

## SLW visits LD and SWD front-line offices (with photos)

The Secretary for Labour and Welfare (SLW), Dr Law Chi-kwong, visited front-line offices of the Labour Department (LD) and the Social Welfare Department (SWD) in North Point Government Offices this morning (July 19) to learn more about their operations and services.

He first went to the LD's North Point Job Centre and was briefed on its employment and recruitment services for job seekers and employers respectively, including job registration, employment advisory services, district-based job fairs and various job search facilities. He tried out the Job Easy touch-screen Vacancy Searching Terminal to see how it assists job seekers to look for vacancies and apply to employers directly.

Over 121 000 private sector vacancies were received by the LD in June. The LD offers a wide range of employment and recruitment services to job seekers and employers through a total of 13 job centres and three industry-based recruitment centres across the territory. To address the difficulties that may be encountered by job seekers with special needs during job search or employment, employment briefings are organised at job centres to help them better understand the latest situation of the employment market and improve job search skills.

Dr Law also visited the SWD's Causeway Bay Social Security Field Unit (SSFU) to get an update on its caseload and workflow of the handling of applications for Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) and Social Security Allowance (SSA). He noted that the 41 SSFUs across the territory now handle over 1.14 million cases per month. He said he was glad to note that, along with the overall local unemployment rate staying low, the number of unemployed CSSA recipients and low-earnings cases in June had decreased by 8.4 per cent and 17.1 per cent respectively year-on-year.

As of the end of June, some 900 000 of 1.2 million elderly persons aged 65 or above in Hong Kong were receiving CSSA or SSA. Among them, about 120 000 were receiving Old Age Living Allowance (OALA) while some 373 000 were receiving Higher OALA. The Government has launched a series of measures to strengthen retirement protection and the Higher OALA can further support elderly persons with more financial needs, he said.

Dr Law then proceeded to the SWD's Adoption Unit to understand its efforts in finding permanent and stable homes for children whose parents are unable or unwilling to take care of them. The unit provides counselling for parents in need and assists them to complete the relinquishment procedure for arranging their children for adoption, and arranges local, overseas or privately arranged adoption as appropriate.

Two secondary school students enrolled under the "Be a Government Official for a Day" programme to shadow the SLW also joined the front-line

visits to gain experience of the SLW's work and understand more about welfare initiatives and public services closely related to people's livelihood.

