

For information

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PANEL ON PUBLIC SERVICE

Implementation of Five-day Week in the Government

At the meeting of the Legislative Council Panel on Public Service on 16 January 2012, Members agreed to revisit the implementation of five-day week in the Government. This paper provides relevant information for Members' reference.

Implementation of Five-Day Week

2. The Administration decided to implement the five-day week initiative in the Government in three phases starting in 2006,¹ with the objective of improving the quality of civil servants' family life but without affecting the overall level and efficiency of public services or incurring additional costs to the taxpayer. Under these parameters, bureaux and departments (B/Ds) have to abide by the following four basic principles in their implementation of the five-day week initiative –

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

3. Five-day week work pattern includes working on a “Monday-to-Friday basis”, or a “five days on, two days off roster in every seven days”, or “fewer than five days/shifts in every seven days”. Upon the final phase of implementation in July 2007, all government units suitable for five-day operation at that time had migrated to a five-day week work pattern.

¹ The initiative was implemented in three phases, namely 1 July 2006, 1 January 2007 and 1 July 2007. Upon implementation of the final phase on 1 July 2007, a total of some 94 300 staff were working on a five-day week work pattern.

4. The Civil Service Bureau has been monitoring progress of migration to five-day week in B/Ds. As at 31 December 2010², around 104 500 civil servants³ (i.e. around 70% of the civil service strength) worked on five-day week. A breakdown by work pattern of civil servants on five-day week is set out below -

	Number of staff (as at 31 December 2010)
Staff working on a "Monday-to-Friday basis"	73 400
Staff rostered to work on a "five days on, two days off roster in every seven days" or "fewer than five days/shifts in every seven days"	30 900
Staff on five-day week pilot schemes	200
<i>Sub-total</i>	104 500 (70%)
Staff not on a five-day week work pattern	44 500 (30%)
<i>Total</i>	149 000 (100%)

5. As shown in the above table, some 200 staff⁴, from the Leisure and Cultural Services Department and the Immigration Department, were under five-day week pilot schemes at the time of the survey. The pilot scheme of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department was completed in late January 2011 and around 20 staff concerned have migrated to work under the five-day week pattern since then. Around 190 civil servants of the Employment and Visit Visas Section, the Certificate of Entitlement Section and the Right of Abode Section of the Immigration Department formally adopted the "Monday-to-Friday" work pattern in April 2011 after completion of the relevant pilot scheme.

6. As at 31 December 2010, there were around 44 500 civil servants who were not yet able to work on a five-day week work pattern, mainly because of the need to maintain the overall level and efficiency of public services, e.g. services provided by the Police Force; or other services that were provided on Saturdays/Sundays such as social welfare services, some immigration counter services, cultural services, postal services, environmental hygiene services, law enforcement, passenger/cargo clearance, and management of penal institutions, etc.

² The next survey is tentatively scheduled to be completed in 2013.

³ This figure did not include civil servants working in government schools, the Judiciary, the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the Hospital Authority, the Vocational Training Council, the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, etc.

⁴ Figure rounded off to the nearest hundred.

WAY FORWARD

7. Whether five-day week can be implemented is based on the operational needs of different B/Ds, the job nature of different posts, and occupational safety considerations etc. We will continue to encourage B/Ds to explore possible ways to migrate more staff to five-day week, subject to the four basic principles stated in paragraph 2 above and after staff consultation. We will also continue to encourage B/Ds to arrange staff to work in five-day week posts by rotation, where operational and other circumstances permit.

Civil Service Bureau
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