

社評
雙語道

MPF withdrawal for home purchase should be deliberated

強積金置業 須三思而行

原文

積金局正在研究是否容許市民動用強積金作首次置業用途 (early withdrawals)。財經事務及庫務局11月5日指出，預計明年第二季前向政府提交報告，暫時未有任

何時間表。研究容許動用強積金作首置用途的議題一經提出，坊間輿論多認為在做法上 (approach) 和時機上 (timing) 均值得商榷 (dubious)，建議政府應三思而行。

樓價若跌 退保物業價值「雙失」

最為公眾關注的是，容許強積金作首置買樓，有違強積金作為退休儲備的目的 (objective)。本港絕大部分打工仔都沒有其他退休保障 (retirement protection)，強積金最重要的作用，就是應付市民退休生活的需要，這是強積金制度設立的本意。

樓宇價格可升可跌且波幅很大 (prone to volatility)，一旦市民提取強積金「上車」之後遇上樓價下跌，很容易面對失去退休保障和物業價值下跌的雙輸困局，這種風險不可低估。

另一方面，本港強積金戶口平均結餘只是大約18萬元，但現時樓市熾熱 (overheated)，一個私樓「上車盤」(“starter homes”) 動輒五六百萬元，首期動輒逾200萬元，究竟容許提取多少比例強積金為宜呢？若全數提取等於將退休積蓄清零，明顯不可行；若提取一半，則只有十萬八萬元，連支付印花稅、律師費和代理佣金都未必夠，對幫助首置人士上車杯水車薪。

亦有意見認為，可以容許提取強積金買置置居、居屋等資助房屋，但此類房屋本來已容許承造九成或更高的按揭，以首個置居項目景泰苑為例，最高可造九成五按揭 (mortgages)，最少5萬元就可以做業主，亦毋須動用強積金。

背道而馳 谷熱樓市

本港樓市正處於歷史高位，當局過去接連推出辣招，都是為了調控樓價。如果當下容許提取強積金置業，很容易被市場解讀 (misinterpret) 為向樓市「泵水」的信號，與調控樓價的目標背道而馳，樓價更加飆升，普羅市民更加置業無望，允許以強積金置業豈不是等同谷熱樓價，當局是想幫市民，還是幫發展商 (property developers) ？

誠然，新加坡的中央強積金制度，的確容許提取部分以購置組屋，相關政策亦行之有效，但新加坡的僱員和僱主供款 (contribution rates) 比例分別高達薪金的20%和17%，分設醫療戶口、特別戶口和普通戶口，其用途本來就比香港廣泛。以香港當前僱員和僱主合共月薪10%的供款比例，保障退休生活尚嫌不足，實不能照搬 (paste) 新加坡的一套。

置業固然是廣大市民的願望，但保障安享晚年的訴求亦不容忽視。對於以強積金置業的建議，當局必須全面周詳考慮，聽取社會各界的疑慮和擔憂，切勿輕率 (rash) 決定。

(標題及小標題為編輯所加)

(摘錄自香港文匯報社評6-11-2017)



積金局正在研究是否容許市民動用強積金作首次置業用途。資料圖片

Exercise

1. 逆按揭/安老按揭
2. 公屋
3. 運房局
4. 港人首置上車盤計劃
5. 累算權益 (強積金)

1. reverse mortgage
2. public rental housing
3. Transport and Housing Bureau
4. "Starter Homes" scheme
5. accrued benefits

Answers

譯文

The Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes Authority (MPFA) is currently studying the feasibility of allowing early withdrawals for first time home buyers. The Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau said on 5 November that the report is expected to be compiled to the government by second quarter of next year, but there is no specific timetable as yet.

As soon as the topic of MPFA considering early withdrawals for home purchases hits the news, the public sentiment has already seem to be dubious about its approach and timing, with a lot of voices suggesting the government to think twice before implementing the idea.

Risks of "double losses"

The public's biggest concern in allowing withdrawal for home purchase,

is that it would be incongruous with the original policy objective of helping people to save for their retirement. The vast majority of Hong Kong wage earners rely solely on MPF in regards to retirement protection, and retirement protection is the original and most important purpose of MPF. As home prices would fluctuate and are prone to volatility, citizens who withdraw MPF funds for their first home might be faced with a no-win situation when the housing market slumps. They would lose both their retirement protection and the value of their property. Such risks must not be underestimated.

Meanwhile, as MPF participants on average only have HK\$183,000 in their accounts, how should the withdrawal ratio be determined amid an overheated property market, when the so-called "starter homes" cost HK\$5 to 6 million with over HK \$2 million down

payment? Full withdrawals would be obviously impractical. Yet, if the limit is set at a mere 50 per cent, then the meagre amount of money would barely pay off the stamp duty, legal cost and commission of estate agents, which would not help home buyers much.

There are also suggestions to allow MPF withdrawal in buying subsidised flats of the Green Form Subsidised Home Ownership Pilot Scheme (GSH) and the Home Ownership Scheme (HOS). However, buyers of these subsidised flats could already get a mortgage loan of up to 90 per cent of the property value. Taking King Tai Court, the first GSH project, as an example, buyers were offered up to 95 per cent mortgages. The cheapest flats were sold with a down payment of only HK \$50,000. Apparently, there is no need to withdraw funds from MPF in such cases.

May heat up property market

In recent years, the authorities have been busy pushing cooling measures so as to control the skyrocketing home prices. If MPF withdrawal for home purchases becomes a thing anytime soon, there is a chance that investors will misinterpret the policy as the government providing a boost to the property market. The policy would then defeat its own purpose as prices are set to rise even higher, and first time buyers would have their dreams shattered. To put it into perspective, is it really a helping hand from the government to first time home buyers, or is it a subtle way to promote the interests of property developers?

