

Hong Kong Family Wellbeing Index 2026

Executive Summary

Introduction

1. The Hong Kong Family Welfare Society (HKFWS) has always been concerned about the wellbeing of families in Hong Kong. In 2020, the HKFWS released “Hong Kong Family Wellbeing Index” (HKFWI) to raise public awareness of family wellbeing. It was the first such tool to measure family wellbeing that was both reliable and tailored for the Hong Kong society and culture. Through city-wide surveys, the HKFWS regularly assessed the wellbeing of families in Hong Kong and identified trends by comparing results with past data. Recommendations were then made according to the findings, providing important references for Hong Kong families, the government and different stakeholders in promoting family wellbeing.
2. 2026 marks the fourth round of the HKFWI survey. The first survey was conducted in July–August 2019 during a period of social unrest; the second was conducted in January 2022, just before the peak of the fifth wave of COVID-19; and the third was conducted in January 2024, after the pandemic. To gain a deeper understanding of family members' mental health, this round of the survey also **added new questions on loneliness, the intention to escape from family, and incorporated time spent together and in conversation with family members into the analysis.**

Research Design Summary

Definition of "Family" and "Family Wellbeing"

3. The study adopted the definition of “family” from a 2018 study of family impact assessment in Hong Kong, which was “a socially recognized group (at least two people in a relationship, usually joined by blood, marriage or adoption) that forms an emotional connection involving care, responsibility and commitment [without time limit]”. Meanwhile, “family wellbeing” was defined as “a state in which a family can perform various functions to satisfy the diverse needs of individual members of the family through interactions with the environment”. In the questionnaire, however, terms like “family” and “family members” were left to respondents to define on their own.

Composition of Hong Kong Family Wellbeing Index (HKFWI)

4. HKFWI consists of six domains, three of which concern the situation within a family, namely (1) **family solidarity**, (2) **family resources** and (3) **family health**; the remaining three concern the family’s interaction with the society, namely (4) **social connection**, (5) **social resources** and (6) **work-life balance**.

Range of index score

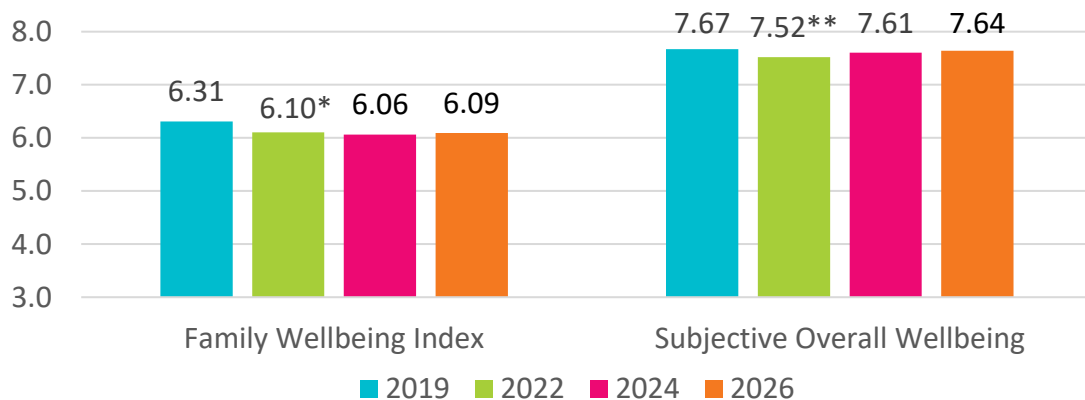
5. HKFWI ranges from 0 to 10. Scores ≥ 7.5 are defined as “good”, 6 to < 7.5 are “average”, 5 to < 6 are “below average”, while scores below 5 are considered “poor”.

Contact Information

6. This year, the HKFWS commissioned the Hong Kong Public Opinion Research Institute (HKPORI) for the third time to conduct a random telephone survey. The survey was conducted by real interviewers from 12 January to 12 February 2026 by dialling both landline and mobile numbers. Hong Kong residents aged 18 or above who were living with their families were invited to complete the HKFWI questionnaire. **The sample size was 2,112** with a response rate of 46.4%.
7. Data were rim-weighted according to figures from the General Household Survey (Q4 2025) provided by the Census and Statistics Department. The demographic variables used for weighting included gender, age, education level (highest level attended), economic activity status as well as household size.

