

SJ participates in distribution of surgical masks to elderly

The Secretary for Justice, Ms Teresa Cheng, SC, visited Yuen Long today (February 18) to distribute surgical masks and leaflets with health information to families in need. She also urged members of the public to join hands with the Government to do their best to curb the spread of disease.

Joined by social workers from Pok Oi Hospital, Ms Cheng went to Long Shin Estate this afternoon and visited elderly families to learn more about their living conditions. She also distributed surgical masks, food, leaflets with health information and other goods to them. Ms Cheng explained to them that the Government is aware of the difficulties faced by the public in purchasing surgical masks. The surgical masks donated to the Government have been passed to various non-government organisations for distribution to the underprivileged with a view to fighting disease together by keeping the community united.

Ms Cheng also appealed to the public to maintain good personal hygiene to effectively prevent the spread of disease.

Public hospital daily update on Wuhan-related cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at noon today (February 18), public hospitals had reported to the Department of Health the admission of 29 patients (13 male and 16 female, aged 5 to 74) in the past 24 hours who met the reporting criteria of severe respiratory disease associated with a novel infectious agent. Specimens of the patients concerned have been sent for testing.

There are 106 patients under isolation currently. So far, four patients with the novel coronavirus infection have been discharged upon recovery.

The Hospital Authority will maintain close contact with the Centre for Health Protection to monitor the latest developments and to inform the public and healthcare workers on the latest information in a timely manner.

HAD opens temporary cold shelters

The cold weather warning has been issued. In view of the novel coronavirus infection, the Home Affairs Department has opened temporary shelters in 12 districts today (February 18) for people in need of the service.

The temporary shelters will remain open during the daytime tomorrow (February 19) when the cold weather warning is still in force.

To ensure that cold shelter users can rest in a quiet and undisturbed environment, members of the public or agencies wishing to make donations to shelter users are requested to register with the staff of the shelter first. Donors will then be directed to place the donated items at a specified indoor location. The staff will help notify the shelter users to collect the items on their own.

Anyone seeking temporary refuge, or those who have any questions about the donation arrangements at the cold shelters may call the department's hotline 2572 8427 for more information.

The 12 temporary cold shelters are located at:

Hong Kong Districts:

Central and Western:

Sai Ying Pun Community Complex Community Hall
3/F, Sai Ying Pun Community Complex, 2 High Street, Sai Ying Pun

Eastern:

Causeway Bay Community Centre
3/F, 7 Fook Yum Road, Causeway Bay

Wan Chai:

Wan Chai Activities Centre
LG/F, Wan Chai Market, 258 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai

Kowloon Districts:

Kwun Tong:

Lam Tin (West) Estate Community Centre
71 Kai Tin Road, Lam Tin

Sham Shui Po:

Nam Cheong District Community Centre

1 Cheong San Lane, Sham Shui Po

Wong Tai Sin:

Tsz Wan Shan (South) Estate Community Centre
45 Wan Wah Street, Tsz Wan Shan

Yau Tsim Mong:

Henry G Leong Yaumatei Community Centre
60 Public Square Street, Yau Ma Tei

New Territories:

Kwai Tsing:

Tai Wo Hau Estate Community Centre
15 Tai Wo Hau Road, Kwai Chung

Tai Po:

Tai Po Community Centre
2 Heung Sze Wui Street, Tai Po

Tsuen Wan:

Lei Muk Shue Community Hall
G/F, Hong Shue House, Lei Muk Shue Estate, Tsuen Wan

Tuen Mun:

Butterfly Bay Community Centre
Butterfly Estate (near Tip Sum House), Tuen Mun

Yuen Long:

Long Ping Community Hall
Long Ping Estate, Yuen Long

Year-end population for 2019

According to the statistics released by the Census and Statistics Department today (February 18), the provisional estimate of the Hong Kong population was 7 500 700 at end-2019, representing an increase of 14 200 or 0.2% from 7 486 400 at end-2018 (Table 1).

Population increase comprises natural increase (i.e. births less deaths) and net movement of Hong Kong residents (i.e. inflow less outflow). The natural increase of the population from end-2018 to end-2019 amounted to 4 300, with 52 900 births and 48 500 deaths. Over the same period, there was a net movement of 9 900 persons, of which 39 100 were inflow of One-way Permit holders and 29 200 were net outflow of other Hong Kong residents.

