

Unemployment and Underemployment Statistics for September – November 2023

According to the latest labour force statistics (i.e. provisional figures for September – November 2023) released today (December 19) by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate stood at 2.9% in September – November 2023, same as that in August – October 2023. The underemployment rate also remained unchanged at 1.0% in the two periods.

Comparing September – November 2023 with August – October 2023, movements in the unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) and underemployment rate in different industry sectors varied, but the magnitudes were generally not large.

Total employment decreased by around 4 700 from 3 713 400 in August – October 2023 to 3 708 700 in September – November 2023. Over the same period, the labour force also decreased by around 8 100 from 3 829 200 to 3 821 100.

The number of unemployed persons (not seasonally adjusted) decreased by around 3 400 from 115 800 in August – October 2023 to 112 400 in September – November 2023. The number of underemployed persons in September – November 2023 was 36 600, about the same as that in August – October 2023 (36 700).

Commentary

Commenting on the latest unemployment figures, the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun, said, "The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate stayed unchanged at 2.9% in September – November 2023, same as the level in August – October 2023. The underemployment rate also remained unchanged at 1.0%. Total employment showed a narrowed decline of 4 700 to 3 708 700, whereas the labour force declined further by 8 100 to 3 821 100. The number of unemployed persons decreased by 3 400 to 112 400."

The unemployment rates of the various sectors stayed low in general in September – November 2023, mostly showing only small changes compared with the preceding three-month period.

Looking ahead, Mr Sun said, "The labour market should remain tight in the near term. Though the still unfavourable external environment might have some negative effects, the expected further recovery of inbound tourism and private consumption would continue to underpin labour demand."

In September – November 2023, LD recorded a monthly average of 91 527 vacancies from the private sector, representing a year-on-year decrease of 14.7% and a decrease of 6.8% over the average figure in August – October

2023. Job-seekers may make use of the LD's online platforms, such as the Interactive Employment Service website, for obtaining such vacancy information.

Further Information

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

In the survey, the definitions used in measuring unemployment and underemployment follow closely those recommended by the International Labour Organization. The employed population covers all employers, self-employed persons, employees (including full-time, part-time, casual workers, etc.) and unpaid family workers. Unemployed persons by industry (or occupation) are classified according to their previous industry (or occupation).

The survey for September – November 2023 covered a sample of some 25 000 households or 68 000 persons, selected in accordance with a scientifically designed sampling scheme to represent the population of Hong Kong. Labour force statistics compiled from this sample represented the situation in the moving three-month period of September to November 2023.

Data on labour force characteristics were obtained from the survey by interviewing each member aged 15 or over in the sampled households.

Statistical tables on the latest labour force statistics can be downloaded at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/scode200.html). More detailed analysis of the 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 report contains statistics for the quarter July – September 2023 while the next issue covering the quarter October – December 2023 will be available by end February 2024. Users can also browse and download this publication at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=B1050001&scode=200).

For enquiries about labour force statistics, please contact the General Household Survey Section (3) of the C&SD (Tel: 2887 5508 or email: ghs@censtatd.gov.hk).