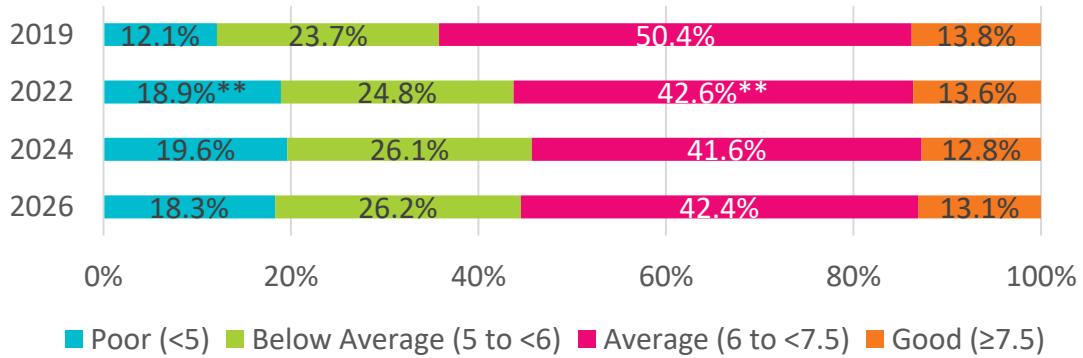
Hong Kong Family Wellbeing Index: Results and Trends

8. The HKFWI had been declining continuously since the first survey in 2019. **This year, however, the downward trend has reversed**, with the score rising slightly from 6.06 in 2024 to 6.09 in 2026, an increase of 0.03 scores — though the increase is not statistically significant. **The overall level of family wellbeing in Hong Kong remained similar to that in 2024.** Meanwhile, the subjective overall wellbeing this year also increased slightly compared with 2024.



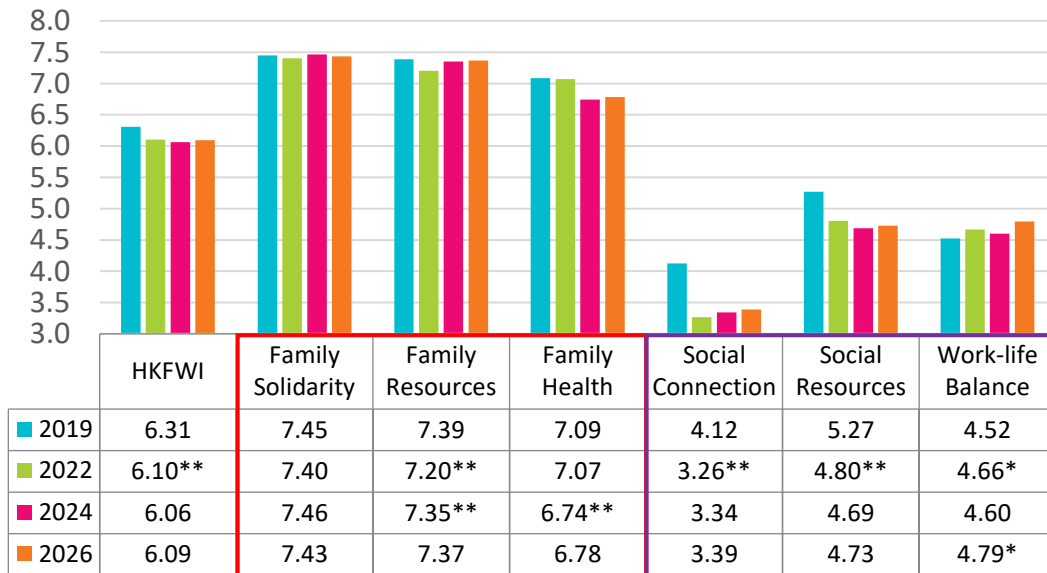
* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$ (compared to the previous survey)

9. **Over 40% of the respondents had their family wellbeing in the “average” category**, similar to the 2024 survey. The proportion of respondents in the "Poor" range showed a slight decrease.



