

HA to join HS' "Letting Scheme for Subsidised Sale Developments with Premium Unpaid" on a trial basis

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

The Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) will join the Hong Kong Housing Society's (HS) "Letting Scheme for Subsidised Sale Developments with Premium Unpaid" (Letting Scheme) on a trial basis, allowing eligible owners of HA's subsidised sale flats (SSFs) to let their flats with premium unpaid to families in need.

The Subsidised Housing Committee (SHC) of the HA agreed at its meeting today (July 29) that the HA would join the HS' Letting Scheme, which had been enhanced taking into account the feedback on its original pilot launched in 2018. Under the enhanced scheme, SSF owners who have owned their flats for 10 years or more with premium unpaid are eligible to apply. Three categories of applicants are eligible as tenants: (i) public rental housing (PRH) general applicants who have waited for three years or more; (ii) PRH non-elderly one-person applicants under the Quota and Points System who have waited for six years or more; and (iii) specified non-government organisations, which are only allowed to sublet the flats to eligible tenants. Apart from letting bedroom(s) as in the original pilot, the enhanced scheme allows owners to let the whole flat. In order to prevent owners from over-subdividing the flats, they will be allowed to enter into no more than two tenancies.

HS first launched the Letting Scheme on a pilot basis in September 2018 as one of the measures proposed in the 2017 Policy Address to help alleviate the hardship faced by families waiting for PRH and the inadequately housed. The 2018 Policy Address further suggested that the HA consider, in light of the operational experience of HS' pilot scheme, joining the scheme so as to allow HA's SSF owners to let their flats with premium unpaid as well.

"The Letting Scheme provides an option for relevant SSF owners wishing to make better use of their flats, and an option for families wishing to rent and live in such flats. It optimises the use of public housing resources and helps improve the living environment of PRH applicants before they are housed to PRH units," a spokesman for the HA said.

At present, about 14 500 owners of HS' SSFs fulfill the 10-year ownership requirement. As for HA's Home Ownership Scheme and Tenants Purchase Scheme, owners of around 340 000 flats have owned the flats for 10 years or more with premium unpaid.

"In order to provide one-stop service both to eligible owners and tenants, all the administrative procedures including processing of

applications and handling of enquiries will be handled by HS, except that the HA will be involved in the verification of the eligibility of owners and tenants. We aim to invite applications from owners in the fourth quarter of this year. The HA and HS will conduct a mid-term review of the effectiveness of the scheme in the light of operational experience after one year of operation," the spokesman said.