

Equal Opportunities Commission

Family Status Equality in Hong Kong

Overview

The family structures of Hong Kong are transforming as the result of the increased participation of women in the workforce, a lowered birth rate, and a rapidly ageing population. In recent years, there has been growing attention on the challenges caregivers face, while work-life balance has also become a priority for employees.

The **Family Status Discrimination Ordinance (FSDO)** was enacted in 1997, making it unlawful for any person or organisation to discriminate against another person, male or female, on the basis of their family status. A “family status” means having the responsibility to care for an immediate family member, which is defined as a person who is related by blood, marriage, adoption or affinity.



In 2025, the EOC handled
54 complaints under the FSDO.

Smaller but Older Families

- The number of domestic households in Hong Kong was 2 763 100 in 2024. The average household size (excluding foreign domestic workers) was **2.5 persons**.^[1]
- The number of domestic households with older persons increased by **52.6%** from 668 621 in 2011 to 1 020 356 in 2021 while the proportion of domestic households without children aged under 15 increased from 74.6% in 2011 to **78.9%** in 2021.^[2]

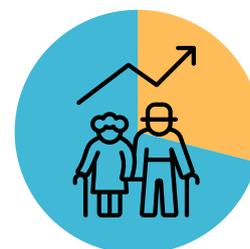


Carers of the Elderly

- In 2021, there were **234 330** primary carers living in domestic households together with persons aged 60 and over requiring long-term care.^[3]
- The majority (69.9%) of the primary carers were female. 28.7% of the carers were aged 60 and over, reflecting the prevalence of the “the elderly taking care of the elderly” phenomenon.^[4]



Gender of primary carers



Age of primary carers

Carers of Persons with Disabilities and Chronic Diseases

- In 2021, 44.2% (204 200) of persons with disabilities (excluding persons with intellectual disabilities) residing in households and 42.7% (247 000) of persons with chronic diseases who had specific needs residing in households had another person taking care of their day-to-day living due to their disabilities and chronic diseases. ^[5]
- The median usual hours of caring services provided by the carer to persons with disabilities was **42** hours per week. For those with chronic diseases who had specific needs, the median usual hours of care provided by carers stood at **35** hours. ^[6]
- Over half of the carers (52.4% for carers of persons with disabilities and 54.9% of carers of persons with chronic diseases) felt stressed due to providing care. ^[7]



Family-friendly Employment Practices

- According to an EOC-funded research, **85.6%** of the employees with family responsibilities thought that **FFEPs were “not very prevalent” or “totally not prevalent”** in Hong Kong but 88.5% of them thought it was necessary for the company or organisation to provide FFEPs. ^[8]
- In a survey of family members of employed persons conducted by the EOC, the respondents see flexible working hours, a five-day work week and remote work arrangements as the effective FFEPs in supporting work-family balance. ^[9]
- In the above survey, the EOC also interviewed human resources professionals and found that flexible work hours (65.8%), a five-day work week (47.3%), and breaking annual leave entitlements into smaller units such as quarter-day or hourly leave (24%) are the FFEPs most commonly provided by employers. Compassionate leave (38.5%) and marriage leave (24%) are the leaves more commonly provided by employers.

However, around **90%** of surveyed Human Resources (HR) professionals reported that their organisations lacked guidelines or policies on family-friendly employment practices. ^[10]



[1] Census and Statistics Department, [Statistics on domestic households](#)

[2] Census and Statistics Department, [Snapshot of the Hong Kong Population: Domestic Households in Hong Kong](#)

[3] Census and Statistics Department, [2021 Population Census, Thematic Report: Older Persons](#)

[4] *ibid*

[5] Census and Statistics Department, [Special Topics Report No. 63, Persons with Disabilities and Chronic Diseases](#)

[6] *ibid*

[7] *ibid*

[8] Ho, H. (2023) [A Mixed-Methods Investigation of Family-Friendly Employment Practices: From Work-Family Conflict to Enrichment](#)

[9] Equal Opportunities Commission (2025) [Study on Family-Friendly Employment Practices from the Perspectives of Human Resource Managers and Family Members of Employees](#)

[10] *ibid*