

For discussion
on 30 October 2023

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PANEL ON PUBLIC SERVICE

Policy Measures of Civil Service Bureau in the Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address

Purpose

This paper outlines the policy initiatives relating to Civil Service Bureau (CSB) featured in the Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address (Policy Address) and Policy Measures.

Details

2. A capable and efficient civil service is the key to good-quality government services. The Chief Executive has proposed various measures in the Policy Address to continue to strengthen the civil service management system.

Advance the Performance-based Management System

3. We will advance the performance-based management system through the following measures.

Chief Executive's Award for Exemplary Performance

4. Announcement of the result of inaugural Chief Executive's Award for Exemplary Performance was made as scheduled in the second quarter of 2023. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) search and research team deployed to the earthquake-stricken areas of Turkey for the search and rescue mission received the inaugural Award. The award presentation ceremony was held on 13 July 2023 followed by extensive publicity through various media. The

Government will launch a new round of the Chief Executive's Award for Exemplary Performance to recognise meritorious and exemplary performance team or individuals in the civil service on a regular basis.

Publicising good stories of civil servants

5. We will enhance our efforts to publicise good stories of civil servants. Through various channels (including electronic, printed and social media as well as publishing feature articles in Civil Service Newsletter and departmental newsletters), we will step up the publicity of the good stories of the award recipients in the Secretary for the Civil Service's Commendation Award Scheme to be presented in November each year, the new round of Chief Executive's Award for Exemplary Performance as well as the Civil Service Outstanding Service Award Scheme to be presented once every three years, to showcase and promote achievements of the awardees in their work and their dedication to serving the community, with a view to boosting work efficacy and staff morale and to attract talents to join the Government.

Strengthening management of civil servants with sub-standard performance

6. We promulgated the streamlined mechanism of retiring officers with persistent sub-standard performance in the public interest pursuant to section 12 of the Public Service (Administration) Order in September this year. We will oversee and encourage departments to make good use of the streamlined mechanism, in order to terminate the appointment of those civil servants in a timely manner. In this regard, we will provide assistance to departments, which includes issuing guidelines of the streamlined mechanism, organising briefing sessions for Heads of Departments (HoDs), departmental secretaries and officers handling personnel matters respectively, and providing a management kit to the departmental management. We will also step up efforts in monitoring departments' handling of such cases, with a view to further enhancing management of civil servants and maintaining the professionalism and efficiency of the civil service.

Enhancing the civil service disciplinary mechanism

7. The Government attaches great importance to the conduct and integrity of civil servants, and takes a zero-tolerance approach against officers who have breached the law or misconducted themselves. In the five financial years from 2018-19 to 2022-23, a total of 1 124 civil servants were punished with formal disciplinary action for serious misconduct or criminal conviction, and 1 995 with summary disciplinary action for misconduct of less serious nature. Among those who were punished with formal disciplinary action during the above period, 195 were removed from the service. In 2022-23 alone, 60 officers were removed from the service, which far exceeded the yearly average of less than 31 officers in the past five financial years (i.e. 2017-18 to 2021-22).

8. The CSB has been continuing its efforts in enhancing the civil service disciplinary mechanism. In 2023, we launched the one-year pilot scheme in four departments¹ for strengthening their monitoring of summary disciplinary actions against officers on probationary or trial terms² (“Pilot Scheme”). We also required officers to report to their HoDs in a timely manner if they are arrested by law enforcement agencies; and organised three workshops for training department managers on the skills in conducting investigation on disciplinary cases. In 2024, we will continue to initiate enhancement measures, as well as supervise and assist departments to make good use of the civil service disciplinary mechanism. Such measures include reviewing the effectiveness of the Pilot Scheme after its one-year implementation, and organising workshops on an ongoing basis to enhance training for departments on the investigation and handling of disciplinary cases. We will also require departments to regularly report to their HoDs and the CSB on the progress of their handling of disciplinary cases with a view to stepping up departments’ monitoring of the processing time of their disciplinary cases and the appropriateness of the level of punishment imposed in terms of strictness and leniency.

¹ Department of Health, Fire Services Department, Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, and Leisure and Cultural Services Department.

² Trial term is applicable to an officer who is confirmed to the permanent establishment and is appointed on transfer without a break in service to another established office; whereas probationary term is applicable to an officer who is not confirmed to the permanent establishment but is appointed to an established office.

