



# **Poverty and Social Exclusion in Hong Kong: First results from the 2013 Living Standards Survey\***

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**Note: \*All figures are provisional and may be subject to small changes**

## Overview

The Poverty and Social Exclusion in Hong Kong (PSEHK) project is funded by the Research Grants Council and the UK Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC/RGC Joint Research Scheme: RES-000-22-4400). The project provides new evidence about the extent and nature of poverty and social exclusion in Hong Kong. The results show that:

- 21% of people in Hong Kong are living in poverty when they have a low income and a low standard of living (in terms of deprivation).
- This means that they are going without items and activities regarded as customary by Hong Kong society. For example, 240,000 of the adult population (4% of adults) cannot afford three meals a day, meat/fish (fresh/frozen)/vegetarian equivalent every other day, or fresh fruit or vegetables every day.
- 1.2 million of the adult population (20% of all adults) go without at least one social and family activity such as taking part in celebrations (e.g. Chinese New Year).
- Child poverty is a serious problem in Hong Kong: more than one in four children (27% of all children) live in poverty according to today's standards.
- 16,000 children live in families who cannot afford to feed them properly.
- 126,000 children (12% of children) do not have at least one school learning-related item and activity, such as a computer with internet connection at home; participation in extra-curricular activities (e.g. sports, music); and tutorial lessons after school.
- More than 50% of households report problems with their accommodation. Seven percent of households report 5 or more problems. The most frequently reported problem is damp walls, ceilings and floors (60%), followed by a shortage of space (41%), and an inability to maintain an adequate temperature throughout the year (29%).
- More than a million adults (19% of all adults) felt that their health had an impact on their financial situation in the previous year.
- Financial insecurity is a widespread problem in Hong Kong. The survey found that 880,000 households (37%) cannot afford an unexpected expense of HK\$8,500 (e.g. relating to dental surgery, broken television).
- Social exclusion is also widespread. For example, more than 430,000 households (18% of all households) use Accident & Emergency services but consider the service poor. A further 230,000 households (10% of all households) are excluded from the service because of unavailability, inadequacy or affordability.
- Significant numbers of the adult population are experiencing limited social contact with either friends or family. For example, 2.2 million adults (37% of adults) meet up with friends and family just monthly or less often.

## **The report explains the study and findings:**

Section 1: The study's objectives

Section 2: The research methods

Section 3: The items and activities people have or 'want'

Section 4: Deprivation and subjective poverty

Section 5: The PSEHK poverty measure

Section 6: Income poverty

Section 7: Social exclusion

Section 8: Conclusions

Section 9: Survey details

Section 10: The PSE research team

Detailed information about the project can be found on the PSEHK project website:  
[www.poverty.hk](http://www.poverty.hk).

## **Section 1: The study objectives**

This UK-HK collaborative research project aims to advance the theory and the practice of poverty and social exclusion measurement in Hong Kong by building on recent scientific advances in the United Kingdom, other European countries and adapting them to an urban Chinese context. The specific objectives of this study were to:

1. To enhance collaboration between researchers in the United Kingdom and Hong Kong by developing new poverty and social exclusion measurement instruments;
2. To improve the measurement of poverty, deprivation, social exclusion and standard of living in the Chinese context.
3. To collect and analyse qualitative evidence on how low living standards and social exclusion shape the lifestyles of families, households and individuals using consensual focus group methods.
4. To investigate the extent and prevalence of poverty and social exclusion in Hong Kong and explore causal relationships between different dimensions of poverty and social exclusion.
5. To develop new combined low income/deprivation poverty measures for adults and children.
6. To enhance the collaboration between academic institutions and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) serving vulnerable groups in Hong Kong.
7. To conduct policy relevant analyses of poverty and social exclusion in Hong Kong.

## Section 2: The research methods

Official definitions of poverty are largely based upon the proportion of the population whose household income falls below particular levels of income (such as 50% or 60% of median household income after adjusting for household size and composition). Recently, the Commission of Poverty (CoP) set the poverty line at 50% of median household income of the *corresponding household size* in Hong Kong (The Commission on Poverty, 2013).

The PSEHK project differs from these approaches by measuring the numbers of people who are unable to participate in the customs of society. This research aims to examine:

- the items and activities people have and ‘want’ in Hong Kong today; and
- people’s actual living standards.

The research involves following three steps:

1. As part of having an acceptable standard of living, **the research aims to examine whether people ‘want’ items and activities**. This includes people who ‘have’ the item or ‘do’ the activity plus people who lack the item or activity because of affordability (Guio *et al*, 2012: 27). The original list of items and activities included in the survey were developed from focus group discussions and an expert review.
2. **The survey identifies who has and who does not have each item or activity**. It also distinguishes between those people who ‘don’t have but don’t want’ (i.e. based on personal preference) and those who ‘don’t have and can’t afford’ the items and activities. Only those people who cannot afford the item are categorised as deprived.
3. **Deprivation counts** identify how many people cannot afford groups of items, and an **overall multiple-deprivation count** identifies how many people cannot afford these items to the point that it affects their standard of living.

This research method was adapted from the 2012 Poverty and Social Exclusion Survey ([www.poverty.ac.uk](http://www.poverty.ac.uk)) and the last recommendations relating to the measurement of deprivation across the European Union (see Guio *et al*, 2012: 27). It builds upon a long tradition of relative poverty research pioneered by Peter Townsend (1979), Nelson Chow (1982) and Joanna Mack and Stewart Lansley (1985).

### Section 3: The items and activities people have or ‘want’

In the 2013 PSEHK Living Standards survey, respondents were asked which, of a list of 52 items (30 for adults and 22 for children) they ‘have’, ‘don’t have but don’t want’ or ‘don’t have and can’t afford’.

Items and activities were included in a deprivation index if they achieved a 60% threshold (Guio *et al*, 2012). All thirty items and activities for adults and all 22 for children were found to be suitable on the basis of this criterion. For some of these items, those reflecting basic needs, they are wanted by all or almost all of the population in Hong Kong.

#### For **adults**

- Enough warm clothes for cold weather 100%
- Three meals a day 99%
- Fresh fruit or vegetables every day 99%
- Meat or fish (fresh/frozen) or vegetarian equivalent every other day 99%

#### For **children**

- Enough warm clothes for cold weather 100%
- New, properly fitted shoes 100%
- Three meals a day 100%
- Fresh fruit or vegetables at least once a day 100%
- Meat/fish/vegetarian equivalent at least twice a day 99%

The majority of the Hong Kong public also want consumer durables and items that allow for social participation, such as:

#### For **adults**

- A mobile phone 97%
- One set of decent clothes (e.g. for job interview /Chinese New Year celebration) 97%
- A gift of money on occasion of wedding 97%
- Red pocket money (laisee) during Chinese New Year 95%
- A meal out with friends or family at least once a month 92%

### For **children**

- A school trip at least once a term 96%
- Extra-curricular activities (e.g. sports, music) 96%
- A meal out with children at least once a month 94%
- Mobile phone for children aged 11 or older 94%
- Tutorial lessons after school 88%

