

Unemployment and underemployment statistics for March – May 2018

According to the latest labour force statistics (i.e. provisional figures for March – May 2018) released today (June 19) by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate stood at 2.8% in March – May 2018, same as that in February – April 2018. The underemployment rate also remained unchanged at 1.0% in the two periods.

Comparing March – May 2018 with February – April 2018, movements in the unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) and underemployment rate in different industry sectors varied, but were all small in magnitude.

Total employment decreased by around 1 700 from 3 866 600 in February – April 2018 to 3 864 900 in March – May 2018. Over the same period, the labour force also decreased by around 2 300 from 3 979 500 to 3 977 200.

The number of unemployed persons (not seasonally adjusted) decreased by around 600 from 112 900 in February – April 2018 to 112 300 in March – May 2018. The number of underemployed persons in March – May 2018 was 41 000, about the same as that in February – April 2018 (41 100).

Commentary

Commenting on the latest unemployment figures, the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, said, "Labour market remained tight in March – May 2018, with the unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted) and underemployment rate staying unchanged at 2.8% and 1.0% respectively. Total employment registered further solid growth on a year-on-year basis."

"While changes in sectoral jobless rates were minimal compared to the preceding three-month period, the unemployment situation in most of the major service sectors continued to show notable improvement compared to a year ago. In particular, on the back of strong global demand and buoyant inbound tourism, visible year-on-year declines in unemployment rates were seen in the trade- and tourism-related industries such as import and export trade, retail, and accommodation services."

Looking ahead, Dr Law said, "Under the generally favourable economic situation, the labour market will likely stay tight in the near term. Yet, we will continue to monitor closely the various external uncertainties and developments in the local labour market."

He noted that the Labour Department (LD) assists young people to find jobs through the Youth Employment and Training Programme (YETP) which provides comprehensive training and employment support to young school leavers aged 15 to 24 with educational attainment at sub-degree level or below. To encourage employers in hiring young people and providing them with on-the-job training, the LD plans to increase the on-the-job training

allowance under YETP this year. The maximum amount of monthly training allowance payable to employers who engage young people and provide them with on-the-job training will be increased from the current \$3,000 to \$4,000, payable for a period of six to 12 months.

On large-scale job fairs, the LD will co-organise the Hong Kong International Airport Career Expo 2018 with the Airport Authority Hong Kong from June 29 to July 1 at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre. About 50 companies will participate, offering over 4 000 vacancies involving the aviation industry and airport operation. 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 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 March – May 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 January – March 2018 while the next issue covering the quarter April – June 2018 will be available by end August 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).