Attracting more young people to join the civil service

9. The Government attaches great importance to youth development, and adopts a multi-pronged approach to attract more young people to join the civil service to build up a diversified pool of talents in the Government. Following the expansion of the pool of eligible candidates to undergraduate or postgraduate students in their penultimate year of study in June 2023, we have strengthened the promotion of the above new arrangement and the diversified job opportunities in the Government in the new school year. In September and October 2023, apart from setting up booths in the career fairs held by local universities, organising recruitment talks and taking part in other promotion activities in more than 10 local universities, the Government also held the first large-scale Government Career Fair (i.e. career fair involving government departments only) in the University of Hong Kong, the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Baptist University for students to learn about the work of more than 40 civil service grades. We will continue to organise career fairs and recruitment talks in more local universities in the future, and actively participate in the “Education & Careers Expo” to attract more talents to join the civil service.

10. Apart from local graduates, recruitment promotion work of the Government also seeks to attract individuals of different background (including Mainland and overseas graduates, and those who are working) to join the Government. For example, during the duty visit to Guangzhou and Xiamen in September 2023, the Secretary for the Civil Service met the Hong Kong students studying there to introduce to them a wide range of employment opportunities offered by the HKSAR Government. Also, the CSB organised roving recruiting talks in Shanghai and Beijing for the first time in September 2023 to introduce the work of different grades, employment opportunities and recruitment process. Our Economic and Trade Offices have also been proactively reaching out in their respective jurisdiction to carry out promotions on recruitment of various grades.

11. The Government also spares no effort in providing young people with ample and diverse short-term internship opportunities. In 2024-25, we are planning to provide more than 3 300 internship

placements in over 80 bureaux/departments and public organisations to enable participants to gain valuable experience and knowledge, as well as to broaden their perspectives and exposure for better planning and preparation before entering the job market.

Updating the Civil Service Code

12. Following the submission of the updated draft Civil Service Code (the Code) to the Chief Executive last year, the CSB has been reviewing more comprehensive information on his instruction. The updated Code will clearly spell out the core values and standards of conduct which present-day civil servants should uphold. Civil servants must be well aware of the need to safeguard sovereignty, national security and development interests. They should be dedicated to their duties, care about the public, embrace collaboration and teamwork, and be committed and responsible. After completion of the review, we will issue the draft updated Code to the staff side for consultation in the first quarter of 2024 or earlier.

Strengthening civil service training

13. The CSB will strengthen civil service management and enhance training in order to support the HKSAR Government in enhancing its governance capability and implementing the principle of “patriots administering Hong Kong”. To take this forward, the Civil Service College (CSC) will continue to strengthen training for civil servants, focusing on deepening their understanding of “One Country, Two Systems”, national development strategies and safeguarding national security, with the aim of enhancing their national identity and patriotism.

14. The CSC has established a systematic training framework, designating mandatory training programmes for officers at different levels. Currently, all new recruits are required to complete within the probationary period a foundation training programme to ensure their accurate understanding of “One Country, Two Systems”, the Constitution, the Basic Law, the Hong Kong National Security Law, along with the civil service’s core values and public service culture. Officers of degree or professional grades are also mandated to attend an advanced training

programme upon confirmation to the permanent establishment to reinforce their national identity and awareness of safeguarding national security. From July 2022 to October 2023, a total of 9 800 civil servants completed the above programmes. The CSC is actively improving the foundation training for new recruits through enhancing the programme design and delivery, thereby developing and reinforcing among civil servants a patriotic spirit, an affection for Hong Kong, a people-oriented service culture and a cross-departmental collaborative mindset.

15. In 2023, the CSC launched a training programme on understanding “One Country, Two Systems” and the contemporary China, and a dedicated seminar series on the theme of “Holistic View of National Security”. The aim is to deepen the understanding of middle and senior-ranking officers on significant subjects such as the theory and practice of “One Country, Two Systems”, developments in the contemporary China, and national security, through systematic training and continuous learning. The programme on understanding “One Country, Two Systems” and the contemporary China is led by renowned scholars arranged by the Institute for Hong Kong and Macau Studies, Peking University, while the seminar series on “Holistic View of National Security” is delivered by Mainland experts. Additionally, in November this year, the CSC will launch a seminar series on “Connecting with the World – ASEAN”. The series aims to enhance senior civil servants’ capacity for macroscopic views and international perspective, enabling them to support Hong Kong in leveraging its strengths to connect our country with the world.