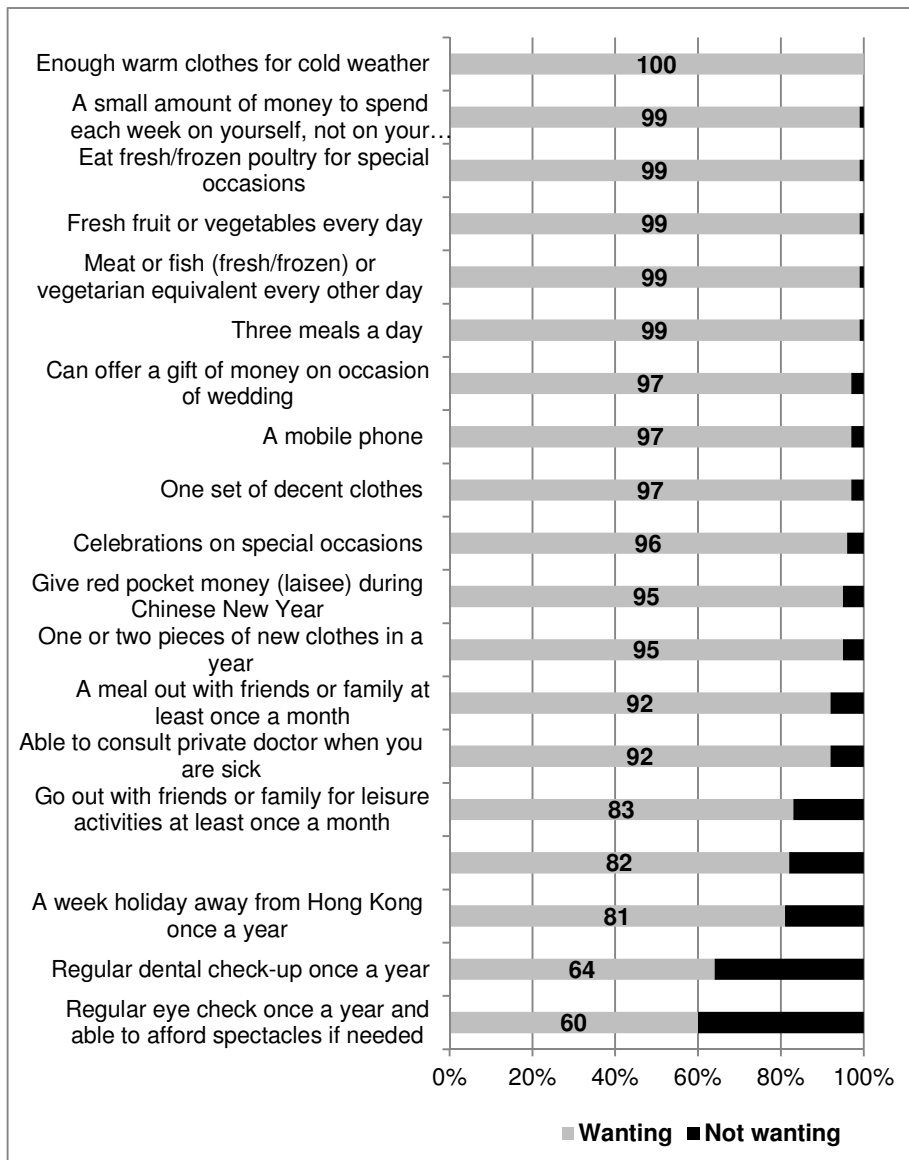
### For **household items**

- A television 100%
- A fan 100%
- An air-conditioner 99%
- A washing machine 99%
- A refrigerator 99%
- A computer with internet connection at home 91%

There is clear evidence that the Hong Kong public supports a relativist view of poverty. The public accepts that a minimum standard of living should go beyond basic needs and should reflect contemporary standards (e.g. 'a computer with internet connection at home') and also include participation in social customs and activities (see Figures 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3).

There are two adult items which just pass the 60% 'wanting' threshold, and they are: 'regular dental check-up once a year' (64%) and 'regular eye check once a year and the ability to afford spectacles if needed (60%)' (see Figure 3.1). We would expect higher proportions of the Hong Kong population to have or want dental and eye check-ups. These findings highlight the extent to which dental and optical care is a 'problem' in Hong Kong and the relative failure of public health information to make a significant impact on Hong Kong society.

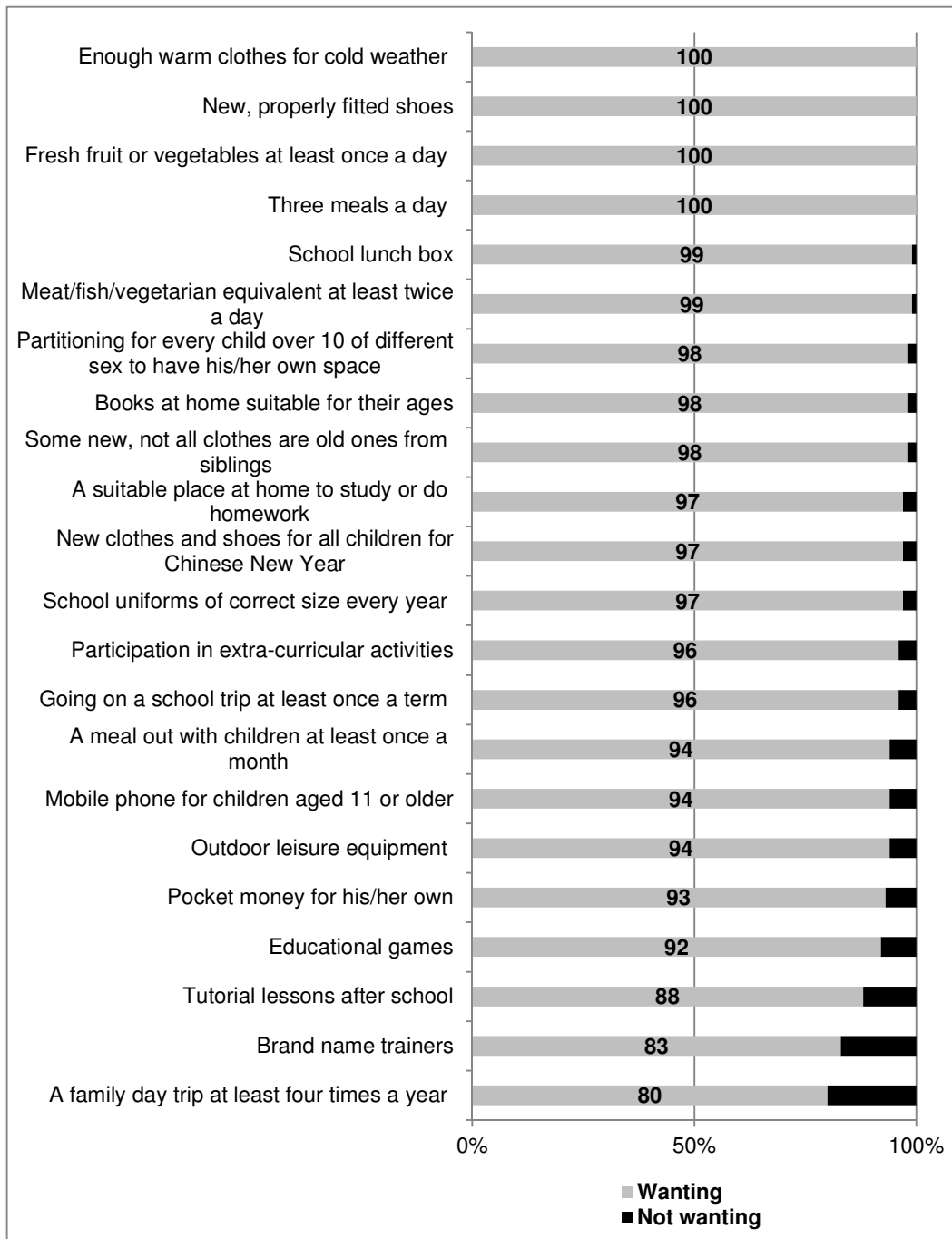
**Figure 3.1: People having and ‘wanting’ adult items and activities in Hong Kong (%)**



Note: People who ‘want’ the item are people who have the item plus people who would like it but cannot afford it. People who ‘do not want’ the item are those who do not have it but for other reasons than financial stress.

