

LCQ21: Employment support services

Following is a question by the Hon Kenneth Leung and a written reply by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun, in the Legislative Council today (December 11):

Question:

As pointed out in the Report on 2023 Manpower Projection recently released by the Government, Hong Kong's labour market was tight last year, with a shortage of approximately 50 000 workers. There are views that in spite of the manpower shortage, young people face greater difficulties in securing employment due to their lack of work experience and qualifications, and there may even be manpower mismatch. Regarding employment support services, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of job seekers registered with the Labour Department (LD) for employment services in each of the past three years, together with a breakdown by their age distribution and education level;

(2) of the total number of job vacancies the LD received from the private sector, as well as the number of cases in which placements were achieved through job seekers' direct application to employers who advertised the vacancies this year to date; of the number of job referrals made through the LD's employment services this year to date and, among them, the number of those securing employment, together with a breakdown by age distribution of recruited persons;

(3) of the number of members of the Youth Employment Start (Y.E.S.) set up by the Government in the past three years, together with a breakdown by age distribution, academic qualifications and type of service targets (including students, non-engaged youths, employed youths, self-employed youths and youths participating in the Youth Employment and Training Programme); the respective numbers and proportions of members who had received Career Consultation Service of Y.E.S. and those who had participated in the value-added training programmes tailor-made by Y.E.S. to meet young people's different needs in each of the past three years;

(4) whether it will enhance the one-stop services provided by Y.E.S., including strengthening support for young people having received tertiary education, assisting young people in pursuing further studies and upgrading their skills, as well as offering them with help and referrals when they change jobs, so as to fulfil the manpower and skills requirements of key industries relevant to the "eight centres" and promote crucial industries; whether it will consider offering services in New Development Areas as well as other Mainland cities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA), so as to provide employment support for Hong Kong young people;

(5) as there are views that students who come to study in Hong Kong and

overseas young people coming to Hong Kong are the future resources for Hong Kong's workforce, whether the authorities will, by drawing on overseas experience, set up teams or centres specifically for providing local employment support services for overseas students studying in Hong Kong and new arrivals in the future; if not, of the reasons for that; and

(6) whether the authorities have plans to further enhance the measures to support youth employment in order to tie in with the restructuring of industries and development of a knowledge-based economy in Hong Kong, for example, whether they will strengthen co-operation between the LD and the employment service units of various tertiary institutions, organise more on-campus events for job placement and for promoting employment in the GBA, as well as increase employment and training support for the key industries relevant to the "eight centres" and those key industries with manpower shortage; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Labour Department (LD) provides diversified pre-employment and on-the-job training, underpinned by career guidance services, and in tandem collaborates with employers of various industries and other stakeholders to support and promote youth employment.

In response to the Member's question, the reply is provided as follows:

(1) and (2) The LD provides diversified and free employment services to job seekers. From 2022 to 2024 (as at November), there were respectively 26 998, 35 379 and 46 300 job seekers registered to use the services of LD's job centres in each year. Breakdowns by age and educational attainment are at Annex 1. Currently, the vast majority (99 per cent) of job vacancies advertised through the LD are open for direct application to employers by job seekers. After obtaining the vacancy information through the Interactive Employment Service website or mobile application, job seekers can use the LD's employment services without the need for registration or visiting the job centres.

In 2024 (as at November), the LD handled a total of 766 268 vacancies from private sectors and recorded 112 333 placements. Of which, 106 133 placements were achieved through job seekers' direct application to employers who advertised the vacancies or their participation in LD's employment programme, and there were 6 200 placements secured through the LD's referral. A breakdown by age is at Annex 2.

(3) The Youth Employment Start (Y.E.S.) of the LD provides one-stop integrated support services on employment and self-employment for young people aged 15 to 29 (including non-local students and young new arrivals who are lawfully employable in Hong Kong). The numbers of Y.E.S. members from 2022 to 2024 (as at November) with breakdowns by age, educational attainment, and employment status are at Annex 3. The numbers of patronage of receiving

career guidance services and attending training courses at the Y.E.S. in the same period are at Annex 4.

(4) and (5) Based on the needs of young people and the employment market situation, the Y.E.S. provides career guidance services and organises varied training courses to enhance young people's understanding about different industries (including related industries under the "eight centres") and acquire relevant job skills. In order to attract young people to join the industries, the Y.E.S. organises activities such as seminars, recruitment days and visits to promote information about industries including artificial intelligence in business application, aviation and financial industries. Besides, young people can keep abreast of the latest development of the industries related to the "eight centres" through links to relevant websites on the Y.E.S. webpage. Taking into account the social and economic development, the Y.E.S. will continue to boost cross-sector collaboration to refine and strengthen the promotion of services.

(6) In this year's Policy Address, the Chief Executive announced measures to strengthen employment services and support for young people, including relaxing the eligibility requirements for the Greater Bay Area Youth Employment Scheme (GBA YES) to allow young people aged 29 or below with sub-degree or higher qualifications to join the scheme while increasing the limit of monthly allowance granted to enterprises to \$12,000. We will also relax the upper age limit for participants of the Youth Employment and Training Programme (YETP) to 29, and introduce workplace attachment opportunities in the Greater Bay Area under YETP to assist young people to enhance employability and promote sustainable development.

The LD will continue to strengthen collaboration with stakeholders (including the student employment services units of tertiary institutes), organise on-campus seminars and exhibitions, and participate in on-campus recruitment activities, etc, to publicise the services of the Y.E.S., YETP and GBA YES for supporting and promoting youth employment.