

Hong Kong Housing Authority estimated public rental housing allocation for 2018-19

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Housing Authority:

The Subsidised Housing Committee (SHC) of the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) today (June 22) approved the estimated public rental housing (PRH) allocation for 2018-19 (see Table) and was briefed on the actual allocation in 2017-18.

It was originally estimated that 25 400 flats could be allocated in 2017-18 but the actual allocation turned out to be 21 397 flats (i.e. the number of housing offers accepted and flats taken up by applicants in or before March 2018). The variance was mainly due to the differences between the actual and estimated completion dates of some new estates. Specifically, the completion date of one new estate was earlier than estimated; whilst those of another three were later than expected, resulting in the difference between actual allocation and the original estimation figures.

In 2018-19, it is estimated that a total of 34 800 PRH flats, comprising 23 100 new flats and 11 700 refurbished flats, will be available for allocation. If the around 5 500 new flats which have not been allocated or taken up in 2017-18 were added back to the allocation in that year, the estimated allocation of new flats in 2018-19 would be around 17 600 which is slightly higher than around 14 000 in 2017-18.

"Among the estimated number for allocation in 2018-19, 25 450 flats (about 73 per cent) will be allocated to PRH applicants. This estimation is not an upper limit. Faced with the persistent stringent supply of PRH, we will endeavour to provide more PRH flats for allocation to PRH applicants as far as possible," a spokesman for the HA said.

The annual allocation quota for non-elderly one-person applicants under the Quota and Points System (QPS) is set at 10 per cent of the total number of flats to be allocated to PRH applicants, subject to a cap of 2 200 flats. Accordingly, 2 200 flats are estimated to be allocated to QPS applicants in 2018-19.

"If the actual supply of PRH flats turns out to be less than estimated, we will keep the number of flats allocated to QPS applicants to not more than 10 per cent of the total number of flats to be allocated to PRH applicants," the spokesman said.

A total of 350 flats are estimated for rehousing residents affected by clearance projects planned by different departments and the Urban Renewal Authority's redevelopment projects.

To facilitate the clearance and redevelopment projects of Blocks 9, 10, 11 and 13 at Pak Tin Estate as well as Mei Tung House and Mei Po House at Mei Tung Estate announced in August 2017, a total of 800 flats will be reserved for the thinning-out transfer exercises.

"For planning purposes, 2 000 flats will be reserved for Compassionate Rehousing in 2018-19. This figure is not an upper limit, and, where resources permit, we will follow the established policy to handle all demands for rehousing as recommended by the Social Welfare Department," the spokesman said.

Moreover, an estimated number of 4 800 flats will be set aside for various transfer purposes in 2018-19. Among them, 1 600 flats will be used for transfer of under-occupation households and the large flats thus recovered can be deployed for easing the pressing demand of applicants with four or more household members. Additionally, a total of 1 000 flats will be reserved for applicants under the Territory-wide Overcrowding Relief Transfer Exercise and the Living Space Improvement Transfer Scheme. The remaining 2 200 flats will be flexibly deployed for other transfer purposes, including the Harmonious Families Transfer Scheme, the conversion programme of Housing for Senior Citizens, and Special Transfer for individual tenants on medical and/or social grounds.

"The quota for civil servants will be 1 400 in 2018-19, in accordance with the HA's approved annual increase by 100 flats for four consecutive years from 2015-16 to 2018-19 in the Civil Service Public Housing Quota," the spokesman said.

"We will closely monitor any changes in the circumstances and will remain flexible in the allocation of PRH flats to ensure optimisation of resources," he added.

SHA visits Sham Shui Po District

The Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Lau Kong-wah, visited Sham Shui Po District today (June 22) to officiate at the opening ceremony of a project completed under the district's Signature Project Scheme. He also inspected leisure works projects and called at an art design college and the Music Children Foundation in the district, and met with Sham Shui Po District Council (SSPDC) members.

Accompanied by the Chairman of the SSPDC, Mr Ambrose Cheung; the Vice Chairman of the SSPDC, Mr Chan Wai-ming; and the District Officer (Sham Shui Po), Mr Damian Lee, Mr Lau first inspected the sites of two proposed construction works, including the Lai Chi Kok Sports Centre, as well as a

covering over the walkway near Lai Chi Kok Park. He then met with SSPDC members to exchange views on district issues.

Mr Lau then officiated at the opening ceremony of the Sham Shui Po District Council Yan Oi Tong Mei Foo Neighbourhood Activity Centre and toured its facilities, including a dance room, a multi-purpose activity room and a piano room. Speaking at the opening ceremony, Mr Lau said the centre is one of the projects under the Signature Project Scheme in Sham Shui Po district. As the partnering organisation of the project, Yan Oi Tong provides diversified leisure, culture and art activities to local residents.