The Hong Kong population is measured on the definition of Resident Population, which comprises Usual Residents and Mobile Residents. Among the total population at end-2019, 7 303 500 (provisional) were Usual Residents and 197 200 (provisional) were Mobile Residents.

"Usual Residents" refer to two categories of people: (1) Hong Kong Permanent Residents who have stayed in Hong Kong for at least three months during the six months before or for at least three months during the six months after the reference time-point, regardless of whether they are in Hong Kong or not at the reference time-point; and (2) Hong Kong Non-permanent Residents who are in Hong Kong at the reference time-point.

For those Hong Kong Permanent Residents who are not "Usual Residents", they are classified as "Mobile Residents" if they have stayed in Hong Kong for at least one month but less than three months during the six months before or for at least one month but less than three months during the six months after the reference time-point, regardless of whether they are in Hong Kong or not at the reference time-point.

The revised figure for the mid-year population for 2019 was 7 507 400. The number of Usual Residents was revised to 7 311 400 and the number of Mobile Residents to 196 000. The population growth rate from mid-2018 to mid-2019 was also revised to 0.8%.

The population figures for recent years are shown in Table 2.

Under the current practice, the latest population figure is released on a provisional basis in each round. The revised figure will be released six months later. In other words, while the provisional population figure for end-2019 is released today, the corresponding revised figure will be released in August 2020.

Unemployment and underemployment statistics for November 2019 – January 2020

According to the latest labour force statistics (i.e. provisional figures for November 2019 – January 2020) released today (February 18) by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased from 3.3% in October – December 2019 to 3.4% in November 2019 – January 2020. The underemployment rate remained unchanged at 1.2% in the two periods.

Comparing November 2019 – January 2020 with October – December 2019, movements in the unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) in different industry sectors varied. A relatively notable increase was observed in the import/export trade and wholesale sector. Movements in the underemployment rates in different industry sectors also varied, but were generally small in magnitude.

Total employment decreased by around 14 600 from 3 817 800 in October – December 2019 to 3 803 200 in November 2019 – January 2020. Over the same period, the labour force also decreased by around 16 300 from 3 941 800 to 3 925 500.

The number of unemployed persons (not seasonally adjusted) decreased by 1 700 from 124 000 in October – December 2019 to 122 300 in November 2019 – January 2020. The number of underemployed persons in November 2019 – January 2020 was 47 300, about the same as that in October – December 2019 (47 400).

Commentary

Commenting on the latest unemployment figures, the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong said, "The labour market slackened further as economic conditions stayed weak. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased by another 0.1 percentage point to 3.4% in November 2019 – January 2020, the highest in more than three years. Meanwhile, the underemployment rate remained unchanged at 1.2%. The year-on-year decline in total employment widened noticeably further to 1.8%, the largest since the third quarter of 2003. The sharp fall in employment combined with a modest increase in unemployment rate suggested that some people may have chosen to leave the labour force when losing their jobs."

"The employment situation of the consumption- and tourism-related sectors (viz. retail, accommodation and food services sectors) remained difficult. The unemployment rate of these sectors combined stayed at 5.2%, the highest in more than three years, and employment continued to fall sharply on a year-on-year basis. Meanwhile, the unemployment rate of the construction sector increased further to 5.7%, the highest level in close to six years, and that of the import/export trade and wholesale sector deteriorated visibly."

Looking ahead, Dr Law said, "The labour market will be subject to even more pressure in the near term, as the threat of the novel coronavirus infection has already caused severe disruptions to a wide range of economic activities lately, particularly the consumption- and tourism-related sectors. The Government will monitor the developments closely."

"In view of the recent development of epidemic situation, the Chief Executive has announced on February 14 a range of measures to assist the affected sectors in order to minimise any negative impact on the labour market due to company closure, as well as to provide assistance for low-income families," Dr Law added.

He noted that the Labour Department (LD) continues to receive and release information on vacancies from various industries for job-seekers with different educational background and working experience. Job-seekers may continue to make use of the LD's online platforms such as the Interactive Employment Service website for obtaining employment information.

Further information

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

The survey for November 2019 – January 2020 covered a sample of some 26 000 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 2019 while the next issue covering the quarter October – December 2019 is expected to be available by end February 2020. 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).