

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).