*p<0.05; **p<0.01 (compared to the previous survey)

10. When look at separate domains, Hong Kong families perform significantly better in intrafamilial functions than in interaction with the larger society. Scores across the six domains are mostly similar to 2024, with the exception of **"Work-Life Balance" (4.79), which rose significantly by 0.19 scores**. In terms of the trends, **"Social Connection" (3.39) has been rising continuously since 2022 but remains the lowest-scoring domain**. In addition, **"Family Health" (6.78) has yet to show a significant recovery since the end of the pandemic**.



Domains related to intrafamily situation

Domains related to family's interaction with larger systems

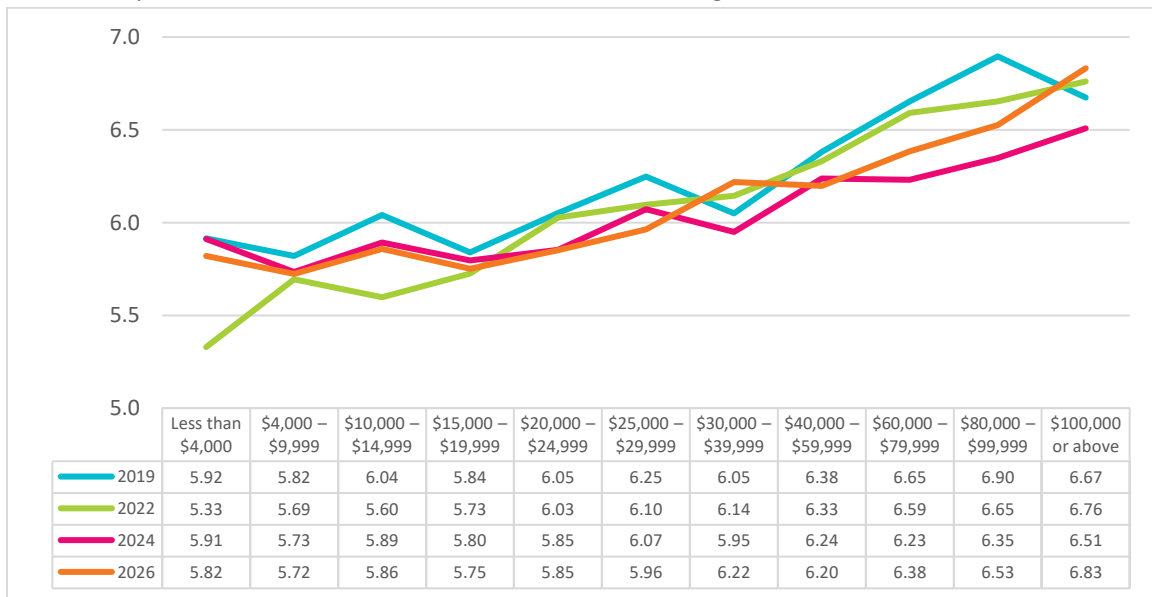
*p<0.05; **p<0.01 (compared to the previous survey)

11. The indicators of “family solidarity”, including “warmth” (7.62) and “discipline” (7.24), have significantly declined compared to 2024. On the other hand, the “family resource” indicator “living environment” (7.49), and the “work life balance” indicator “work interferes with home” (4.35), both showed significant improvement.

