

Equal Opportunities Commission

Equality for Diverse Abilities in Hong Kong

Overview

The number of people with disabilities and chronic diseases in Hong Kong is expected to increase as population ageing gathers pace. Despite the increased awareness of disability in society, some individuals continue to have misunderstandings about people with disabilities, dismissing their abilities and capabilities. As a result, many people with disabilities are deprived of equal opportunities in various aspects of society.

The **Disability Discrimination Ordinance (DDO)** was implemented in 1996, protecting people with disabilities from discrimination, harassment, and vilification on the grounds of their disabilities in specified domains such as education, employment, access to premises, and the provision of goods, services and facilities.

For years, complaints filed under the DDO take up the largest share of complaints handled by the EOC.



In 2025, the EOC handled
824 complaints under the DDO.

Demographic

- In 2020, there were about 534 200 people with disabilities in Hong Kong, representing **7.1%** of the total population. The figure does not include the number of persons with intellectual disability, which was estimated to range from 77 000 to 90 000, or 1.0% to 1.2% of the total population.
- In addition, another 1 799 100 people required long-term (i.e. lasting at least 6 months) medical treatment, consultation or medication in certain type(s) of disease, representing **24.1%** of the total population of Hong Kong and higher than the 1 375 200 (19.2%) in 2013.
- In 2020, there were 256 800 people with mental illness/mood disorder, 74.3% more than the figure in 2013 (147 300), reflecting the worsening mental health of Hong Kong people.
- The number of people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (22 400), specific learning difficulties (35 400), attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (38 200) also increased to 96 000, as compared to a total of 40 700 in 2013. This could be attributed to the Government's promotion of early detection and intervention for children with special educational needs in recent years.
- Almost 60% of the people with disabilities were aged 60 and above: with 44.5% aged 70 or above, and 14.4% aged between 60 and 69. The median age of people with disabilities stood at 65 in 2020, as compared to 45 for the total population.
- There were more women (**58.5%**) with disabilities than men (**41.5%**).



Education

- The educational attainment of people with disabilities is relatively lower than the total population. Excluding persons with intellectual disability, **49.6%** of people with disabilities attained primary education and below, as against 25.8% of the total population in 2020.
- Only **13.7%** of people with disabilities received post-secondary education, compared with 30.2% of the total population.
- In a study by the EOC, around 36% of young people with disabilities surveyed said their teachers failed to understand their learning difficulties. Around 36% also said they had been teased or rejected by their classmates because of their disabilities.^[1]

Economic Activity

- The proportion of people with disabilities who were economically active is far lower than that of the overall population. Of the 490 800 people with disabilities aged 15 and above, only **19.7%** were economically active, while 80.3% or 393 900 were economically inactive. In contrast, the labour force participation rate (or those economically active) of the total population was 59.6% as at Q4, 2020.
- Of the economically active people with disabilities, about 86 300 (17.6%) were working at the time of enumeration, while the others were without employment, translating into an unemployment rate of 11.0%, almost double that (5.8%) of the total population.
- Of the 86 300 people with disabilities who were working, 36.0% were managers and administrators, professionals and associate professionals, while 25.4% were employed in elementary occupations. This compared to 41.4% and 20.6% respectively in the total population.
- The median monthly employment earnings of people with disabilities in 2020 stood at HK\$14,000, as against HK\$17,700 of the total employed population. About one-third of the employed persons with disabilities earned less than HK\$10,000 per month.
- According to a study by the EOC, the majority (**81.7%**) of employed persons consider **workplace discrimination against persons with mental illness (PMIs) to be “very prevalent” or “quite prevalent”** in Hong Kong.^[2]

Carers

- Among those 462 400 persons with disabilities (excluding persons with intellectual disabilities) residing in households, 204 200 (44.2%) had another person taking care of their day-to-day living due to their disabilities and chronic diseases. Of these, 28.7% were taken care by their children/son-in-law/daughter-in-law, 28.2% by their domestic helpers, 20.7% by their spouses and 15.0% by their parents.
- The median hours of caring services provided by the carer to people with disabilities residing in households was **42** hours per week.
- Among the 150 800 people with disabilities residing in households who had a specific carer, **52.4%** of their carers felt stressed due to the caring services.

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

[1] Equal Opportunities Commission (2023) [Study on Effective Strategies to Facilitate School-to-work Transition of Young Persons with Disabilities in Hong Kong](#).

[2] Equal Opportunities Commission (2023) [Study on Perceptions of Stigmatization and Discrimination of Persons with Mental Illness in the Workplace](#)