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# \$20m plan to tackle bed-space problem

By Connie Ko

THE Government has allocated more than \$20 million to solve the problem of bed-space apartments.

The task will be carried out by 32 staff members from five Government departments led by the City and New Territories Administration.

The team was also responsible for implementing the Hotel Accommodation Bill.

In a meeting with representatives from two pressure groups and district board members yesterday, Home Affairs Secretary Peter Tsao detailed the Government's plan to halve the population of so-called "cage men" within one or two years.

A survey by the City and New Territories Administration revealed that there are about 4,800 "cage men" in Hongkong.

It also revealed that 20 per cent of them are single



■ Peter Tsao ... announced the plans.

elderly people aged over 60 and are eligible for compassionate resettlement.

Representatives were told that these single elderly people would be resettled in urban public housing flats by the end of this month.

Representative Leung Lai said another 20 per cent of the "cage men" were expected to move to new hostels for single

people which are run by voluntary agencies.

He said the Government would encourage the voluntary agencies to run the hostels for single people in urban areas to help solve the problem.

It is expected that 10 per cent of the "cage men" would subsequently move out of the apartments and look for alternative accommodation themselves.

The remaining 50 per cent of "cage men", the representatives were told, would live in upgraded bed-space apartments governed by the new Hotel Accommodation Bill.

The representatives were told that the Government may consider subsidising or taking over these bed-space apartments as the reduced population might lead to the owners running the apartments at a loss.

If the bed-space apartments were to be taken over, they would be managed by the Housing Society.