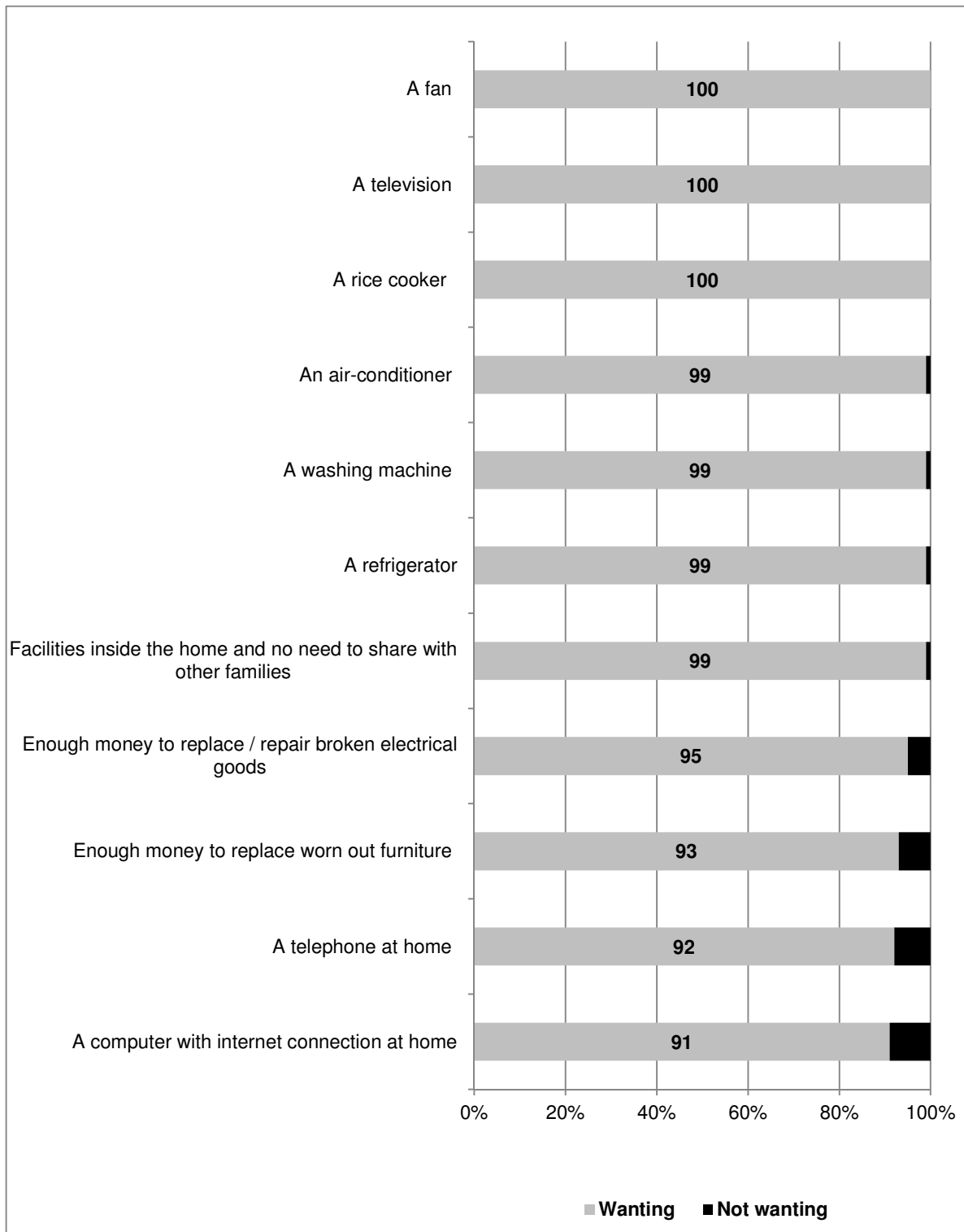


**Figure 3.2: People having and ‘wanting’ child items and activities in Hong Kong (%)**



Note: People who ‘want’ the item are people who have the item plus people who would like it but cannot afford it. People who ‘do not want’ the item are those who do not have it but for other reasons than financial stress.

**Figure 3.3: People having and ‘wanting’ household facilities and items in Hong Kong (%)**



Note: People who ‘want’ the item are people who have the item plus people who would like it but cannot afford it. People who ‘do not want’ the item are those who do not have it but for other reasons than financial stress.

## Section 4: Deprivation and subjective poverty

The 2013 Living Standards Survey identified how many people in Hong Kong fell below what is an acceptable standard of living. All the numbers and percentages below refer to the population as a whole (adult or children) and include only those who lack items and activities because they cannot afford them. They exclude those who choose not to have items out of personal preference (i.e. 'don't have but don't want'), and for activities, people who do not do them for reasons other than money (i.e. 'don't do for any other reason').

### Food

The majority of the population living in Hong Kong wants an acceptable diet (Figures 3.1 and 3.2). However, there are a number of adults and children lacking at least one food item (Table 4.1):

- 16,000 children (2% of children) live in families who cannot afford to feed them properly. This means that they are going without at least one of the following food items: three meals a day; fresh fruit or vegetables at least once a day; or meat/fish/vegetarian equivalent at least twice a day.
- 240,000 of the adult population (4% of adults) cannot afford to eat properly by the standards of contemporary Hong Kong. This includes lacking three meals a day, meat/fish (fresh/frozen)/vegetarian equivalent every other day, or fresh fruit or vegetables every day.
- 277,000 of the adult population (5% of adults) reports that during the last month there was a day when they did not have a substantial meal due to lack of money.

**Table 4.1: Extent of food deprivation**

	Number	%
<b>Children's food items</b>		
Not deprived	1,039,000	99
Deprived	16,000	2
<b>Adult's food items</b>		
Not deprived	5,777,000	96
Deprived	240,000	4
<b>Lack of substantial meal (subjective poverty)</b>		
Yes	277,000	5
No	5,671,000	95

Note: Figures do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

## Clothing

The survey found that significant percentages of people are going without essential clothing items (Table 4.2):

- 43,000 children (4% of children) cannot afford at least one of these basic clothing items: new, properly fitted shoes (e.g. leather shoes and sport shoes); some new, not all clothes are old ones from siblings; or enough warm clothes for cold weather.
- The survey also found that very large numbers of children are going without clothing items which allow them to fit in with their peers. For example, 122,000 of children (12% of children) cannot afford new clothes or shoes for Chinese New Year or brand name trainers.
- 273,000 adults (5% of adults) cannot afford to buy one or two new pieces of clothes in a year or enough warm clothes for the cold weather.
- 193,000 adults (3% of adults) cannot afford to have one set of decent clothes (e.g. for job interviews / Chinese New Year celebration).

