

Unemployment and underemployment statistics for March – May 2019

According to the latest labour force statistics (i.e. provisional figures for March – May 2019) released today (June 19) by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate stood at 2.8% in March – May 2019, same as that in February – April 2019. The underemployment rate also remained unchanged at 1.0% in the two periods.

Comparing March – May 2019 with February – April 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 4 100 from 3 865 000 in February – April 2019 to 3 869 100 in March – May 2019. Over the same period, the labour force also increased by around 5 900 from 3 977 300 to 3 983 200.

The number of unemployed persons (not seasonally adjusted) increased by around 1 800 from 112 300 in February – April 2019 to 114 100 in March – May 2019. Over the same period, the number of underemployed persons also increased by around 1 200 from 38 000 to 39 200.

Commentary

Commenting on the latest unemployment figures, the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong said, "The labour market stayed tight in March – May 2019. Both the unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted) and the underemployment rate held steady, at 2.8% and 1.0% respectively."

"When compared to the preceding three-month period, movements in sectoral unemployment rates varied but were generally small in magnitude. On a year-on-year basis, there was a noticeable increase in unemployment rate in foundation and superstructure works of the construction sector, conceivably related to the completion of some major infrastructural projects. Meanwhile, the unemployment situation was broadly steady in most other major economic sectors."

Looking ahead, Dr Law said, "The labour market is expected to remain largely stable in the near term. Yet, the Government will stay vigilant and monitor the situation closely in view of the various external headwinds facing the economy."

He noted that the Labour Department (LD) launched a special programme – "Career Let's Go" from May to August 2019 to help this year's secondary school leavers find suitable work. The LD will canvass job vacancies suitable for secondary school leavers and organise a number of large-scale and district-based job fairs at which job-seekers can have job interviews with the recruiting employers on the spot. A dedicated webpage (www2.jobs.gov.hk/1/0/WebForm/information/en/careerletsgo/index.aspx) has

already been set up to provide information on the activities of the special programme as well as other employment market information, including job vacancies suitable for persons with secondary school education, so that school leavers can apply to these positions.

On large-scale job fairs, the LD will organise the Kowloon East Job Fair on June 20 and 21 at the Yau Tong Community Hall and about 50 employers will participate, offering over 2 500 job vacancies from various industries. The LD will also organise the Sha Tin Job Fair on July 23 and 24 at Sha Tin Town Hall and more than 50 employers will participate. In addition, industry-based or district-based job fairs are regularly organised at the LD's industry-based recruitment centres and job centres located across the territory.

Further information

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

The survey for March – May 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 January – March 2019 while the next issue covering the quarter April – June 2019 will be available by end-August 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).