

## LCQ20: Assisting young people in taking up employment

Following is a question by the Hon Luk Chung-hung and a written reply by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, in the Legislative Council today (September 29):

Question:

In the past three years, the unemployment rates of persons belonging to the two age groups of 15 to 19 and 20 to 29 were both higher than those of persons from other age groups. Although the unemployment rates of persons from the two age groups dropped from their peaks in July to September last year (i.e. 25.2 per cent and 12 per cent) to 18.5 per cent and 8.6 per cent in May to July this year respectively, such rates were still much higher than those of persons from other age groups. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) Whether it conducted in the past three years studies and surveys on matters such as the causes of unemployment among young people, their intention to receive training, career aspirations and terms of employment; if so, of the details; if not, whether it will regularly conduct thematic studies and surveys with young people and employers as targets;
- (2) Whether it evaluated in the past three years the effectiveness of those measures which had been introduced to assist persons from the aforesaid two age groups in taking up employment; if so, of the details; if not, whether it will conduct such an evaluation and improve the relevant measures based on the evaluation results; and
- (3) Given that in the light of the epidemic, the Government has launched the "Job Creation Scheme" and introduced measures under the Scheme to assist young people in taking up employment, of the progress and effectiveness of the various measures?

Reply:

President,

In consultation with relevant bureaux and departments, my consolidated reply to the Member's question is as follows:

- (1) The Government conducts researches into youth employment from time to time. The Census and Statistics Department conducted a Thematic Household Survey (THS) during November 2017 to January 2018 to collect information on the education and employment trajectories of young and middle-aged persons (aged 22 to 47 at the time of enumeration) in Hong Kong. Information on their self-perceived social class and degree of life satisfaction was also collected. Key findings of the survey were set out in the THS Report No. 65 published in June 2019

([www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/data/stat\\_report/product/B1130201/att/B11302652019XXX XB0100.pdf](http://www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/data/stat_report/product/B1130201/att/B11302652019XXX XB0100.pdf)).

Moreover, since last year, the Youth Development Commission (YDC) has arranged policy thematic meetings via live webcast, with a view to communicating with young people in an open, direct and interactive manner. The first policy thematic meeting held in August 2020 was on "youth employment". The then Chief Secretary for Administration, Secretary for Labour and Welfare, representative of the Civil Service Bureau as well as young people and stakeholders jointly discussed and listened to young people's views, thereby enabling more thorough consideration as well as effective formulation and implementation of relevant policy measures in the future. The recorded meeting has been uploaded to the Facebook page of the YDC ([www.facebook.com/YDCgovhk](http://www.facebook.com/YDCgovhk)) for the public's viewing.

Besides, the Labour Department (LD) has all along been keeping tabs on the employment support service needs of young people through various channels, including customer opinion surveys and collection of views from service providers regularly.

(2) To assist young people in finding jobs, the LD provides comprehensive training and employment support to young school leavers aged 15 to 24 with educational attainment at sub-degree level or below through the Youth Employment and Training Programme (YETP). Besides, the LD operates two youth employment resource centres named "Youth Employment Start" (Y.E.S.) to provide personalised advisory and support services on employment and self-employment to young people aged 15 to 29.

The LD conducts trainee development surveys every year on trainees who have enrolled under the YETP and completed the 12-month support services. The survey findings for the 2018/19 and 2019/20 programme years showed that 69.8 per cent and 77.1 per cent of the trainees respectively were still in employment at the time of survey. In addition, Y.E.S. regularly evaluates the effectiveness of its services by arranging opinion surveys and group discussions with its members. Participants generally considered that training activities and counselling services provided by Y.E.S. could help them better map out career path and opportunities for self-employment.

The LD from time to time enhances the YETP in light of the review results. Enhancement measures include raising the ceiling of the on-the-job training (OJT) allowance payable to employers under the YETP in September 2020, with a view to further encouraging employers to hire young people. The LD also launched a pilot scheme in the same month to encourage eligible employees to undergo and complete the OJT under the YETP through the provision of a retention allowance, thereby stabilising employment.

The Employees Retraining Board also reviews the effectiveness of its courses for young people from time to time, and launched five new dedicated courses for youth in 2020-21, including three full-time placement-tied courses in professional security services, youth inspiration training and all-round performer as well as two part-time skill upgrading courses in hairdressing and pet boarding.

(3) As graduates and young people have limited work experience, it is particularly difficult for them to seek job opportunities amid the pandemic. As such, many jobs under the Job Creation Scheme are created specifically for graduates or especially suitable for young people to apply. Among the 31 000 jobs created under the first round of the Job Creation Scheme, around 10 000 jobs belong to this category. For instance, various bureaux and departments have created around 700 administrative and executive support positions in the Government which may be taken up by people without any work experience. As regards the non-governmental sector, various bureaux, in collaboration with the non-governmental organisations or relevant associations under their purview, have launched a number of subsidy schemes to provide jobs that are suitable for young people, covering engineering and architectural, financial services, elderly and rehabilitation services sectors, logistics industry, etc. These jobs offer graduates and young people with on-the-job training or orientation support in the relevant sectors with a view to enabling them to gain relevant work experience which will be conducive to their career development, while some may even facilitate them to acquire related professional qualifications.

The new round of the Job Creation Scheme will continue to create jobs for graduates and young people with limited work experience. For example, the Development Bureau will roll out a subsidy scheme again to subsidise companies to employ around 2 000 graduates and assistant professionals in the fields of engineering, architecture, surveying, town planning and landscape architecture. The Environment Bureau will also launch a subsidy scheme again to subsidise enterprises to employ around 300 fresh graduates in the environmental-related discipline. Besides, there will be new subsidy schemes, such as the one jointly launched by the Department of Justice and the Law Society of Hong Kong to subsidise local law firms to employ trainee solicitors.