

Unemployment and underemployment statistics for February – April 2018

According to the latest labour force statistics (i.e. provisional figures for February – April 2018) released today (May 17) by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate decreased from 2.9% in January – March 2018 to 2.8% in February – April 2018. The underemployment rate remained unchanged at 1.0% in the two periods.

Comparing February – April 2018 with January – March 2018, movements in the unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) in different industry sectors varied, with a relatively notable decrease observed in the education sector.

Total employment decreased by around 5 800 from 3 872 400 in January – March 2018 to 3 866 600 in February – April 2018. Over the same period, the labour force also decreased by around 4 900 from 3 984 400 to 3 979 500.

The number of unemployed persons (not seasonally adjusted) increased by around 800 from 112 100 in January – March 2018 to 112 900 in February – April 2018. Over the same period, the number of underemployed persons also increased by around 2 200 from 38 900 to 41 100.

Commentary

Commenting on the latest unemployment figures, the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, said, "The labour market tightened further in February – April 2018 on the back of robust economic conditions. The unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted) edged down by 0.1 percentage point to 2.8%, the lowest level in more than 20 years. The underemployment rate likewise stayed low at 1.0%. Total employment continued to record appreciable growth on a year-on-year basis."

"Compared to the preceding three-month period, a more notable decrease in unemployment rate was seen in the education sector. On a year-on-year comparison to net out seasonal influences, most major service sectors showed visible improvement in unemployment situation. In particular, jobless rates in the financing sector as well as the trade- and tourism-related segments posted discernible declines, thanks to the buoyant economic environment and continued recovery of tourist arrivals."

Looking ahead, Dr Law said, "Overall labour market conditions will likely remain tight in the near term amid the prevailing positive economic environment. Yet, we will stay vigilant and closely monitor the relevant developments."

He noted that the Labour Department (LD) launched a special programme – "Career Let's go" from May to August to help this year's secondary school leavers find suitable work through a series of tailor-made activities. The

"Youth Employment Start" resource centres will organise various training courses and an interactive drama to enhance the job-hunting skills of graduates as well as help them unleash their potential at work and learn the true value of working; and provide school leavers with career assessment and career consultation services. The LD will also canvass job vacancies suitable for secondary school leavers and organise a number of large-scale and district-based job fairs during which job-seekers may have on-the-spot job interviews with the recruiting employers.

On large-scale job fairs, the LD will co-organise the Hong Kong International Airport Career Expo 2018 with the Airport Authority Hong Kong at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre from June 29 to July 1. Ample vacancies involving the aviation industry and airport operation will be provided. Moreover, a dedicated job expo for elderly care and rehabilitation services will be held on July 18 and 19 at MacPherson Stadium, Mong Kok. 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 February – April 2018 covered a sample of some 25 000 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 October – December 2017 while the next issue covering the quarter January – March 2018 will be available by end-May 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 Social Analysis and Research Section (2) of the C&SD (Tel: 2887 5508 or email: ghs@censtatd.gov.hk).