**Table 4.2: Extent of clothing deprivation**

	Number	%
<b>Children's essential clothing items</b>		
Not deprived	1,012,000	96
Deprived	43,000	4
<b>Children's clothing items to fit in peer norms</b>		
Not deprived	933,000	89
Deprived	122,000	12
<b>Adult essential clothing items</b>		
Not deprived	5,744,000	96
Deprived	273,000	5
<b>Adult decent clothes for job interviews /CNY celebration</b>		
Not deprived	5,824,000	97
Deprived	193,000	3

Note: Figures do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

## Housing and area deprivation

Children are living in overcrowded conditions (Table 4.3).

- 192,000 children (18% of children) live in households without partitioning for every child over 10 of different sex.

Housing and area problems are widespread issues.

- More than 50% of households report problems with their accommodation. Seven percent of households report 5 or more problems.
- The most frequently reported problem is damp walls, ceilings and floors (60%), followed by a shortage of space (41%), and an inability to maintain an adequate temperature throughout the year (29%).
- 45% of households report problems with their local area. Five percent report 5 or more problems.
- The most frequently reported problem is noise (from traffic and businesses) (56%), followed by air pollution (35%).

**Table 4.3: Extent of housing and area deprivation**

	Number	%
<b>Children's housing deprivation</b>		
Not deprived	863,000	82
Deprived	192,000	18
<b>Problems with accommodation</b>		
No problem	1,158,000	49
Problem	1,211,000	51
<b>Problems with the local area</b>		
No problem	1,312,000	55
Problem	1,057,000	45

## Children’s educational and social development

Significant numbers of children lack items considered essential for their educational and social development (Table 4.4).

- 150,000 children (14% of children) have no suitable place at home to study or do homework.
- 126,000 children (12% of children) do not have at least one of four school learning-related items and activities, including: a computer with internet connection at home; going on a school trip at least once a term; participation in extra-curricular activities (e.g. sports, music); and tutorial lessons after school.
- 145,000 children (14% of children) have families who cannot afford to take them on day trips at least four times a year (e.g. going to Lantau Island, Amusement parks) or cannot afford to have a monthly meal out with other children.
- 64,000 children (6% children) do not have pocket money.

**Table 4.4: Extent of children’s educational and social development**

	Number	%
<b>Study area</b>		
Not deprived	906,000	86
Deprived	149,000	14
<b>School learning-related items and activities</b>		
Not deprived	929,000	88
Deprived	126,000	12
<b>Social activities with family and friends</b>		
Not deprived	910,000	86
Deprived	145,000	14
<b>Pocket money</b>		
Not deprived	992,000	94
Deprived	63,000	6

## Consumer durables

A majority of people want household appliances as part of an acceptable standard of living, and they include: a television, a telephone at home, a refrigerator, a washing machine, a fan, an air-conditioner, and a rice cooker (Table 4.5).

- Nearly 224,000 people (3% of all people) cannot able to afford these household appliances.
- 136,000 people (2% of all people) cannot afford a home computer with internet connection.
- 579,000 people (8% of all people) are not able to afford to repair broken electrical goods (e.g. refrigerator or washing machine).

**Table 4.5: Deprivation of consumer durables**

	Number	%
<b>Household appliances</b>		
Not deprived	6,848,000	97
Deprived	224,000	3
<b>A home computer with internet connection</b>		
Not deprived	6,936,000,	98
Deprived	136,000	2
<b>Repairing broken electrical goods</b>		
Not deprived	6,493,000	92
Deprived	579,000	8

## Social and family life

The extent of social deprivation was revealed by the survey (Table 4.6).

- 1.2 million of the adult population (21% of all adults) go without at least one social and family activity such as taking part in celebrations (e.g. Chinese New Year), having a meal out with friends/family once a month, taking an annual holiday outside of Hong Kong, being able to offer money as a wedding gift. More than one in 20 people miss out at least three activities.

**Table 4.6: Extent of social deprivation**

	Number	%
<b>Social and family life</b>		
Not deprived	4,787,000	80
Deprived	1,230,000	21

Note: Figures do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

## Health deprivation

The survey revealed the extent of health deprivation in Hong Kong society. Significant percentages of adults cannot afford at least one or more items relating to medical, dental and optical care (Table 4.7).

- Over 1.4 million adults (23%) cannot afford at least one of these four health-related items: able to consult private doctor when they are sick; able to consult Chinese medicine practitioner when they are sick and purchase prescribed medicines; have a regular dental check-up once a year; or regular eye check once a year and able to afford spectacles if needed. Nearly one in twenty of the adult population lacks all four items.
- More than a million adults (18% of all adults) felt that their health had an impact on their financial situation in the previous year. Similar proportions, say that their health has been affected to some degree by a lack of money in the previous year.

**Table 4.7: Extent of health deprivation**

	Number	%
<b>Medical, dental and optical care</b>		
Not deprived	4,606,000	77
Deprived	1,410,000	23
<b>Health has impacted on financial situation (previous 12 months)</b>		
No	4,897,000	82
Yes	1,096,000	18
<b>Health has been affected by a lack of money (previous 12 months)</b>		
No	4,909,000	82
Yes	1,084,000	18



## Financial insecurity

Financial insecurity is a widespread problem in Hong Kong (Table 4.8). The survey found that:

- 880,000 households (37%) cannot afford an unexpected expense of HK\$8500 (e.g. relating to dental surgery, broken television).
- 280,000 adults (5% of adults) cannot afford to have a small amount of money to spend each week on themselves, not on their family.

**Table 4.8: Financial insecurity**

		Number	%
<b>Unexpected expense</b>	Yes	1,484,000	63
	No	881,000	37
<b>Own money</b>	Not deprived	5,735,000	95
	Deprived	281,000	5

## Subjective Poverty

As well as identifying the extent and nature of deprivation, the survey also uncovered the depth of subjective poverty amongst the Hong Kong population (Table 4.9).

- More than 2.3 million adults (39% of all adults) consider that their income is 'a little' or 'a lot' below that needed to avoid poverty.
- 1.8 million adults (29% of adults) think they are poor now.
- 1.5 million adults (26% of adults) say that they have been often or mostly poor in the past. 42% say that this was during their childhood.
- 860,000 adults (14% of adults) feel that their standard of living is fairly or very low.
- 21% of adults say that they have felt embarrassed because of their low income.

