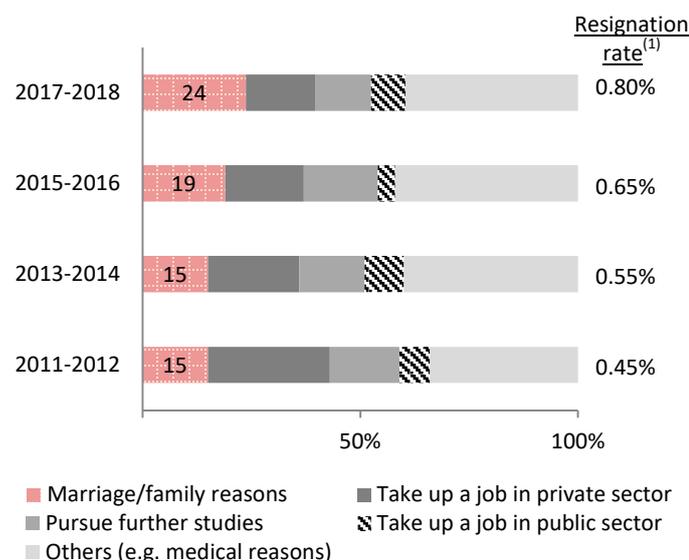


Family-friendly policies for civil servants

Figure 1 – Reasons for civil servant resignation

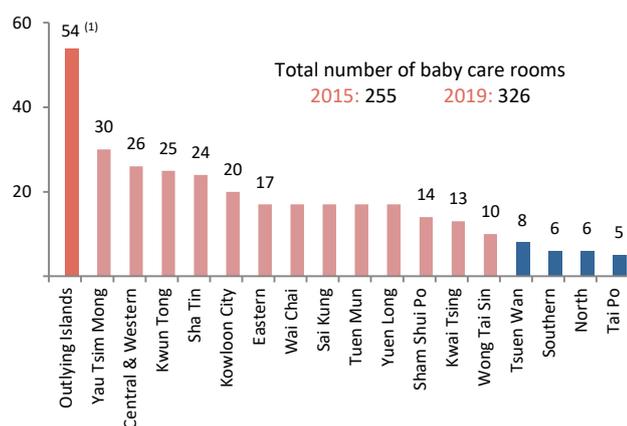


Note: (1) Percentage of staff who resigned from civil service.

Figure 2 – Paid maternity and paternity leave of civil servants in developed economies

Places	Maternity leave	Paternity leave
The United Kingdom ("UK")	39 weeks	14 days
Denmark	20 weeks	14 days
Singapore	16 weeks	14 days
Australia	16 weeks	14 days
Japan	14 weeks	7 days
Hong Kong	14 weeks	5 days
South Korea	12.9 weeks	10 days

Figure 3 – Distribution of baby care rooms in government premises as at June 2019



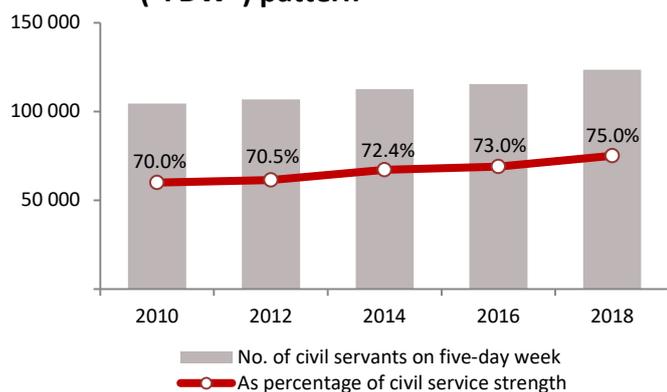
Note: (1) Over 70% of baby care rooms are located at the airport.

