

For discussion
on 25 October 2022

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PANEL ON PUBLIC SERVICE

Policy Measures of Civil Service Bureau in the Chief Executive's 2022 Policy Address

Purpose

This paper outlines the policy initiatives relating to Civil Service Bureau (CSB) featured in the Chief Executive's 2022 Policy Address (Policy Address) and Policy Measures.

Details

2. To lead Hong Kong in moving ahead, we need a capable government that can deliver results. The civil service being the backbone of Government is the key. The Chief Executive has proposed various measures in the Policy Address to strengthen civil service management.

Updating the Civil Service Code

3. The Civil Service Code (the Code) was promulgated in 2009 and has been in place until now. As Hong Kong reaches the crucial stage of advancing to prosperity, the expectations and demands of the community towards civil servants have continuously grown. We have commenced reviewing and updating the Code to ensure civil servants uphold the same set of core values and guiding principles.

4. The updated Code will clearly spell out the core values and standards of conduct which present-day civil servants should uphold. Civil servants should put the principle of "patriots administering Hong Kong" into practice and have strong awareness of safeguarding national

sovereignty, security and development interest. They have to be dedicated to their duties, be people-oriented, embrace teamwork, and be ready to take up commitment and responsibilities. The Code will assist civil servants in understanding their responsibilities, and guide their daily work, decision-making and conduct. We expect to issue the updated Code to the staff side for consultation in the first quarter of 2023.

Strengthen the reward and punishment systems

5. We will strengthen the reward and punishment systems through the following measures.

Chief Executive's Award for Exemplary Performance

6. The HKSAR Government has been ranked among the top worldwide for its efficiency over the years, manifesting the good qualities of the civil service which are worthy of recognition. We will launch the "Chief Executive's Award for Exemplary Performance" from the second quarter of 2023 onwards, to acclaim exemplary teams, individuals or cases on a regular basis every three to six months. The exemplary contributions which may be acclaimed may span across a wide range of areas. The Government will also openly publicise these "good stories", with a view to showcasing more clearly to the public the excellent performance of the civil service.

7. Meanwhile, the Government will continue its drive in running the various existing commendation schemes for civil servants, including the Civil Service Outstanding Service Award Scheme, the Secretary for the Civil Service's Commendation Award Scheme and the Commendation Letter Scheme, so as to encourage civil servants to strive for excellence in their work, and give their best in providing quality service to the public.

Providing enhanced training and advancement opportunities

8. The Government has been maintaining a clear and well-structured career development system for civil servants to attract, nurture and retain talents. The Secretary for the Civil Service meets with heads of departments to discuss the succession arrangements and

planning of directorate officers in respective department on a regular basis. We will identify as early as possible officers with potential and outstanding performance (but may have shorter years of service), provide them with training and advancement opportunities, and prepare these promising officers for effective performance and for taking up higher responsibilities by career management. Heads of departments/heads of grades will monitor their posting needs and keep in view their development, formulate departmental development plans, and provide opportunities for promising senior professionals to take up responsibilities beyond their professional domains in a strategic manner to widen their exposure.

9. In addition, departments will also systematically arrange promising officers to attend advanced leadership programmes to broaden their perspectives with particular reference to the essential leadership and administrative competencies required to fulfill the role of a directorate officer. For example, the Master's Degree in Public Policy Programme for senior civil servants held jointly with the School of Government of Peking University is specifically designed for senior civil servants of high potential. We will encourage departments to select young officers with good potential and commitment to participate in this programme.

10. The aforementioned measures will enable the Government to better our work in selecting, nurturing and equipping talents, and have the most meritorious officers in taking up the most suitable posts, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of governance.

Strengthening the management of sub-standard performers

11. Civil servants at all levels are subject to annual performance appraisals, in order to enable the management to monitor and assess staff performance. We would on the one hand strengthen training and promotion of meritorious officers, but would also strengthen the management of sub-standard performers on the other hand. The Government will strengthen supervision of and assistance to under-performers. If their sub-standard performance persists, their appointment should be terminated in a timely manner. CSB will review the existing mechanism for managing sub-standard performers, and

consult the Public Service Commission on the proposed measures within 2023, before promulgation and implementation.

