

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL BRIEF

Census and Statistics Ordinance (Cap. 316)

CENSUS AND STATISTICS (2026 POPULATION CENSUS) ORDER

INTRODUCTION

A At the meeting of the Executive Council on 11 February 2025, the Council ADVISED and the Chief Executive ORDERED that the Census and Statistics (2026 Population Census) Order (the Order), at **Annex A**, should be made under section 9 of the Census and Statistics Ordinance (Cap. 316) (the Ordinance), to direct the Commissioner for Census and Statistics to take a population census for Hong Kong in 2026.

JUSTIFICATIONS

2. Since 1961, the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) has been conducting population censuses every ten years, and by-censuses between two full censuses. Population censuses and by-censuses aim to obtain up-to-date benchmark information on the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the population of Hong Kong. The statistics are vital to the Government for planning and policy formulation, as well as to the private sector and academia for business and research purposes.

3. C&SD will conduct the next population census in 2026. As a major step to modernise the population censuses and by-censuses and to reduce their operational risks and costs in the long run, the following re-engineering initiatives will be implemented from the 2026 Population Census (26C) onwards –

- (a) conducting only a sample enumeration using the “long form” every five years, in lieu of a full census once every ten years and a sample basis by-census in between;

(b) extending the data collection period from 1.5 months to one year;
and

(c) using more extensively government administrative data to supplement survey data.

4. The 26C will be conducted from 1 January to 31 December 2026. Around one-tenth of households in Hong Kong will be subject to detailed enquiry on a broad range of demographic and socio-economic characteristics using the “long form” questionnaire.

5. C&SD has drawn up the data topics to be covered by 26C, taking into account views and suggestions put forward in the extensive consultation exercise conducted in 2023 and 2024. The data topics cover a broad range of items on socio-economic characteristics, and will be specified in the Schedule to the Order. These data topics are generally not covered by other data sources and are relevant to meet users’ needs. Compared with the 2021 Population Census, the data topic on “elderly persons requiring care” will be extended in 26C to cover all persons aged 15 or above¹. In addition, talents and imported labours admitted to Hong Kong under various schemes and the “place of origin” of persons with Chinese ethnicity will be identified in 26C, so as to better understand their socio-economic characteristics.

6. With more extensive use of administrative data, some questions under the sub-items of 26C data topics will be trimmed to reduce the respondents’ reporting burden. These include the amount of government subsidies and allowances received, rent and floor area of public housing units, etc. On the other hand, sub-questions on mode of transport for work and study will be deleted from the list of data topics, as statistics collected through other means are more comprehensive and precise.

7. The summary results for 26C will be released by August 2027, while the detailed results by small geographical areas and population sub-groups, which are of greater policy and research value to the Government, academia and business sector, will be released by phase from September 2027. All completed questionnaires (including electronic copies) containing data on individual persons and households will be destroyed not later than one year after the end date of the census period, i.e. not later than 31 December 2027.

¹ This effectively covers all persons as minors are assumed to require long-term care from their parents or guardians.

OTHER OPTIONS

8. The Order is necessary to provide statutory backing for the conduct of 26C, which cannot be achieved through administrative means. There is no other option.

THE ORDER

9. The Order specifies the period for taking 26C (section 3), the persons, premises and vessels in respect of which particulars are to be obtained (section 3), the purpose of this census (section 4), persons who are required to give the requisite information (section 6), and the deadline for destroying the completed questionnaires (section 7). The Schedule to the Order also specifies the matters in respect of which respondents are required to give particulars.

LEGISLATIVE TIMETABLE

10. The legislative timetable is as follows –

Publication in the Gazette	14 February 2025
Tabling at the Legislative Council (LegCo) for negative vetting	19 February 2025
Commencement	17 April 2025

IMPLICATIONS

11. The Order is in conformity with the Basic Law, including the provisions concerning human rights. Although the making of the Order has no productivity, environmental, sustainability and family implications, the data collected in 26C would provide essential information for policy formulation and service planning in various aspects. The financial, civil service, economic and gender implications are set out at **Annex B**. The Order does not affect the binding effect of the Ordinance.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

12. Extensive consultation on the data topics and the questioning approach of 26C was conducted in 2023 and 2024, with a view to ensuring that 26C can meet various data users' needs. The consultation involved advisory and statutory bodies (including the Statistics Advisory Board), selected organisations (including non-governmental organisations and trade and industrial organisations), relevant faculties/departments in academic institutions, and government bureaux and departments. C&SD briefed the LegCo Panel on Financial Affairs on 4 December 2023 on the conduct of 26C (including the data topics).

