

H.K. Standard

4 Jan 1984

1,624 receive compassionate rehousing

UP to last November, 1,624 people have been rehoused by the Social Welfare Department on compassionate grounds, a spokesman for the department said yesterday.

And, of 800 flats allocated under the Compassionate Rehousing Scheme, 496 have been used.

A total of 614 cases had been reported to the department at the end of last November, while 652 reported over the year and the previous financial year have been rehoused.

"The quota may well be filled at the end of the current financial year," he said.

The quota for 1982-83 had just been used up, with 2,695 people

(1,134) being rehoused on either medical or social grounds.

The spokesman added there were occasions of the quota not being filled in the past.

"The quota is an estimation of the need of the community. We've no reason to fill it if the cases referred to us do not warrant compassionate rehousing."

One of the latest cases of compassionate rehousing is a hawker and his drifting 82-year-old mother being rehoused at a Wongtatsin low cost housing estate before Christmas. The hawker's staff was demobilised in a clearance operation while he was hospitalised early last year.

Initially ineligible for compassionate rehousing on medical grounds, the man later took his case to the Umelco office. It was reviewed with the argument that he wanted to live with his mother, who had been unable to find a fixed abode. The hawker was finally rehoused on social grounds.

The spokesman said the scheme had been set up for more than two decades for people who are "in genuine need of accommodation and with financial means comparable with the level of public assistance."

He added that those in poor physical and mental conditions and were living in places unfavourable

to their mental or physical state were considered eligible for compassionate rehousing.

Asked whether the scheme had been widely publicised, the spokesman said it had been "publicised from time to time."

"We consider the needy are quite well-informed about the scheme and if they don't, the case workers can certainly alert them to it and referred them to us."

The existing quota of 800 flats will cover the financial year of 1984-85.

"The quota has been constantly under review. Once we detect an upsurge in demand, we'll try to adjust," he said.