

## Hong Kong Customs combats sale of infringing goods at mobile hawker stalls in Central (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs earlier conducted a special operation against the sale of infringing goods at mobile hawker stalls and seized a total of about 2 300 items of suspected infringing goods with an estimated market value of about \$520,000 in Central and Lau Fau Shan in the past two days (January 17 and 18).

Customs officers raided multiple mobile hawker stalls selling suspected infringing goods as well as an upstairs storage centre in Central on January 17. A batch of suspected infringing goods including clothes, leather products, handbags, wallets and eyeglasses were seized.

Customs further raided a container depot in Lau Fau Shan yesterday and seized another batch of suspected infringing goods in two containers. Initial investigations revealed that the goods were to be supplied to the mobile hawker stalls in Central for sale.

During the operation, Customs arrested one man and two women, aged between 25 and 42.

With the imminent arrival of the Lunar New Year, Customs will continue to step up inspection and enforcement to combat the sale of infringing goods before and during the holiday.

Customs reminds consumers to procure goods at reputable shops and to check with the trademark owners or their authorised agents if the authenticity of a product is in doubt. Traders should also be cautious and prudent in merchandising since the sale of counterfeit goods is a serious crime and offenders are liable to criminal sanctions.

Under the Trade Descriptions Ordinance, any person who sells or possesses for sale any goods with a forged trademark commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

Under the Copyright Ordinance, any person who sells or possesses for sale any infringing goods commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$50,000 per infringing copy and imprisonment for four years.

Members of the public may report any suspected infringing activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account ([crimereport@customs.gov.hk](mailto:crimereport@customs.gov.hk)).



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## **EDB's latest public service arrangements**

In view of the extension of special work arrangements for government employees until January 27, a spokesman for the Education Bureau (EDB) announced today (January 19) that all Regional Education Offices and the Joint Office for Kindergartens and Child Care Centres will continue to provide emergency services and essential public services during this period.

The spokesman reminded that members of the public who need these services should contact the service units concerned by phone in advance.

As for appointments already made for the audiological services at the Kowloon Tong Education Services Centre, officers of the EDB will contact the parents concerned for appropriate arrangements.

The School Places Allocation Section will continue to provide limited hotline services to handle enquiries and appointments.

When circumstances permit, the Teacher Registration Team will invite applicants to proceed with the necessary procedure in due course. For the new teachers taking up teaching posts in this school year, their applications would not be affected in principle.

Regarding the following public facilities/units of the EDB, they will remain closed to the public temporarily until further notice:

1. Hong Kong Teachers' Centre, Special Education Resource Centre and Young Achievers' Gallery located at Kowloon Tong Education Services Centre;
2. Arts and Technology Education Centre (including STEM Education Centre);
3. School Places Allocation Section;
4. Qualifications Framework Secretariat; and

## **Latest service arrangements of Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency**

The Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency (WFSFAA) announced today (January 19) the adjustment of service arrangements from this Friday (January 22) until further notice.

The service counters of the Student Finance Office (SFO) at the Cheung Sha Wan Government Offices as well as the Trade and Industry Tower will be open from 8.45am to 1pm and 2pm to 5.45pm on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, but the counters will only receive applications for loans under student finance schemes from those who have made prior bookings through the online system of the SFO. Approved applicants for student loans who have been notified by the SFO may also collect their cheque payments at the service counters at the Cheung Sha Wan Government Offices.

The service counters of the Working Family Allowance Office (WFAO) at Hoi Bun Road, Kwun Tong, will be open from 9am to 6pm on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

To reduce the flow of people and social contacts, the WFSFAA appeals to applicants for student finance schemes, the Working Family Allowance Scheme and the Individual-based Work Incentive Transport Subsidy Scheme to submit their applications by post, online or through the drop-in boxes at the SFO and the WFAO.

Members of the public may contact the WFSFAA for enquiries through the following channels:

1. Student Finance Office: Email ([wg\\_sfo@wfsfaa.gov.hk](mailto:wg_sfo@wfsfaa.gov.hk)); general hotline (2802 2345); cheque payment collection hotline (2150 6220); and
  2. Working Family Allowance Office: Email ([enquiry\\_wfao@wfsfaa.gov.hk](mailto:enquiry_wfao@wfsfaa.gov.hk)); hotline (2558 3000).
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## CSSA caseload for December 2020

The overall Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) caseload in December 2020 showed a rise of 476 cases, representing an increase of 0.2 per cent compared with that of November, according to the latest CSSA caseload statistics released by the Social Welfare Department today (January 19).

