

LCQ22: Job Creation Scheme

Following is a question by the Hon Starry Lee and a written reply by the Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Patrick Nip, in the Legislative Council today (July 7):

Question:

Although the latest seasonally adjusted unemployment rate has declined from the peak of this year to 6 per cent, the number of unemployed persons still stands high at 233 000. There are comments that the difficulties encountered by young people and fresh graduates in seeking employment should not be overlooked. On the other hand, the Government has introduced in recent years a number of work incentive schemes, including (i) the scheme under which around 60 000 time-limited jobs in both the public and private sectors are to be created with a funding of \$13.2 billion, (ii) the Greater Bay Area Youth Employment Scheme, which seeks to encourage and support young people to work and develop their career in the Mainland cities of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, and (iii) a number of schemes that are run separately by several bureaux to subsidise private organisations to employ graduates of the relevant disciplines. On assisting young people in taking up employment, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the following information on the jobs provided respectively by the aforesaid schemes for young people: the numbers of jobs, job durations, nature of work, amounts of public expenditure involved, as well as the details of the recruitment exercises (including the respective numbers of young people who submitted applications, have been employed and have reported for duty), together with a breakdown by the category to which their employers belong (i.e. bureaux, government departments, public sector, and private sector) and the name of their employers;

(2) whether it will consider expediting the recruitment for the aforesaid jobs so that more eligible applicants can be employed as early as possible; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether it will consider regularising or expanding such schemes so as to create more jobs, thereby further assisting young people in taking up employment; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

In order to relieve the unemployment situation caused by the epidemic and anti-epidemic measures, the Government has earmarked \$6.6 billion under the Anti-epidemic Fund last year to implement the Job Creation Scheme to create around 30 000 time-limited jobs in the public and private sectors within two years. Subsequently, the Government has earmarked an additional

provision of \$6.6 billion in the 2021-22 financial year to launch a new round of Job Creation Scheme to create around 30 000 additional time-limited jobs.

Regarding the question raised by the Hon Starry Lee, having consulted the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB), our reply to respective parts is as follows:

(1) Since the launch of the first round of Job Creation Scheme in April last year, around 31 000 jobs have been created for people of different skill sets and academic qualifications, including around 15 800 jobs in the Government and around 15 500 jobs in the non-governmental sector.

As young people have limited work experience, it is particularly difficult for them to seek job opportunities amid the pandemic. In this connection, around 10 000 jobs under the Job Creation Scheme were created specifically for fresh graduates or especially suitable for young people to apply.

For instance, various bureaux and departments (B/Ds) created around 700 administrative and executive support positions in the Government which are suitable for people without any work experience to apply. Besides, the Development Bureau (DEVB), in collaboration with various works departments, created around 90 graduate trainee positions with a view to developing the professional knowledge of young people in the fields of engineering, architecture, surveying, town planning and landscape architecture. The Leisure and Cultural Services Department has also created around 60 trainee positions in arts administration, stage and museum management to provide employment opportunities for young people and graduates who are interested in these fields.

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, property management, financial services, creative industry, elderly and rehabilitation services sectors as well as 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.

Relevant information on the aforementioned schemes is set out at the Annex.

In addition to the above, the Government launched the Greater Bay Area Youth Employment Scheme (GBAYES) in January 2021, offering a total of 2 000 job vacancies, including 1 300 general posts and 700 innovation and technology posts. Enterprises are entitled to allowance for employing eligible graduates through the scheme. Job vacancies under the GBAYES cover

jobs of different nature, such as management positions like project management, sales and marketing; innovation and technology positions like website development, new media, network engineering; and other positions like business analysts, teachers and management trainees. The estimated expenditure of the scheme is \$376 million. The GBAYES has received over 2 800 job vacancies so far. The vetted vacancies have been uploaded to the dedicated website of the scheme for open application by eligible graduates. Enterprises having successfully recruited eligible graduates may submit preliminary applications for allowance after the graduates have reported for duty. The Scheme Secretariat has received more than 300 preliminary applications for allowance so far.

The LWB has been funding through recurrent provision to the Vocational Training Council to administer the "Engineering Graduate Training Scheme" (EGTS), with a view to sustaining the provision of vocational training opportunities for engineering graduates who aspire to obtain the professional qualifications recognised by the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers (HKIE). The annual quota has been 274. Under the EGTS, employers who provide recognised professional training approved by the HKIE may receive a monthly subsidy of \$5,610 for up to 18 months for each eligible engineering trainee. The maximum amount of subsidy for each engineering trainee is around \$100,000.

(2) and (3) As at end June this year, among the 31 000 jobs created under the Job Creation Scheme, around 25 000 jobs have been filled. The Civil Service Bureau will continue to co-ordinate with relevant B/Ds with a view to expediting the recruitment process of the remaining jobs under the first round of the Job Creation Scheme.

As for the new round of the Job Creation Scheme, B/Ds have been actively carrying out the relevant work. A number of subsidy schemes introduced specifically for young people in the first round of the Job Creation Scheme will be launched again. For example, the DEVB will roll out a new round of subsidy scheme to subsidise companies in the fields of engineering, architecture, surveying, town planning and landscape architecture to employ about 1 700 graduates and assistant professionals. The Environment Bureau will also launch a subsidy scheme again to subsidise enterprises to employ around 300 graduates to work in areas related to environmental protection.

As far as the GBAYES is concerned, in order to enable the eligible graduates to be recruited as early as possible, the GBAYES has set up a dedicated website for participating enterprises to conduct recruitment and for eligible graduates to make job applications. The Government has also launched a series of publicity activities, including advertising in newspapers, recruitment magazines, employment websites and major modes of public transport; broadcasting radio Announcements in the Public Interest and publicising the scheme on multiple websites, mobile applications and internet search tools; staging physical and online large-scale thematic job fairs to provide effective and convenient platforms for recruitment and job applications; liaising with the universities and other institutions that offer degree programmes to enlist their support to the scheme and conducting

11 online briefing sessions with the universities. The Government will continue its publicity and promotion work to encourage more graduates to participate in the scheme, and introduce measures to facilitate them to work in the Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area. The GBAYES has just been launched for a few months. The Government will closely monitor the implementation of the scheme and review it in a timely manner so as to map out the way forward.

In respect of LWB's EGTS, the Government has provided additional resources this year for a one-off increase of 226 subsidy quotas on top of the regular quotas, with a view to encouraging employers to sustain the provision of vocational training opportunities for engineering graduates of 2021 under the epidemic.