

For discussion
on 25 January 2017

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PANEL ON PUBLIC SERVICE

Policy Initiatives of Civil Service Bureau

Purpose

This paper outlines policy initiatives relating to Civil Service Bureau featured in the 2017 Policy Address and the Policy Agenda.

New Initiative

Setting up additional specialised dental surgeries for civil service eligible persons (“CSEPs”) and enhancing clinical psychology service provided by Families Clinics

2. Civil servants, pensioners and their eligible dependants are entitled to receive medical services and dental treatment provided by the Department of Health (“DH”) and the Hospital Authority (“HA”) free of charge¹, as well as reimbursement of expenses for items prescribed according to medical necessity and are chargeable by HA or not available in HA and DH. In 2017-18, we will enhance clinical psychology service provided by Families Clinics and enhance specialised dental services for CSEPs by setting up more periodontal surgeries.

On-going Initiatives

(A) Extending the service of civil servants

3. We have continued to implement the package of initiatives for flexibly extending the service of civil servants. Since 1 June 2015, the retirement age

¹ Save for the charges applicable to hospital maintenance, dentures and dental appliances as provided for in the Civil Service Regulations.

for new recruits to the civilian grades has been raised to 65 and that for the disciplined services grades to 60. As regards serving staff, we have introduced the Post-retirement Service Contract Scheme since November 2015 which enables bureaux/departments (“B/Ds”) to engage retired/retiring officers on contract terms to undertake ad hoc, time-limited, seasonal or part-time duties requiring civil service expertise or experience. The revised arrangements for final extension of service, which include raising the maximum period from 90 days to 120 days and suitably relaxing the approving criteria, have also taken effect since February 2016. For further employment of a duration longer than 120 days, we have earlier consulted the staff sides on a draft implementation framework, based on which detailed implementation guidelines have been drawn up for comment by bureau/departmental management before consultation with the staff sides.

(B) Giving due consideration to additional manpower needs

4. We assist B/Ds in enhancing efficiency through internal redeployment, reprioritisation, streamlining and re-engineering, while supporting the creation of new posts to cope with additional workload where justified. To this end, the civil service establishment has increased by about 1% to 1.5% annually between 2007-08 and 2015-16. As shown in the 2016-17 Estimates, the projected establishment as at 31 March 2017 is 178 495, up by about 1.3% as compared with the preceding financial year. We expect a further rise in 2017-18, with relevant details to be published in the 2017-18 Budget on 22 February 2017.

(C) Maintaining broad comparability between civil service pay and private sector pay

5. The Government’s civil service pay policy is to offer remuneration sufficient to attract, retain and motivate staff of suitable calibre, and such remuneration is to be regarded as fair by both civil servants and the public whom they serve by maintaining broad comparability with the private sector. Civil service pay is compared with private sector pay on a regular basis through three types of market surveys, namely the pay trend survey (“PTS”) which ascertains year-on-year pay adjustment in the private sector²; the triennial

² The net Pay Trend Indicators derived from the PTS each year, together with other relevant factors (including the state of Hong Kong’s economy, changes in cost of living, the Government’s fiscal position, the pay claims of the staff sides and civil service morale) will be taken into account by the Chief Executive-in-Council in determining the annual civil service pay adjustment.

Starting Salaries Survey which compares the starting salaries of civil service civilian grades with the entry pay of jobs in the private sector requiring similar qualifications; and the six-yearly Pay Level Survey which ascertains whether civil service pay is broadly comparable with private sector pay.

(D) Enhancing medical and dental benefits for CSEPs

6. As part of our on-going efforts to enhance civil service medical and dental benefits, the preparatory work for setting up a new Families Clinic in Sai Kung is in full swing. This sixth Families Clinic is expected to commence operation in 2018-19. Other efforts include enhancing prosthodontic services for CSEPs through phased commissioning of additional surgeries from 2018-19.

(E) Providing training programmes and fostering a learning culture

7. The Government is committed to providing civil servants with learning opportunities that could empower them with the skills, knowledge and mindset necessary for delivering quality public services. While B/Ds provide vocational training to meet job-specific requirements, the Civil Service Training and Development Institute (“CSTDI”) takes charge of programmes that fulfill common needs such as leadership and management, language and communication, national affairs and the Basic Law. Moreover, CSTDI formulates policies governing training and performance management, offers consultancy services on human resource management and strives to nurture a culture of continuous learning by way of alternative means such as e-learning.

(F) Maintaining a rigorous, effective and efficient disciplinary system against misconduct in the civil service

8. The Government attaches great importance to upholding integrity and probity in the civil service, and adopts a three-pronged approach for this purpose, namely prevention, education and training, as well as sanction. On prevention, due emphasis is placed upon policies and guidelines complemented by checks and balances. For education and training, sustained efforts are made to promulgate good practice of conduct and probity at all levels in the civil service. Finally on sanction, timely and proportionate disciplinary sanctions are imposed to achieve a punitive, deterrent and rehabilitative effect.

(G) Fostering close partnership with the civil service and encouraging use of commendation schemes to recognise exemplary performance

9. Since a progressive and motivated workforce is pivotal to effective service delivery, we attach considerable importance to fostering partnership and building rapport. Leading by example, the Secretary for the Civil Service (“SCS”) has stepped up the frequency of his visit to individual departments to learn about their latest achievements and emerging challenges, while taking advantage of the occasion to meet with frontline workers. In the same way, departmental heads are encouraged to maintain close dialogue with their team to align corporate vision, set common goals and review actual outcomes.

10. From an institutional perspective, the Senior Civil Service Council, the Model Scale 1 Staff Consultative Council, the Police Force Council and the Disciplined Services Consultative Council make up the primary platform on which the staff sides are consulted on issues affecting conditions of service and matters of mutual concern. This is augmented by some 90 Departmental Consultative Committees which aim to enhance co-operation and understanding at the operational level.

11. Due to rising public expectation and changing community aspirations, civil servants are increasingly being called upon to handle conflicts and must therefore be able to cope with pressure when carrying out their daily chores. Apart from injection of manpower, the Civil Service Outstanding Service Award Scheme, the SCS’s Commendation Award Scheme, the Commendation Letter Scheme and the Long and Meritorious Service Travel Award Scheme are useful tools to recognise exemplary performance and boost morale.

(H) Implementing measures to ensure that persons with disabilities or ethnic minorities will enjoy equal access to job openings in the Government

12. The Government is a strong advocate for elimination of disability, race and other forms of discrimination. Targeted measures have been put in place to facilitate persons with disabilities and ethnic minorities in applying for civil service vacancies and integrating seamlessly into the workplace. We launched in mid-2016 an internship scheme for students with disabilities to strengthen their competitiveness before entering the job market and allow B/Ds to better appreciate their true potential.

Advice Sought

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

Civil Service Bureau
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