Enhancing the civil service disciplinary mechanism

12. The Government attaches great importance to the conduct and integrity of civil servants. While most of the civil servants are law-abiding and observe discipline, we adopt a zero-tolerance attitude towards officers who have breached the law or the civil service rules and regulations. In the five financial years from 2017/18 to 2021/22, a total of 1 125 civil servants were punished with formal disciplinary action for serious misconduct or criminal conviction, among whom 156 were removed from the service. In 2021/22 alone, 52 officers were removed from the service, accounting for one third of the above five-year total. Besides, in the aforesaid five years, a total of 1 968 civil servants were punished with summary disciplinary action for misconduct of less serious nature. CSB will review and enhance the civil service disciplinary mechanism, with a view to enabling disciplinary cases to be handled in a fair and just manner while also enabling appropriate punishment commensurate with the severity of cases to be promptly imposed on officers who have misconducted themselves. CSB will identify measures to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of handling disciplinary cases, and consult the Public Service Commission on the proposed measures within 2023, before promulgation and implementation.

Strengthening civil service training

13. The quality of civil service plays a critical role in the effective governance and implementation of policies. CSB, through the Civil Service College (CSC), makes on-going efforts to enhance training for civil servants on various fronts. In particular, we accord the highest priority to enhancing civil servants' understanding of the constitutional order of the HKSAR and the country's development, reinforcing the patriotic spirit and the citizen-oriented service ethos of civil servants. CSC will enhance civil servants' leadership capabilities, build a result-oriented team culture, deepen their understanding of "One Country,

Two Systems” and contemporary China and broaden their global perspectives through a variety of programmes.

Strengthening Civil Service College’s establishment and organisational structure

14. To date, except for the creation of the post of the Head, CSC has been operating on the establishment and organisational structure inherited from the former Civil Service Training and Development Institute. To enhance the functions of CSC, we will use existing and new resources to establish the School of Public Sector Leadership. The School will be dedicated to the training of senior civil servants, in particular those with potential for advancement to the senior echelons, in order to enhance their leadership, governance and public policy-making capabilities, as well as to ensure their accurate understanding of the “One Country, Two Systems” principle and the development strategy of our country in full support of the HKSAR Government’s implementation of the principle of “patriots administering Hong Kong”.

15. CSC will also establish the School of Professional Development, which will be dedicated to the provision of foundation and professional development training for civil servants. This will allow their continued participation in training, from induction and through different stages of their career, to update their knowledge and skills at work, and reinforce the service-oriented culture in the civil service. In the long term, CSC seeks to develop itself into a training base on public administration for leaders in the wider public sector who share a role in the governance of Hong Kong.

Strengthening civil servants’ national identity and awareness of national security

16. It is also a major priority of CSC to enhance civil servants’ understanding of national affairs and their awareness and responsibility in safeguarding national security. CSC has invited the Institute for Hong Kong and Macau Studies, Peking University to design an in-depth training programme to enhance directorate officers’ understanding of “One Country, Two Systems” and the contemporary China. CSC also

plans to launch a dedicated series of seminars on the theme of “Holistic View of National Security” to foster civil servants’ understanding of the challenges Hong Kong faces in safeguarding national security in the complex international environment and the responsibilities civil servants should shoulder in safeguarding national security. The series will be launched within the year.

17. CSC will establish a systematic training framework and designate training programmes for mandatory attendance by officers of different levels. Induction training for new recruits has been updated since July 2022. All new recruits are required to complete within the probationary period a foundation training programme. The contents cover understanding “One Country, Two Systems”, the Constitution, the Basic Law, the Hong Kong National Security Law, as well as the country’s system and major policies. Non-completion will disqualify the officers concerned from being confirmed to the permanent establishment. Officers of degree or professional grades are also required to take part in advanced training upon confirmation to the permanent establishment, so as to deepen their understanding of the constitutional order of the HKSAR, and enhance their awareness in safeguarding national security. Non-completion will adversely affect the promotion prospects of the officers concerned.