Effects of Demographic Variables on Family Wellbeing and Their Trends

Family Income

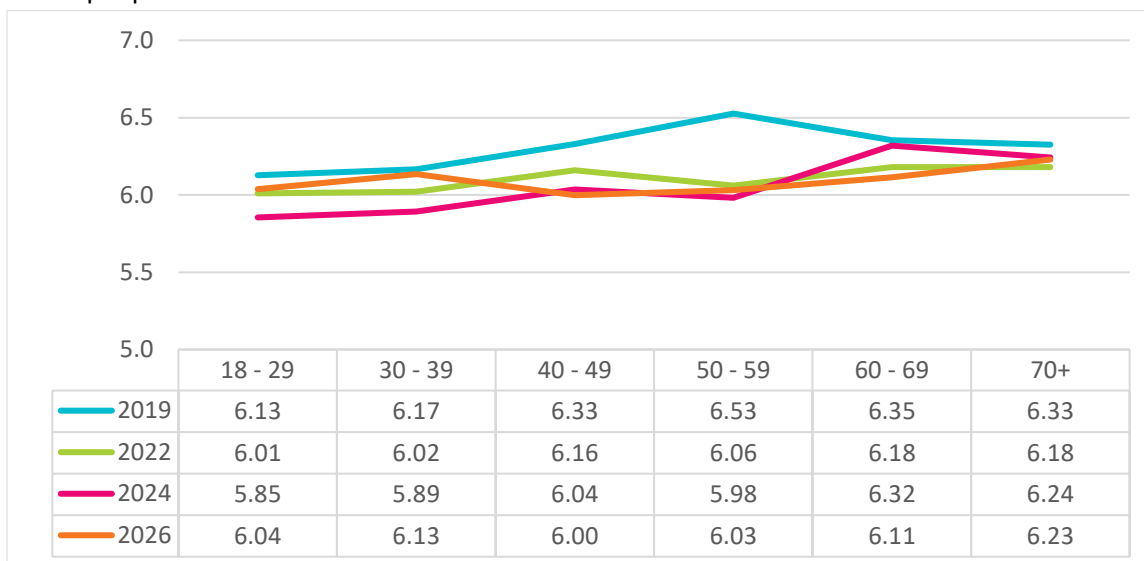
12. Family income continued to have a positive correlation with the FWI. In other words, **the higher the income, the higher the FWI**. Also, **a significant FWI gap had consistently been observed between the lowest income group (less than HK\$4,000) and the highest income group (HK\$100,000 or above)**, and the gap had even widened from 0.60 to 1.01 this year.
13. Hong Kong's median monthly household income in 2025 was HK\$30,000. Using this as a benchmark, **the FWI of families with income below the median remained about the same as in 2024, while families with income above the median increased significantly**. The survey also showed that **the FWI for families with monthly incomes slightly below the median (HK\$25,000 - \$29,999) has been decreasing continuously since 2019**, and obtained only 5.96 in this year’s FWI, which is lower than the overall average of 6.09.



14. Linear regression analysis of demographic variables found **a significant positive relationship between family income and multiple FWI domains**, including "Family Solidarity," "Family Resources," "Family Health," and "Social Resources." Looking back to the three surveys since 2022, family income has maintained a significant positive relationship with both "Family Resources" and "Family Health."

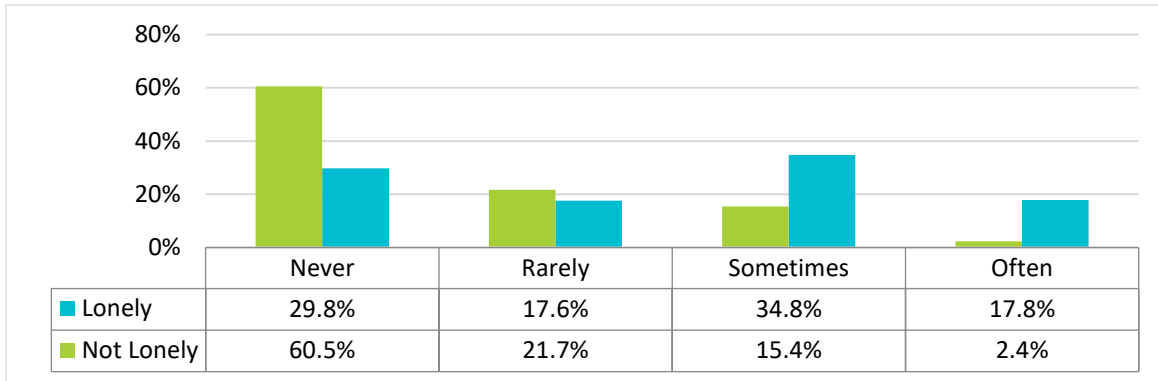
Age

15. Unlike previous survey years, **the younger age groups (18–39) had consistently recorded lower wellbeing scores in the past, but showed a significant recovery this year. In contrast, the 40–49 age group has experienced a continuous decline, becoming the lowest-scoring group this year.** It is probably related to the heavier family responsibilities borne by this group of people.



