

[Translation]

香港特別行政區政府

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

運輸及房屋局

香港九龍何文田

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27 May 2016

Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, SBS, JP
Room 1104
Sunbeam Commercial Building
469 Nathan Road Kowloon

Dear Hon FUNG,

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2016-17
(Question Serial No: R032)

I refer to the above question which you raised during the examination of the estimates of expenditure for 2016-17 regarding the waiting time of public rental housing (PRH). Our reply is as follows.

The Government and the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA)'s objective is to provide PRH to low-income families who cannot afford private rental accommodation, with the target of providing the first flat offer at around three years on average to general applicants (i.e. family and elderly one-person applicants). As at end-March 2016, the average waiting time¹ for general applicants was 3.9 years. HA has conducted special analysis of the housing situation of general applicants as at end-June 2013, 2014 and 2015 respectively. Based on the results of the special analysis, the household size distribution of general applicants who had waited for over three years and without any flat offer are set out in the table below –

¹ Waiting time refers to the time taken between registration for PRH and the first flat offer, excluding any frozen period during the application period (e.g. when the applicant has not yet fulfilled the residence requirement; the applicant has requested to put his/her application on hold pending arrival of family members for family reunion; the applicant is imprisoned, etc). The average waiting time for general applicants refers to the average of the waiting time of those general applicants who were housed to PRH in the past 12 months.

As at	Household size of general applicants (i.e. family and elderly one-person applicants) who had waited for over three years and without any flat offer					Total
	1-person	2-person	3-person	4-person	5-person or above	
end-June 2013	50	1 600	6 900	8 300	2 300	19 200
end-June 2014	60	4 200	10 300	10 800	2 900	28 300
end-June 2015	200	12 000	16 000	14 300	3 700	46 100

Note: There is no breakdown in HA's special analysis on households of 5-persons or above. Values of one thousand or above are rounded to the nearest hundred and values below one thousand are rounded to the nearest ten, figures may not add up to total due to rounding.

For the special analysis quoted above, since the applicants have yet to receive any flat offer, the "waiting time" is counted from the date of registration up to end-June 2013, 2014 and 2015 respectively, excluding any frozen period. The "waiting time" thus calculated only shows the specific situation at a given point in time and is not a particularly useful reference. The waiting time may change due to various reasons, including change of district choice and change of household particulars. The waiting time of the applicants would eventually be reflected in the calculation of average waiting time when they are housed to PRH. Besides, as the household size of applicants may change pending flat offers, it is not appropriate to compare the household distributions at different time points directly.

Even though the latest average waiting time for general applicants has already exceeded three years, we will not give up this target easily. Instead, we will continue to adopt the long-term target of providing the first flat offer to general applicants at around three years on average, so that HA can work closely with relevant government departments and the public to identify land for PRH developments. The Government has adopted 460 000 units as the total housing supply target for the next ten years (i.e. from 2016-17 to 2025-26), with public housing accounting for 60%, which comprises 200 000 PRH units and 80 000 subsidised sale flats. The increased PRH production, coupled with the annual average net gain of about 7 000 flats recovered from surrender of flats by existing tenants and enforcement actions against abuse of PRH resources, as well as the likely increase in PRH units recovered from those tenants who choose to buy newly-built Home Ownership Scheme flats as they come on stream, should help meet demand from PRH applicants.

Yours sincerely,

(Original Signed)

(Jerry CHEUNG)

for Secretary for Transport and Housing

c.c.

Clerk to the Legislative Council Finance Committee (Attn: Mr Daniel SIN)
Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Attn: Ms Emily TSANG)