16. Besides, the CSC has resumed arranging for middle and senior-ranking officers to attend national studies programmes at nine Mainland institutions (such as the National Academy of Governance, Tsinghua University, Peking University, and China Foreign Affairs University, among others). In June this year, the CSB also arranged for Permanent Secretaries and HoDs to undertake a study and duty visit in Beijing and Zhejiang Province. Around 800 civil servants are expected to participate in the above national studies training by the end of 2023. The CSC will continue to enrich the content and delivery of national affairs training, deepening civil servants’ understanding of the country.

17. In respect of public administration training for senior civil servants, the inaugural cohort of 14 participants has successfully completed their first year of the Master's Degree in Public Policy Programme, jointly organised by the CSC and the Peking University. Concurrently, the second batch of 20 senior civil servants has embarked on their study in Beijing. Upon returning to Hong Kong, the first-cohort participants conveyed that their yearlong immersive learning experience in Beijing, along with the in-depth exchanges with scholars, government officials, and the public, has significantly deepened their understanding of the motherland and enriched their knowledge of the country's politics and public administration. The insights gained from the development experiences on the Mainland also prompted the participants to thoughtfully reflect on how to combine the strengths of both systems of the Mainland and Hong Kong to complement each other, thereby enhancing the governance efficiency of the HKSAR, aligning it more closely with public sentiment, and actively integrating Hong Kong into the country's overall development. During their visits and exchanges with local officials in Midu County of Yunnan Province, Tianjin City, Hebei Province, and Inner Mongolia, the participants were profoundly moved by the unwavering dedication and commitment of Mainland officials towards the well-being of the people. These experiences have significantly reinforced the participants' sense of mission as civil servants, inspiring them to cultivate a people-oriented team spirit in their future roles, dismantle silos between departments, and strive towards achieving good governance. The CSC will continue to arrange for 15 to 20 senior civil servants with potential for advancement each year to participate in this programme, and will also continue to sponsor senior civil servants to attend the "Executive Master of Public Administration Programme for the Project of Hong Kong Public Administrative Talents" at Tsinghua University.

18. In September 2023, the CSB signed an agreement on Civil Service Staff Exchange and Collaboration Programme with the Mainland Municipalities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) with the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the People's Government of Guangdong Province. By the end of 2023, the CSB will commence the Civil Service Staff Exchange Programme jointly organised with the Mainland municipalities in the GBA. This staff exchange

programme is the first exchange programme for civil servants following the full resumption of normal travel between Hong Kong and the Mainland. The exchange period will be extended from four weeks to about three months, enabling Hong Kong civil servants to stay longer on the Mainland and gain a deeper understanding of the development of the GBA and the work of the host government agencies, thereby complementing the GBA's development strategy.

19. Executive Officers (EOs) are professional managers of the Government. Serving in various policy bureaux and departments, EOs play a pivotal role in resource and system management. It is a crucial work force providing support for the operation of Government. To equip the grade members for more effective performance of their managerial role in a professional manner and for proactive support to facilitating Hong Kong's efforts to integrate itself into the overall development of the country, the Government has launched the "Mainland Training Programme for EOII's" in partnership with the Sun Yat-sen University and the "Mainland Study Tour for EOs" in partnership with the Wuhan University this year. All EOII's who joined the civil service in or after June 2020 are required to attend the three-day Mainland Training Programme, which serves to further enhance the foundation training for the EO grade. Since its introduction in September 2023, five classes of the "Mainland Training Programme for EOII's" has been held and were attended by a total of 173 EOII's. As for the "Mainland Study Tour for EOs" to be launched in October 2023, it is a five-day programme open for all ranks of grade members. About 40 EOs at different ranks would join the first class of the programme from late October to early November. Supported by the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, the above two programmes mainly focus on on-site visits and research, which help the participants to learn about the country and its development from various aspects, as well as to strengthen their sense of belonging to and awareness of the country. It is also hoped that the participants may utilise what they have learned in the programmes to enhance their role as professional managers.

Civil Service Volunteer Commendation Scheme

20. The CSB has been encouraging civil servants to participate in volunteer activities, and providing support to policy bureaux/departments in establishing their volunteer service teams to provide diversified volunteer services in cooperation with other organisations and bodies. Volunteerism can enhance the solidarity of the civil service, bolster staff morale as well as deepen colleagues' understanding of the needs of members of public. As the epidemic has notably stabilised, policy bureaux and departments have fully resumed their participation in volunteer services with around 70 volunteer teams established.

