

LCQ8: Non-elderly one-person applicants waiting for public rental housing

Following is a question by the Hon Kwok Wai-keung and a written reply by the Secretary for Housing, Ms Winnie Ho, in the Legislative Council today (June 18):

Question:

I have contacted a group of grass-roots households in recent months, several of whom are young people who have been waiting for public rental housing (PRH) under the Harmonious Families Priority Scheme for years. Unfortunately, their family members passed away before they were allocated PRH, leaving them to continue waiting for PRH as "non-elderly one-person applicants". In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of, in each year between 2022 and 2024, (i) the number of score points that non-elderly one-person applicants needed to obtain to be arranged for detailed vetting (commonly known as "being interviewed by an officer"), (ii) the respective ages of the oldest and the youngest non-elderly one-person applicants at the time when they were allocated PRH, and (iii) the quota of PRH units for allocation to non-elderly one-person applicants and its share in the total number of PRH units supplied for that year;

(2) as the 2024 Policy Address has proposed that the total public housing supply from 2025-2026 to 2029-2030 will reach 189 000 units, which is about 80 per cent higher than that of the first five-year period since the current-term Government took office (i.e. 2022-2023 to 2026-2027), and in the past two years, the average waiting time for PRH dropped from the peak of 6.1 years to the current 5.5 years, whether the Government has plans to increase the quota of PRH units reserved for non-elderly one-person applicants; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) to enable non-elderly one-person applicants to consider whether they should continue waiting for PRH, whether the Government can provide them with more information on the Points System in a timely manner, such as by dividing the non-elderly one-person applicants into 10 groups evenly according to their score points and publishing the highest and lowest score points of applicants in each group, so that the applicants will know which group they are in and their waiting status, thereby helping them to assess their waiting time?

Reply:

President,

The objective of the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) is to provide public rental housing (PRH) to people who cannot afford private rental accommodation. It is the policy of the HA to accord priority to general applicants (i.e. family applicants and elderly-one person applicants) over non-elderly one-person applicants in the allocation of PRH flats. The reply to the Hon Kwok Wai-keung's question is as follows:

(1) From 2022/23 to 2024/25, the points for non-elderly one person applicants arranged for detailed vetting, the highest and lowest ages of non-elderly one-person applicants that were housed to PRH flats and the ratio of actual allocation for non-elderly one-person applicants to the actual annual allocation are set out in Tables 1 to 3 of the Annex respectively.

(2) In order to rationalise and prioritise the allocation of PRH to non-elderly one-person applicants, the HA implemented the Quota and Points System (QPS) since September 2005. Unlike general applicants, the priority of flat allocation to non-elderly one-person applicants is not determined by the time when the individual applicant joined the queue, but the total points accumulated by an individual applicant under QPS. The points are calculated based on the applicants' age, their waiting time and whether they are already residing in PRH.

The HA endorsed refining QPS in October 2014. Such refinements included increasing the scale of age points from three to nine points per year of age increase at the time of application to reduce the incentive for early registration; and awarding a one-off bonus of 60 points to non-elderly one-person applicants aged 45 or above so as to accord them with higher priority over other younger applicants. In addition, starting from 2015/16, the HA has also increased the annual allocation quota for non-elderly one-person applicants under QPS from 8 per cent to 10 per cent of the total number of units to be allocated to PRH applicants, subject to a cap which was increased from 2 000 to 2 200 units. Generally speaking, elder applicants will be allocated flats faster under the refined QPS. The above arrangement of increasing the cap of allocation quota has struck an appropriate balance between the needs of non-elderly one-person applicants and that of general applicants. Considering that the demand for PRH in the society remains strong currently, we have no plan to further increase the annual allocation quota for QPS at this stage.

We do not encourage young people to apply for PRH early. Young people should seize their time and work hard to move up the housing ladder in accordance with their abilities. In fact, the number of non-elderly one-person applicants reduced significantly by about 40 per cent from the highest level of 143 700 as at end-December 2015 to 86 300 as at end-March 2025. During the same period, the number of non-elderly one-person applicants aged below 30 recorded a sharper decline of 57 per cent, from 74 500 to 31 700.

The Government has been encouraging young people to buy their own homes through the provision of various types of subsidised sale flats (SSF). In fact, young people aged below 40 have always accounted for a large proportion of buyers of different types of SSF. For example, nearly half of the

successful applicants for first-hand Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) flats are young people under the age of 40; meanwhile, around 80 per cent of the buyers of White Form Secondary Market Scheme (WSM) are under the age of 40.

In the next five years (i.e. from 2025/26 to 2029/30), apart from PRH/ Green Form Subsidised Home Ownership Scheme flats, the HA and the Hong Kong Housing Society will have a supply of about 56 500 SSF. To increase the chances of young people in purchasing SSF successfully, the HA will allocate an extra ballot number to young family applicants and one-person applicants aged below 40 with white form status for the purchase of HOS flats starting from the next HOS sale exercise onwards; for the secondary market, starting from WSM 2024, the HA has also increased the quota by 1 500 to 6 000, all of which will be allocated to young family applicants and one-person applicants aged below 40.

(3) The priority under QPS is determined by the total points accumulated by an non-elderly one-person applicant. To enhance the transparency of information, the Housing Department (HD) publishes the latest PRH allocation status in different districts in newspapers on a monthly basis, including the lowest point for non-elderly one person applicants being arranged for detailed vetting and the lowest point for non-elderly one person applicants having accepted public housing offers in individual application district. Such information is also uploaded to the HA/HD website (www.housingauthority.gov.hk/en/flat-application/allocation-status/index.html) for applicants' reference.

In addition, "e-Services for PRH Application" (eservices.housingauthority.gov.hk/eprhas) also provides 24-hour online services for PRH applicants. Through "iAM Smart+", applicants can submit their PRH applications, enquire about their application status, amend the application information, and change the date and time of the detailed vetting interview, etc.