

## LCQ16: Leave deduction arrangements for civil servants working under the six-day work week mode

Following is a question by Dr Hon Elizabeth Quat and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Lau Kong-wah, in the Legislative Council today (November 7):

Question:

A civil servants' trade union has relayed to me that under the existing requirement, when staff members take leave for one week, those who work under the six-day work week mode will have six days deducted from their annual leave balance, whereas their counterparts who work under the five-day work week mode will have five days deducted. In March last year, the union proposed that the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) implement, for staff of the various grades in the Department working under the six-day work week mode, the following trial scheme: staff members who are absent from work for seven days in a duty cycle will be subject to annual leave deduction of five days instead of six days. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the reasons why LCSD has not yet implemented the trial scheme after considering it for more than one year;
- (2) whether it has studied the feasibility of the trial scheme; if so, of the study outcome (including the implementation difficulties, and the workload implications on staff);
- (3) whether LCSD will implement the trial scheme first for the Amenities Assistant grade staff for a period of one year, and extend the scheme, after it has been proved to work, to cover other grades; if so, of the details and timetable; if not, the reasons for that;
- (4) as some trade unions have relayed that the Civil Service Bureau has set out a number of pre-conditions for LCSD to implement the trial scheme, of the relevant details; and
- (5) as the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) (i) introduced in December 2015 a similar trial scheme, (ii) has since January this year been testing the implications of the relevant leave deduction arrangement on the department, and (iii) is updating its e-leave system for implementing the said arrangement, whether LCSD has assessed if its e-leave system can dovetail with the implementation of the trial scheme; if it has assessed and the outcome is in the negative, of the details and whether it has any solution; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

As regards the various parts of the question, after consulting the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) and the Civil Service Bureau (CSB), my reply is as follows –

(1), (2) and (4) The LCSD understands the concern of officers working on a non-five day week work pattern on their Leave Deduction Arrangements (LDA). CSB earlier invited all departments that had not fully implemented five-day week (including the LCSD) to explore the feasibility of revising the LDA for staff on non-five day work week pattern, but all LDA proposals should comply with the related basic principles, i.e. (a) no reduction in the conditioned hours of service of individual staff; (b) no additional manpower and no reduction in the level of service to public; and (c) existing rules governing leave remain intact.

The LCSD has conducted initial review on the operation of service units/venues under its purview. Given that the department manages a variety and large number of venues, and different venues have staff of different grades, with varying establishment, conditioned hours of work, job nature and shift patterns, the LCSD needs more time to devise a pilot scheme that complies with the relevant basic principles. Careful consideration has also to be given to various aspects in order not to affect public service. The LCSD has yet to formulate a feasible pilot scheme of revised LDA for officers on non-five day week work pattern. Besides, the Electronic Leave Application and Processing System (ELAPS) currently used by the department cannot process revised LDA. It is envisaged that manual processing and calculation of such "leave deduction" will involve additional workload and may lead to problems on leave record management. The LCSD considers it necessary to duly address the issues mentioned above before proposing any pilot scheme.

(3) The LCSD understands the concerns of individual grades/staff unions on the progress of the revised LDA but the feasibility of implementing a pilot scheme of revised LDA is subject to consideration in multiple perspectives. The department will continue examining the feasibility of implementing a pilot scheme of revised LDA and relevant issues. A concrete trial plan and its timetable are not available at this stage.

(5) As mentioned in the reply to part (1) of the question, the ELAPS currently used by the department cannot process revised LDA. The LCSD will continue examining the feasibility of implementing a pilot scheme of revised LDA and other relevant issues. At this stage, there is no plan to update the ELAPS or develop a new system to cater for revised LDA.