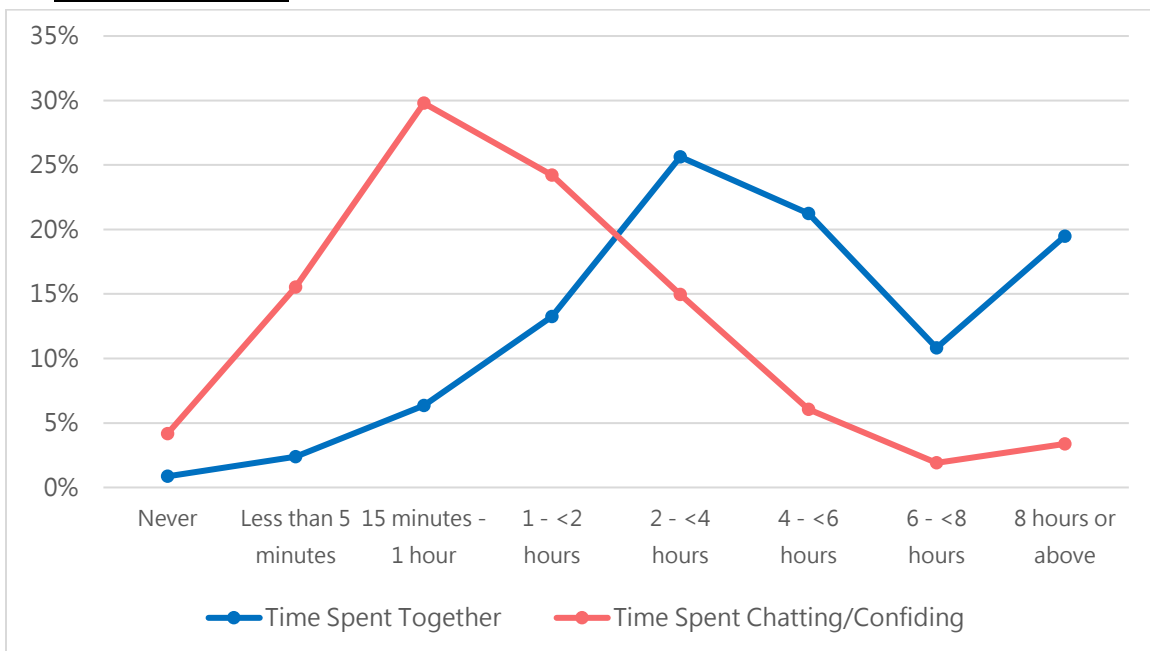
Loneliness and the Intention to Escape from Home

16. This survey incorporated the UCLA-3 Loneliness Scale to measure the respondents' level of loneliness on a scale of 0 to 9, with 6 as the threshold for loneliness. Results show that 20% of respondents met or exceed the threshold. In other words, **one in every five people in Hong Kong can be considered "lonely"**.
17. Based on linear regression analysis, groups with higher loneliness scores include: (1) lower-income families, (2) separated/divorced people, (3) families that experienced a significant incident in the past year, (4) people aged 50–69, and (5) students. The least lonely group consists of retirees.
18. Loneliness is inversely related to the HKFWI. **After controlling for socioeconomic background, each one-score increase in the loneliness score corresponds to a 0.29-score decrease in the HKFWI.**
19. **Among respondents who are classified as "lonely," more than half (53%) reported that they "sometimes" or "often" found the life with their families unbearable, causing the intention to escape from their families;** among those classified as "not lonely", fewer than one in five (18%) reported the same.



Time Spent Together and Family Wellbeing

20. The survey also investigated how many hours per day, on average over the past year, the respondents spent with their family members, and how much time they spent chitchatting or confiding in each other. Results show that 90% of respondents spent at least one hour with their family per day. However, **20% of respondents chatted with their families for less than 15 minutes per day.**



21. Linear regression analysis shows that family wellbeing is positively correlated with time spent together and in conversation. **If daily time spent with family increases from less than one hour to two hours or more, the HKFWI increases by 0.26 scores and the loneliness score decreases by 0.62 scores,** reflecting the value of face-to-face companionship.
22. Furthermore, **compared to respondents who never talk or confide in family members at all, those who spend at least 15 minutes a day in conversation with family show a significant increase of 1.19 scores in HKFWI and a decrease of 0.84 scores in loneliness score.** These

findings collectively demonstrate that spending time with and talking to family members effectively uplift family wellbeing and reduces loneliness.