Mr Lau also visited the Savannah College of Art and Design Hong Kong. He toured the facilities on the campus and met with students. The college was opened in September 2010 through the revitalisation and conversion of the former North Kowloon Magistracy. It is the only college in Hong Kong that focuses on teaching arts and design, and offers bachelors and masters programmes.

Before concluding the visit, Mr Lau visited the Music Children Foundation to watch a choir rehearsal and meet with volunteers and children. He also learnt about the support for grass-roots children provided by the Foundation. Founded in 2013, the Music Children Foundation aims to provide free music training for children from grass-roots families.

Public hospitals to cease dispensing Enzyplex

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority (HA) spokesperson today (June 22) said that in view of the decision made by the supplier of the digestive drug Enzyplex this afternoon to suspend the supply and sale of the drug due to suspected contamination, the Authority will dovetail to cease dispensing the specific drug in all public hospitals with immediate effect. Patients must seek advice from healthcare professionals for any related queries.

Earlier in the day, the HA Central Committee on Infectious Disease and Emergency Responses convened a special meeting with representatives from the Department of Health to deliberate and follow up on the drug contamination incident. It was concluded that monascus found in the drug will not cause any health hazard to a normal healthy person. However, there is a possible risk of infection among immuno-compromised patients.

The HA has reviewed the clinical records and confirmed that there have been no reported cases of monascus infection in public hospitals over the

past five years.

Enzyplex tablet, containing vitamins and digestive enzymes, is an over-the-counter drug for digestive disorders. There are currently around 4 000 patients in public hospitals being prescribed with the drug.

The HA will continue to follow up and co-operate with the Department of Health in the investigation.

DH continues to investigate case of suspected mould contamination of pharmaceutical product

A spokesman for the Department of Health (DH) today (June 22) said that the department's investigation into a case of suspected mould contamination of a pharmaceutical product named Enzyplex (HK Registration Number: HK-06544) is ongoing.

The DH's Drug Office has collected different batches of the product from the local supplier Unam Corporation Ltd (Unam) as well as Hospital Authority (HA) and DH clinics for further analysis yesterday (June 21) to confirm whether the product exceeds the pharmacopoeial standards on mould and yeast content. The analysis usually takes five to seven days and further actions, if any, will depend on the testing results.

The DH has also instructed Unam to ask the manufacturer in Indonesia to conduct an investigation. Initial investigation by the manufacturer indicates that the raw materials used and the production facilities complied with its in-house specifications. The manufacturer will continue to conduct a thorough investigation and submit an investigation report as soon as possible.

According to Unam, about 128,000 bottles of 100 tablets and 46,000 bottles of 30 tablets of the product have been supplied to the HA, DH clinics, private hospitals, local private doctors, pharmacies and medicine stores. The majority of the product has been supplied to the private market. As a precautionary measure, Unam has asked all its clients to suspend the supply of the product to patients or customers. Unam has also set up a hotline (3665 2000) for public enquiries.

So far, the DH has not received any adverse reports related to the consumption of the product. People who are consuming the product, or in doubt or feeling unwell after consumption, should seek advice from healthcare professionals.

SCMA visits North District (with photos)

The Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Patrick Nip, visited North District this afternoon (June 22), meeting with members of the North District Council (NDC) and visiting a family in the district. He also went to Lok Ma Chau to see for himself the development plan of the Lok Ma Chau Loop area.

Accompanied by the District Officer (North), Mr Chong Wing-wun, Mr Nip met with the Chairman of the NDC, Mr So Sai-chi, and members of the NDC to exchange views on district and community matters.

Mr Nip then visited a family in Ching Ho Estate in Sheung Shui. He chatted with the family members to learn about their daily life and listened to their views on the support facilities in the district. He also showed his care about the integration of new arrivals in society and children's schooling in North District.

After the home visit, Mr Nip went to Lok Ma Chau to see for himself the development of the Loop area and was briefed by officers from the Civil Engineering and Development Department and the Planning Department on the development plan.

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government and the Shenzhen Municipal Government are jointly developing the Lok Ma Chau Loop area into the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park. The Park will be a key base for scientific research collaboration, with provision of related higher education, cultural and creative workspaces and other complementary facilities.

Mr Nip said, "The HKSAR Government and the Guangdong Provincial Government have earlier reached a consensus on the key work plan to take forward the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Bay Area. Building the Bay Area into an 'international innovation and technology hub' is one of the main items.

"I believe that the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park, which is being jointly developed by Hong Kong and Shenzhen, will combine the unique advantages of the two places, and attract top-notch enterprises, research institutions and higher education institutes from the Mainland and other parts of the world to be stationed there. The Park will bring enormous impetus to the development of innovation and technology in the Bay Area."

