

Streamlined mechanism of retiring officers in the public interest on grounds of persistent sub-standard performance

The Civil Service Bureau (CSB) issued a Circular to all civil servants today (September 4), promulgating the streamlined mechanism of retiring officers in the public interest on grounds of persistent sub-standard performance under section 12 of the Public Service (Administration) Order, which took effect on the same day.

A spokesman for the CSB said that the streamlined mechanism is to, under the principle of impartiality and fairness, further enhance performance management and maintain the professionalism and efficiency of the civil service so as to improve the efficacy of governance. The staff side generally agreed with the measures to streamline the mechanism.

The Chief Executive announced in his 2022 Policy Address the strengthening of the civil service management system. Among which, for officers whose performance remains persistently sub-standard despite supervision and assistance, their appointments should be terminated in a timely manner. The CSB has consulted the Public Service Commission on the streamlined mechanism and collected views from the staff side this year.

Main points of the streamlined mechanism include reducing unnecessary representations at multiple junctures, and dispensing with the requirement for a Head of Department/Head of Grade to set up and consult an "independent panel" within the department before submission of the case to the CSB. The mechanism also requires that the "observation period" for a persistent sub-standard performer can only be extended once and for specific circumstances only, and that an increment of an officer who is subject to Section 12 action and whose performance remains persistently sub-standard be stopped or deferred.