**Table 4.9: Extent of subjective poverty**

	Number	%
<b>Household income needed to avoid poverty</b>		
Above that level of income	1,612,000	27
About the same	1,991,000	34
Below that level of income	2,347,000	39
<b>Live in poverty now</b>		
Yes	1,755,000	29
No	4,238,000	71
<b>History of poverty</b>		
Never or rarely	2,632,000	44
Occasionally	1,805,000	30
Often or most of the time	1,562,000	26
<b>Experience of poverty</b>		
Childhood	1,896,000	42
Adult life	886,000	20
Both	1,754,000	39
<b>Perception of standard of living</b>		
Very or fairly high	472,000	8
Fair	4,656,000	78
Fairly or very low	859,000	14
<b>Felt embarrassed because of low income</b>		
Yes	890,000	21
No	3,337,000	79

Note: Figures do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

## Section 5: The PSEHK poverty measure

The PSEHK poverty measure identifies how many individuals or households cannot afford the items and activities, discussed in the previous section, to a point that their whole way of life is affected.

**The study defines people or households as poor when they have a low income and a low standard of living (in terms of deprivation).**

They are 'not poor' if:

1. they have a low income and a reasonable standard of living; or
2. they have a low standard of living but a high income (rising); or
3. they have a low income but a high standard of living (vulnerable).

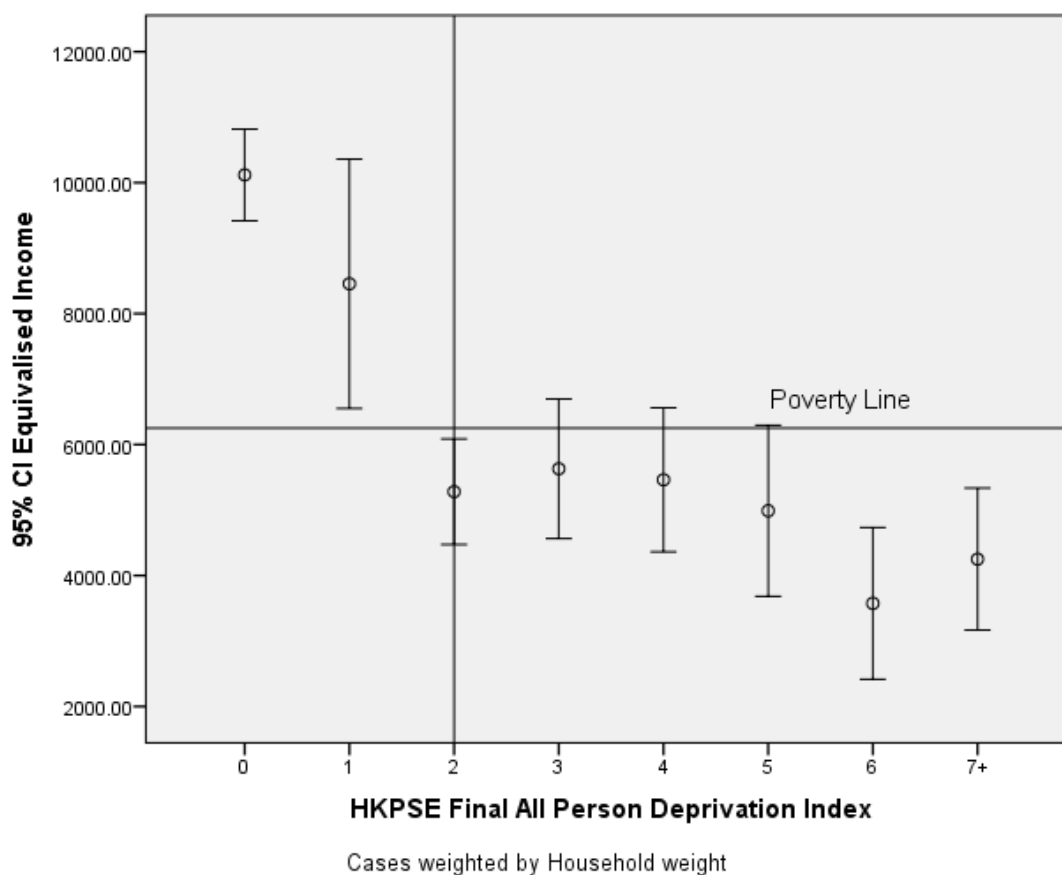
Table 5.1 shows that 21% of people in Hong Kong are living in poverty according to the methods used in the study. There are 6% of people rising out of poverty, 20% of people are vulnerable to poverty and 53% of people are neither deprived or living on a low income (Not poor). The survey also found that 21% of households are poor.

**Table 5.1: The extent of poverty (PSEHK measure)**

	Number	%
<b>Poor</b>	<b>1,473,000</b>	<b>21</b>
Rising	422,000	6
Vulnerable	1,408,000	20
Not Poor	3,769,000	53

The study found a relationship between income and deprivation; as income falls deprivation increases. Figure 5.1 shows that there is a clear break of slope between a deprivation score of 1 and 2, indicating a poverty line/threshold of about HK\$6,250 per month (MacPherson equalised household income) in the PSEHK 2013 survey.

**Figure 5.1: Deprivation Index Score by equivalised household income**

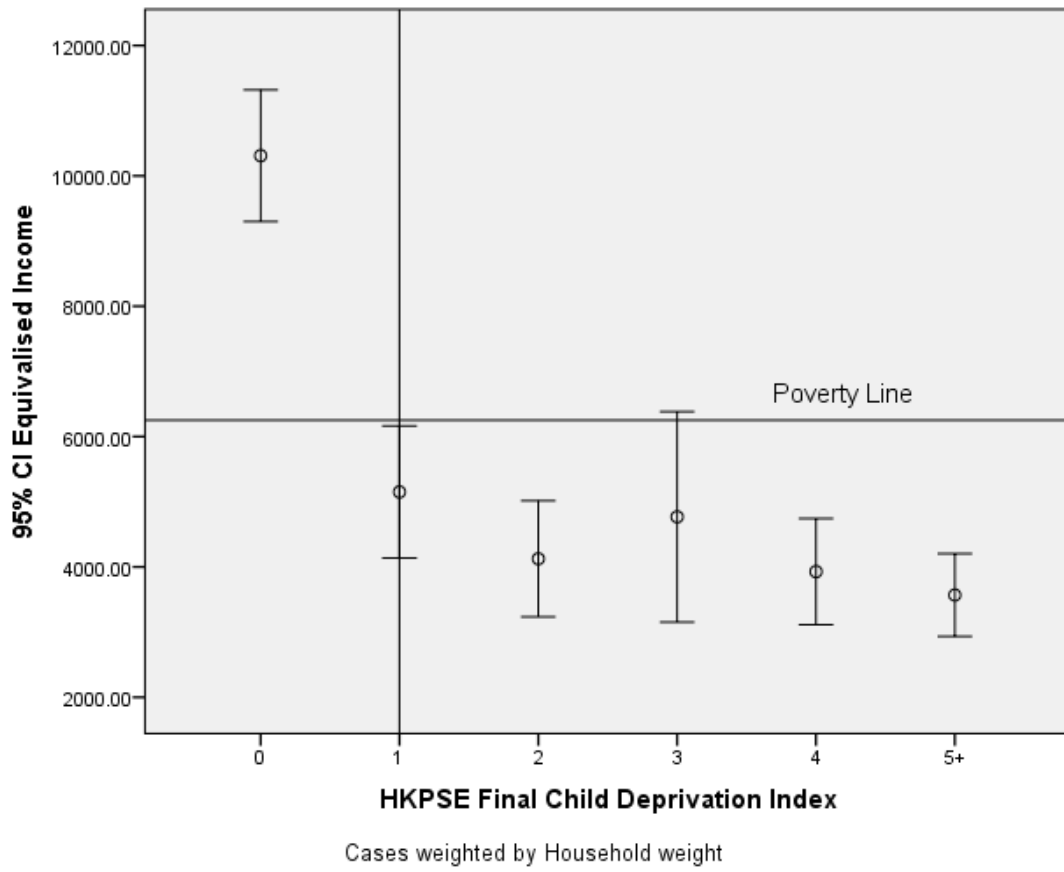


Child poverty is a serious problem in Hong Kong: more than one in four children (27% of all children) live in poverty according to today's standards (Table 5.2). Figure 5.2 shows that the household income falls to around HK\$6,250 per month, children will experience deprivation.

