

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **CHM-Logo-Final-RGB.png** | **Affordable transitional housing**  **Provision of 500 units**  **benefiting 1,000 households** |

**【Press release 19 September 2017】**The Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS) today announced the inauguration of the three-year project on Community Housing Movement. The Movement is going to solicit idle or under-utilized housing resources in the community to provide affordable and decent transitional social housing to the grassroots. It aims to provide 500 units for 1,000 households in the project period.

The grassroots without public rental housing support have been suffering from undesirable living condition. Soaring rent of the private housing market adds further pressure on them in maintaining basic living. Public rental housing is currently the only permanent and decent option, but it takes time for adequate provision. Short-term and medium-term solutions become increasingly important. “What the Community Housing Movement is trying to create is a new option of affordable and decent housing - social housing. We hope one more choice can be made available for the grassroots,”Mr Bernard Chan, Chairperson of HKCSS, said.

The launching ceremony of the Movement was officiated by Mr Charles Lee, President of The Community Chest of Hong Kong. Mr Lee said, ”The Community Housing Movement represents the collective effort of welfare agencies, property owners, professionals and many others in the society, together with the support from the government. This makes the pioneer project meaningful and innovative. The Community Chest is pleased to be the lead funder of this unique project which also reflects on the organization’s emphasis and encouragement to member agencies in developing new services to meet community needs.”

Today's ceremony was also witnessed by Mr Frank Chan Fan, Secretary for Transport and Housing; Dr Law Chi Kwong, Secretary for Labour and Welfare; Mr Michael Wong Wai Lun, Secretary for Development and Mr. Kim A. Salkeld, Secretary-General of the SIE Fund Secretariat.

With the support of the HKSAR Government and the joint efforts of funders, landlords, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)/social enterprises (SEs), the Community Housing Movement aims to provide short-term relief by way of accommodation and support services to individuals or families which have demonstrated need of transitional housing (waiting for Public Rental Housing for not less than 3 years, or those with other long-term housing arrangement). They may be currently living in dismal, high rental or inadequate housing conditions, and are having low income in urgent need of more community support.

The role of HKCSS is to set up a Social Housing Intermediary to solicit idle or under-utilized housing resources in the community, to conduct inspection and basic renovation, and to sublet the housing units to NGOs or SEs for operation. We target to provide affordable and decent transitional housing for the needy. While soliciting housing flats, HKCSS is not going to accept illegitimate flats, for example, unlawful subdivided flats and properties under improvement orders issued by Fire Services Department and Buildings Department.

The rent will be between the maximum level of the rent allowance under Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme and rent of the Public Rental Housing. Also, we benchmark the rental assistance scheme of the Housing Authority and ensure that it will not be higher than 25% of household income of the tenant.

On top of general rental service, community-based empowerment service to support the tenants will be provided to deal with potential uncertainties or difficulties arising in future housing arrangement. The service thus provided is expected to enhance their financial, employment, personal and social resilience.

332 potential units are contributed by 26 landlords at this moment. The HKCSS will start the inspection and renovation for selected units. It is expected that at least 34 units will be available by the end of this year. The rest of those at hand now are expected to be available in the first half of 2018 once their physical conditions are confirmed to be acceptable.

The Community Chest has allocated $50 million to support the hardware of the project, and will consider supporting the cost of the empowerment service as provided by the NGO/SE operators via the HKCSS. The Community Chest and the Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Fund (SIE Fund) have agreed to provide $11.5 million for the 3-year operation of the intermediary. Four professional bodies, including The Hong Kong Institute of Architects, The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers, The Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors and The Law Society of Hong Kong have agreed to offer necessary professional assistance for the project.

Interested landlords, NGOs and social enterprises may call 2864 2975 or e-mail housing@hkcss.org.hk for further inquiry and liaison.

**The Transitional Social Housing Intermediary by the HKCSS:**

**Appendix:**

* Fact Sheet of Community Housing Movement

**Media Contact**

Mr. Eddie Tsang

Corporate Communications

The Hong Kong Council of Social Service

Tel.: 2864 2982  
Email: eddie.tsang@hkcss.org.hk

