

CSSA caseload for February 2025

The overall Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) caseload in February showed a rise of 188 cases, representing an increase of 0.1 per cent compared with that of January, according to the latest CSSA caseload statistics released by the Social Welfare Department today (March 18).

The total CSSA caseload at the end of February stood at 195 775 (see attached table), with a total of 262 513 recipients.

Analysed by case nature, low-earnings cases registered a month-to-month decrease of 1.1 per cent to 1 354 cases. Single parent cases dropped by 0.3 per cent to 19 025 cases. Permanent disability cases declined by 0.1 per cent to 16 704 cases.

Old age cases registered an increase of 0.2 per cent to 110 943 cases. Unemployment cases increased by 0.1 per cent to 16 069 cases. Ill-health cases remained steady at 27 762 cases.

Unemployment and underemployment statistics for December 2024 – February 2025

According to the latest labour force statistics (i.e. provisional figures for December 2024 – February 2025) released today (March 18) by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased from 3.1% in November 2024 – January 2025 to 3.2% in December 2024 – February 2025. The underemployment rate remained unchanged at 1.1% in the two periods.

Comparing December 2024 – February 2025 with November 2024 – January 2025, movements in the unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) in different industry sectors varied. Relatively notable increases were observed in the food and beverage service activities sector, transportation sector, construction sector, and professional and business services sector (excluding cleaning and similar activities). Movements in the underemployment rate in different industry sectors also varied, but the magnitudes were generally not large.

Total employment decreased by around 7 100 from 3 716 600 in November 2024 – January 2025 to 3 709 500 in December 2024 – February 2025. Over the same period, the labour force also decreased by around 5 400 from 3 826 700

to 3 821 300.

The number of unemployed persons (not seasonally adjusted) increased by around 1 600 from 110 100 in November 2024 – January 2025 to 111 700 in December 2024 – February 2025. Over the same period, the number of underemployed persons decreased by around 2 300 from 43 000 to 40 700.

Commentary

Commenting on the latest unemployment figures, the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun, said, "The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate stayed low at 3.2% in December 2024 – February 2025, though edging up by 0.1 percentage point over November 2024 – January 2025. The underemployment rate remained unchanged at 1.1%. The labour force and total employment were at 3 821 300 and 3 709 500 respectively, declining slightly from the preceding three-month period."

The unemployment rates of various sectors showed diverse movements in December 2024 – February 2025 compared with the preceding three-month period, but they generally stayed low.

Looking ahead, Mr Sun said, "The labour market should remain largely stable in the near term amidst continued economic expansion, though some businesses would be affected by the uncertainties stemming from the United States' trade protection measures."

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 December 2024 – February 2025 covered a sample of some 26 000 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 December 2024 to February 2025.

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 October – December 2024 while the next issue covering the quarter January – March 2025 will be available by end May 2025. 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).

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Tuesday, March 18, 2025 is 106.3 (down 0.1 against yesterday's index).

Inspection of aquatic products imported from Japan

In response to the Japanese Government's plan to discharge nuclear-contaminated water at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Station, the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene issued a Food Safety Order which prohibits all aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds originating from the 10 metropolis/prefectures, namely Tokyo, Fukushima, Ibaraki, Miyagi, Chiba, Gunma, Tochigi, Niigata, Nagano and Saitama, from being imported into and supplied in Hong Kong.

For other Japanese aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds that are not prohibited from being imported into Hong Kong, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will conduct comprehensive radiological tests to verify that the radiation levels of these products do not exceed the guideline levels before they are allowed to be supplied in the market.

As the discharge of nuclear-contaminated water is unprecedented and will continue for 30 years or more, the Government will closely monitor and step up the testing arrangements. Should anomalies be detected, the Government does not preclude further tightening the scope of the import ban.

From noon on March 17 to noon today (March 18), the CFS conducted tests

on the radiological levels of 162 food samples imported from Japan, which were of the "aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt" category. No sample was found to have exceeded the safety limit. Details can be found on the CFS's thematic website titled "Control Measures on Foods Imported from Japan"

(www.cfs.gov.hk/english/programme/programme_rafs/programme_rafs_fc_01_30_Nuclear_Event_and_Food_Safety.html).

In parallel, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) has also tested 50 samples of local catch for radiological levels. All the samples passed the tests. Details can be found on the AFCD's website (www.afcd.gov.hk/english/fisheries/Radiological_testing/Radiological_Test.html).

The Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) has also enhanced the environmental monitoring of the local waters. No anomaly has been detected so far. For details, please refer to the HKO's website (www.hko.gov.hk/en/radiation/monitoring/seawater.html).

From August 24, 2023, to noon today, the CFS and the AFCD have conducted tests on the radiological levels of 123 152 samples of food imported from Japan (including 80 845 samples of aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt) and 28 428 samples of local catch respectively. All the samples passed the tests.

Fraudulent websites and internet banking login screens related to The Bank of East Asia, Limited

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) wishes to alert members of the public to a press release issued by The Bank of East Asia, Limited relating to fraudulent websites and internet banking login screens, which have been reported to the HKMA. A hyperlink to the press release is available on [the HKMA website](#).

The HKMA wishes to remind the public that banks will not send SMS or emails with embedded hyperlinks which direct them to the banks' websites to carry out transactions. They will not ask customers for sensitive personal information, such as login passwords or one-time password, by phone, email or SMS (including via embedded hyperlinks).

Anyone who has provided his or her personal information, or who has conducted any financial transactions, through or in response to the websites

or login screens concerned, should contact the bank using the contact information provided in the press release, and report the matter to the Police by contacting the Crime Wing Information Centre of the Hong Kong Police Force at 2860 5012.