

Ah Yuen (阿元), tenant under the Home Plus project operated by the Salvation Army:

When I first moved in here, I was worried that I might not get along with others as there would be three families living together including myself. But after I have settled in, I learned that the other two households are both a mother-and-son family and are rather easy to get along with. Sometimes when they are preparing meals, they would ask if I am staying in for dinner. Also, when they are going out, they will invite me to join, and I will eat out and walk around with them if I have the time. When we first moved in, we respected one another's views on the arrangements of furniture. The dining table and the brown sofa in the dining room are given by my friend who no longer needs them. They are for shared use by everyone here. My flatmates don't need to ask for my permission before using them. That's fine with me.

Every now and then if I am returning home late in the evening, I will let my flatmates know in advance, so that they don't have to wait for me without knowing whether I would be coming back during the night. I once came home late in the night from a movie and found that they were worried about me for staying out. I told them I had been out for a movie and appreciated their staying up late for me. I felt like we were in the same family.

I used to live in a youth hostel run by the Salvation Army before moving in here. There I shared the place with some other young people and would occasionally have friction with them. Now that I have a unit of my own, I am living more independently. Living here helps me learn to become more self-reliant. I know I definitely need to pay a higher rent out there. This room is almost 100 square feet and is already more than enough for me.

Living in a hostel for single persons would be boring as I would be alone in my room. But here I am co-living with other families and have at least someone to talk to instead of staring at the blank walls all day long.

When this place was still undergoing refurbishment, staff of the organisation arranged some briefings and interviews for us and took us here for site visits. I could see they had done a lot of preparation work. They told us where the fused connection units are and how to read a water meter. Later I realised that when I live on my own, there are many things that I need to take care of by myself, like when household items go wrong. This morning when a bathroom light was not working, I sent a phone message to the staff. If it's a problem with the fixture rather than simply a light bulb that went out, they will send someone up here to fix it. I find this so nice. If I rented a unit elsewhere, I would need to find a repairman by myself whenever something breaks down. The overall arrangement here is very convenient.

I also know the concept of "work exchange", which seeks to encourage young people to organise activities for residents regularly. We made some direction signs to show the locations of the units, because only the residents here know where the units are, but the visitors may not be able to tell the way. We meet here in this living room once a month to see how our skills can contribute to this community. For example, I am good at sports, so I may take others out for ball games and jogging. I know many families have children and if the kids can spend time playing here, their parents can have some time for breaks. I would like to make good use of my skills to contribute to the residents.