21. To further motivate departmental volunteer teams to actively take part in and organise more volunteer services, and promote participation among civil servants, we plan to launch the Civil Service Volunteer Commendation Scheme in the third quarter of 2024 to give recognition to the civil service volunteer teams and individual civil servants for their outstanding performance and contributions in volunteerism. We will also publicise the good stories of commended departmental volunteer teams and individual civil servants through various channels and platforms (including social and printed media, and featuring stories in the Civil Service Newsletters and departmental newsletters), so as to showcase to the public the civil servants' dedication to serving the community and the people-oriented spirit.

Medical and dental benefits for civil servants

22. The Government has been providing civil service medical and dental benefits for around 570 000 civil service eligible persons (CSEPs) through the Department of Health (DH) and the Hospital Authority (HA).

23. Since March 2020, the Government has set up three Civil Service Chinese Medicine Clinics (CSCMCs) at the Chinese Medicine Clinics cum Training and Research Centres in Eastern District, Tsuen Wan District and Fanling, North District to provide free Chinese medicine general consultation and acupuncture services to CSEPs for treatment purpose. The annual service quota of Chinese medicine services for CSEPs has increased from around 63 000 in the initial stage to around

100 000 at present, representing an increase of over 50%. The services have all along been welcomed by CSEPs. In view of the service demand, we will actively explore with the Health Bureau and HA to modestly increase the service capacity of CSCMCs from 2024, and in the longer run, set up more CSCMCs by reprovisioning and redeveloping some of the Chinese Medicine Clinics cum Training and Research Centres with a view to gradually increasing the clinics' service capacity.

24. In respect of dental services, to alleviate the issue of long waiting time, the Government launched the 18-month "Pilot Scheme on Dental Services (Dental Scaling) for CSEPs" in July 2023. We will arrange more than 140 000 CSEPs to receive dental scaling services at private dental clinics. CSEPs who are invited to join the pilot scheme can receive dental scaling services at a time earlier than their original recall appointments, and the consultation time slots at DH dental clinics thus freed up can be allocated to new dental consultations or other CSEPs for recall appointments or follow-up treatments. As at 23 October 2023, DH has issued invitations to 29 300 CSEPs, and 7 300 CSEPs have already completed or booked dental scaling under the scheme.

25. In addition, we understand that quite some CSEPs would like to see the registration for new dental consultations to be free from monthly quota restrictions, thus saving them time from calling DH every month³. Meanwhile, the staff side would also like to have, other than telephone calls, electronic means for CSEPs to register for new dental consultations. After considering views from all parties concerned, we will introduce a more convenient and time-saving way for CSEPs to complete a one-time registration for joining the waiting list for new dental appointment quotas. DH is now doing the preparatory work for CSEPs to register for new dental consultations through an electronic platform starting from January 2024. The registration platform would have no quota restriction, and CSEPs can register at any time to wait for consultation slots. We will continue to listen to staff side's views regarding the detailed arrangements before finalising the improvement measure.

³ Currently, CSEPs are required to call DH's hotline on the first working day of a month to register for new dental consultations. When all the quotas of the month are given out, DH will not accept further registration. CSEPs who fail to make a registration will have to call the hotline again in the following month.

Mainland Education Award Scheme for Children of Civil Servants

26. Having regard to the Government's policy of encouraging young people in Hong Kong to actively integrate into the overall development of our country, the CSB has implemented the Mainland and Local Education Allowance (MLEA) scheme since 2021. On the premise that the eligibility criteria and the maximum rates for the former Local Education Allowance remain intact, eligible civil servants (i.e. those who were offered appointment before 1 June 2000 and joined the civil service) can apply for education allowances in respect of their children's primary or secondary education in the Mainland or in Hong Kong.

27. To encourage more civil servants' children to deepen their understanding of our country and its affairs; and more proactively integrate into the overall development of our country through receiving education in the Mainland, and to achieve good performance in different areas of learning, the CSB is going to set up a "Mainland Education Award Scheme for Children of Civil Servants" to provide education awards for eligible children of civil servants appointed on new terms on or after 1 June 2000 who receive primary or secondary education in the Mainland. To be eligible for application, the children of civil servants concerned have to complete a full academic year of full-time primary or secondary education in the Mainland, and be recommended by their schools' principals. We will consult the staff side on the proposal (including eligibility criteria, application quota and amount of award, etc.) within this year and formally roll out the scheme in 2024.

