



# Welfare Services

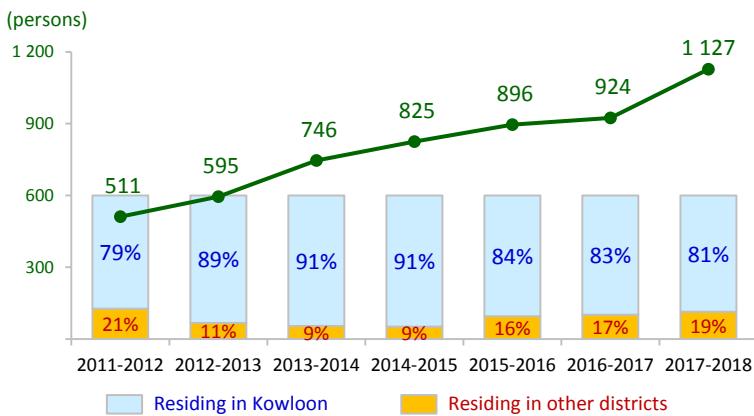
Research Office  
Legislative Council Secretariat

## Statistical Highlights

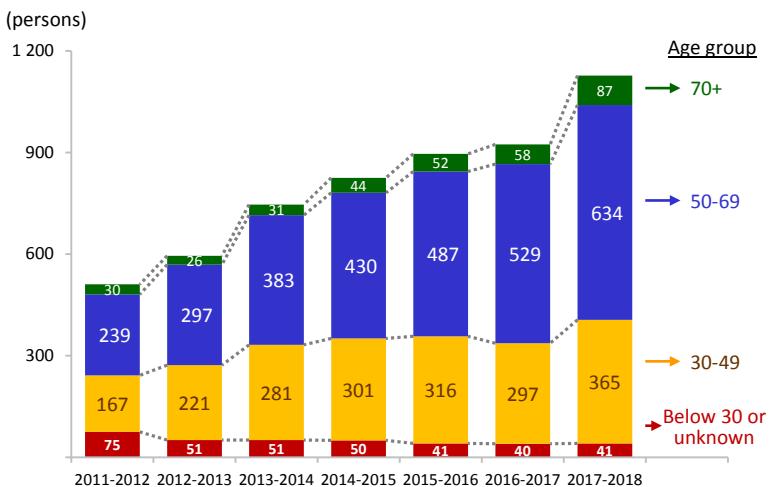
ISSH17/18-19

### Street sleepers in Hong Kong

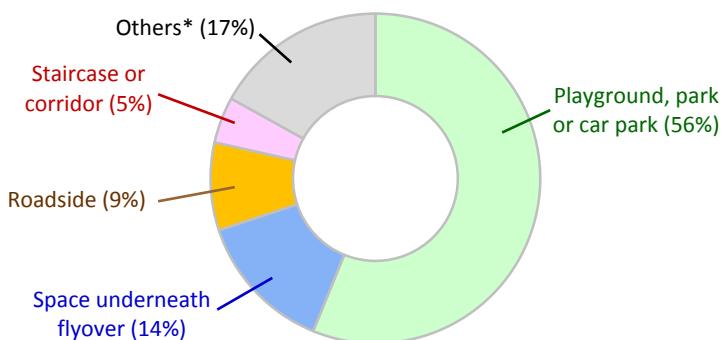
**Figure 1 – Number of registered street sleepers, 2011-2018**



**Figure 2 – Age distribution of street sleepers, 2011-2018**



**Figure 3 – Residing locations of street sleepers as at March 2018**



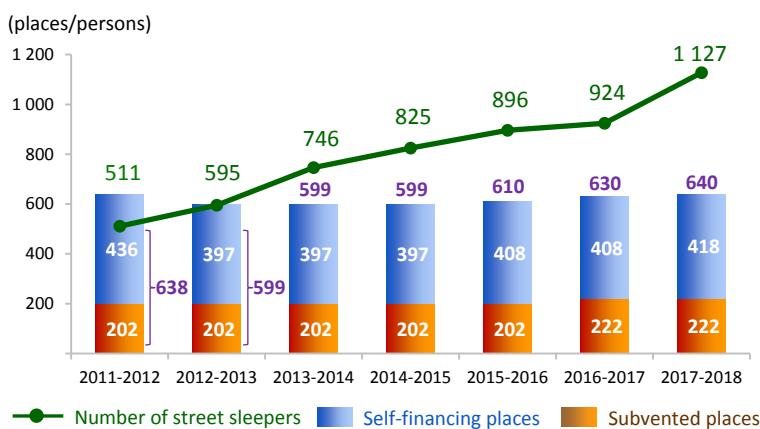
Note: (\*) Staying at lanes, lorries, inside/near public lavatories, bus stops, piers, subways, or 24-hour fast food restaurants.

