

**Frequently Asked Questions:**  
**Consultation on Extension of the Service of Civil Servants**

**A. Adopting a Higher Retirement Age for Civil Service New Recruits**

**Q1 The Administration proposes that the retirement age of new recruits for the civilian grades be extended by five years to 65. Why is it that the retirement age for new recruits of the disciplined services grades would only be extended by two years to 57 and may only be further extended to the age of 60 subject to passing an annual assessment?**

A1 We propose that the retirement age for the disciplined services be raised in the same direction as the proposal for extending the retirement age of new recruits for the civilian grades by five years. Taking into account the unique job nature and physical requirements of the disciplined services grades, we propose that new recruits for the disciplined services grades may serve up to 60 subject to passing an annual assessment after 57 to assure that they are physically fit and suitable in all other aspects to carry out the duties of the disciplined services posts.

**Q2 What are the details of the annual assessment for the disciplined services grades? Would the annual assessment be the same for all disciplined services grades?**

A2 Subject to the outcome of the consultation, we would discuss with the management of the disciplined services with a view to devising a suitable and objective mechanism for the annual assessment.

**Q3 Would the retirement age of the civil servants under the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) be extended by five years to 60? Would the retirement age of the civil servants under the New Pension Scheme (NPS) also be extended to 65 (for civilian grades) or 57/60 (for disciplined services grades)?**

A3 The extension of retirement age proposed in the consultation paper would be applied to all civil service new recruits as from a future date. For serving civil servants, irrespective of whether they are employed under the OPS, NPS or appointed on new terms on or after 1 June 2000, their retirement age would remain unchanged. That said, to provide

Heads of Grade/Heads of Department (HoGs/HoDs) with more flexibility, it is proposed in the consultation paper that serving officers may be further employed in civil service posts beyond their retirement age, subject to operational needs and an approval mechanism. Such period of further employment should, in total, not be more than five years. The consultation paper has also proposed to extend the coverage of the further employment mechanism from civil servants under the OPS and NPS to civil servants on new terms of appointment.

**Q4 Why doesn't the proposal to extend the retirement age to 65 (for civilian grades) or 57/60 (for disciplined services grades) for civil service new recruits apply to serving civil servants employed on or after 1 June 2000 on new terms of appointment?**

A4 The proposed initiatives set out in the consultation paper seek to enable the Government to keep pace with the demographic changes of society, while providing flexibility to meet the operational and succession needs of individual grades/departments. We propose to extend the retirement age of civil service new recruits so that the Civil Service, and the Hong Kong society as a whole, may take early action to address the demographic challenges arising from an ageing population. For serving civil servants, we propose to introduce flexible initiatives, which include providing HoGs/HoDs with more flexibility to further employ officers beyond retirement age and employing retired officers to fill contract positions (i.e. the Post-retirement Service Contract Scheme (PRSC Scheme)). These would enable departments to meet their operational and succession needs in a more flexible manner, while avoiding manpower mismatch and undue impacts on promotion and turnover in the Civil Service.

**Q5 Regarding the proposal to adopt a higher retirement age for civil service new recruits, would the Government's current rates of contributions (including both mandatory and voluntary contributions) under the Civil Service Provident Fund (CSPF) Scheme remain unchanged?**

A5 At present, under the CSPF Scheme, the Government's contributions, inclusive of mandatory and voluntary contributions, will increase from 5% of the basic salary of an eligible officer at his substantive rank for below three years of service, to 15% from three years to below 15 years

of service, and then progress every five years until reaching 25% for 30 or above years of service. For disciplined services officers, they are provided with the Special Disciplined Services Contribution (SDSC) in recognition of their earlier retirement age vis-à-vis civilian staff. The SDSC is at a rate of 2.5% of the basic salary on top of the Government's voluntary contributions under the CSPF Scheme. The proposal of adopting a higher retirement age for new recruits would result in an increase in the Government's voluntary contributions under the CSPF Scheme since such contributions increase progressively with the years of service of officers covered by the Scheme. Given this, we will examine in greater detail the financial implications of the proposal with a view to hammering out the implementation details at the next stage, including the Government's rates of voluntary contributions for new recruits in future.

**Q6 Are CSPF officers only allowed to withdraw the accrued provident fund benefits at the age of 65?**

**A6** Under the existing mechanism, CSPF officers may withdraw the accrued benefits attributable to the Government's voluntary contributions upon leaving the Civil Service at the prescribed retirement age (i.e. 60 for civilian officers, and 55 or 57 for disciplined services officers). They may also withdraw the accrued benefits derived from their mandatory contributions when they reach the age of 65 in accordance with the Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes Ordinance.

