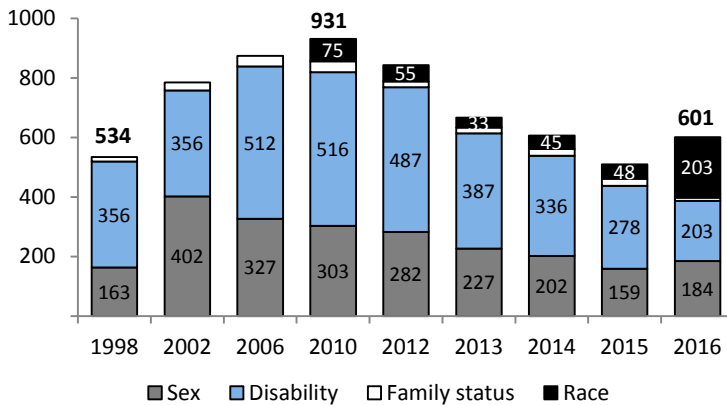




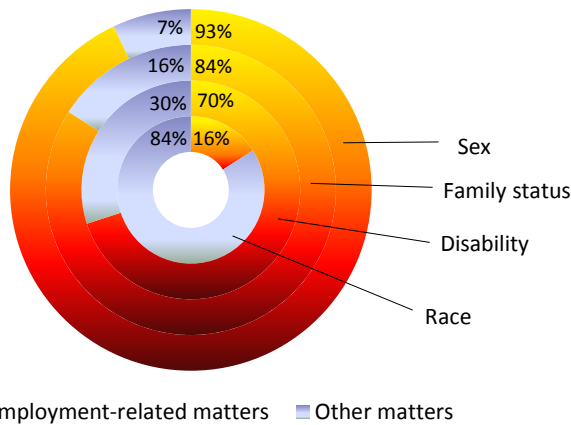
## Equal opportunities

**Figure 1 – Discrimination complaints lodged in 1998-2016**



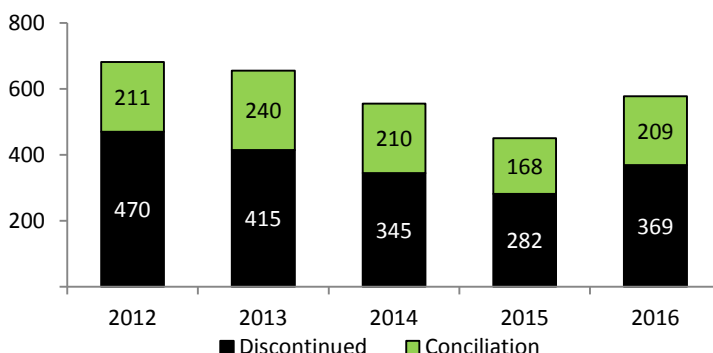
Notes: (1) The surge in race discrimination complaints in 2016 was due to multiple complaints (174 complaints) lodged in relation to an incident.  
(2) The Race Discrimination Ordinance came into force in 2009.

**Figure 2 – Share of employment-related complaints in four discrimination categories (2012-2016)**



Note: Employment-related matters constitute 29% of race discrimination complaints if the multiple complaints related to an incident in 2016 are excluded.

**Figure 3 – Number of cases conciliated and discontinued during the year**



## Highlights

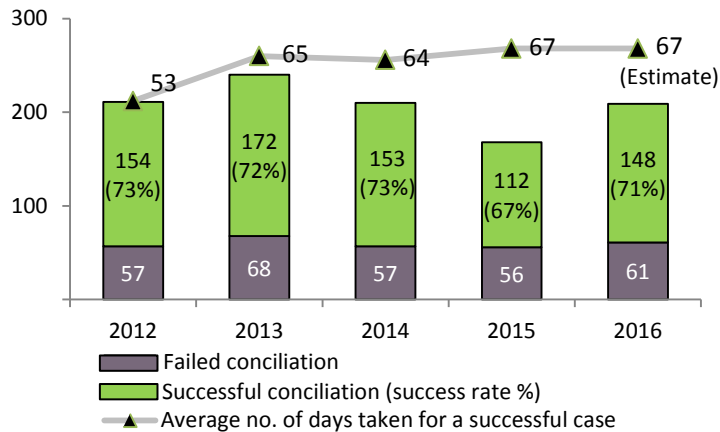
- Established in 1996, the Equal Opportunities Commission ("EOC") is a statutory body tasked to eliminate discrimination and harassment on grounds of sex, pregnancy, marital status, disability, family status and race. During 1998-2010, the number of complaints filed to EOC had gone up by 74% to the peak of 931 cases, before falling by 35% to 601 cases in 2016. About two-thirds of the complaints were related to sex and disability discrimination (Figure 1).

