

Unemployment and underemployment statistics for February – April 2019

According to the latest labour force statistics (i.e. provisional figures for February – April 2019) released today (May 20) by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate stood at 2.8% in February – April 2019, same as that in January – March 2019. The underemployment rate also remained unchanged at 1.0% in the two periods.

Comparing February – April 2019 with January – March 2019, movements in the unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) and underemployment rate in different industry sectors varied, but were generally small in magnitude.

Total employment increased by around 4 600 from 3 860 400 in January – March 2019 to 3 865 000 in February – April 2019. Over the same period, the labour force also increased by around 6 500 from 3 970 800 to 3 977 300.

The number of unemployed persons (not seasonally adjusted) increased by around 1 900 from 110 400 in January – March 2019 to 112 300 in February – April 2019. Over the same period, the number of underemployed persons decreased by around 900 from 38 900 to 38 000.

Commentary

Commenting on the latest unemployment figures, the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong said, "The labour market stayed tight in February – April 2019, with the unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted) and the underemployment rate remaining unchanged at 2.8% and 1.0% respectively."

"When compared to the preceding three-month period, movements in sectoral unemployment rates varied but were mostly small in magnitude. On a year-on-year basis, the unemployment situation improved in many major service sectors. In particular, the unemployment rate of the retail, accommodation and food services sector declined further on the back of sustained expansion in inbound tourism."

Looking ahead, Dr Law said, "The labour market is expected to remain largely stable in the near term. Nevertheless, given the still challenging external environment, the Government will keep a close watch over development of the local labour market."

He noted that the Labour Department (LD) is running a special programme – "Career Let's Go" from May to August 2019 to help this year's secondary school leavers find suitable work. Among others, various training courses will be organised under the "Youth Employment Start". These include assisting graduates to enhance their job-interview skills; and providing graduates with career assessment and career consultation services.

On large-scale job fairs, the LD will co-organise the Hong Kong

International Airport Career Expo 2019 with the Airport Authority Hong Kong from May 31 to June 2 at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre. Ample vacancies involving the aviation industry and airport operation will be provided. The LD will also organise the Kowloon East Job Fair from June 20 to 21 at the Yau Tong Community Hall and about 50 employers will participate.

Further information

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

The survey for February – April 2019 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 October – December 2018 while the next issue covering the quarter January – March 2019 will be available by end-May 2019. 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).