The total CSSA caseload at the end of December stood at 224 895 (see attached table), with a total of 319 200 recipients.

Analysed by case nature, low-earnings cases registered a month-to-month decrease of 1.0 per cent to 2 520 cases. Old age cases were down by 0.2 per cent to 130 647 cases.

Unemployment cases continued to increase, rising by 2.2 per cent on a monthly basis to 19 506 cases. The figure represented an increase of about 55.2 per cent in comparison with that of December 2019. On a month-to-month basis, the number of applications of unemployment cases increased by 12.2 per cent to 1 045 cases in December 2020, representing an increase of about 65.1 per cent from 633 cases in December 2019.

Ill-health cases rose by 0.8 per cent to 26 056 cases. Single parent cases increased by 0.4 per cent to 24 760 cases. Permanent disability cases increased by 0.1 per cent to 17 377 cases.

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## Unemployment and Underemployment Statistics for October – December 2020

According to the latest labour force statistics (i.e. provisional figures for October – December 2020) released today (January 19) by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased from 6.3% in September – November 2020 to 6.6% in October – December 2020. The underemployment rate remained unchanged at 3.4% in the two periods.

Comparing October – December 2020 with September – November 2020, the unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) increased across almost all the major economic sectors, with a more distinct increase observed in the retail, accommodation and food services sector. As to the underemployment rate, a decrease was mainly seen in the warehousing and support activities for transportation sector while an increase was mainly observed in the retail sector.

Total employment decreased by around 2 400 from 3 650 100 in September – November 2020 to 3 647 700 in October – December 2020. The labour force in October – December 2020 was 3 893 400, about the same as that in September – November 2020 (3 894 400).

The number of unemployed persons (not seasonally adjusted) increased by around 1 500 from 244 300 in September – November 2020 to 245 800 in October – December 2020. Over the same period, the number of underemployed persons also increased by around 700 from 133 100 to 133 800.

## Commentary

Commenting on the latest unemployment figures, the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong said, "The labour market deteriorated again due to the fourth wave of local epidemic which started in the latter part of November. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate rose by 0.3 percentage point from September – November 2020 to 6.6% in October – December 2020, the highest in 16 years, while the underemployment rate remained unchanged at 3.4%. Meanwhile, total employment edged down by 0.1% from the preceding three-month period to 3 647 700, and the number of unemployed persons increased by 0.6% to 245 800."

"Analysed by sector, the unemployment rate of the consumption- and tourism-related sectors (viz. retail, accommodation and food services sectors) combined rebounded by 0.5 percentage point over September – November 2020 to 10.6% in October – December 2020. Among these sectors, the unemployment rate for food and beverage service activities rose to 13.8%. The unemployment rate in many other sectors also increased."

Looking ahead, Dr Law said, "As the fourth wave of local epidemic continues to weigh on local consumption sentiment and disrupt economic activities, the labour market will remain under notable pressure in the near term. The Government has rolled out targeted measures lately to provide further support to the hard-hit sectors, and will continue to monitor the situation closely."

He noted that the Labour Department (LD) has launched a pilot scheme in September 2020 to encourage the elderly, young people and persons with disabilities to undergo and complete on-the-job training under its employment programmes through the provision of a retention allowance, thereby stabilising employment. Besides, the Government launched the Greater Bay Area Youth Employment Scheme on January 8, 2021 to encourage young people of Hong Kong to work and pursue their careers in the Mainland cities of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA). Young people engaged under this scheme will be deployed to work in GBA Mainland cities during the 18-month subsidy period. The aims are to allow them to have more in-depth contact with the labour market in the Mainland, experience its living culture and leverage the opportunities for career advancement.

Meanwhile, the 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 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 October – December 2020 covered a sample of some 26 000 households or 73 000 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 3-month period of October to December 2020.

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.

Statistical tables on the latest labour force statistics can be downloaded at the website of the C&SD ([www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp200.jsp?productCode=D5250021](http://www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp200.jsp?productCode=D5250021)). 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 publication contains statistics for the quarter July – September 2020 while the next issue covering the quarter October – December 2020 will be available by end February 2021. Users can also download this publication at the website of the C&SD ([www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp200.jsp?productCode=B1050001](http://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](mailto:ghs@censtatd.gov.hk)).