Granted, Singapore's Central Provident Fund (CPF) is a successful example which allows early withdrawal for the purchase of public housing, but

the employees' and employers' contribution rates for the CPF are as high as 20 per cent and 17 per cent respectively. It is also multipurpose in nature, with three sub-accounts for retirement, medical services and general purposes. The MPF pales in comparison as the combined contribution rate is only at 10 per cent of the employee's monthly salary. In this sense, the retirement protection of MPF is already questionable, therefore it would be unwise to copy the Singaporean policy and paste it into Hong Kong.

Buying a home is an understandable wish of the people of Hong Kong, yet the need for a financially secure retirement must not be ignored. The authorities must comprehensively deliberate all relevant factors, address and listen to the doubts and concerns of the public, and refrain from making any rash decisions.

環保飯堂 惜食再用

天主教培聖中學多年來着力建設綠色校園，以「環保就是生活」的方針，致力培養學生建立良好的生活習慣。當中環保飯堂就是同學實踐這個理念的最佳地方。

重用餐具 廚餘堆肥

環保飯堂是初中學生用膳之處，每天有近300位學生使用，他們需要輪流清潔飯桌及管理飯堂。

為響應棄用塑膠用品，學校與膳食供應商合作，在飯堂提供可重用餐具，兩年前更增設廚餘機收集廚餘，鼓勵學生珍惜食物。

每天午膳時間，同學們都會排隊，將廚餘倒進大型廚餘收集桶內，再由每班負責環保的「綠得開心大使」，協助將它們運送到廚餘機。只需經過24小時，機器會將廚餘磨細，並經由益生菌處理裝置中加熱和攪拌，快速發酵成有機肥料。

為了進一步推動飲食循環的概念，學校鼓勵學生利用生產的肥料，在校內進行有機耕種。科學科及成長課的同學，透過種植進行科學研習。他們以校內的產肥，種植如番茄、生菜、薯仔等可食用蔬菜，並將之帶回家與家人分享，將這個環保理念推廣開去。



校園的植物是使用由廚餘製成的有機肥料種植，既可減少廚餘，又可美化環境。作者供圖

收集剩菜 派發長者

惜食活動更推廣到社區層面，培聖同學逢周三會參與社區「有衣食分享」義工團隊，到街市收集菜販賣剩的蔬菜，再派發給有需要的基層長者。

學校近年的環保工作亦獲得肯定，奪得2016年香港卓越環境大獎中學組優異獎及第十五屆香港綠色學校獎金獎，在教育界內發揮環保領導的角色。

在未來發展方面，雖然現時學校的

小食部已經不提供任何一次性用品，如飲管、膠袋及膠叉等。不過，校內的塑膠飲品及紙包飲品的銷售情況仍然相當普遍，而這些飲品容器就是海洋垃圾的元兇之一。

在本學年，學校的「綠得開心推廣大使」，將會積極推動「重用」與「替代」的工作，自己設計校本水樽，推動學生自備飲用水，希望為社區的環保及可持續發展出一分力。

王若璋 港燈「綠得開心推廣大使」(天主教培聖中學，港燈智「惜」用電計劃「綠得開心學校」之一)



活得幸福是人生功課

上回談到在人抑鬱時，若我們一味用正面的說話給予支持和鼓勵，反而會收到反效果。於是，有些人抨擊正

向心理學，說這是有理論無實際的學術派，紙上談兵，管說不管用。真是蒙上了不白之冤，真正的正向心理學又何必是一句鼓勵說話？這篇文章為正向心理學說一些公道話。

早在1998年，前美國心理學協會主席塞利格曼教授是首位提倡正向心理學的科學家。他指出，心理學的根本，應該是助人發揮潛能、生活愉快，以及處理心理困擾，但因二次世界大戰帶來的巨大傷痛，讓心理學家全力投放資源於研究各種精神疾患、貢獻世界。

戰亂平息後，心理學已經變成以治療為目標的學說。塞利格曼認為，現代心理學家是時候肩負起提升大眾心理健康的責任。

「小確幸」幸福感更持久

心理學是一門科學。研究人員展開了很多嚴謹而有趣的實驗，試圖了解正向的心理對人的好處。例如有一個研究項目，嘗試找出什麼樣的「開心」對人的幸福感有最大的提升，結果發現，開心的頻率比強烈程度對人的情緒有更直接的幫助。

而且，往往因為有比較，太強烈的

開心反而會令人在事後難以感受到小事情本身應有的喜悅。

具體來說，似乎在情人節絞盡腦汁，不如努力經營一點「小確幸」，更能持久享受幸福的味道。

又有一些研究，探討是負面還是正面的事情較影響人的情緒，結果不出所料地顯示負面事情造成的情緒較強烈，且需要較長的時間回復。

問題是，要多少正面的情感才能抵消負面情緒的影響呢？答案：正面經驗平均為負面經驗的2.9倍。較多的正向情緒會讓人有更好的社交生活，有更好的健康，這些正面因素又會讓人的正向情緒提升，令「好」變成「更好」。

找出根源 解開心結

了解到正向心理學的初衷，以及成千上萬研究中的一小部分，大家便會知道它並非用來醫治情緒問題，而是旨在提升人的生活質素，幫助人了解如何活得幸福。

總括而言，正向心理學就像是心理衛生的維他命。它不只能加強健康，更可以成為負面情緒的緩衝區，提升我們的抵抗力。

然而，當一個人的心靈生了病，我們當然不能一味派送維他命，相反，我們要找出痛苦的根源，正面面對，解開心結，然後才去為自己的心靈錦上添花，迎接生命的一切美好。

香港心理衛生會
註冊臨床心理學家 江偉賢
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香港心理衛生會

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