Provision of marriage leave and compassionate leave for government employees

28. Being the largest employer in Hong Kong, the Government has all along been committed to creating a family-friendly working environment for staff. Having made reference to the practices of public and private organisations in Hong Kong, the Government will provide marriage leave and compassionate leave for government employees starting from April 2024 to cater for their family needs arising from marriage or bereavement. The CSB is formulating the details and

implementation arrangements, which will be put in place after consultation with the staff sides.

Employment of non-ethnic Chinese

29. It is the Government's policy to provide equal employment opportunities to all civil service job applicants (including non-ethnic Chinese). To provide an additional way for job applicants to meet the appointment requirement in respect of language proficiency, departments may design their own job-oriented language tests according to the requirements of individual grades. In this connection, the Hong Kong Police Force has introduced the Recruit Police Constable Written Examination in May 2023 having regard to the job requirements of Police Constables. The Correctional Services Department will also introduce similar test.

30. In addition, the Government will also step up recruitment and outreaching efforts (e.g. enhancing communication and collaboration with organisations serving non-ethnic Chinese) so non-ethnic Chinese could receive government recruitment information in a more direct and efficient manner. We will also provide basic workplace Chinese training for non-ethnic Chinese government interns based on the experience of the introduction of such training in 2023.

KPIs

31. Various indicators (including key performance indicators (KPIs)) relevant to the policy initiatives of the CSB are set out in **Annex** for Members' reference.

Advice Sought

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

Civil Service Bureau
October 2023

Indicators for policy initiatives relevant to the Civil Service Bureau
(including key performance indicators (KPIs))

A. Indicators for Specified Tasks in 2023 Policy Address

1. Launch the “Civil Service Volunteer Commendation Scheme” **in Q3 2024** to encourage participation in and organisation of more volunteer work among civil servants.
2. Publicise the good stories of award recipients in the Secretary for the Civil Service’s Commendation Award Scheme held in November annually as well as in various other commendation schemes for civil servants **from end-2023 onwards** through electronic, social and print media to showcase and promote achievements of the awardees in their work and their dedication to serving the community.
3. Conduct briefings for and issue guidelines on the streamlined mechanism of retiring officers in the public interest with persistent sub-standard performance to Heads of Departments/Grades and departmental management **by end-2023**, and step up efforts to monitor the handling of these cases by departments.

B. On-going and Valid Indicators for Specified Tasks Introduced in the 2022 Policy Address¹

1. Issue the draft updated Civil Service Code for consultation with the staff side in **Q1 2024 or earlier**.

¹ Some of the on-going and valid indicators introduced in 2022 have been updated or enhanced in light of the latest situation.

C. Progress of 2022 Policy Address Indicators for Specified Tasks

Indicator No.	Indicators for Specified Tasks	Progress
14	Issue the updated Civil Service Code to staff sides for consultation in Q1 2023.	The CSB submitted a preliminary draft of the updated Civil Service Code last year. As there were views from the community on the Code at the same time, the Chief Executive instructed that more comprehensive information should be reviewed. Upon completion of the review, the CSB will issue a draft updated Code to the staff sides in Q1 2024 or earlier for consultation.
15	Enhance the existing mobilisation protocol by Q4 2022 and conduct the first drill within Q1 2023.	Task completed. The CSB implemented the enhanced mobilisation protocol in December 2022 with the newly established “government-wide mobilisation” level, and conducted the first drill on 16 February 2023. In response to Super Typhoon Saola and the torrential rain that hit Hong Kong in September, the mobilisation level was activated and more than 600 civil servants were mobilised to carry out relief work in various districts.
16	Launch the Chief Executive’s Award for Exemplary Performance in Q2 2023.	Task completed. Announcement on the winning team of the inaugural Chief Executive’s Award for Exemplary Performance was made on 27 June 2023.
17	Identify measures to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of managing sub-standard performers and consult the Public Service Commission (PSC) within 2023 before promulgation and implementation.	Task completed. After consulting the PSC, the CSB conducted consultation with the staff side on the relevant proposals. Taking into account the views expressed by the staff side, a streamlined mechanism of requiring civil servants to retire in the public interest on grounds of persistent sub-standard performance was implemented in September 2023.

Indicator No.	Indicators for Specified Tasks	Progress
18	Identify measures to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of handling disciplinary cases and consult the PSC within 2023 before promulgation and implementation.	Task completed. After consulting the PSC, the CSB put in place measures progressively in 2023 to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of handling disciplinary cases at the departmental level, e.g. enhancing training on the skills and capabilities of management staff in investigating and handling disciplinary cases, requiring civil servants to report their arrests, etc.