### Highlights

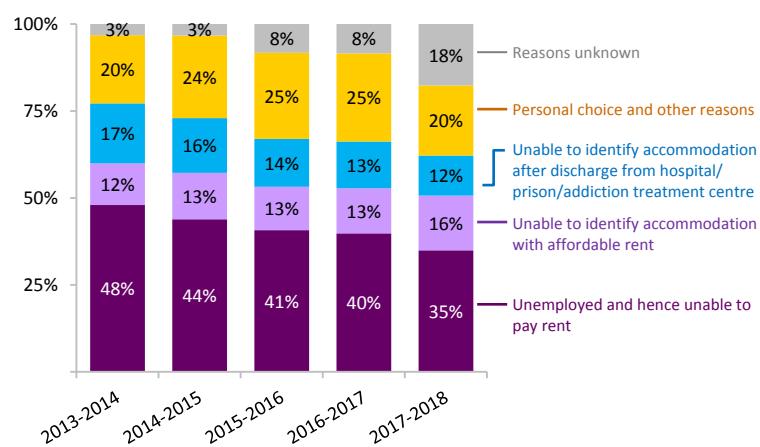
- In Hong Kong, the Social Welfare Department ("SWD") has been subventing three non-governmental organizations ("NGOs") to provide support services to street sleepers, aiming to help them give up street sleeping and re-integrate into the community. Yet, the number of street sleepers has been on the rise in recent years. Between 2011-2012 and 2017-2018, the number of street sleepers registered on SWD's Street Sleepers Registry doubled from 511 to 1 127 and most of them resided in Kowloon (**Figure 1**).
- People aged 50-69 make up the bulk of registered street sleepers, accounting for 47% to 56% of the total between 2011-2012 and 2017-2018. It was followed by people aged 30-49 accounting for about one-third of the total. Another noteworthy trend is the increased number of street sleepers aged 70 or above that almost tripled over the period (**Figure 2**).
- In 2018, the majority of street sleepers resided in playgrounds, parks or car parks (56%), followed by spaces underneath flyover (14%), roadside (9%) and staircase/corridor (5%). In addition to these places, some street sleepers might stay at other locations such as lanes, lorries, inside/near public lavatories, bus stops, piers, subways or 24-hour fast food restaurants (**Figure 3**).

## Street sleepers in Hong Kong (cont'd)

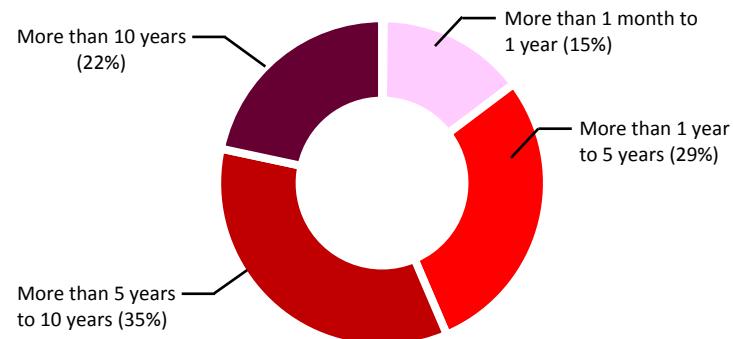
**Figure 4 – Number of street sleepers and accommodation places provided, 2011-2018**



**Figure 5 – Main reason for street sleeping, 2013-2018**



**Figure 6 – Duration of street sleeping among street sleepers as at March 2018**



## Highlights

- To address the emergency and short-term accommodation needs of street sleepers, the SWD-subvented NGOs provide urban hostels and emergency shelters for them. There are also other NGOs providing accommodation places for street sleepers on a self-financing basis. Yet the total number of accommodation places increased modestly between 2011-2012 and 2017-2018, falling short of meeting the potential demand from increased number of street sleepers over the period (Figure 4).

- According to the interviews with all registered street sleepers conducted by SWD, the most common reason for people being homeless is their inability to pay rent either because they are unemployed or cannot afford the rent of private housing. It is also worth noting that discharged patients from hospitals, ex-offenders and rehabilitated drug abusers also have difficulties in identifying accommodation (Figure 5).
- Sleeping on the streets seems to be more than a temporary arrangement for many homeless people. As at March 2018, 35% of street sleepers had slept outdoor for five to 10 years while 22% had even been left homeless for more than 10 years (Figure 6).

Data sources: Latest figures from Labour and Welfare Bureau, and Social Welfare Department.