18. In addition, CSC collaborates with Peking University in organising the two-year Master’s Degree in Public Policy Programme for senior civil servants of high potential and nominated by their departments, with the aim of enriching the perspectives of the participating officers in public administration. The inaugural programme was launched in this September. Participants have to attend the programme on a full-time basis at Peking University in the first year. The second year of study will take place in Hong Kong for completion of a thesis while they resume work. CSC also continues to provide sponsorship for senior civil servants to attend the Executive Master of Public Administration Programme for the Project of Hong Kong Public Administrative Talents at Tsinghua University. CSC collaborates with the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the HKSAR as well to provide training on the country’s foreign affairs. A series of monthly

talks are delivered to deepen civil servants' understanding of the international scene and our country's foreign policy.

19. CSC also arranges for middle and senior-level civil servants to take part in national studies programmes, thematic visits and exchange programmes on the Mainland. CSC collaborates with nine Mainland institutions (including the National Academy of Governance, Tsinghua University, Peking University, China Foreign Affairs University, Zhejiang University, Nanjing University, Wuhan University, Jinan University and Sun Yat-sen University) in organising training programmes. The annual number of trainees reached 1 000 before the outbreak of the pandemic. CSC will further increase the number of training places when the pandemic is over.

Enhancing the existing mobilisation protocol

20. The Government will enhance the existing mobilisation protocol by introducing a "government-wide mobilisation" level. Under the new "government-wide mobilisation" level, rosters will be drawn up in advance to include designated personnel from various departments, who will stand ready to cope with major incidents that require deployment of considerable manpower. The enhanced mobilisation protocol will help ensure that civil servants can be mobilised promptly for quick response during such major incidents. CSB is devising relevant details and the enhancement is expected to be completed by the end of 2022. We will also conduct regular drills to strengthen the government's emergency response capability. The first drill is planned to be conducted within the first quarter of 2023.

Promoting civil service volunteerism

21. There is no lack of officers in the civil service who are enthusiastic in participating volunteer services in their spare time to demonstrate the care to the community and people-oriented service culture. CSB has also been encouraging the civil service to actively volunteer for community service. At present, 56 bureaux/departments have their volunteer teams set up, organising colleagues to cooperate with different local organisations and social welfare groups in promoting

volunteer service in their spare time for building a caring society together. Through direct contact and interactions with the public, colleagues will, at the same time, gain a deeper understanding of the needs of members of the public and enable the delivery of public service to better address these needs. CSB will continue to encourage departmental volunteer teams to promote more diversified volunteer services for developing a caring and people-oriented service culture.

Abolition of the archaic “Saturday-off” rule

22. In order to keep civil service management up with the times, CSB will review and update the Civil Service Regulations (CSRs), and repeal, amend and simplify outdated rules and procedures. We started by reviewing rules relating to leave calculation and deduction, in particular the “Saturday-off” rule, amongst others.

23. The “Saturday-off” rule was introduced in the early 1980s to address the difference in the number of leave days deducted for the same duration of extended absence between civil servants working on five-day week (FDW) work pattern and non-FDW civil servants when the former group was the minority. At present, almost 80% of civil servants are now working on a FDW work pattern. Upon preliminary review, we may abolish the “Saturday-off” rule, and at the same time revise the leave deduction arrangement (LDA) for non-FDW staff such that civil servants on different work patterns will have their leave days deducted in accordance with the same arrangement. We will proceed to communicate with the departments to ensure that their manpower deployment is geared up for the revised LDA. The initiatives are expected to be implemented within the first half of 2023.