- EOC groups the complaints into either employment-related (e.g. dismissal or hiring) or other matters. Most sex, disability and family status discrimination complaints were employment-related which accounted for 70% to 93% in each discrimination category. By contrast, only 16% of race discrimination complaints were related to employment, with the rest of 84% related to other matters like provision of banking and translation services, refusal in premises rental (Figure 2).

- EOC is obliged to investigate complaints from the public and bring parties in dispute together for conciliation. On average, about one-third of all the cases in the past five years were conciliated, while the rest were discontinued for reasons like complaint withdrawal or lacking in substance (Figure 3).

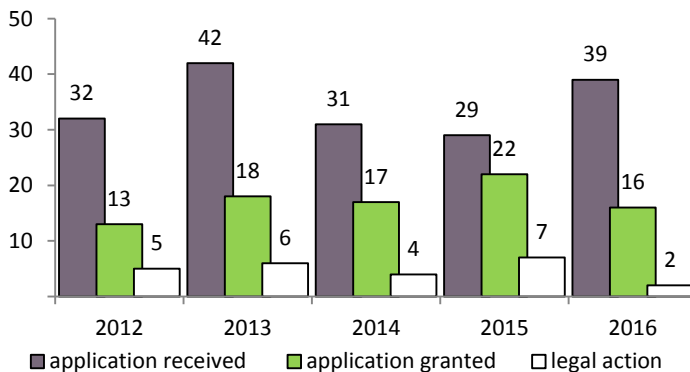
## Equal opportunities (cont'd)

**Figure 4 – Successful and failed conciliation cases**



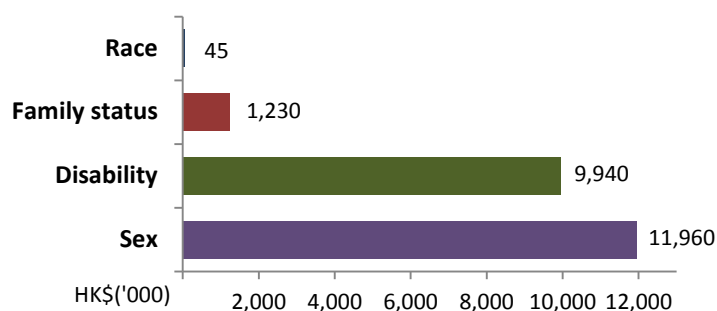
Note: Average days taken for a successful case were financial year figures.

**Figure 5 – Legal assistance offered by EOC**



Note: The figures may include cases brought forward from previous years.

**Figure 6 – Cash compensation successfully sought via conciliation and legal action for the period 2012-2016**



## Highlights

- Conciliation success rate held broadly stable during 2012-2016, hovering between 67% and 73%, indicating the willingness of the disputed parties to settle. Yet, the average duration taken to reach a successful conciliation has lengthened from 53 days in 2012 to 67 days in 2015 (Figure 4).
- If conciliation fails, complainants may apply to EOC for legal assistance like legal advice and representation, or take civil action on their own. Approval of EOC hinges mainly on whether the case helps establish precedent. EOC granted assistance to 86 cases or 50% of all applications over the past five years, resulting in 24 legal actions (Figure 5).
- Settlement of discrimination complaints could take various forms, including cash compensation. Over the past five years, the total compensation via conciliation and legal action amounted to HK\$23 million, half of which related to sex discrimination cases (Figure 6). Other settlement forms include apology, policy or practice change, facilities improvement, provision of training, and donation to charity.

Data sources: Latest figures from Equal Opportunities Commission and Estimates of 2017-2018 Budget.

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