**Table 5.2: The extent of children's poverty (PSEHK measure)**

	Number	%
<b>Poor</b>	<b>293,000</b>	<b>27</b>
Rising	40,000	4
Vulnerable	233,000	22
Not Poor	489,000	46

**Figure 5.2: Children's Deprivation Index Score by equivalised household income**



## Section 6: Income poverty

The Commission on Poverty (CoP) set poverty threshold as 50% of median monthly household according to household size in Hong Kong. Table 6.1 shows that significant proportions of 1-person and 6-person + households living in income poverty.

**Table 6.1: Poverty line in Hong Kong**

Household size	Poverty line set by the CoP*	Poverty rate set by the CoP	PSEHK income poverty rate
1-person	HK\$ 3,600	35%	52%
2-person	HK\$ 7,700	27%	29%
3-person	HK\$ 11,500	18%	26%
4-person	HK\$ 14,300	16%	17%
5-person	HK\$ 14,800	15%	10%
6-person +	HK\$ 15,800	15%	45%

Note: \*Commission on Poverty (CoP) adopts the concept of relative poverty and sets poverty threshold as 50% of median monthly household income according to household size (The Commission on Poverty, 2013, HK Poverty Situation Report 2012, p.8).

\*\*Weighted according to 2011 Population Census

In terms of the relationship between the PSEHK poverty measure (described in section 5) and the Official Hong Kong poverty line, 55% of PSEHK poor are also 'officially' poor. Forty-nine percent of PSEHK vulnerable are also 'officially' poor. More than 99% of PSEHK 'not poor' and also 'officially' not poor and 100% of PSEHK rising group are 'officially' not poor (Table 6.2).

**Table 6.2: Relationship between PSEHK poverty measure and 'official' Hong Kong poverty line**

		PSEHK Poverty Categories			
		Poor	Rising	Vulnerable	Not poor
Official Hong Kong Poverty Line	Not poor	45%	100%	51%	99%
	Poor	55%	-	49%	1%

## Section 7: Social exclusion

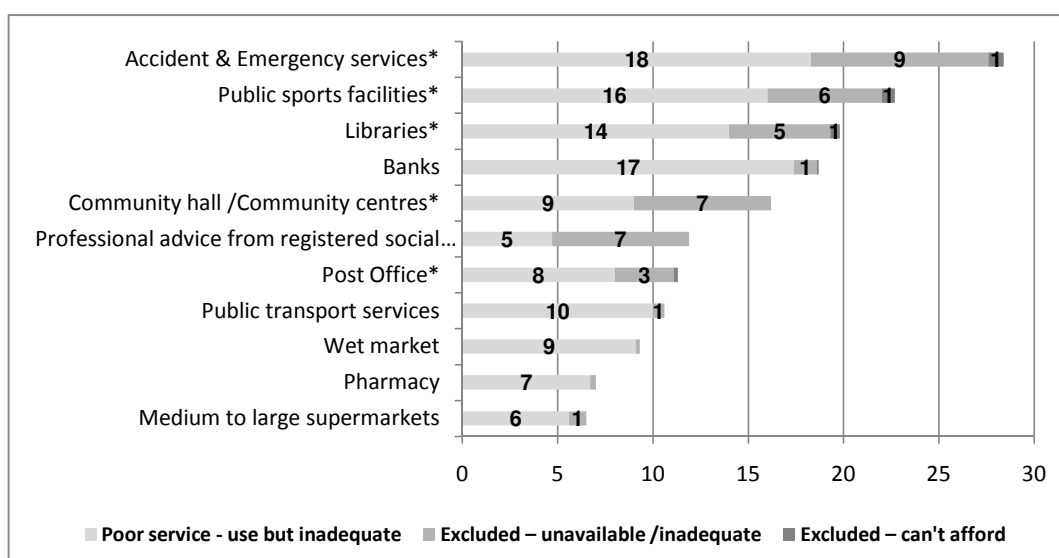
Social exclusion has many different facets. The report focuses on two aspects of social exclusion: service exclusion and social contact and social support.

### Service exclusion and poor services

Significant numbers of adults are excluded from Hong Kong public and private services; services are not used because they are either unavailable or inadequate or unaffordable. Large numbers of people also report experiencing poor services; they use the service but judge it to be inadequate (Figure 7.1).

- 660,000 households experience poor Accident & Emergency services or are excluded from the service all together. More than 430,000 households (18% of all households) use Accident & Emergency services but consider the service poor. A further 230,000 households (10% of all households) are excluded from the service because of unavailability, inadequacy or affordability.
- More than 520,000 households are excluded from or experience poor public sports services. Almost 400,000 households (16% of all households) consider public sports facilities to be poor quality. An additional 155,000 households (7% of all households) are excluded from using public sports services on the basis of unavailability, inadequacy or a lack of funds.
- Nearly 250,000 households (10% of all households) use public transport services but believe the service is poor.

**Figure 7.1: Extent of service exclusion and experience of poor services**

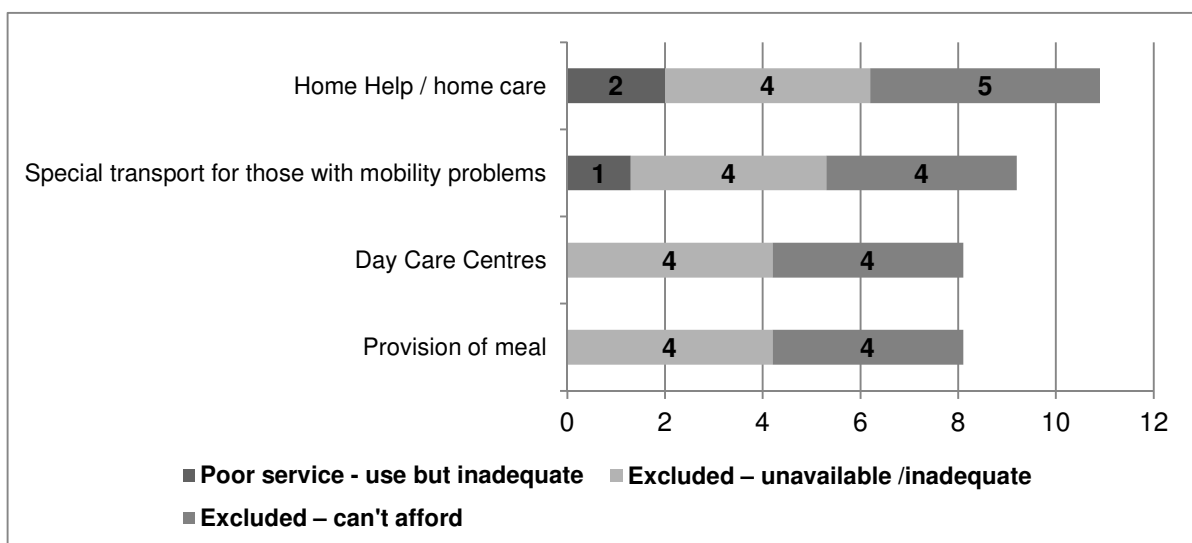


Note: \*Public services

The survey also revealed that service exclusion is a problem for specific population groups. For the older population (65 years and over) (Figure 7.2):