13. The consulted parties put forward various suggestions on the data topics to be included in 26C. In response to the suggestions, 26C will feature the new questions and the existing questions with extended scope as stated in paragraph 5 above. Some other suggestions are already available in other survey vehicles (e.g. physical health, e-commerce, and Wi-Fi access).

PUBLICITY

14. The Order will be published in the Gazette on 14 February 2025, and a press release will be issued on the same day. A spokesperson will be available to handle media enquiries. A press conference will be held at end-2025 to announce the upcoming commencement of the data collection work, together with a series of publicity programmes to be launched throughout 2026.

BACKGROUND

15. Population censuses were conducted in Hong Kong at ten-year intervals in 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991, 2001, 2011, and 2021; and population by-censuses were conducted in 1966, 1976, 1986, 1996, 2006 and 2016 in between consecutive population censuses. From 26C onwards, a sample enumeration using the "long form" will be conducted every five years, in lieu of a full census once every ten years and a sample basis by-census in between.

ENQUIRIES

16. Enquiries in relation to the Order can be directed to Ms Sharon NG Pun-wai, Assistant Commissioner (Social), Census and Statistics Department, at 2582 4801.

Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau
12 February 2025

Census and Statistics (2026 Population Census) Order

Section 1

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Census and Statistics (2026 Population Census) Order

(Made by the Chief Executive in Council under section 9 of the Census and Statistics Ordinance (Cap. 316))

1. Commencement

This Order comes into operation on 17 April 2025.

2. Interpretation

In this Order—

2026 census (2026 年普查) means a census of population referred to in section 3(1);

premises (處所) includes a staircase, a corridor and an unsheltered place;

vessel (船隻)—

(a) means any description of vessel, whether or not it is used in navigation or constructed or adapted for use in navigation; and

(b) includes a ship and a boat.

3. Census to be taken

(1) The Commissioner must take a census of population from 1 January 2026 to 31 December 2026 (both dates inclusive) to obtain particulars of—

(a) persons dwelling in Hong Kong—

(i) including persons dwelling on board a vessel in Hong Kong other than an excluded vessel; but

(ii) excluding any naval, military or air force personnel;

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(b) premises, other than a vessel, in Hong Kong that are occupied by any person referred to in paragraph (a) for dwelling purposes, and households in those premises; and

(c) vessels on board of which persons referred to in paragraph (a)(i) dwell, and households on board those vessels.

(2) In this section—

excluded vessel (豁除船隻) means—

(a) a vessel used by—

(i) the Central People's Government;

(ii) the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region; or

(iii) the government of a foreign state,

at the time when a census officer seeks access to the vessel; or

(b) a warship.

4. Purpose of census

The purpose of the 2026 census is to obtain information on the demographic, social and economic characteristics of the population of Hong Kong at the time of the taking of the census.

5. Sampling methods may be used

The Commissioner may use sampling methods for the collection of information relating to the 2026 census.

6. Specified persons to give particulars of matters specified in Schedule

(1) A specified person occupying any premises subject to census under section 3(1)(b) or dwelling on board any vessel subject to census under section 3(1)(c) must, for the purpose of the

2026 census, give to the Commissioner particulars of the matters specified in the Schedule in respect of—

- (a) the specified person, the premises or the vessel, and the household in those premises or on board that vessel; and
- (b) any other person—
 - (i) who occupies the premises or dwells on board the vessel; and
 - (ii) who is—
 - (A) aged below 15 and under the specified person's guardianship; or
 - (B) unable to give those particulars by reason of sickness, disablement, absence or other sufficient cause.

(2) In this section—

specified person (指明人士)—

- (a) means a person who has reached 15 years of age on 30 June 2026; but
- (b) excludes any naval, military or air force personnel.

7. **Deadline for destroying completed schedules**

The Commissioner must destroy all completed schedules collected or received by census officers for the 2026 census, and all copies of the schedules, not later than 31 December 2027.