If the retirement age is extended by five years, civil service new recruits in future would only be allowed to withdraw the accrued benefits attributable to the Government's voluntary contributions upon leaving the Civil Service at the new prescribed retirement age. They may also withdraw the accrued benefits derived from their mandatory contributions when they reach the age of 65 in accordance with the Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes Ordinance.

**B. Employment Initiatives**

**(i) Further Employment Mechanism**

**Q7 The Administration proposes that suitable adjustments be made to the existing mechanism on further employment. If serving officers**

**on pensionable terms (i.e. officers employed under the OPS and NPS) are further employed without a break in service after reaching applicable normal/prescribed retirement age, what will be their terms of appointment? Will they receive pensions during the period of further employment?**

A7 As proposed in the consultation paper, officers would be further employed under the current further employment terms. According to the existing mechanism and rules, the terms of further employment for pensionable officers (including those on the OPS and NPS) beyond retirement age are as follows:

- (1) final extension of service not exceeding 90 days: further employment in the form of extension of service irrespective of whether the officers are on the OPS or NPS. Unless the officers concerned are re-employed on agreement terms before the final extension of service, the period of extension of service will be counted as pensionable service in accordance with the relevant pensions ordinances and regulations until the officers concerned attain maximum pension status. Upon completion of the extension of service and exhaustion of their accumulated leave, the officers concerned will retire with payment of pensions.
- (2) further employment beyond retirement age exceeding 90 days:
  - (i) officers on the OPS: further employment in the form of re-employment after retirement without a break in service on agreement terms. The period of re-employment will not attract pension benefits, but monthly pensions will be paid during the re-employment period. Gratuities will also be paid upon satisfactory completion of each re-employment period in accordance with the terms of the agreement.
  - (ii) officers on the NPS: further employment in the form of extension of service normally. The period of further employment will be counted as pensionable service in accordance with the Pension Benefits Ordinance and Regulations until the officers concerned attain maximum pension status. Upon completion of the extension of service

and exhaustion of their accumulated leave, the officers concerned will retire with payment of pensions.

**Q8 Would the proposed adjustments to the existing mechanism on further employment set out in the consultation paper be applied to officers on the OPS and NPS who have attained maximum pension status?**

A8 According to the existing mechanism and rules, pensionable officers on the OPS or NPS may apply for further employment without a break in service beyond their retirement age, irrespective of whether they have attained maximum pension status.

It is proposed in the consultation paper that suitable adjustments be made to the existing mechanism on further employment so that HoGs/HoDs would have more flexibility to retain experienced officers beyond their retirement age under the current further employment terms. In other words, the proposal is intended to cover all pensionable officers on the OPS or NPS irrespective of whether they have attained maximum pension status.

**Q9 Regarding the proposed adjustments to the existing mechanism on further employment in the consultation paper, are they applicable to civil servants on agreement terms in addition to pensionable officers?**

A9 At present, a mechanism is in place to handle applications for further appointment (including applications for extension or renewal of agreement beyond the normal retirement age) from civil servants appointed on agreement terms for a fixed period of service (including civil servants on overseas agreement terms). Such applications are handled subject to the prevailing criteria and regulations (including the Civil Service Regulations). All relevant factors (including satisfactory performance and conduct of the officers concerned, operational needs, etc.) will be taken into account in processing such applications.

It is proposed in the consultation paper that suitable adjustments be made to the existing mechanism on further employment so that HoGs/HoDs would have more flexibility to retain experienced officers beyond their retirement age under the current further employment terms. We welcome views from concerned parties on whether and how to adjust the

further employment mechanism (including that applicable to civil servants appointed on agreement terms for a fixed period of service).

**Q10 It is proposed that the coverage of further employment be extended to officers on new appointment terms. It is also proposed that pensionable officers should not be considered for promotion during the further employment period. Would these officers be “demoted” upon further employment? Also, would officers on new appointment terms not be considered for promotion during the further employment period?**

A10 According to the existing mechanism and rules, pensionable officers may be further employed in the same or lower rank upon reaching the retirement age. It is proposed in the consultation paper that officers should not be considered for promotion during the further employment period. Whether these officers would be further employed in the same or lower rank would depend on the operational needs and other relevant factors.

In addition, the proposal is intended to cover all officers on further employment, including pensionable officers and officers on new appointment terms.

**Q11 For serving officers on further employment, would the renewal of their employment be subject to an annual review?**

A11 The consultation paper proposes to allow a longer period of further employment other than final extension of service, subject to the relevant conditions being met (i.e. well-justified operational and/or succession needs, no undue promotion blockage, good performance and physical fitness, and periodic review of the duration of further employment). In any case, such period should, in total, not be more than five years. The proposal has not specified a requirement for annual review of each case of further employment. Details of implementation would be worked out subject to the outcome of the consultation.

