



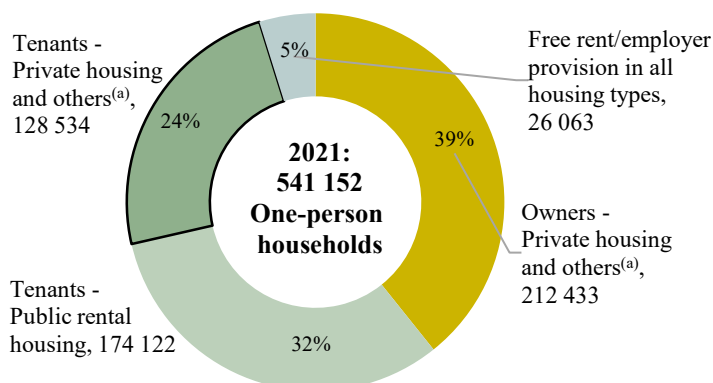
Rental housing for one-person households in Hong Kong

Figure 1 – Number of persons living alone by age

Age	2006	2021	Change
< 25	10 446 (3%)	12 870 (2%)	+2 424
25-34	66 751 (18%)	54 798 (10%)	- 11 953
35-44	83 840 (23%)	68 398 (13%)	- 15 442
45-54	65 539 (18%)	91 476 (17%)	+25 937
55-64	42 248 (11%)	125 041 (23%)	+82 793
≥ 65	98 829 (27%)	188 569 (35%)	+89 740
Total	367 653 (100%)	541 152 (100%)	+173 499 (+47%)
OPH share^(a)	16.5%	20.2%	
Gender share	M:50%, F:50%	M:43%, F:57%	

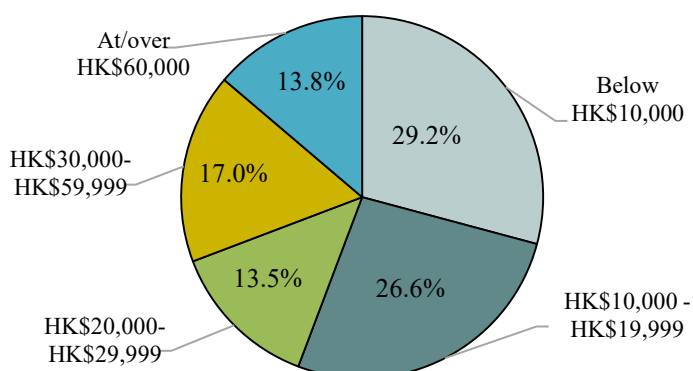
Note: (a) Share in all households in Hong Kong.

Figure 2 – Number of OPHs by housing types and occupier status



Note: (a) Private housing and others include private permanent housing, subsidized home ownership housing, non-domestic housing and temporary housing.

Figure 3 – Monthly income of OPH tenants in non-public rental housing, 2021^(a)



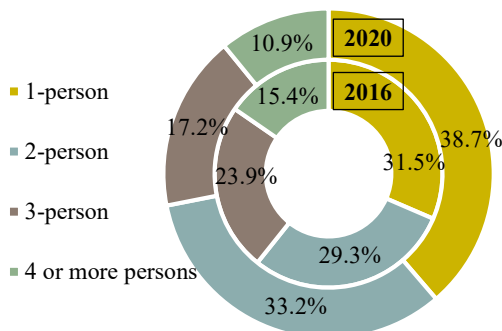
Note: (a) The figures cover household income of tenants living in private permanent housing and other types of housing other than PRH.

Highlights

- Although family members living together are culturally preferred among Chinese, it is not uncommon for people in Hong Kong to live alone by personal choice or due to circumstances (bachelorhood/spinsterhood, divorce or widowhood). Latest Population Census data indicated that the number of such persons has grown by 47% to over 540 000 during the 15-year-period between 2006 and 2021. There was also an ageing trend among these single-dwellers. Among them, 58% were aged over 54 in 2021, markedly higher than 38% in 2006, whereas those under 45 have fallen from 44% to 25% during the same period. Overall, these one-person households (“OPHs”) constitute around 20% of all 2.7 million households in Hong Kong, and more women (57%) live alone than men do (43%) (Figure 1).
- In 2021, 56% of single dwellers or over 300 000 OPHs were rent-paying tenants. Among them, 174 122 or 32% of OPHs lived in public rental housing (“PRH”) mainly provided by Housing Authority (“HA”) and the rest (24% of OPHs) private rental housing. About 39% of OPHs were in fact private or subsidized sale unit owners occupying their own units. The rest of some 5% did not need to pay rent or their units were provided by their employers (Figure 2).
- Contrary to OPHs in PRH with over 70% earning less than HK\$10,000 a month, for those OPHs which rented private housing units, about 70.8% of them earned more than HK\$10,000 and the ratio for earnings at or above HK\$30,000 was also noticeable at 30.8%. For the remnant persons with monthly income of less than HK\$10,000, their housing choice in the market could be rather limited (Figure 3).

