

# 確保居有所

Housing for People in Need





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Yat Tung Estate



Public rental housing (PRH), which has provided stable and affordable housing for millions of Hong Kong people for over half a century, is a cornerstone of Hong Kong's success. With an affordable roof over their heads, PRH residents over the years have been able to improve their livelihood by raising happy and close-knit families, working hard and building successful careers, and contributing to strong neighbourhoods and vibrant community life throughout Hong Kong.

The HA seeks to provide adequate and affordable housing to all those who need it. Our PRH estates are home to over two million people.



Here at the Housing Authority (HA), our objective is to provide PRH for low income families who cannot afford private rental housing. That means not simply providing accommodation for those in need, but developing well-maintained environments along with harmonious and caring communities for PRH residents.

## Affordable Housing for the Needy

As at the end of March 2011, around two million people were living in some 708 000 PRH units in 200 HA estates and courts across Hong Kong. The government's objective is to keep the average waiting

time for PRH at around three years for general Waiting List (WL) applicants (excluding non-elderly one-person applicants). It is also our target to keep the average waiting time for elderly one-person applicants at around two years. To meet these targets, we have a five-year rolling public housing construction programme which aims to produce about 75 000 new PRH flats in the coming five years, averaging about 15 000 flats per year. As at the end of March 2011, the average waiting time for general WL applicants stood at two years, and that for elderly one-person applicants at 1.1 years. During the year, we allocated 15 900 PRH units to WL applicants, while another 4 700 applicants were allocated newly completed flats pending intake. Approximately 152 400 PRH applications were on the WL as at the end of March 2011.

### Implementation of PRH Rent Policy

The existing rent adjustment mechanism came into operation on 1 January 2008 following the Legislative Council's passing of the Housing (Amendment) Ordinance 2007 in June 2007. Under this mechanism, PRH rent is determined with regard to the affordability of the tenants. The mechanism provides an objective basis for adjusting PRH rent according to changes in the household incomes of PRH tenants.

The first rent review under the mechanism was completed in mid-2010. According to the report of the Commissioner for Census and Statistics, a comparison of the income indices of 2007 and

2009 indicated that PRH rent should be adjusted upward by 4.68%. The outcome of the first rent review exercise was endorsed by the Subsidised Housing Committee (SHC) under the HA. Given that PRH tenants might not have fully benefited from the economic recovery, the SHC decided to provide PRH tenants with a special one-off rent waiver for the month of September 2010. The next rent review will take place in 2012. As at 31 March 2011, PRH rents ranged from \$260 to \$3,530 per month, with the overall average standing at around \$1,400.

Our Rent Assistance Scheme helps tenants facing temporary financial hardship. Eligible applicants receive a rent reduction of either 25% or 50%, depending on their level of need. As at the end of March 2011, around 11 900 families were benefiting from the scheme.

### Initiatives for Fostering Harmonious Families

We have several incentives designed to support and foster harmonious families in PRH. One incentive for WL applicants is the Harmonious Families Priority Scheme, by which applicants applying together with

at least one elderly parent or dependent relative can enjoy a credit waiting time of six months.

We also run a Harmonious Families Transfer Scheme for existing PRH tenants, which encourages younger tenants to move closer to their elderly parents in PRH or, alternatively, elderly tenants to move closer to their offspring in PRH. We set aside a quota of 1 000 flats for this purpose for the year 2010/11, and extended the application period for the transfer exercise to two months. Around 400 applications were received. Another initiative is the Harmonious Families Addition Scheme, by which elderly tenants can add one of their adult children and his or her family to their existing PRH tenancy. We also offer a Harmonious Families Amalgamation Scheme, under which younger families may amalgamate their tenancy with that of their elderly parents or other dependent relatives. A new flat of a suitable size may be offered to the amalgamated household if resources are available.



Our Rent Assistance Scheme provides relief to tenants facing temporary financial hardship.



We run various schemes to encourage younger tenants to live with their elderly parents.

