

LCQ9: Creation of time-limited jobs

Following is a question by the Hon Alice Mak and a written reply by the Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Patrick Nip, in the Legislative Council today (July 8):

Question:

Hong Kong's economy has been dealt double blows by a series of demonstrations and the Coronavirus Disease 2019 epidemic, resulting in the unemployment rate rising continuously in recent months. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate from February to April this year was 5.2 per cent, and the unemployment rates of individual trades exceeded 10 per cent. In view of the above, the relief measures introduced by the Government in April this year included the creation of around 30 000 time-limited jobs in both the public and private sectors in the coming two years. Such jobs include more than 200 positions for fresh graduates and 3 300 positions to support the city in fighting the epidemic. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of time-limited jobs that have been created so far, with a breakdown by trade, type of position, type of workplace and monthly salary range (each group spanning \$5,000); among such jobs, the number of those created to support the fight against the epidemic;

(2) as there are comments that the around 200 time-limited jobs are just a drop in the bucket for tens of thousands of fresh graduates each year, whether the Government will consider afresh increasing the number of such jobs; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(3) whether it has drawn up a timetable for the creation of those jobs which have yet to be created; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(4) of the to-date number of private organizations with which it has discussed the creation of time-limited jobs, with a breakdown by trade, type of position and outcome of discussion?

Reply:

President,

With a view to relieving the worsening unemployment situation due to the epidemic relating to COVID-19, the Government has earmarked \$6 billion under the Anti-epidemic Fund to create around 30 000 time-limited jobs normally not exceeding 12 months in both the public and private sectors in the coming two years. Respective bureaux and departments are actively implementing related preparatory and recruitment work. Regarding the question raised by the Hon Alice Mak, reply to the different parts of the question is as follows –

(1) As at end June, among the 30 000 time-limited jobs using the Anti-

epidemic Fund to be created in the coming two years, the planning of around 20 000 time-limited jobs has reached an advanced stage. Among them, around 700 jobs have been filled while the recruitment of around 7 000 jobs has already commenced. These time-limited jobs will cover people of different skill sets and academic qualifications, including fresh graduates, technical and supporting staff and seasoned professionals, etc. At present, there are around 4 000 time-limited jobs related to anti-epidemic work, for example, Contract Doctors, Nurses, Scientific Officers, Medical Laboratory Technologists and Dispensers of the Department of Health, time-limited positions required by the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer to provide technical support related to anti-epidemic work, and cleansing and supporting staff for enhancing the cleansing work in various districts for anti-epidemic purpose, etc.

The remuneration of the afore-mentioned time-limited positions varies depending on the requirements of the positions and the qualifications of appointees. As regards jobs created in the Government, departments will also arrange suitable job locations for employees according to operational needs.

(2) to (4) The types of jobs and related numbers as stated in the paper submitted by the Government to the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council earlier for seeking funding approval were only some of the examples during the preparatory stage of the programme. Bureaux and departments are now conducting in full swing the preparatory and recruitment work for the creation of the time-limited jobs. The number of the various types of time-limited jobs, including positions provided for university degree holders and fresh graduates, will increase progressively with the planning work reaching an advanced stage gradually, so as to achieve the target of creating around 30 000 time-limited jobs in two years' time.

For example, various departments will create around 300 time-limited Executive Service Assistant (ESA) (equivalent to Executive Officer II) positions, to provide various executive support services. These positions are suitable for university degree holders and fresh graduates to apply. To facilitate and expedite the procedures of recruiting ESAs, the Civil Service Bureau is co-ordinating the recruitment exercise for ESAs.

Besides, bureaux and departments concerned are engaging their stakeholders to formulate the plan of job creation in the non-governmental sector. Among others, around 3 000 jobs will be provided under the following three schemes, the recruitment exercises of which have already commenced –

(i) Development Bureau has launched a subsidy scheme for private companies to employ graduates and assistant professionals from the engineering, architecture, surveying, town planning and landscape architecture streams. The scheme is open for application from employers from June 19, 2020;

(ii) Environment Bureau has launched a subsidy scheme for private companies to employ graduates of environment-related disciplines. The scheme is open for application from employers from June 26, 2020; and

(iii) Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau has launched a job creation

scheme to subsidise private companies and startups conducting Fintech related business in Hong Kong to employ additional staff. The scheme is open for application from July 2, 2020.