

## Hong Kong's poor live in homes smaller than prison cells

4th November, 2017



A new study shows that some poor people in Hong Kong live in tiny homes. Residents from a housing alliance found that 204 families in their area live in homes that are smaller than prison

cells. The families live in the Kwai Chung area of Hong Kong. The average living space per person was just 4.6 square meters. This is roughly the size of three toilet cubicles, or about half the size of a car parking space. The average size of a prison cell for Hong Kong's maximum security prisoners is about 50 per cent bigger than the size of the Kwai Chung homes. A 2016 government report stated that over 65 per cent of Hong Kong families live in homes that range between 7 and 14 square meters.

Hong Kong has one of the world's most expensive housing markets. Britain's 'Guardian' newspaper said an average resident would have to save for more than 18 years in order to pay for a tiny home. A member of the Kwai Chung housing alliance told reporters about how unhappy people are about living in such a small home. He said: "It is completely unacceptable and inhumane that the living area for people is the same as for prisoners in such a prosperous city like Hong Kong." Another resident said she could only afford a tiny room for her husband and six-year-old son. The room has a bunk bed, a closet and a small folding table. She said: "The bathroom is so small we have to sit sideways to go to the toilet."

Sources: [nydailynews.com](http://nydailynews.com) / [the-guardian.com](http://the-guardian.com) / [scmp.com](http://scmp.com)

## Writing

Governments should make sure there is a minimum size for houses. Discuss.

## Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

study / housing / families / prison cells / toilet / average / size / homes / square / expensive / markets / resident / unhappy / inhumane / prosperous / afford / toilet

## True / False

- The article reported on 2,400 families in Hong Kong. T / F
- The average living space in the homes was 4.6 square meters per family. T / F
- The average living space was the size of three toilet cubicles. T / F
- Maximum security prison cells were the same size as the tiny rooms. T / F
- The article says people have to be over 18 to buy a house. T / F
- The article said Hong Kong was a prosperous city. T / F
- A woman's room had a bunk bed in it. T / F
- A woman could not sit on her toilet properly. T / F

## Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                      |                |
|----------------------|----------------|
| 1. <b>study</b>      | a. costly      |
| 2. <b>found</b>      | b. usual       |
| 3. <b>average</b>    | c. rich        |
| 4. <b>roughly</b>    | d. announced   |
| 5. <b>stated</b>     | e. pay for     |
| 6. <b>expensive</b>  | f. report      |
| 7. <b>reporters</b>  | g. bathroom    |
| 8. <b>prosperous</b> | h. journalists |
| 9. <b>afford</b>     | i. discovered  |
| 10. <b>toilet</b>    | j. about       |

## Discussion – Student A

- How much space do you need in your house?
- What things must you have in your room?
- Why are rooms and houses in Hong Kong so small?
- How would a tiny living space make you feel?
- Should Hong Kong make its prison cells smaller?
- What do you know about Hong Kong?
- What would you do with a bigger living space?
- What advice do you have for those living in small rooms?

## Phrase Match

- |                                      |                             |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. homes that are smaller            | a. housing markets          |
| 2. roughly the size                  | b. report                   |
| 3. maximum                           | c. to go to the toilet      |
| 4. A 2016 government                 | d. than prison cells        |
| 5. homes that range between          | e. order to pay             |
| 6. one of the world's most expensive | f. security prisoners       |
| 7. save for more than 18 years in    | g. city like Hong Kong      |
| 8. It is completely unacceptable     | h. of three toilet cubicles |
| 9. a prosperous                      | i. and inhumane             |
| 10. we have to sit sideways          | j. 7 and 14 square meters   |

## Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- How much space do you have in your house?
- What is the good thing about a big living space?
- Is it better to buy or rent a house?
- How can prison cells be bigger than rooms in houses?
- What good things are there about tiny rooms?
- How would you survive in a really tiny room?
- What questions would you like to ask the lady in the article?

## Spelling

- detneriss from a housing alliance
- The aegerva living space
- luyrohq the size of three toilet cubicles
- maximum icyuster prisoners
- egran between 7 and 14
- 7 and 14 qaeurs meters
- in rrdoe to pay for a tiny home
- It is tleoclypme unacceptable
- unacceptable and umhenain
- in such a spurroopse city
- she could only fdarfo a tiny room
- we have to sit ywiadsse

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. i	3. b	4. j	5. d
6. a	7. h	8. c	9. e	10. g

## Role Play

### Role A – Bedroom

You think the bedroom is the most important room in a house. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their rooms aren't as important. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): bathroom, kitchen or living room.

### Role B – Bathroom

You think the bathroom is the most important room in a house. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their rooms aren't as important. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): bedroom, kitchen or living room.

### Role C – Kitchen

You think the kitchen is the most important room in a house. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their rooms aren't as important. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): bathroom, bedroom or living room.

### Role D – Living Room

You think the living room is the most important room in a house. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their rooms aren't as important. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): bathroom, kitchen or bedroom.

## Speaking – Rooms

Rank these with your partner. Put the most important rooms in a house at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |                |               |
|----------------|---------------|
| • dining room  | • bedroom     |
| • study        | • toilet      |
| • bathroom     | • kitchen     |
| • laundry room | • living room |

### Answers – True False

a	F	b	F	c	T	d	F	e	F	f	T	g	T	h	T
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.