**(ii) New PRSC Scheme**

**Q12 It is proposed that holders of PRSC positions are not entitled to other civil service fringe benefits generally. If they are retired civil servants on pensionable terms, can they still receive pensions while holding contract positions?**

A12 According to the existing mechanism and rules, officers on pensionable terms will be paid monthly pensions after they have retired at the applicable normal retirement age, even if they are holding non-civil service contract positions.

**(iii) Coverage and Relevant Arrangements**

**Q13 Would there be any ceilings for the numbers of approved applicants under the further employment mechanism and the PRSC Scheme? If so, what are the respective numbers? Would the applicants be restricted to particular grades or ranks? If so, what are the grades or ranks involved?**

A13 The adjusted mechanism on further employment under the proposal would not be restricted to particular grades or ranks. As for the new PRSC Scheme, it would only cover contract positions which correspond to civil service non-directorate level, but would not be restricted to particular grades. Approval of the applications would mainly be subject to the relevant conditions being met, including well-justified operational and/or succession needs, and resource availability. Details of implementation would be worked out subject to the outcome of the consultation.

**Q14 What are the approving authorities and specific approval criteria/eligibility for the further employment mechanism and the PRSC Scheme? Would all serving civil servants who have reached the retirement age be eligible to apply?**

A14 On the basis of their operational and/or succession needs and subject to resource availability, HoGs/HoDs would process applications of serving/retired civil servants for further employment and the contract positions to be created under the PRSC Scheme through a transparent and objective selection process. As a matter of fact, at present,

HoGs/HoDs may use the further employment mechanism to meet their operational and/or succession needs. A mechanism is already in place to ensure that such applications are handled in a proper and fair manner. Subject to the outcome of the consultation, we would issue guidelines on the approval criteria for the further employment mechanism and the PRSC Scheme to ensure that all applications would be processed through a transparent and objective selection process.

**Q15 What measures would the Civil Service Bureau (CSB) adopt to avoid a culture of cronyism or a flattery culture in processing applications for further employment and the PRSC Scheme?**

A15 At present, HoGs/HoDs may use the further employment mechanism to meet their operational and/or succession needs. A mechanism is already in place to ensure that such applications are handled in a proper and fair manner. Subject to the outcome of the consultation, we would issue guidelines on the approval criteria to ensure that all applications would be processed through a transparent and objective selection process, and only applications that fully meet the relevant criteria would be approved. In this regard, we will discuss with HoGs/HoDs the implementation details of the proposal, including measures for ensuring a transparent and objective selection process.

**Q16 When could civil servants approaching the retirement age make applications under the further employment mechanism or the PRSC Scheme?**

A16 We will decide on the way forward and work out the implementation details as well as timetable after taking into account the feedback received through the consultation and further examination of the relevant issues, including the financial implications of the proposals. We do not have a concrete timetable for the implementation of the proposals at the moment. It would be subject to the outcome of the consultation.

At present, HoGs/HoDs may use the further employment mechanism to meet their operational and/or succession needs. Before implementation of the proposals, applications for further employment will continue to be processed in accordance with the existing mechanism.



**C. Streamlining Control Regime on Post-service Outside Work**

**Q17 Would the proposal to streamline the control regime on post-service outside work cover all non-directorate civil servants?**

A17 No. At present, blanket permission has been granted to civil servants remunerated on the Model Scale 1 Pay Scale to take up post-service outside work after retirement. In a bid to remove unnecessary barriers for retired civil servants to stay in the labour market and considering the relatively remote risk of impropriety for non-directorate civil servants at junior ranks taking up outside work after retirement, we propose that consideration be given to extending such blanket permission to other non-directorate civil servants who are occupying frontline or supporting positions.

**D. Others**

**Q18 Would the proposals to extend the service of civil servants also be applied to staff of subsidised schools and public bodies?**

A18 The proposals would only be applied to civil servants. As part of the entire working population, the Civil Service must keep pace with the demographic changes of society so that it can better respond to the economic and social challenges arising thereof. By proposing to extend the service of civil servants, we hope to set an example for other employers (including public bodies) to follow.

**Q19 When would CSB implement the proposals to extend the service of civil servants?**

A19 Taking into account the feedback received through the consultation and further examination of the relevant issues including the financial implications of the proposals, we will decide on the way forward and work out the implementation details and timetable. We do not have a concrete timetable for implementing the proposals at the moment. Subject to the outcome of the consultation, we may consider whether the proposals would be implemented by phases, instead of rolling out the proposals concurrently after completing the discussion of all proposals.

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