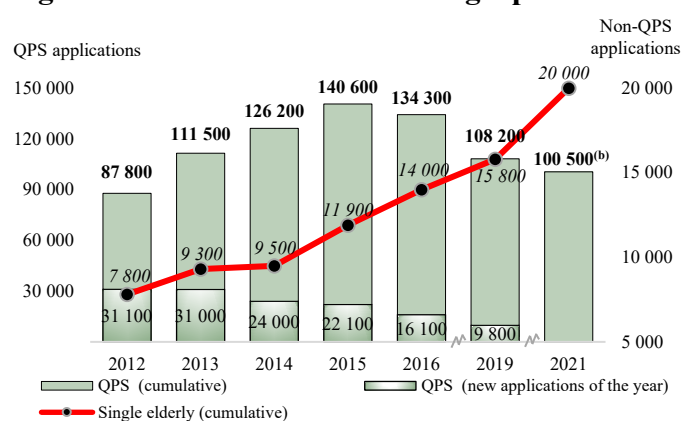
Rental housing for one-person households in Hong Kong (cont'd)

Figure 4 – Household size in subdivided units based on surveys of 2016 and 2020^(a)



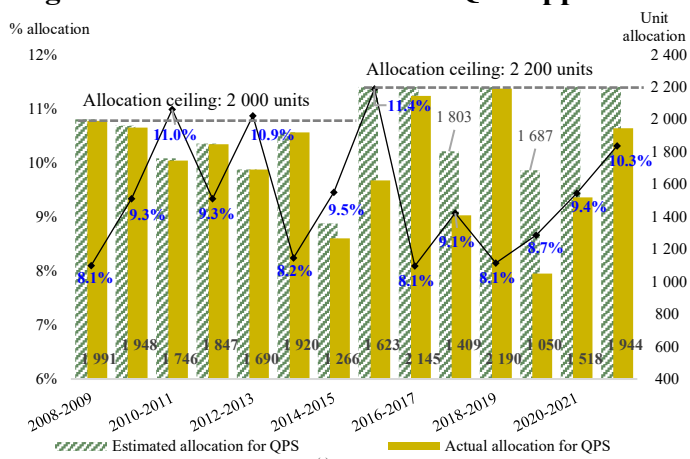
Note: (a) The 2020 survey covered also cubicles and bedspaces which accounted for 3.2% of SDUs in 2020. Whereas in the 2016 survey, such units were not covered. Hence, the two sets of figures may not be directly comparable.

Figure 5 – PRH demand from single persons^(a)



Notes: (a) Cumulative figures were as at end-March of the year (except the 2019 figure for elderly one-person applications which was at end June).
(b) New application number under QPS in 2021 is not yet available. The cumulative number has further dropped to 98 400 as at June 2022.

Figure 6 – Allocation of PRH to QPS applicants



Note: (a) It is calculated as the percentage share of the actual number of units allocated for QPS in a year out of the actual number of units allocated to PRH applicants on the waiting list.

Highlights

- Subdivided units (“SDUs”) is a common housing type for low-income singles, though it is not yet clear about the household number based on the 2021 Population Census. A Government-commissioned survey in 2020 projected that 226 300 people or 110 000 households were living in 100 900 such units. Among the 12 000 SDU covered by the survey, 39% of the households were OPHs (Figure 4). Half of the surveyed households were also on PRH waiting list, but the survey did not provide a separate breakdown for OPHs.
- PRH is often the ultimate choice of low-income OPHs on SDUs and those with a need/wish to live alone but cannot afford the rent in the private market. For those below age 58, they are put under a quota-points system (“QPS”). Rolled out in 2005, QPS assigns points to applicants based on their age, waiting time, and housing status. These applicants had a median age of 32 as at 2020. In 2015, the queue hit a record high of 140 600 before demand waned somewhat after a PRH allocation policy change and HA’s active review over the QPS applications. On the other hand, demand for elderly one-person PRH has continued to climb and reached 20 000 in 2021 (Figure 5), resulting in the lengthening of average waiting time to 4.1 years as at June 2022, i.e. beyond the “around two years” target for single elderly PRH applicants (versus “around three years” for all general applicants as a whole). The Government is offering cash allowance on a pilot basis to those family/elderly one-person applicants who have been waiting for over three years, though QPS applicants are not eligible. Likewise, the recently-announced Light Public Housing will give priority to family applicants.
- QPS is subject to an annual quota as a percentage of flats to be allocated to PRH applicants, with a cap on the number of units. Due to the long queue, HA raised the planned quota in 2015 from 8% to 10%, and the cap from 2 000 to the current 2 200 units. Every year, based on the percentage quota, HA estimates in advance the annual number of flats to be allocated under QPS, which varied quite widely in the past 14 years, with some years close to attaining the cap. The actual allocation was often noticeably less than the estimated allocation in most of the years since 2014-2015 (e.g. by as much as 38% in 2019-2020), probably due to deferred completion of PRHs (Figure 6). How these have affected the waiting time is unclear as HA no longer publishes the information (the average waiting time released in 2011 was 2.3 years). A recent survey conducted by a non-government organization indicated that almost one in five non-elderly singles living in inadequate housing had been waiting for PRH allocation for at least 10 years.

Data sources: Latest figures from Housing Bureau, Housing Authority, Census and Statistics Department, and Society for Community Organization.

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