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Auto-pay welfare stretches to Guangdong

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Elderly social security recipients who opt to live in Guangdong will be able to receive their payments from Hong Kong by auto-pay from April.

"We are not abandoning this group of Hong Kong people," Secretary for Health and Welfare Katherine Fok Lo

Shiu-ching said. "This programme will enable elderly people who choose to live outside Hong Kong to still receive payments."

The Social Welfare Department has no estimate of the number of elderly people involved.

She was unable to say whether those who went to

Guangdong would be guaranteed public housing if they returned to the territory.

There were no plans to extend the payments to other parts of China, Mrs Fok said.

The programme – part of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Review completed in March – was welcomed by support groups.

"It gives more opportunities for the elderly to move around. They will have more choices about their way of life," said Tsang Fook-ye, deputy executive director of the Society for the Aged.

"After having worked in Hong Kong for so many years, they should have this choice."