- Nearly 100,000 older people (11%) experience exclusion or poor home help services. 83,000 households (9% of all older person households) report being excluded from home help /home care because of unavailability/inadequacy or a lack of money. A further 13,000 older person (2%) households use the service but consider it to be inadequate.
- 86,000 older people (9%) experience exclusion or poor special transport services. The majority are excluded because of unavailability/inadequacy or a lack of money (73,000 or 8%).
- 76,000 older people (8%) report being excluded from or day care centres. Similar proportions of older person households are excluded from the provision of meals.

**Figure 7.2: Extent of service exclusion and experience of poor services – services for older people (65+ years)**

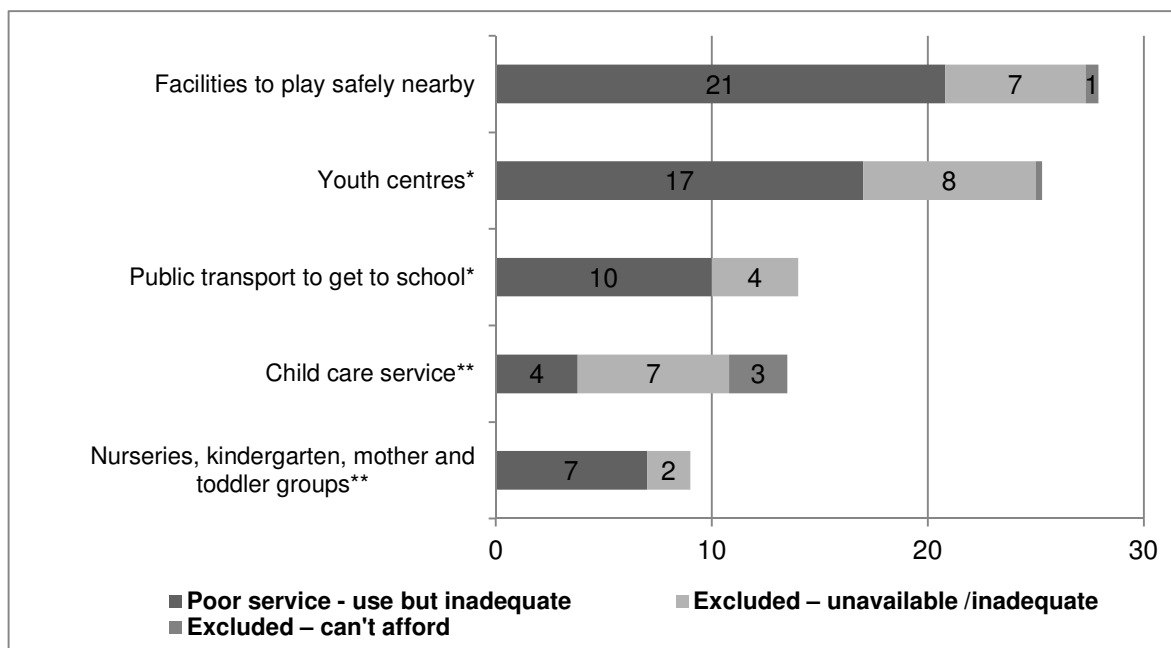




Children and young people also experience service exclusion (Figure 7.3).

- More than one in four children experience exclusion or poor services relating to safe play spaces. 186,000 children (21% of all children) use local play facilities but these are judged to be inadequate by their parents. A further 8% are excluded from play facilities because they are unavailable/inadequate or unaffordable.
- Nearly one in four young people experience exclusion or poor services relating to youth centres. 110,000 young people (17% of young people) consider youth centres to be poor. Another 8% do not use them because they are unavailable/inadequate or unaffordable.

**Figure 7.3: Extent of service exclusion and experience of poor services – Facilities and services for children**



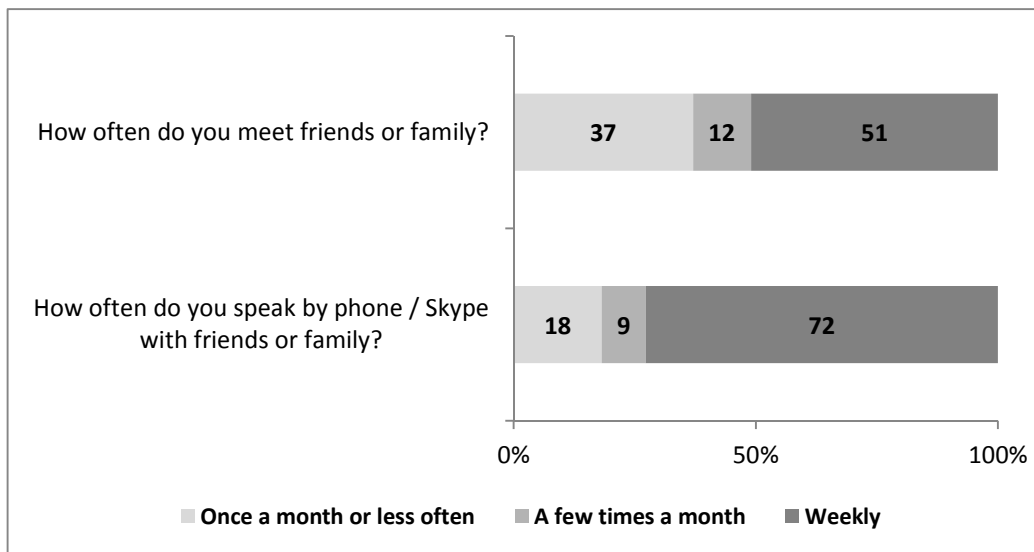
Notes: \*services for school age children; \*\*services for under school age children

## Social contact

The survey revealed significant numbers of the adult population experiencing limited social contact with either friends or family (Figure 7.4):

