

Unemployment and underemployment statistics for April – June 2019

According to the latest labour force statistics (i.e. provisional figures for April – June 2019) released today (July 18) by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate stood at 2.8% in April – June 2019, same as that in March – May 2019. The underemployment rate also remained unchanged at 1.0% in the two periods.

Comparing April – June 2019 with March – May 2019, movements in the unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) in different industry sectors varied, with a relatively notable decrease observed in the foundation and superstructure works of the construction sector and a relatively notable increase in the accommodation services sector. Movements in the underemployment rates in different industry sectors also varied, but were generally small in magnitude.

Total employment increased by around 1 600 from 3 869 100 in March – May 2019 to 3 870 700 in April – June 2019. Over the same period, the labour force also increased by around 1 700 from 3 983 300 to 3 985 000.

The number of unemployed persons (not seasonally adjusted) in April – June 2019 was 114 300, about the same as that in March – May 2019 (114 100). The number of underemployed persons increased by around 2 000 from 39 200 in March – May 2019 to 41 200 in April – June 2019.

Commentary

Commenting on the latest unemployment figures, the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong said, "The labour market stayed tight in April – June 2019. Both the unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted) and the underemployment rate remained unchanged, at 2.8% and 1.0% respectively."

"The unemployment situation was broadly steady in most economic sectors. However, the unemployment rate in foundation and superstructure works of the construction sector has been generally rising over the past year notwithstanding the decrease in the latest three-month period, conceivably due to the completion of some major infrastructure projects. The unemployment rate in the import and export trade sector also increased visibly over a year earlier amid weaker trade flows."

Looking ahead, Dr Law said, "The labour market is expected to remain largely stable in the near term. The Government will stay vigilant to how a softer economic environment and other unfavourable factors will affect the local labour market going forward."

He noted that the Labour Department (LD) has adopted a series of on-going measures to promote the employment of elderly persons, including setting up special counters at job centres to provide priority registration and job

referral services for elderly job-seekers, organising tailor-made employment briefings for the elderly, setting up a dedicated webpage for elderly job-seekers on the Interactive Employment Service website and enhancing the functions of the vacancy search terminals to facilitate their access to employment information and search for suitable vacancies.

On large-scale job fairs, the LD will organise the Sha Tin Job Fair on July 23 and 24 at Sha Tin Town Hall and more than 50 employers will participate. The LD will also organise the Kowloon West Job Fair on August 15 and 16 at the Dragon Centre in Sham Shui Po. In addition, industry-based or district-based job fairs are regularly organised at the LD's industry-based recruitment centres and job centres located across the territory.

Further information

The unemployment and underemployment statistics were compiled from the findings of the continuous General Household Survey.

The survey for April – June 2019 covered a sample of some 26 000 households or 75 000 persons, selected in accordance with a scientifically designed sampling scheme to represent the population of Hong Kong.

Data on labour force characteristics were obtained from the survey by interviewing each member aged 15 or over in the sampled households.

In the survey, the definitions used in measuring unemployment and underemployment follow closely those recommended by the International Labour Organization.

Detailed analysis of labour force characteristics is given in the "Quarterly Report on General Household Survey" which is published four times a year. The latest issue of the publication contains statistics for the quarter January – March 2019 while the next issue covering the quarter April – June 2019 will be available by end-August 2019. Users can download this publication free of charge at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp200.jsp?productCode=B1050001).

For enquiries about labour force statistics, please contact the Household Statistics Analysis Section of the C&SD (Tel: 2887 5508 or email: ghs@censtatd.gov.hk).