



Keeping Public Housing Accessible for Singaporeans

Greater priority for specific groups of first-time new flat buyers, further support for seniors, and more options for low-income singles

At MND's Committee of Supply debate today, the Minister for National Development, Mr Desmond Lee, and Minister of State for National Development, Dr Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim, announced various initiatives to keep public housing accessible for Singaporeans.

Helping young families secure their flats in a more timely manner

[announced by Min(ND)]

- New First-Timer (Parents & Married Couples), or FT(PMC), priority category for a subset of First-Timers
- FT(PMC) applicants will receive an additional ballot chance, and enjoy higher priority in Build-to-Order (BTO) / Sale of Balance flat (SBF) exercises

[Date of implementation: Aug 2023 BTO exercise]

Ensuring more efficient flat allocation in BTO exercises

[announced by Min(ND)]

- Tightened rules for non-selection of flat

[Date of implementation: Aug 2023 BTO exercise]

Expanding housing-plus-care options for seniors

[announced by Min(ND)]

- 3rd Community Care Apartments project at Bedok

[Date of implementation: Later this year]

Expanding housing options for single public rental tenants

[announced by MOS(ND)]

- 3 additional sites for Joint Singles Scheme Operator-Run Pilot
[Date of implementation: Later this year]

Greater priority for a Subset of First-Timer Families in their BTO/SBF applications

2 There are diverse buyer groups for HDB flats, including First-Timer families, Second-Timer families, seniors, and singles. Currently, First-Timers families are given greatest priority in the ballot for a BTO/SBF flat. Up to 95% of HDB's BTO/SBF flat supply is set aside for First-Timer families who also receive more ballot chances¹, relative to other buyer groups.

3 The First-Timer category covers a wide range of applicants, including those who already have their own homes, but have not enjoyed housing subsidies previously. As mentioned by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Mr Lawrence Wong, during his Budget Speech², MND and HDB will provide further support to a subset of First-Timer families buying their first home, to help young families settle down more quickly. We will introduce a new priority category, known as the First-Timer (Parents & Married Couples) category, or FT(PMC) in short. FT(PMC) applicants constitutes about 10% of all First-Timer family applicants. The eligibility criteria for the FT(PMC) category are as follows:

- a) Families with at least one Singapore Citizen child aged 18 and below, or married couples aged 40 and below; and

¹ Currently, first-timer families are given two ballot chances while second-timer families are given one. First-timer families are also given an additional ballot chance for every subsequent BTO application in the non-mature estates (NMEs) if they had been unsuccessful for two or more times in their previous BTO applications in the NMEs.

² During the Budget Speech on 14 February, DPM also announced the increase in the CPF Housing Grant amount for eligible first-timer families and singles to buy resale flats.

b) Never owned or sold a residential property before; and

c) Did not have a chance to book a BTO/SBF flat in the past five years prior to their flat application.

4 To increase housing accessibility for FT(PMC) applicants, we will implement the following from the August 2023 BTO exercise:

(i) Provide an additional ballot chance

5 FT(PMC) applicants will receive one additional ballot chance for their BTO/SBF flat applications, on top of the two ballot chances that they already receive today as First-Timer families. This means that they will receive a total of three ballot chances when they apply for any flat type in any estate.

6 Other First-Timer applicants will continue to receive the same support in their flat applications, over other buyer groups, that they do today, i.e. there is no change to the following:

- First-Timers who are not under the FT(PMC) category will continue to receive two ballot chances while other buyer groups will receive one ballot chance.
- All first-timer families, including FT(PMC) applicants, who are unsuccessful in two or more attempts for a BTO flat in the non-mature estates (NMEs), will continue to receive an additional ballot chance for every subsequent application for a BTO flat in the NMEs.

- (ii) Allocate up to 40% of BTO Public Flat Supply and up to 60% of SBF Public Flat Supply under the Family and Parenthood Priority Scheme

7 Under the current Parenthood Priority Scheme (PPS), up to 30% and 50% of the public flat supply in BTO and SBF exercises respectively are allocated to First-Timer married couples with at least one Singapore citizen child aged 18 and below, or who are expecting a child. The PPS will be expanded such that FT(PMC) applicants are eligible as well, and will be renamed as the Family and Parenthood Priority Scheme (FPPS).

8 Up to 40% of the public flat supply in each BTO exercise³, and up to 60%⁴ of the public flat supply in each SBF exercise, will be set aside for the FPPS.