Exploring new service delivery modes in the provision of fringe benefits

24. The Government, as an employer, is obliged to provide fringe benefits to civil servants as conditions of service. We will explore new and up-to-date service delivery modes to provide fringe benefits. Dental benefits for civil service eligible persons (CSEPs) would be our trial area, where the feasibility of allowing some eligible persons to receive dental scaling services from private dental clinics would be explored. With a

view to gauging the market's interest and intention in providing and operating the said dental scaling services, the Department of Health will, by end of this month, invite private dental organisations to express their interests. If feasibility is confirmed upon assessment, we will seek to roll out the initiative in the form of a pilot scheme with the target implementation in mid-2023. This measure would not only address the prevailing situation of massive case backlog arising from rescheduling of appointments of a number of patients due to the pandemic, as well as the long waiting time for dental benefits of CSEPs caused by manpower shortage, but also present an opportunity to test out the feasibility of providing fringe benefits to civil servants through a new model in a more cost-effective manner.

Internship programme for non-ethnic Chinese (NEC)

25. The Government, being the largest employer in Hong Kong, is a strong advocate for equal opportunities in employment. Race is never a relevant consideration in the selection process. CSB has introduced an internship programme for NEC students since 2019, with a view to helping them gain work experience, enhance their competitiveness for employment, and nurture their passion in serving the community. Thus far, over 100 NEC students have participated in the programme.

Youth development

26. As part of our commitment to youth development work, the HKSAR Government as the largest employer, in addition to offering a diverse range of career development opportunities for young people through recruitment, spares no effort in providing young people still in their study with short-term internship opportunities. In 2023/24, we plan to offer over 3 000 internship places in more than 80 bureaux/departments and public organisations to enable participants to gain valuable working experience and knowledge, as well as broadening their perspectives and exposure for better planning and preparation before entering the job market.

COVID-19 vaccination programme

27. CSB is also responsible for the implementation of COVID-19 Vaccination Programme.

28. The Government launched the territory-wide COVID-19 Vaccination Programme in February 2021 to provide the eligible population with the Sinovac and BioNTech vaccines, which are safe, efficacious and meeting quality requirements. Under the Programme, members of the public may get vaccinated through various channels including Community Vaccination Centres (CVCs), Community Vaccination Stations (CVSs), COVID-19 Vaccination Stations in public hospitals (HCVSs), general outpatient clinics under the Hospital Authority (HA), designated clinics under the Department of Health (DH), Private Clinic COVID-19 Vaccination Stations (PCVSs), private clinics participating in provision of Sinovac and BioNTech vaccination service, outreach services and Home Vaccination Service (HVS), etc. As at 20 October 2022, the Government has provided to the public around 19.73 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines. Around 6.73 million people have received two doses, accounting for around 92% of the eligible population, and 5.6 million have received three doses, accounting for around 81% of the eligible population. We will continue to press ahead with timely vaccination of appropriate doses by members of the public. The new publicity campaign launched in September 2022 would target the elderly aged over 70 and children below 12 for receiving vaccination as early as possible to prevent them from serious illness or risk of death if they were infected, and to build a community defence in Hong Kong.

29. To facilitate the unvaccinated elderly and people with impaired mobility due to disability or chronic illness to receive vaccination, the Government launched the HVS in April 2022 to provide door-to-door vaccination service to them. By 20 October 2022, over 50 000 doses were administered through HVS. Moreover, having noted the slow pace of vaccination rate of elderly, which may be caused by their relatively slow and passive grasp of vaccination related information, we have adopted a proactive approach in contacting and encouraging the elderly to receive vaccination. In April to July 2022, a call centre manned by

students of healthcare related disciplines from seven tertiary institutions made calls to unvaccinated persons receiving relevant allowances under the Social Welfare Department. HA and DH also arranged for staff to call their unvaccinated service users. Over 200 000 persons, mainly elderly, were approached and encouraged for vaccination under this three-pronged approach. In September 2022, we stepped further in expanding the channels of proactively contacting the elderly. Apart from commissioning the Senior Citizen Home Safety Association to reach out to users of its care-on-call service, the Government has also organised home visits to public housing estates with relatively more unvaccinated elderly to encourage them to get vaccinated. By various means of contact, we hope to help the elderly to get rid of the barriers to vaccination. Moreover, we have also actively arranged outreach visits to residential care homes for the elderly and residential care homes for persons with disabilities. As at end of September 2022, over 93% of these residents have received the first two doses of COVID-19 vaccines, while over 77% of them have received the third dose.

