

Information Paper for LegCo Panel on Housing

Shared non-self-contained accommodation in public housing estates

Purpose

This paper informs Members of the policy and arrangements about shared non-self-contained accommodation, the converted one-person flats, in public housing estates.

Background

2. Historically, public rental housing (PRH) flats were constructed to meet the need of those households with more than one member. Single person households were required to share accommodation with other families or single persons. With effect from 1984, single person households have also been eligible for allocation of separate flats. To cater for the demand, the Housing Authority has since constructed one-person flats in new estates and converted suitable vacant flats in existing estates into one-person flats.

3. Due to limited resources, elderly singletons and other singletons affected by redevelopment or clearance operations are accorded priority in the allocation of one-person flats.

Converted one-person (C1P) flats

4. The C1P flats made available through partitioning of vacant flats in older estates are provided with shared toilet and balcony facilities of the partitioned premises. Except the toilet, other facilities of these C1P flats (e.g. entrance door, cooking bench, water main, power supply) are used exclusively by individual tenants.

5. Currently there are about 4,500 singleton tenants, including 3,100 elderly persons (70%), residing in the C1P flats. Most of the elderly in these C1P flats live together in harmony. The number of requests approved for transfer on the grounds of disputes in 1997, 1998 and 1999 (up to 31 August 1999) were 12, 16 and 11 respectively. The Social Welfare Department would recommend to the Housing Authority cases for transfer if the social workers consider that continual sharing of common facilities by tenants would likely lead to harmful confrontation. The Housing Authority will consider these requests for transfer on individual merit.

6. Elderly C1P tenants who wish to live with their relatives may also seek alternative accommodation through the following schemes :

- (i) *Family with Elderly Persons Priority (FEP) Scheme*
Elderly tenant may apply for alternative accommodation with the family of his relatives by joining the FEP scheme. Eligible families will have their waiting time for housing allocation advanced by three years.
- (ii) *Inclusion in an existing family in a housing estate in new town*
Elderly tenant having relatives residing in a public housing estate in new town may apply for addition into that household and seek transfer to a larger flat in new town together if situation so warrants.
- (iii) *External transfer*
Elderly tenants in urban estates may apply for transfer to estates in new towns where their relatives reside and to occupy separate flats within the same block.

Recent developments

7. The project of converting vacant flats in older estates into C1P flats has been suspended in recent years. Resources have been pooled to boost the production of one-person flats with self-contained facilities. Currently, there are about 15,600 live applications, comprising 6,000 elderly and 9,600 non-elderly applicants, on the Single-person Waiting List.

8. The Housing Authority will increase the supply of one-person flats in the following ways -

- (i) to double the number of one-person flats in Harmony Blocks by filling up the void around the staircases;
- (ii) to incorporate an additional block (Annex Block) in the Harmony Block design;
- (iii) by 2003-04, to convert some 1600 3-bedroom flats which are surplus to the requirements into self-contained one-person flats; and

- (iv) to review the production and flat-mix of new housing projects to be completed after 2003-04 with a view to increasing the overall supply of small flats including one-person flats.

A total of about 31 400 one-person flats will be produced during the period from 1999-00 to 2005-06. The breakdown is as follows :

Year	No. of new 1P flat
1999/00	6954
2000/01	11328
2001/02	4158
2002/03	4323
2003/04	2509
2004/05	1834
2005/06	<u>318</u>
	Total : 31,424

It is hoped that the average waiting time for single non-elderly applicants will be shortened from the current 10 years to three years by 2005.

9. It is not desirable to convert all existing C1P flats back to larger flats at the present stage as suggested by a housing concern group, for the following reasons :

- (i) To abolish the C1P flats will involve the immediate rehousing of some 4,500 singleton tenants. Given the current supply and demand position, the average waiting time would be lengthened to about six years in 2005-06.
- (ii) As most of the C1P flats are situated in urban and sub-urban areas, they are still regarded as acceptable, if not favourable, accommodation by many existing and prospective singleton tenants, including those affected by clearance of urban Temporary Housing Areas.

Conclusion

10. The Housing Authority will continue to make every effort to speed up the construction of one-person flats in order to provide adequate housing to singleton households in genuine need.

Housing Department
December 1999