Eligibility Criteria of Ex-gratia Scheme for the Elderly Property Owner-occupiers

Applicants have to satisfy the following conditions:

1. must meet the qualifying criteria for CR; and
2. waiving of DPT requirement would be considered subject to the following criteria:
   (a) the applicant, and all family members in the application where appropriate, must
       be aged 60 or above;
   (b) the applicant, and his/her family members where appropriate, have owned and
       lived in the concerned property for 10 years or more; and
   (c) the property concerned must be located in a walk-up block without lift service.

How to Apply

Applicants may approach the Integrated Family Service Centres/Integrated Services Centres, Medical Social Services Units, Social Security Field Units etc. for enquiry and application.

Other Housing Assistance

Moreover, SWD and HD have strengthened the referral mechanism to handle the applications for transfer, splitting, addition of family member(s) to PRH tenancy and arrangement of other housing assistance. PRH tenants can make application to HD who will undertake the initial screening and eligibility vetting. In case some of the requests cannot be acceded to under HD’s prevailing policy and the tenant may appear to have social or medical grounds warranting special consideration, HD may seek advice and assistance from service units of SWD/non-governmental organizations with the consent from the applicant.

Enquiries

For enquiries, please call the Hotline of SWD at 2343 2255.

Fee and Charges

Free of charge.

February 2011
Compassionate Rehousing (CR)

CR is a form of housing assistance, which aims at providing assistance to individuals and families who have genuine and imminent housing problems which cannot be solved by themselves. The Social Welfare Department (SWD) is responsible for recommending eligible applicants to Housing Department (HD) for allocation of public rental housing (PRH) unit.

Under CR Scheme, Conditional Tenancy (CT) is recommended to help those who are assuming custody of child(ren) and on divorce proceedings to meet their genuine and imminent housing needs while awaiting the court decision on their divorce applications. With effect from November 2001, HD has extended CT to cover victims of domestic violence having petitioned for divorce but who have no offspring or have not brought along any dependent children when leaving their matrimonial home. SWD recommends eligible applicants to HD for temporary residence in PRH unit.

To address the living problem encountered by elderly property owner-occupiers (EPOs) living in private dilapidated buildings, HD and SWD have agreed, with effect from June 2004, to an ex-gratia scheme to assist those eligible EPOs to move into Housing for Senior Citizens (HSC) on a licence basis, as a transitional arrangement, under the CR consideration. With effect from July 2005, the Housing Authority modified the Scheme to allow allocation of self-contained PRH units on licence to EPOs upon their refusal of offers of HSC units.

Eligibility Criteria of CR

Applicants have to satisfy the following conditions:

1. be in imminent need of long-term housing assistance;
2. have social or medical needs and the granting of CR could help solve their problems or relieve their hardships;
   
   For example:
   (a) Through CR, people with disabilities can be assisted in rehabilitation and re-integration into the community.
   (b) For families which have undergone psychological traumas and adverse life events, CR may help them rebuild their families and live a new life.
3. at the time of allocation, at least half of the family members included in the application must have lived in Hong Kong for seven years and are still living in Hong Kong. All children under the age of 18, (i) regardless of their place of birth and with one of their parents having lived in Hong Kong for seven years; or (ii) with established Hong Kong birth status as permanent residents, are deemed to have fulfilled the seven-year residence rule;
4. applicants and their family members must pass the Comprehensive Means Test (CMT) (income and asset limits pitching at public rental housing waiting list level) and the Domestic Property Test (DPT) (i.e. no ownership of private residential property); and
5. have the ability to pay rent (including rent allowance under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme).

In addition to the above basic criteria, the responsible social worker will gather in-depth information on the applicants’ family background and financial conditions and verify relevant information and documents before deciding on their eligibility.

Eligibility Criteria of CT Scheme

Applicants have to satisfy the following conditions:

1. must meet the qualifying criteria for CR;
2. socially, they must be facing undue hardship in continuing to stay in the same unit with the party with whom a divorce is being contemplated. Besides, the applicants and/or their child(ren), if any, must have genuine and imminent needs for a public housing accommodation to resolve their housing problem;
3. a bona-fide petition for divorce has been filed to court, or grant of legal aid for divorce proceedings has been obtained;
4. applicants have been assuming custody of the child(ren) and in the opinion of the processing unit, are considered to be the most suitable party to take care of the child(ren); and
5. the prospective tenants must undertake that should they fail to be granted custody of the children upon the court’s award of divorce decree, the tenancy should be terminated and the flat be surrendered to HD.

Note 1 : For victims of domestic violence having no offspring or bringing along no dependent children when leaving their matrimonial home, the requirement to meet criteria 4 above may be exempted.

Note 2 : For applicants who have joint ownership of private residential property or a flat under the Home Ownership Scheme with their spouses, upon SWD’s recommendation, HD will consider granting conditional tenancy to them while waiting for court order for the disposal of their entitlement in the property.

Note 3 : After completion of the divorce proceedings and the granting of divorce decree, the applicants’ CT could be converted to normal tenancy, if they pass the CMT and satisfy the DPT requirement as in the case of other divorced couples. The applicants must also meet other applicable special criteria including the granting of custody of their children, if any.