

Consumer Price Indices for January 2024

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (February 22) the Consumer Price Index (CPI) figures for January 2024. According to the Composite CPI, overall consumer prices rose by 1.7% in January 2024 over the same month a year earlier, smaller than the corresponding increase (2.4%) in December 2023. 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 January 2024 was 0.8%, also smaller than that in December 2023 (1.4%). The smaller increase in January 2024 was mainly due to the fact that the Lunar New Year fell in January last year, which resulted in a high base of comparison, in particular food prices.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, the average monthly rate of change in the Composite CPI for the 3-month period ending January 2024 was 0.0%, and that for the 3-month period ending December 2023 was 0.4%. Netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures, the corresponding rates of change were 0.0% and 0.1%.

Analysed by sub-index, the year-on-year rates of increase in the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) were 2.0%, 1.6% and 1.5% respectively in January 2024, as compared to 2.7%, 2.2% and 2.3% respectively in December 2023. 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 0.5%, 0.8% and 1.0% respectively in January 2024, as compared to 1.1%, 1.4% and 1.8% respectively in December 2023.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, for the 3-month period ending January 2024, the average monthly rates of change in the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) were -0.1%, 0.0% and 0.0% respectively. The corresponding rates of change for the 3-month period ending December 2023 were 0.5%, 0.3% and 0.3% 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 January 2024 were -0.1%, 0.0% and 0.0% respectively, and the corresponding rates of change for the 3-month period ending December 2023 were 0.0%, 0.1% and 0.1% respectively.

Amongst the various components of the Composite CPI, year-on-year increases in prices were recorded in January 2024 for alcoholic drinks and tobacco (19.5%), clothing and footwear (3.5%), meals out and takeaway food (3.1%), housing (2.9%), miscellaneous services (2.2%), miscellaneous goods (1.9%), and transport (1.8%).

On the other hand, year-on-year decreases in the components of the Composite CPI were recorded in January 2024 for electricity, gas and water (-7.6%), basic food (-2.3%), and durable goods (-1.4%).

For the 3 months ending January 2024, the Composite CPI rose by 2.2% over a year earlier, while the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) rose by 2.6%, 2.1% and 2.0% respectively. The corresponding increases after netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures were 1.3%, 1.0%, 1.3% and 1.6% respectively.

For the 12 months ending January 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 2.0% respectively. The corresponding increases after netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures were 1.6%, 1.6%, 1.5% and 1.7% respectively.

Commentary

A Government spokesman said the underlying consumer price inflation moderated visibly in January, partly due to the base effect stemming from the different timing of the Lunar New Year. It would thus be more meaningful to examine the figures for January and February combined, when available, to assess the underlying inflation situation. Among the major components, prices of basic food fell from a year earlier given the high base of comparison, and those of energy-related items declined further. Prices of meals out and takeaway food, and clothing and footwear saw relatively fast increases. Price pressures on other major components remained broadly in check.

Looking ahead, overall inflation should remain moderate in the near term. Domestic costs may face some upward pressures as the Hong Kong economy continues to grow. Meanwhile, external price pressures should continue to ease. The Government will continue to monitor the situation.

Further information

The CPIs and year-on-year rates of change at section level for January 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 3 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).

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).