

Unemployment and underemployment statistics for May – July 2018

According to the latest labour force statistics (i.e. provisional figures for May – July 2018) released today (August 17) by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate stood at 2.8% in May – July 2018, same as that in April – June 2018. The underemployment rate increased from 1.0% in April – June 2018 to 1.1% in May – July 2018.

Comparing May – July 2018 with April – June 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 food and beverage service activities sector.

Total employment increased by around 2 900 from 3 869 800 in April – June 2018 to 3 872 700 in May – July 2018. Over the same period, the labour force also increased by around 5 200 from 3 982 200 to 3 987 400.

The number of unemployed persons (not seasonally adjusted) increased by around 2 300 from 112 400 in April – June 2018 to 114 700 in May – July 2018. Over the same period, the number of underemployed persons also increased by around 2 700 from 41 400 to 44 100.

Commentary

Commenting on the latest unemployment figures, the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, said, "Labour market remained tight in May – July 2018, with the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate holding stable at 2.8%. Total employment posted further solid year-on-year growth.

"When compared to the preceding three-month period, movements in jobless 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 across most of the major service sectors, especially so in the retail, information and communications, as well as warehousing and support activities for transportation sectors."

Looking ahead, Dr Law said, "The labour market should remain tight in the near term riding on the solid growth momentum of the local economy. Nevertheless, as external uncertainties have increased markedly of late, with possible repercussions for export outlook, local economic sentiment and asset markets, we will stay vigilant to their potential impact on the local labour market."

He noted that the Labour Department (LD) has been implementing the Employment Programme for the Middle-aged to encourage employers to take on

mature unemployed job-seekers aged 40 or above in full-time or part-time jobs and offer them on-the-job training through the provision of training allowance to employers. With effect from September 1, 2018, the LD will rename the programme as the Employment Programme for the Elderly and Middle-aged, and enhance the programme by offering an on-the-job training allowance of up to \$4,000 per month for a period of six to 12 months to employers engaging elderly job seekers aged 60 or above who have left the workforce or are unemployed.

On large-scale job fairs, the LD will organise the Job Fair for Middle-aged and Elderly Employment on September 20 and 21 at the Tuen Mun Town Hall, and the New Opportunities-New Terrain Job Expo on October 25 and 26 at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. 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 May – July 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 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).