

Unemployment and underemployment statistics for July – September 2018

According to the latest labour force statistics (i.e. provisional figures for July – September 2018) released today (October 19) by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate stood at 2.8% in July – September 2018, same as that in June – August 2018. The underemployment rate increased from 1.1% in June – August 2018 to 1.2% in July – September 2018.

Comparing July – September 2018 with June – August 2018, movements in the unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) in different industry sectors varied, but were generally small in magnitude. Movements in the underemployment rate also varied, with a relatively notable increase observed in the foundation and superstructure works of the construction sector.

Total employment decreased by around 7 800 from 3 882 400 in June – August 2018 to 3 874 600 in July – September 2018. Over the same period, the labour force also decreased by around 7 400 from 3 999 800 to 3 992 400.

The number of unemployed persons (not seasonally adjusted) in July – September 2018 was 117 800, about the same as that in June – August 2018 (117 400). The number of underemployed persons increased by around 1 800 from 45 500 in June – August 2018 to 47 300 in July – September 2018.

Commentary

Commenting on the latest unemployment figures, the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, said, "Labour market stayed tight in July – September 2018, with the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate holding steady at 2.8%. Total employment sustained a solid growth 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. On a year-on-year comparison to net out seasonal fluctuations, the unemployment situation improved in many major sectors, especially in the accommodation services, decoration, repair and maintenance for buildings, as well as information and communications sectors."

Looking ahead, Dr Law said, "Overall labour market conditions will likely remain favourable in the near term. Nonetheless, the Government will continue to monitor closely how the increasing external headwinds will affect the local labour market going forward."

On promoting youth employment, Dr Law noted that to encourage employers in hiring young people and to provide them with quality on-the-job training, the Labour Department (LD) expanded the scope of the Youth Employment and Training Programme on September 1 to cover part-time on-the-job training and

increased the maximum amount of monthly training allowance payable to employers who engage young people and provide them with on-the-job training from \$3,000 to \$4,000 (for a period of six to 12 months).

On large-scale job fairs, the LD will organise the New Opportunities-New Terrain Job Expo on October 25 and 26 at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Around 45 employers would participate, offering vacancies suitable for young people with post-secondary education. Moreover, the LD will organise the Job Fair for Middle-aged and Elderly Employment on November 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 July – September 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).