

Consumer Price Indices for April 2024

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (May 23) the Consumer Price Index (CPI) figures for April 2024. According to the Composite CPI, overall consumer prices rose by 1.1% in April 2024 over the same month a year earlier, smaller than the corresponding increase (2.0%) in March 2024. The smaller increase was mainly due to the Government's provision of rates concession in April 2024, whereas there was no such concession in March 2024. Netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures, the year-on-year rate of increase in the Composite CPI (i.e. the underlying inflation rate) in April 2024 was 0.9%, also smaller than that in March 2024 (1.0%).

On a seasonally adjusted basis, the average monthly rate of change in the Composite CPI for the 3-month period ending April 2024 was -0.2%, and that for the 3-month period ending March 2024 was 0.0%. Netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures, the corresponding rates of change were both 0.0%.

Analysed by sub-index, the year-on-year rates of increase in the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) were 1.1%, 1.0% and 1.1% respectively in April 2024, as compared to 2.3%, 1.9% and 1.7% respectively in March 2024. Netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures, the year-on-year rates of increase in the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) were 0.8%, 1.0% and 1.1% respectively in April 2024, as compared to 0.8%, 1.1% and 1.3% respectively in March 2024.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, for the 3-month period ending April 2024, the average monthly rates of change in the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) were -0.3%, -0.2% and 0.0% respectively. The corresponding rates of change for the 3-month period ending March 2024 were 0.0%, 0.0% and -0.1% respectively. Netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures, the average monthly rates of change in the seasonally adjusted CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) for the 3-month period ending April 2024 were 0.1%, 0.0% and 0.1% respectively, and the corresponding rates of change for the 3-month period ending March 2024 were 0.0%, 0.0% and -0.1% respectively.

Amongst the various components of the Composite CPI, year-on-year increases in prices were recorded in April 2024 for alcoholic drinks and tobacco (20.8%), meals out and takeaway food (3.1%), miscellaneous services (2.2%), transport (1.8%), miscellaneous goods (1.1%), housing (1.0%), and clothing and footwear (0.6%).

On the other hand, year-on-year decreases in the components of the Composite CPI were recorded in April 2024 for electricity, gas and water (-9.3%), durable goods (-0.8%), and basic food (-0.4%).

Taking the first 4 months of 2024 together, the Composite CPI rose by 1.7% over a year earlier. The respective increases in the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) were 2.0%, 1.6% and 1.6% respectively. The corresponding increases

after netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures were 1.0%, 0.7%, 1.0% and 1.3% respectively.

For the three months ending April 2024, the Composite CPI rose by 1.7% over a year earlier, while the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) rose by 1.9%, 1.6% and 1.6% respectively. The corresponding increases after netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures were 1.0%, 0.8%, 1.1% and 1.3% respectively.

For the 12 months ending April 2024, the Composite CPI was on average 2.0% higher than that in the preceding 12-month period. The respective increases in the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) were 2.2%, 1.9% and 1.9% respectively. The corresponding increases after netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures were 1.4%, 1.3%, 1.4% and 1.6% respectively.

Commentary

A Government spokesman said that underlying consumer price inflation stayed modest in April. While prices of meals out and takeaway food increased at a relatively fast pace, prices of basic food edged down. Prices of energy-related items declined notably. Price pressures on other major components remained broadly in check.

Looking ahead, overall inflation should remain contained in the near term. Domestic costs may face some upward pressures along with continued economic growth. External price pressures should remain on a broad downward trend, though geopolitical tensions will bring uncertainties. The Government will continue to monitor the situation.

Further information

The CPIs and year-on-year rates of change at section level for April 2024 are shown in Table 1. The time series on the year-on-year rates of change in the CPIs before and after netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures are shown in Table 2. For discerning the latest trend in consumer prices, it is also useful to look at the changes in the seasonally adjusted CPIs. The time series on the average monthly rates of change during the latest three months for the seasonally adjusted CPIs are shown in Table 3. The rates of change in the original and the seasonally adjusted Composite CPI and the underlying inflation rate are presented graphically in Chart 1.

More detailed statistics are given in the "Monthly Report on the Consumer Price Index". Users can browse and download this publication at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=B1060001&scode=270).

The reference period of the expenditure weights used for compilation of CPIs has been updated to the whole year of 2023 starting from the reference month of April 2024, primarily to better reflect changes in household consumption patterns brought by resumption to normalcy after the COVID-19

epidemic. The updating is technical in nature which is in full conformity with international recommendations and it does not involve revision to the CPIs already released. More details are provided in Part 8 on "Latest Developments" of the note on "Concepts and Methods" in the "Monthly Report on the Consumer Price Index".

For enquiries about the CPIs, please contact the Consumer Price Index Section of the C&SD (Tel: 3903 7374 or email: cpi@censtatd.gov.hk).