

**Legislative Council
Panel on Housing and Panel on Welfare Services
Housing Needs of Street Sleepers**

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the provision of housing to low-income families/ individuals including street sleepers under the public rental housing (PRH) policy of the Housing Authority (HA) and support services for street sleepers by the Social Welfare Department (SWD).

Public Rental Housing

2. The HA provides PRH to eligible low-income families/individuals who cannot afford private rental accommodation via the Waiting List system, with a target of maintaining the average waiting time for the general Waiting List applicants at around three years. Low income families/individuals who cannot afford private rental accommodation, including street sleepers, may apply for PRH under the HA. Anyone who have genuine, imminent and long term housing needs but are not able to solve the problem by themselves may consider applying for Compassionate Rehousing through the SWD for its assessment of recommending eligible applicants to the Housing Department for consideration of allocating PRHs.

Support Services for Street Sleepers

3. The Administration is concerned about the needs of street sleepers. We provide various support services to enhance their work motivation and skills, so as to help them give up street sleeping and become self-reliant.

Integrated Services Team for Street Sleepers (IST)

4. SWD has been providing subvention to three non-governmental organisations (NGOs), namely the Salvation Army, St James' Settlement and the Christian Concern for the Homeless Association, for each to operate an IST.

ISTs provide one-stop services for street sleepers including day and late-night outreaching visits, emergency shelter and short-term hostel placement, counselling, employment guidance, personal care (e.g. bathing, haircut and meal), emergency relief fund to cover various expenses, such as short-term payment of rent and living costs, rental deposit and other removal expenses, aftercare service and service referrals, etc.

Emergency and Short-term Accommodation Needs

5. To address the emergency and short-term accommodation needs of street sleepers, SWD subvents NGOs to operate five urban hostels and two emergency shelters, providing a total of 202 short-term accommodation places with related counselling services. Through temporary accommodation support and the related counselling services, we aim to enhance the work motivation and skills of the street sleepers so as to help them give up street sleeping and become self-reliant. As at the end of December 2011, the average utilisation rate of these hostels and shelters in 2011-12 was around 82%. Apart from these subvented places, there are eight street sleeper hostels or temporary shelters operated by NGOs on a self-financing basis, providing a total of 437 places of overnight or temporary accommodation for street sleepers.

Advice Sought

6. Members are invited to note the content of this paper.

Housing Department
Social Welfare Department
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