- (iii) Accord FT(PMC) applicants with first priority under the FPPS

9 FT(PMC)s will be given further support in their applications for 4-room and smaller BTO flats in the NMEs where there is relatively larger flat supply. FT(PMC) applicants applying for 4-room and smaller BTO flats in the NMEs will be given first priority for the flats set aside under the FPPS. This means that they will be shortlisted ahead of all other FPPS-eligible applicants, and stand a higher chance of being invited to select a flat.

Tighter Rules for Non-Selection of Flat

10 Over the past few years, even with the higher application rates for the BTO sales exercises, about 40% of BTO flat applicants do not book a flat when invited to do so, i.e. they do not turn up, or decline to book a flat at their flat selection appointments. While some may have genuine reasons for not booking a flat, they crowd out home buyers with more urgent housing needs. Resources are also expended in the application, balloting and flat booking processes.

³ 40% of the BTO public flat supply for 3-room and larger flats will be set aside for FPPS. For 2R Flexi flats in the non-mature and mature estates, this will be 10% and 35% of the public flat supply respectively.

⁴ 60% of the SBF public flat supply for 3-room and larger flats will be set aside for FPPS. For 2R Flexi flats, this will be 55%.

11 To ensure more efficient flat allocation so that those who need it can secure their flats more quickly, HDB will tighten the rules for non-selection of flats from the Aug 2023 BTO exercise, as follows:

- First-timers, including those under FT(PMC) category, who accumulate one non-selection count (lowered from the current two counts) will be considered second-timers for a year in the computer ballot.
- Second-timers who accumulate one non-selection count (lowered from the current two counts) will have to wait one year before they can apply for a flat again.

12 That said, we recognise that there may be incidences when flat applicants are left with very limited choices, when they are invited to book their flats. Hence, HDB will waive the non-selection count for applicants with 10 or fewer BTO flats to choose from; or 5 or fewer SBF flats to choose from.

13 The tightened rules for non-selection of flats seek to strike a balance between considering the interests of flat applicants with urgent housing needs, while being fair to applicants who have been successful in their flat balloting process. HDB flats are heavily subsidised and in demand. We strongly encourage all applicants to carefully consider when they should apply for a new flat, and book a flat when invited to do so.

Expanding Housing-plus-Care Options for Seniors

14 For seniors who aspire to age independently within the community, the Community Care Apartments (CCAs) offer an additional housing option. The CCA is a public housing assisted living concept jointly developed by the Ministry of National Development (MND), Ministry of Health (MOH) and HDB, to expand the continuum of residential options for seniors. It integrates senior-friendly housing with care services that can be customised

according to the individual's care needs, thus enabling seniors to age in place independently.

15 The responses to the first two CCA pilots, Harmony Village @ Bukit Batok (launched in February 2021) and Queensway Canopy (launched in November 2022), have been positive. We have also received feedback from seniors that they hope to see more CCAs being built at different locations. We will therefore launch the third CCA in Bedok later this year. The development will comprise about 200 CCA units, alongside other flat types, as well as social and communal facilities. CCA residents will also have convenient access to various amenities nearby, including Active Ageing Centres, community centres, markets and hawker centres. More details will be provided during the sales exercise later this year.

16 In addition, we are developing a pipeline of CCAs in different locations across Singapore. We will share more details when ready.

More Housing Options for Low-Income Singles in Public Rental Housing

17 While home ownership continues to be a cornerstone of our public housing programme, we recognise that some Singaporeans may not be ready for home ownership, and would require additional assistance and support.

18 For lower-income singles eligible for public rental housing, we launched the Joint Singles Scheme Operator-Run (JSS-OR) pilot in December 2021 to provide an additional option for singles to apply for a public rental flat on their own, without first having to find a flatmate. Under this pilot, HDB appoints an operator to manage the flat-sharing arrangements, provide social support to tenants, and mediate amongst tenants when needed. Thus far, the pilot has been well subscribed, and all three JSS-OR sites, which can accommodate around 400 tenants in total, are close to full occupancy.

19 Given the positive response, we are expanding the JSS-OR pilot to three new sites this year. The three additional sites, which are located in Bukit Panjang, Bidadari, and Sengkang, can accommodate about 600 tenants in total. We expect to open the new sites for applications by the end of this year. We will continue to learn from this pilot, and find ways to improve the living experience of singles under the Public Rental Scheme.

Supporting Singaporeans' Housing Aspirations

20 MND and HDB are committed to providing homes to meet the diverse housing needs of Singaporeans, and support their home ownership aspirations at different life stages. We will continue to keep public housing affordable and accessible, so that Singaporeans with different budgets and needs will be able to own a home.

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