

Unemployment and underemployment statistics for September – November 2018

According to the latest labour force statistics (i.e. provisional figures for September – November 2018) released today (December 18) by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate stood at 2.8% in September – November 2018, same as that in August – October 2018. The underemployment rate also remained unchanged at 1.2% in the two periods.

Comparing September – November 2018 with August – October 2018, movements in the unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) and underemployment rate in different industry sectors varied, but were generally small in magnitude.

Total employment decreased by around 5 400 from 3 872 600 in August – October 2018 to 3 867 200 in September – November 2018. Over the same period, the labour force also decreased by around 10 600 from 3 988 600 to 3 978 000.

The number of unemployed persons (not seasonally adjusted) decreased by around 5 200 from 116 000 in August – October 2018 to 110 800 in September – November 2018. Over the same period, the number of underemployed persons also decreased by around 800 from 46 700 to 45 900.

Commentary

Commenting on the latest unemployment figures, the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, said, "The labour market remained tight in September – November 2018, with the unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted) and the underemployment rate holding steady at 2.8% and 1.2% respectively. Total employment continued to record 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. The unemployment situation in most of the major service sectors showed improvements on a year-on-year basis. In particular, the unemployment rates of the retail, accommodation and food services sectors decreased visibly from a year earlier on the back of resilient local consumption demand and the strong performance of inbound tourism."

Looking ahead, Dr Law said, "The labour market will likely remain tight in the near term. Yet, the employment outlook further down the road will hinge on the impacts of the various external headwinds on the local economy. The Government will stay vigilant and monitor the situation closely."

He noted that the Labour Department (LD) continues to promote the employment of elderly persons, including organising experience sharing

sessions on employment of elderly persons and inviting representatives of the Hong Kong Federation of Insurers to brief employers on matters relating to the taking out of employees' compensation insurance policies for elderly employees. LD also stages large-scale thematic job fairs targeted at middle-aged and elderly job seekers and organises district-based job fairs on part-time employment at job centres to meet the needs of some elderly persons who are more interested in taking up part-time jobs.

On large-scale job fairs, LD will organise the North District Recruitment and Training Expo 2019 on January 4, 2019 at Wo Hing Sports Centre in Fanling. 57 employers will participate, offering about 5 800 vacancies. Eight training bodies will introduce job training programmes at the venue and receive applications on the spot. Moreover, 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. In addition, industry-based or district-based job fairs are regularly organised at 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 September – November 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).