Schedule

[s. 6]

Specified Matters

1. **For persons**

- (1) Whether a member of the household
- (2) Relationship to other members of the household
- (3) Sex
- (4) Year and month of birth
- (5) Marital status
- (6) Usual accommodation in Hong Kong
- (7) Place of birth
- (8) Ethnicity
- (9) For a person of Chinese ethnicity—place of origin
- (10) Nationality
- (11) Duration of residence in Hong Kong
- (12) Whether a Hong Kong permanent resident, Hong Kong non-permanent resident, visitor holding Two-way Permit from the Mainland or visitor holding other travel document
- (13) For a person who is a Hong Kong non-permanent resident—type of visa or entry permit that the person relies on to stay in Hong Kong, or type of admission scheme under which the person is permitted to stay in Hong Kong
- (14) Number, or expected number, of months of stay in Hong Kong during the period between January 2026 and June 2026

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- (15) Number, or expected number, of months of stay in Hong Kong during the period between July 2026 and December 2026
- (16) If staying, or expecting to stay, outside Hong Kong during any period in 2026—main reason for that
- (17) Whereabouts, or expected whereabouts, on 30 June 2026
- (18) Place of residence 5 years ago
- (19) Type of housing 5 years ago
- (20) Usual language
- (21) Ability to speak other languages or dialects
- (22) Ability to read languages
- (23) Ability to write languages
- (24) For a person who has reached 15 years of age on 30 June 2026—whether the person requires care
- (25) For a person requiring care who has reached 15 years of age on 30 June 2026—the person's primary carer
- (26) School attendance
- (27) Educational attainment—
 - (a) highest level attended
 - (b) highest level completed
- (28) Type of school attended
- (29) Field of study
- (30) Place of study
- (31) Economic activity status
- (32) Industry
- (33) Occupation
- (34) Place of work
- (35) Hours of work in main employment

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- (36) Earnings from main employment
- (37) Whether having other employment
- (38) Hours of work in all other employment
- (39) Earnings from all other employment
- (40) Other cash incomes

2. For households

- (1) Type of household
- (2) Household size
- (3) Household composition
- (4) Household income

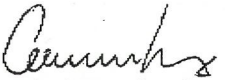
3. For premises other than vessels

- (1) Type of premises
- (2) Type of accommodation
- (3) Whether usual or occasional residence
- (4) Number of households in premises
- (5) Number of persons in premises
- (6) Whether subdivided units
- (7) Number of living or dining rooms
- (8) Number of kitchens
- (9) Number of bathrooms or toilets
- (10) Number of bedrooms
- (11) Number of other rooms
- (12) Number of cocklofts
- (13) Number of bedspaces
- (14) Saleable area of accommodation

- (15) Tenure of accommodation
- (16) Mortgage payment
- (17) Outstanding mortgage period or loan period
- (18) Rent
- (19) Management fee

4. For Vessels

- (1) Type of vessel
- (2) Whether usual or occasional residence
- (3) Number of households on board vessel
- (4) Number of persons on board vessel


Clerk to the Executive Council

COUNCIL CHAMBER

11 February 2025

Explanatory Note

This Order directs the Commissioner for Census and Statistics to take a census of population of Hong Kong in 2026 to obtain particulars relating to persons, premises, vessels and other matters described in the Order.

Financial, Civil Service, Economic and Gender Implications

Financial and civil service implications

In January 2024, the Legislative Council (LegCo) Finance Committee (FC) approved an amount of \$182.671 million for the non-recurrent expenditure for acquisition of information technology (IT) equipment and services for the 2026 Population Census (26C)¹. Separately, an additional time-limited funding of \$370.955 million has been allocated to the Census and Statistics Department over a five-year period from 2024-25 to 2028-29 for employing additional manpower resources and setting up an office for conducting 26C.

2. A project team has been set up comprising mainly statistical, IT and administrative professionals, field and clerical staff to undertake various planning and implementation tasks, including data collection, data processing, statistical compilation and dissemination of results. At the peak of the project, there will be 55 time-limited civil servants and 247 non-civil service contract/post-retirement service contract positions, of which 200 positions will be Survey Interviewers. All time-limited civil service posts are approved for creation either by temporary upgrade of the respective posts in recruitment ranks, or with offsetting deletion of existing permanent posts.

Economic implications

3. The 26C will provide comprehensive and useful population and household related information to the Government, academics and the business community for planning, research and formulating business strategies, which will benefit Hong Kong as a whole.

¹ At the same meeting, the LegCo FC also approved an amount of \$67.008 million for the acquisition of IT equipment and services for implementing a Departmental Data Collection Platform.

Gender implications

4. The 26C has positive implications as it enables collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data, provides objective data on the situations and needs of both genders in various aspects, and facilitates gender analysis.