

**For discussion  
on 5 February 2018**

## **Legislative Council Panel on Housing**

### **Measures to Cater for the Mobility Needs of Elderly Residents by the Hong Kong Housing Authority**

#### **Purpose**

This paper briefs Members on the measures by the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) in facilitating the movement of elderly residents in public rental housing (PRH).

#### **Background**

2. HA has been committed to improving the living quality and providing a safe and convenient living environment for PRH residents. In line with the Government's policy of 'Ageing in Place', HA has put in place a series of measures to cater for the mobility needs of elderly residents. Owing to functional declines or even impaired mobility, the elderly need a suitable physical environment to carry out basic daily activities independently and in a safe manner, including barrier-free access (BFA) within PRH estates and suitable home layout and facilities. In March 2017, HA briefed Members on its measures in designing **new PRH estates** to meet the mobility needs of elderly residents<sup>1</sup>. This paper introduces to Members HA's measures and enhancement programmes in **existing PRH estates**.

#### **Facilities and measures for the movement of the elderly**

##### BFA facilities

3. HA has implemented the BFA Improvement Programme in PRH estates to carry out improvement works such as enhancing the design of control buttons on lift panels; installing detection devices at lift doors; adding handrails, illuminated visual indicators and audible signals in lift cars; improving pedestrian walkways; and adding handrails and tactile warning strips. All these improvement works have been completed.

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<sup>1</sup> Please refer to LC Paper No. CB(1)617/16-17(05).

4. Besides, HA launched the Access Coordinator and Access Officer Scheme in 2011, with a view to providing better on-site coordination on accessibility issues and timely assistance to the residents. Under the scheme, an Access Coordinator and an Access Officer are assigned to each PRH estate to assist the elderly and persons with disabilities in using BFA facilities within the estates.

#### Lift modernisation and addition programme

5. HA has also been replacing all the aged lifts, and, whenever practicable, providing lift services for floors without lift access. Since the 1990s, HA has completed modernisation works for more than 1 000 aged lifts. HA replaced 107 aged lifts in 2016/17, and plans to upgrade about 500 lifts in PRH blocks in the coming six to seven years. In addition, HA has installed 83 lifts in 32 PRH estates since the implementation of the lift addition programme in 2008.

#### Provision of elderly facilities and equipment

6. At present, there are about 1 800 sets of elderly fitness facilities/equipment installed in PRH estates, including Tai Chi Wheels, Joint Exerciser, Health Walker and Foot Massage Path etc., which are tailor-made for elderly residents to exercise their muscles and improve body strength. Besides, HA plans to gradually increase the provision of diversified recreational facilities at 102 PRH estates which have a higher proportion of elderly residents. As at December 2017, HA has started installing such facilities in 94 PRH estates. All the works are expected to be completed by March 2019.

#### Home modification/adaptation works in PRH units

7. HA not only ensures that facilities in common area are convenient for the elderly to use, but also caters for the needs of elderly residents inside domestic units. HA undertakes home modification/adaptation works and bears the full cost incurred for the sitting/prospective elderly tenants as well as families with members over 60, upon tenants' requests and as recommended by physiotherapists or medical officers. Typical improvement works include widening of the PRH unit's entrance with provision of a ramp whenever practicable; conversion of the bath tub into a shower area; installation of grab rails in the bathroom etc. In order to help households move into the new units, HA will take prompt actions to handle applications submitted before/during intake, and consider postponing the commencement date of the tenancy until work completion if necessary. In case such works cannot be carried out in the unit due to existing physical constraints, or the health condition of the tenants

warrants a unit with a larger living space, HA will arrange to transfer the tenants to other suitable PRH units.

## **Support and services for the elderly**

8. Apart from the above-mentioned measures to improve the living environment of the elderly residents and to cater for their mobility needs, HA also implements various management measures to foster support from their families and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the community, in support of the Government's policy of 'Ageing in Place'.

### Harmonious Families Schemes

9. HA has been supporting the Government's harmonious families policies and encouraging the younger generation to take care of and live together with their elderly parents. In this connection, HA has endorsed the following schemes between 2007 and 2008 to facilitate the establishment of a family-based support network and further establish the concept of 'Ageing in Place'. As at end-December 2017, about 48 540 households have benefitted from these arrangements –

(a) Harmonious Families Transfer Scheme

It allows PRH tenants to apply for transfer to the same or nearby estates of their offspring/elderly parents residing in different District Council districts for mutual care. An annual quota of 1 000 flats is set aside for the transfer exercise under this scheme.

(b) Harmonious Families Addition Scheme

The scheme allows an elderly PRH tenant to add an adult offspring together with his/her family member(s) into his/her tenancy, subject to the rule of 'one-line continuation' of family (i.e. the elderly tenant(s) may live with only one married adult offspring's family) as well as passing of Comprehensive Means Test and Domestic Property Test.

(c) Harmonious Families Amalgamation Scheme

Younger families living in PRH may apply for amalgamation of tenancies with their elderly parents or elderly dependent relatives. Subject to the availability of resources, the amalgamated family can choose to move to a PRH unit in any district.

### Under-occupation policy

10. Whilst relocating under-occupation (UO) households<sup>2</sup> to smaller units of suitable size can release larger units for allocation to households in need, HA has been taking into account the difficulties of the elderly and disabled persons in adapting to a new environment, and allows the elderly to age in the PRH units they have been living in. Households with disabled members or elderly members aged 70 or above are therefore excluded from the UO list, and those with elderly members aged between 60 and 69 are placed at the end of the UO list for transfer.

### Non-housing services

11. Where possible, HA partners with service providers to promote awareness of health care, strengthen mutual care, and foster a harmonious living environment for elderly tenants in the public housing communities.

12. For example, HA has been supporting the work of NGOs such as the Poly-U Henry G. Leong Mobile Integrated Health Centre and the Oral Health Education Unit of the Department of Health, in providing elderly tenants with free health checking and health education/promotion services with an objective to promote active ageing and disease prevention. HA also supports the work of some charitable organisations, like Yan Oi Tong, Pok Oi Hospital, Tung Wah Group of Hospitals, in providing “Mobile Chinese Medical Van” in PRH estates. A further example is that, elderly households who are not currently receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance can obtain a special grant on a reimbursement basis for a one-off installation cost up to a maximum of \$2,500, to acquire any emergency alarm service on the market to meet their needs.

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

**Transport and Housing Bureau  
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<sup>2</sup> After tenants taking up PRH units, there may be deletion of family members due to moving-out, death, marriage, emigration, etc. rendering the remaining family members to enjoy far more living space than is allowed under the established allocation standards and become an under-occupation household.