

LCQ11: Non-civil service contract staff

Following is a question by the Hon Ma Fung-kwok and a written reply by the Secretary for the Civil Service, Mrs Ingrid Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (July 5):

Question:

There are views that in the face of an upsurge of departure of civil servants, full-time non-civil service contract (NCSC) staff with certain work experience in the Government can become important manpower resources for government departments. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the total number of full-time NCSC staff currently employed by the Government, as well as the government departments employing the largest number of full-time NCSC staff and the number of such staff;
- (2) of the number of full-time NCSC staff who left the service before the expiry of their contracts between June last year and May this year, and the reasons for their departure;
- (3) of the number of full-time NCSC staff who were appointed as civil servants between June last year and May this year;
- (4) given that NCSC staff are not entitled to civil service benefits, whether the Government will consider improving the benefits of full-time NCSC staff, such as providing dental benefits, etc, so as to reduce the wastage of such staff; if not, of the reasons for that; and
- (5) as it is learnt that some full-time NCSC staff possess certain qualifications (e.g. a bachelor's degree and a pass in the Common Recruitment Examination), whether the Government will consider establishing an internal screening procedure to allow full-time NCSC staff who have gone through the procedure to be converted to civil servants, so that full-time NCSC staff can see better job prospects; if not, of the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The reply to different parts of the question is as follows:

- (1) According to the information provided by bureaux/departments (B/Ds), there were 9 903 full-time Non-civil Service Contract (NCSC) staff as at June 30, 2022. Among them, 1 397 full-time NCSC staff were employed by Hongkong Post, which was the department employing the largest number of full-time NCSC

staff.

(2) The Civil Service Bureau (CSB) does not keep statistical information on full-time NCSC staff who left service before expiry of their contracts.

(3) According to the information provided by B/Ds in the latest annual survey, around 480 NCSC staff were appointed as civil servants during the period from September 2021 to August 2022.

(4) The purposes of appointing civil servants and NCSC staff, and the circumstances of their employment are entirely different. The NCSC Staff Scheme aims at providing heads of departments with a flexible means of employing staff to cope with the changing operational and service needs of B/Ds. In general, NCSC positions are used to cater for tasks that are time-limited, seasonal, or subject to market fluctuations; or the mode of delivery of the service involved is under review or is likely to be changed. In addition, where the working hours of the manpower required for the work are less than the conditioned hours of civil servants, or there is a need to tap from the labour market the latest expertise in a particular area, B/Ds may also consider engaging NCSC staff to meet the service needs. As such, it is not appropriate to make direct comparison on the salary and terms and conditions of employment between civil service and NCSC staff.

As regards the terms and conditions of NCSC staff, the CSB has been reminding B/Ds to set a good example for employers by offering better conditions of service to NCSC staff, if possible, having regard to the principle of the proper use of public funds. B/Ds also conduct periodic reviews on the remuneration and terms of employment of NCSC staff. Many B/Ds are offering their NCSC staff with employment packages with terms and conditions of service better than the provisions in the Employment Ordinance, such as providing more annual leave than that prescribed by the law, offering end-of-contract gratuity, and providing 17 days of General Holidays with pay for their full-time NCSC staff.

(5) It is the Government's policy to select the most suitable persons to fill civil service vacancies through an open, fair and competitive process. The Government welcomes interested NCSC staff to apply for civil service jobs through open recruitment exercises. Since relevant work experience is one of the factors to be taken into consideration in the recruitment of civil servants, NCSC staff who meet the basic entry requirements of the civil service ranks should, with their work experience in the Government, generally enjoy a competitive edge over the other applicants. During the period from September 2021 to August 2022, the successful rates of qualified serving NCSC staff and other applicants applying for civil service posts are 17 per cent and five per cent respectively.