

Unemployment and underemployment statistics for August – October 2018

According to the latest labour force statistics (i.e. provisional figures for August – October 2018) released today (November 16) by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate stood at 2.8% in August – October 2018, same as that in July – September 2018. The underemployment rate also remained unchanged at 1.2% in the two periods.

Comparing August – October 2018 with July – September 2018, movements in the unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) and underemployment rate in different industry sectors varied, but were generally small in magnitude.

Total employment decreased by around 2 000 from 3 874 600 in July – September 2018 to 3 872 600 in August – October 2018. Over the same period, the labour force also decreased by around 3 800 from 3 992 400 to 3 988 600.

The number of unemployed persons (not seasonally adjusted) decreased by around 1 800 from 117 800 in July – September 2018 to 116 000 in August – October 2018. Over the same period, the number of underemployed persons also decreased by around 600 from 47 300 to 46 700.

Commentary

Commenting on the latest unemployment figures, the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, said, "The labour market remained tight in August – October 2018, with the unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted) and underemployment rate staying unchanged at 2.8% and 1.2% respectively. Total employment grew solidly on a year-on-year basis."

"When compared to the preceding three-month period, movements in unemployment rates varied across sectors, but were generally small in magnitude. The unemployment situation in most of the major service sectors continued to improve on a year-on-year basis, notably in the accommodation services sector amid the buoyant performance of inbound tourism."

Looking ahead, Dr Law said, "The labour market is expected to stay tight in the near term. Yet, the employment outlook beyond the near term will hinge on how the increased external headwinds will affect the local economy going forward. The Government will stay vigilant and monitor the situation closely."
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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, organise 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 organised the Job Fair for Middle-aged and Elderly Employment on November 15 and 16 at the Dragon Centre in Sham Shui Po. 44 employers participated and offered about 4 200 vacancies suitable for middle-aged and elderly job seekers. Moreover, the LD will organise the North District Recruitment and Training Expo on January 4, 2019 at Wo Hing Sports Centre in Fanling. 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 August – October 2018 covered a sample of some 25 000 households or 74 000 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 April – June 2018 while the next issue covering the quarter July – September 2018 will be available by end November 2018. 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).