### **Transfer Opportunities to Suit Different Needs**

Because housing arrangements sometimes cease to suit individuals and families whose life circumstances have changed, we have a number of transfer schemes in place to meet their needs. In some cases, a household may have expanded in size and become overcrowded, and this is where our Territory-wide Overcrowding Relief Transfer Scheme can help. Our target is to ensure that no more than 0.6% of all PRH households fall into the overcrowded category (i.e. occupying less than 5.5 square metres of Internal Floor Area per person). Two exercises under this scheme were carried out during the year, helping around 790 families find more spacious accommodation. The total number of overcrowded households was 3 230 at the end of March 2011. This figure represents 0.47% of all PRH households and is well within our target. A related scheme is our Living Space Improvement Transfer Scheme, under which households occupying less than seven square metres of Internal Floor Area per person may apply for transfer to bigger accommodation. An exercise under the scheme was carried out during the year, assisting 1 060 households to improve their living space.

We also offer Internal and Special Transfer Schemes for families with specific medical or social needs. The schemes, involving either internal transfer within an estate or in some cases transfer to another estate, benefited a total of around 4 150 households during the year.

## **Making the Best Use of our Housing Resources**

### **Tackling Vacancies**

We are committed to better utilising PRH resources by reducing the flat vacancy rate. To encourage the take-up of less popular PRH flats, our Express Flat Allocation Scheme (EFAS) offers fast-track allocation for WL applicants who are willing to accept flats that have remained vacant for a prolonged period or are less popular. We launched the 15th EFAS exercise in July 2010, receiving 33 100 applications. In 2010/11, we housed around 1 810 families through EFAS, including around 360 families from the 14th EFAS exercise launched in 2009/10.



Above : So Uk Estate has been earmarked for clearance and redevelopment.  
Left: Incentives are given to tenants taking up less popular flats.



Besides the EFAS, we also offer other incentives to encourage the take-up of less popular flats. For instance, applicants willing to accept flats that have remained vacant for 12 months or more but less than 24 months are offered a 50% rent reduction for the first eight months of their tenancy. For flats that have been unoccupied for 24 months or more, the 50% rent reduction period is extended to 12 months. A total of 1 900 new tenants benefited under this initiative during the year.

### Clearance and Redevelopment

In 2005 we launched the Comprehensive Structural Investigation Programme (CSIP). This programme systematically investigates the structural conditions of estates that are around 40 years old. The findings are used to determine if the blocks should be repaired with the aim of retaining them for another

15 years or more, or demolished for redevelopment. Redevelopment of older blocks or estates is only carried out if they are found to be structurally unsafe or no longer cost effective to maintain.

So Uk Estate was identified for clearance and redevelopment after investigation under the CSIP. To ensure the clearance runs smoothly and causes minimum disruption to the many families involved, we are carrying it out in phases. The first phase was completed in July 2009, with around 2 570 families rehoused in other estates. The second phase is currently in progress, with final moving-out scheduled for April 2012. Nearly 1 300 families in the Phase 2 clearance had been relocated as at the end of March 2011.

Another clearance site is Block 22 of Tung Tau (I) Estate, which held 900 flats inhabited by around 1 500 people. The clearance is expected to be completed in 2012. As at the end of March 2011, we had rehoused around 170 households, involving some 240 individuals. At a third site, the Interim

Housing at Block 12, Kwai Shing East Estate, clearance was completed during the year, with 613 people from 198 households rehoused.

We continue to offer rehousing arrangements for eligible people affected by the clearance of squatters and of illegal rooftop structures undertaken by the Lands Department and the Buildings Department respectively. During the year we received a total of 330 rehousing applications, of which 180 were from those affected by squatter clearances and emergency clearances, and 150 from those rendered homeless due to the clearance of illegal rooftop structures in private tenement buildings.

## Disposal of Surplus HOS Flats

The Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) ceased in 2002, and since 2007 a phased sales programme has been carried out to dispose of the 16 700 surplus HOS flats. To date, six sales exercises have been completed, and a total of around 15 900 flats sold, of which around 3 200 flats were sold this year.

We strive to keep the average waiting time for PRH at around three years.



Left: Over 3 200 surplus HOS flats were offered for sale during the year.

Above: The average waiting time for general PRH Waiting List applicants stood at two years during the year.