

For Discussion on
16 May 2016

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PANEL ON PUBLIC SERVICE

Implementation of Five-day Week in the Government

PURPOSE

This paper updates Members on the position of the implementation of five-day week (FDW) in the Government.

POLICY ON FIVE-DAY WEEK

2. The Government has implemented the FDW initiative in three phases starting from 2006¹, with the objective of improving the quality of civil servants' family life without compromising the overall level and efficiency of public services or incurring additional costs to taxpayers. Under these parameters, bureaux and departments (B/Ds) are encouraged to migrate staff to work on a FDW pattern while adhering to the following four basic principles –

- (a) no additional staffing resources;
- (b) no reduction in the conditioned hours of work of individual staff;
- (c) no reduction in emergency services; and
- (d) continued provision of some essential counter services on Saturdays/Sundays.

3. FDW work pattern includes working on a “Monday-to-Friday” basis, a “five-day-on, two-day-off roster in every seven days”, or “fewer than five days/shifts in every seven days”. Upon the third phase of implementation in July 2007, a total of some 94 300 out of 145 500 civil servants (i.e. around 65% of the then civil service strength) were working on a FDW work pattern. Despite that the third phase of implementation concluded the migration of all suitable government units to FDW at that time, we are continuing our effort in encouraging B/Ds to explore trial schemes on further migrating more staff to a FDW work pattern when and where it is feasible and appropriate.

¹ The three phases started from 1 July 2006, 1 January 2007 and 1 July 2007 respectively.

BIENNIAL SURVEYS

4. We conduct biennial surveys to monitor the progress of migration to FDW in B/Ds. The last survey captured the position as at 30 September 2014, which is set out in the ensuing paragraphs.

5. As at 30 September 2014, the number of civil servants working on a FDW work pattern stood at around 112 600² (i.e. around 72.4% of the then civil service strength). It was the highest percentage of civil servants working on a FDW work pattern since the introduction of the policy in 2006. A breakdown by work pattern of civil servants on a FDW work pattern is set out in the table below -

	Number of staff³ (as at 30 Sept 2014)
Staff working on a “Monday-to-Friday” basis	86 400
Staff working on a “five-day-on, two-day-off roster in every seven days” or “fewer than five days/shifts in every seven days”	25 500
Staff on FDW trial schemes	700
<i>Sub-total</i>	112 600 (72.4%)
Staff not on a FDW work pattern	42 900 (27.6%)
<i>Total</i>	155 500 (100%)

6. Due to the need to maintain the overall level and efficiency of public services and the continued provision of certain services on Saturdays/Sundays, around 42 900 civil servants (i.e. around 27.6% of the then civil service strength) delivering social welfare services, certain immigration counter services, cultural services, postal services, environmental hygiene services, law enforcement, passenger/cargo clearance, management of penal institutions, etc, were working on a non-FDW work pattern as at 30 September 2014.

² Following the approach adopted in previous surveys, this figure included staff who were on FDW trial schemes, but excluded civil servants working in government schools, the Judiciary, the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the Hospital Authority, the Vocation Training Council and the Hong Kong Monetary Authority.

³ Figures rounded off to the nearest hundred.

7. Some 700 staff who were undergoing FDW trial schemes as shown in the table under paragraph 5 above came from the Customs and Excise Department, Social Welfare Department and Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD). Apart from the trial scheme of CEDD involving around 50 staff, which is still on-going, the other trials have been proven to be successful and the staff concerned have since been migrated to FDW. The migration mainly involved measures such as adoption of new shift cycles or lengthening the daily working hours of the staff concerned from Monday to Friday or during their five-day shifts.

NEW DEVELOPMENT

8. Our continual effort in encouraging B/Ds to explore trial schemes on further migrating more staff to a FDW work pattern when it is feasible and appropriate has borne fruits. We are glad to note that the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department has recently devised a FDW trial scheme for around 430 of its staff. Subject to positive feedback from staff, the Department plans to launch the trial in the coming few months. In respect of the disciplined services, the Immigration Department will also launch a trial scheme for around 70 of its staff shortly.

9. We will conduct the next biennial survey later this year to capture the position of FDW in the Government as at 30 September 2016. Because of service needs and operational requirements of different B/Ds, and in keeping with the basic principles outlined in paragraph 2 above, we expect that some civil service posts would have to continue to remain on a non-FDW work pattern.

ADVICE SOUGHT

10. Members are invited to note the content of this paper.

Civil Service Bureau
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