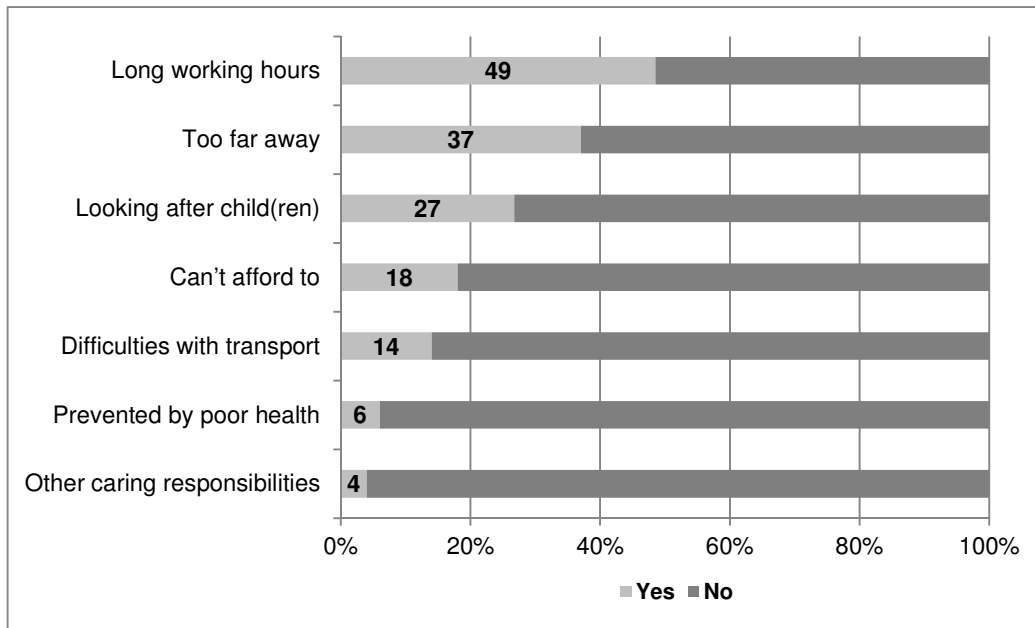
- 2.2 million adults (37% of adults) meet up with friends and family monthly or less often.
- 1.1 million adults (18% of adults) speak to friends and family once a month or less often.

**Figure 7.4: Extent of social contact**



Among those reporting that they are prevented from meeting up with friends or family more often (Figure 7.5), long working hours is the main barrier to more frequent contact (49%), followed by the problem of distance (37%), and looking after children (27%). Nearly one in five adults reports problems with affordability.

**Figure 7.5: Reasons preventing individuals from meeting up with family or friends more often**

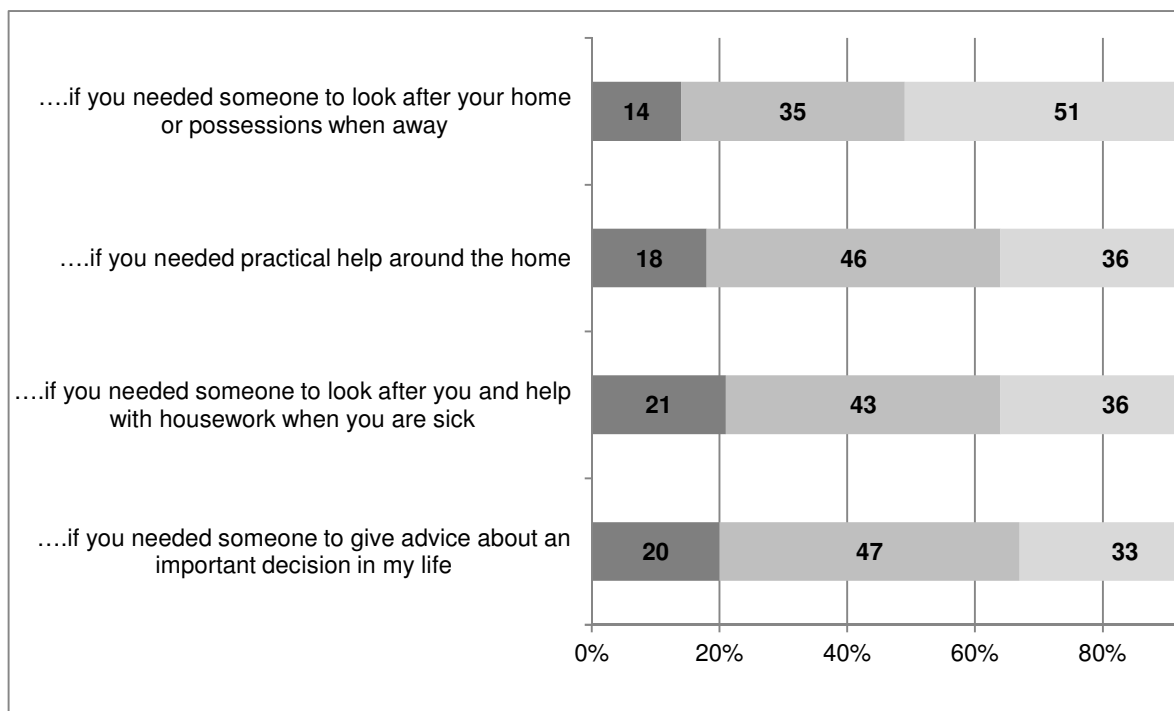


## Lack of social support

Significant numbers of the people lack social support in times of need, for example, when they need to be looked after when they are ill, or when they need advice about important changes in their lives, for example (Figure 7.6):

- 51% of adults report that that they would not receive any or much support if they needed someone to look after their home or possessions when they are away.
- 36% of adults report that that they would not receive any or much practical help around the home and 36% would not receive help with housework in times of illness.
- In terms of emotional support, 33% of all adults say that they cannot rely on someone to offer advice about important life decisions.

**Figure 7.6: Extent of practical and emotional support**



## **Section 8: Recommendations and conclusions**

- Poverty and social exclusion are major issues which need to be tackled by government.
- A combined low income and deprivation poverty measure would complement the official poverty line and would provide policy-relevant information about the lives of poor people.
- Health deprivation is a major problem and additional help is needed to improve access to health care for the people on a low income.
- There is a need to improve housing conditions in Hong Kong as many people suffer from problems relating to damp, shortage of space and noise pollution.
- More than 1 in 4 children's lives are blighted by poverty and some families cannot afford to provide their children with an adequate diet. Urgent policies are needed to tackle child poverty.

## Section 9: Survey details

The Living Standards Survey was undertaken between December 2012 and May 2013 by the Policy 21 Limited. The survey re-interviewed respondents to a HKCSS 2011 survey to see how people's lives have changed (n=356), and a new sample from the 2011 Population Census (n=248)<sup>1</sup>. A total of 604 households aged 18 and over were interviewed. Where there was more than one eligible respondent in a household, one adult (aged 18 or over) was selected at random from each sampled household. This methodology allows different survey weights to be calculated which allows results to be calculated which are representative at both individual and household levels.

The Hong Kong Standard of Living Survey questionnaire, including both English and Chinese versions, can be downloaded from the PSEHK website: [www.poverty.hk](http://www.poverty.hk).

## Section 10: The PSE research team

The Poverty and Social Exclusion in Hong Kong ([PSEHK](http://www.psehk.org)) project is funded by the [Hong Kong Research Grants Council](http://www.hkrcg.gov.hk) and the [UK Economic and Social Research Council](http://www.esrc.ac.uk). It is UK-HK research collaboration between the University of Bristol, the Hong Kong Institute of Education and City University of Hong Kong working with the Policy 21 Limited.

Further details of the PSEHK research, including the members of the project team and advisory committee, and focus groups and questionnaire can be found on the PSEHK website: [www.poverty.hk](http://www.poverty.hk).



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<sup>1</sup> The HKCSS 2011 survey on poverty, deprivation and exclusion in Hong Kong commissioned by the Hong Kong Council of Social Services was led by Professor Wong Hung, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and Professor Peter Saunders, the University of New South Wales.

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