Highlights

- Being the largest employer in Hong Kong, the Government has pledged to provide a family-friendly working environment for civil servants to cope with both work and family commitments. According to government data, over 1 300 civil servants resigned from their positions, resulting in a resignation rate of 0.8% in 2017-2018, compared with 0.45% in 2011-2012. Among the resignees, 24% cited marriage or family as a major reason for leaving the civil service in 2017-2018, markedly up from 15% in 2011-2012 (Figure 1). This trend might indicate that making family time has become more of a priority for some civil servants.
- Family-friendly policies for civil servants may take the form of vacation days and special leaves to meet their family needs. In Hong Kong, the Government's policy in 2018 to extend the paid maternity leave for its female employees from 10 weeks to 14 weeks has put Hong Kong nearly on par with Singapore and Australia, but it is still less than half of the UK's 39 weeks (Figure 2). Meanwhile, paid paternity leave for eligible male government employees in Hong Kong have since 2012 increased to five days, which represented some good progress but are still fewer than those in other Asian economies. In some places such as the UK, Denmark and Singapore, shared parental leave (i.e. wife to share part of the leave benefits with husband) is also available to civil servants. This arrangement is however not offered in Hong Kong.
- Regarding support for working mothers in the civil service, the Government provides baby care rooms in its premises (e.g. government offices, hospitals, health centres and community facilities) to facilitate breastfeeding. Some of the venues are also accessible by public users. Although the number of baby care rooms has increased from 255 in 2015 to 326 in 2019, its distribution is not so even. While baby care rooms tend to concentrate in urban areas (e.g. Central and Western), civil servants working in districts such as Tai Po and North have less access to these facilities (Figure 3). Despite this, the Government said that over 75 bureaux and departments had implemented a breastfeeding friendly workplace policy, providing lactation breaks and private space to lactating employees for expression of breastmilk.

Family-friendly policies for civil servants (cont'd)

Figure 4 – Civil servants on five-day week ("FDW") pattern⁽¹⁾



Note: (1) Excluding those working in government schools, the Judiciary and some statutory organizations such as Hospital Authority.

Figure 5 – Popularity of FDW among disciplined services departments in 2016

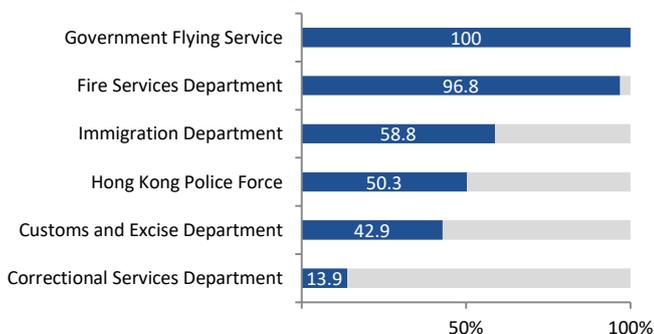


Figure 6 – Median waiting time (in weeks) at specialist clinics for civil servants⁽¹⁾

	2014-2015	2018-2019	Change
Queen Elizabeth Hospital			
Gynaecology	24w	37w	+13w
Medicine	103w	105w	+2w
Orthopaedics & Traumatology	44w	43w	-1w
Surgery	40w	39w	-1w
Prince of Wales Hospital			
Gynaecology	4w	6w	+2w
Medicine	6w	44w	+38w
Orthopaedics & Traumatology	3w	32w	+29w
Surgery	1w	4w	+3w
Queen Mary Hospital			
Medicine	9w	7w	-2w
Surgery	5w	6w	+1w

Note: (1) "w" refers to week(s).

Highlights

- Since 2006, the Government has introduced the five-day week ("FDW") initiative aimed at improving the quality of civil servants' family life without compromising the efficiency of public services. The FDW work pattern can vary from working on a regular Monday-to-Friday basis to taking two rest days in every seven days. While the number of civil servants working on FDW pattern has increased steadily from 70% in 2010 to 75% in 2018, about a quarter of staff have yet to benefit from this initiative (Figure 4).
- Civil servants who are not on FDW pattern are mainly responsible for maintaining emergency and essential public services, such as law enforcement and immigration clearance. As a result, some disciplined services departments such as the Hong Kong Police Force ("HKPF") and Immigration Department had less than two-thirds of staff on FDW pattern in 2016, with the least being the Correctional Services Department ("CSD"), which had a low rate of 13.9% (Figure 5). In recent years, some departments including CSD and HKPF have implemented trial schemes to help more staff migrate to FDW pattern. The schemes involved about 700 civil servants as at September 2018.
- Medical protection is another component of family-friendly employment practices. Outpatient and other medical services are available to eligible civil servants and their families, but high demand has led to long waiting time. This is especially the case for specialist outpatient services, which are provided by three clinics for the exclusive use of civil servants and their eligible family members. In the clinic at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, patients faced long waits of 105 weeks for their first specialist appointment in medicine in 2018-2019 (Figure 6). For Prince of Wales Hospital, the median waiting time in this specialty also rose markedly from six weeks to 44 weeks. However, the waiting time might still be shorter than that for the general public in the same hospital cluster (New Territories East). In 2019, the cluster's median waiting time in medicine specialty for stable cases was 83 weeks.

Data sources: Latest figures from the Civil Service Bureau, Census and Statistics Department and government websites of selected countries.

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