

Unemployment and underemployment statistics for October – December 2018

According to the latest labour force statistics (i.e. provisional figures for October – December 2018) released today (January 17) by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate stood at 2.8% in October – December 2018, same as that in September – November 2018. The underemployment rate decreased from 1.2% in September – November 2018 to 1.1% in October – December 2018.

Comparing October – December 2018 with September – November 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 decrease observed in the decoration, repair and maintenance for buildings sector.

Total employment increased by around 5 400 from 3 867 200 in September – November 2018 to 3 872 600 in October – December 2018. The labour force in October – December 2018 was 3 978 000, the same as that in September – November 2018 (3 978 000).

The number of unemployed persons (not seasonally adjusted) decreased by around 5 400 from 110 800 in September – November 2018 to 105 400 in October – December 2018. Over the same period, the number of underemployed persons also decreased by around 1 400 from 45 900 to 44 500.

Commentary

Commenting on the latest unemployment figures, the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong said, "The labour market remained tight in October – December 2018. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate stayed low at 2.8%, while the underemployment rate edged down by 0.1 percentage point to 1.1%. Total employment grew further over a year earlier."

"When compared to the preceding three-month period, movements in unemployment rates varied across sectors, but were generally small in magnitude. Meanwhile, a visible decrease in underemployment rate was observed in the decoration, repair and maintenance for buildings sector. When compared with a year earlier, the unemployment situation in most of the major service sectors improved, notably in the retail, and accommodation and food services sectors, thanks in part to the continued expansion in inbound tourism."

Looking ahead, Dr Law said, "The labour market is expected to remain tight in the near term. Yet, the Government will stay vigilant and monitor the developments closely in view of the various challenges facing the local economy."

He noted that the Labour Department (LD) canvasses vacancies for job-seekers with different educational background and working experience in

various industries; and organises large-scale job fairs in different locations as well as industry-based and district-based job fairs at its industry-based recruitment centres and job centres respectively to expedite the dissemination of employment information and help different job-seekers to secure employment.

On large-scale job fairs, LD will organise the Leap into a New Page Job Expo on March 5 and 6, 2019 at the Hong Kong Productivity Council Building in Kowloon Tong. More than 50 employers will participate, offering lots of vacancies suitable for young people with post-secondary education. LD will also stage the "Mong Kok Job Expo – Building a Multi-culture Workplace" on March 18 and 19 at the MacPherson Stadium.

Further Information

The unemployment and underemployment statistics were compiled from the findings of the continuous General Household Survey.

The survey for October – December 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 July – September 2018 while the next issue covering the quarter October – December 2018 will be available by end February 2019. 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).