of estates where the ELO Scheme was implemented

(position as at June 1998)

Name of Estate	Date of Implementation	Remarks
1. Choi Hung	August 1990	The experimental project was approved vide Paper No. MOC 97/90
2. So Uk		
3. Pak Tin	September 1992	The extension of the ELO Scheme to Pak Tin Estate, Tung Tau Estate and six additional estates per year in the subsequent year was endorsed vide Paper No. MOC 43/92.
4. Tung Tau (I)*		
5. Tung Tau (II)*		
6. Cheung Sha Wan	January 1994	The extension of the ELO Scheme to ten additional estates per year for five years starting from 1994/95 was approved vide Paper No. MOC 66/94.
7. Kwai Chung		
8. Kwong Yuen		
9. Sha Kok		
10. Shek Kip Mei		
11. Tai Wo Hau		
12. Hing Wah (II)	May 1996	
13. Lam Tin (I)		
14. Ngau Tau Kok (I)		
15. Ngau Tau Kok (II)		
16. Shek Lei (I)		
17. Upper Ngau Tau Kok		
18. Chai Wan	June 1996	The scheme was eventually extended to 15 more estates in 1996 with the ELOs started to take up their posts from late April to early July 1996.
19. Kai Yip		
20. Sau Mau Ping (II)		
21. Shek Lei (II)		
22. Shek Pak Wan		
23. Tak Tin		
24. Tsui Ping (North)*		
25. Tsui Ping (South)*		
26. Wong Chuk Hang		

* Tung Tau and Tsui Ping Estates were split into Tung Tau (I) & Tung Tau (II) Estates and Tsui Ping (North) & Tsui Ping (South) Estates in July 1995 and October 1995 respectively.

Phasing Out Schedule of ELO Scheme

Estate	Name of Multi-service Centre for the Elderly with STEs	Date of phasing out of the ELO Scheme
1. Tung Tau (I)	SKH Wong Tai Sin Multi-service Centre for the Elderly (run by SKH Diocesan Welfare Council)	30.9.2002
2. Kwai Chung	Chan Tseng Hsi Kwai Chung Multi-service Centre for the Elderly (run by Hong Kong Society for the Aged)	30.9.2002
3. Sha Kok	Wilson T S WANG Multi-service Centre for the Elderly (run by Tung Wah Group of Hospitals)	30.9.2002
4. Tai Wo Hau	Chan Tseng Hsi Kwai Chung Multi-service Centre for the Elderly (run by Hong Kong Society for the Aged)	30.9.2002
5. Shek Lei (I)	SKH Lady Macle hose Centre Dr LAM Chik-suen Multi-service Centre for the Elderly (run by SKH Diocesan Welfare Council)	30.9.2002
6. Choi Hung	Choi Hung Community Centre for Senior Citizens (run by Yang Memorial Methodist Social Service)	31.3.2003
7. So Uk	Caritas Social Centre – Cheung Sha Wan (run by Caritas – Hong Kong)	31.3.2003

Estate	Name of Multi-service Centre for the Elderly with STEs	Date of phasing out of the ELO Scheme
8. Pak Tin	Pak Tin Multi-service Centre for the Elderly (run by Neighbourhood Advice-Action Council)	31.3.2003
9. Shek Kip Mei	Pak Tin Multi-service Centre for the Elderly (run by Neighbourhood Advice-Action Council)	31.3.2003
10. Hing Wah (II)	Chai Wan Multi-service Centre for the Elderly (run by Hong Kong Society for the Aged)	31.3.2003
11. Ngau Tau Kok (I)	Wan Hon Multi-service Centre for the Elderly (run by Hong Kong Christian Service)	31.3.2003
12. Ngau Tau Kok (II)	- ditto -	31.3.2003
13. Upper Ngau Tau Kok	- ditto -	31.3.2003
14. Kai Yip	Shun On Multi-service Centre for the Elderly (run by Christian Family Services Centre)	31.3.2003
15. Wong Chuk Hang	Wong Chuk Hang Multi-service Centre for the Elderly (run by Aberdeen Kai-fong Welfare Association Social Service Centre)	31.3.2003