30. The minimum age for receiving the Sinovac vaccine has been lowered to 5 years old and above in January 2022 and further to 6 months and above in August 2022, while the vaccination service of BioNTech vaccine for children aged between 5 and 11 commenced in February 2022. Parents may make reservations for children to receive the vaccine at CVCs or private clinics. In addition, schools can liaise with the Education Bureau on arrangements for the outreach Sinovac vaccination service at schools by visiting doctors. The Government also provides a special appointment service for schools at the four Children Community Vaccination Centres and a transport service from and to schools. To date, the outreach vaccination service has served over 500 schools, while some 500 schools or more have utilized the group appointment service for students' vaccination at CVCs.

31. The Government is endeavor to provide various channels to cope with the vaccination demand of the population. At the same time, we would adopt appropriate consolidation strategy with regard to the public's desire for resuming normalcy in daily life. Five CVCs at sports centres as well as one Pop-up CVC at private premises would be closed by end of October 2022. The five sports centres would then be returned

to the Leisure and Cultural Services Department for re-opening to the public. We shall set up new container-built CVSs and PCVSs as replacements in the concerned districts to continue to provide vaccination services to the public. The 13 HCVS would provide both SinoVac and BioNTech vaccines with effect from 31 October 2022 to provide convenience to patients and visitors to the hospitals. Two other CVC and CVS which administer only SinoVac at present would also add the BioNTech vaccination service on the same day. After consolidation of facilities, the daily vaccination capacity would still be maintained at the level of around 63 000 jabs which is well above the prevailing demand.

Job creation scheme

32. In order to relieve the unemployment situation caused by the epidemic and anti-epidemic measures, the Government has earmarked \$19.8 billion under the Anti-epidemic Fund to implement three rounds of Job Creation Scheme. Around 90 000 jobs have been created under the three phases of the scheme, benefitting people in various sectors such as engineering, architecture, surveying, town planning, elderly and rehabilitation services, financial, innovation and technology, environmental protection, legal, creative industry, logistics industry and telecommunication, etc. Some of the job opportunities are provided for people from industries which are hard hit by the epidemic, for example, people from the travel industry and sport coaches. There are also jobs created specifically for fresh graduates or young people to apply. These jobs enable them to gain relevant work experience which will be conducive to their career development in the long run.

KPI

33. Various indicators (including key performance indicators (KPIs)) relevant to the aforementioned policy initiatives are set out in Annex for Members' reference.

Advice Sought

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

Civil Service Bureau
October 2022

Annex

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

1. Issue the updated Civil Service Code to staff sides for consultation **in Q1 2023**.
2. Enhance the existing mobilisation protocol **by Q4 2022** and conduct the first drill **within Q1 2023**.
3. Launch the Chief Executive's Award for Exemplary Performance **in Q2 2023**.
4. 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.
5. Identify measures to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of handling disciplinary cases and consult the PSC **within 2023** before promulgation and implementation.
6. Explore the feasibility of arranging some CSEPs to receive dental scaling services from private dental clinics under a new mode. Private dental organisations will be invited **by end of October 2022** to express their interests in providing the said dental scaling services. If feasibility is confirmed upon assessment, some CSEPs would be arranged to receive dental scaling services in private dental clinics under a pilot scheme, with the target implementation **in mid-2023**.
7. Simplify the rules relating to leave calculation and deduction by abolishing the "Saturday-off" rule, and implement a revised leave deduction arrangement for civil servants working on non-five-day week work pattern, **within the first half of 2023**.
8. Provide young people still in their study with short-term internship opportunities. In **2023/24**, offer **over 3 000 internship places** in more than 80 bureaux/departments and public organisations.