Confidants and Family Wellbeing

23. Respondents were asked to rate on a scale of 0 to 10 their willingness to confide in family members, friends, and AI chatbots. Categorizing a score of 5 or above as "willing," results show that **approximately one in four respondents (24%) are unwilling to confide in family members.** More strikingly, nearly 10% of respondents are unwilling to confide in any of these parties (including those who do not know how to use AI chatbots). Based on this data, **an estimated 520,000 people in Hong Kong are experiencing self-isolation despite living with family members.**
24. Among the 18–29 age group, 41% indicated willingness to confide in AI chatbots. In terms of priorities, **excluding those unfamiliar with AI, 71% of the 18–29 age group prefer confiding in friends over AI, while only about 58% prefer confiding in family members over AI — significantly lower than the approximately 78% among those aged 30 and above.**

Work-Life Balance: Results and Trend

25. In 2026, the overall "Work-Life Balance" score was **4.79**, showing a statistically significant increase compared to the 2024 score.
26. Regression analysis of "Work-Life Balance" against various socioeconomic background variables identified groups with lower scores, including: (1) those living in public housing / transitional housing / subdivided flats, (2) those who experienced a major family crisis in the past year, and (3) families with one caregiver. Groups with higher scores include students.

Social Connection: Results and Trend

27. Survey results show that "Social Connection" (3.39) remains at the "Poor" level. Across all four surveys to date, **"Social Connection" has consistently been the lowest-scoring domain.**
28. Regression analysis of "Social Connection" against various socioeconomic variables found that it is significantly and positively associated with age and educational attainment. Females also scored higher on "Social Connection." Groups with lower scores include unmarried individuals and those who experienced a major family crisis in the past year.

Qualitative Results

29. The research team conducted an online qualitative exercise to understand the perspectives on family and loneliness particularly of individuals experiencing self-isolation despite living with family members. When asked "What do you find important in family life but find difficult to bring up or tend to avoid?", respondents cited topics ranging from daily life matters and family responsibilities to health concerns. When asked "Why do you feel lonely within your

family?", many respondents responded similar content, "My family members just can't communicate with me" and "Everyone is on their phones or tablets — they each have their own world." When asked "What do you think people around you could do to make you feel less lonely?", respondents expressed wishes such as "Chances to chat, even if it's just about trivial matters" and "Put down the phone and accompany me, turn off the TV, and play board games or share stories together as a family."

Recommendations

Continue Promoting "Family Health" with the Family as a Unit — Advocating that "Health is a Family Matter"

30. This survey found that "Family Health" scores declined noticeably after the COVID-19 pandemic and have yet to show a significant recovery. HKFWS recommends that all sectors continue to promote "Family Health" with the family as a cohesive unit.
31. HKFWS will continue to organise activities under the theme "Healthy Family" to promote "Family Health". These activities not only help strengthen health of family members, but also facilitate their communication and time spent together, thereby enhancing family cohesion and strengthening families' connection with society.

Reducing Loneliness Starts from Families

32. People need to maintain connections with others to alleviate loneliness, and healthy family bonds are not only effective in reducing the risk of loneliness but also in enhancing family wellbeing. Based on the survey results, HKFWS recommends everyone spending at least 2 hours per day with family members and at least 15 minutes in chats, accompanying one another and expressing care. HKFWS understands that some families may face challenges in conducting effective communication; we therefore also provide relevant services to help families to build stronger relationships and positive interactions.
33. If a family member shows signs of loneliness — such as feeling a lack of companionship or being ignored — the symptom may gradually constitute to anxiety or depression. Family members should proactively express concern to them or seek professional assistance. HKFWS's Integrated Family Services offers the "Family Wellness Savings Plan", encouraging families to spend more time together and "save up happy moments".

Harnessing AI to Promote Relationships

34. AI chatbot tools have become increasingly prevalent. Artificial intelligence and time spent confiding in family and friends can serve complementary roles. HKFWS calls on the government and various organisations to introduce more services and training tailored to citizens' needs, helping those with less exposure to digital technology better understand AI and its proper use, so that technology truly becomes a tool to strengthen connections. HKFWS encourages those unfamiliar with AI to actively learn, and through its various services, the

organisation works to enhance digital capability — ultimately fostering connection with others and improving "Family Wellbeing".