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**Replies to supplementary questions raised by Finance Committee Members in examining the
Estimates of Expenditure 2016-17**

Director of Bureau : Secretary for the Civil Service

Session No. : 1

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CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. S0002)

Head: (143) Government Secretariat: Civil Service Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (2) Human Resource Management

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service (Thomas Chow)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Civil Service

Question:

While the total civil service establishment stood at 170 898 on 31 March 2015, the strength was only 163 645, the difference being 7 253 or about 4% of the establishment. Vacancies in some departments, such as the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, the Water Supplies Department and the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, were near or above 10% of their respective establishments. Would such significant manpower shortage mean a huge increase in the workload for the existing staff and thus a lot of overtime work? What measures are there to contain the problem?

Asked by: Hon KWOK Wai-keung (Member Question No.)

Reply:

The difference between the establishment and strength of the civil service is mainly due to the appropriate timing determined by departments for starting to deploy additional manpower resources and the lead time required to conduct recruitment exercises. Regarding the former, departments will deploy additional manpower resources as and when necessary, taking into account the timing for launching new services or providing improved services, so as to optimise the use of manpower resources. As for the latter, the Civil Service Bureau (CSB) has issued guidelines reminding departments of the need to make early manpower planning (including making forecasts for new posts to be created) with a view to conducting recruitment exercises in a timely manner. Departments may also consider taking additional measures to streamline and expedite the recruitment process, such as making advance planning to make available sufficient manpower for conducting recruitment exercises, setting up several recruitment boards to conduct interviews concurrently in order to expedite the progress of the recruitment exercises, etc. The CSB will continue to work with departments and assist them in making appropriate arrangements to speed up the recruitment process.

Heads of departments have the responsibility to ensure that overtime work is kept to the minimum compatible with operational requirements. The Post-retirement Service Contract

Scheme recently launched by the CSB provides another means for departments to cope with their short-term manpower needs.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. S0008)

Head: (143) Government Secretariat: Civil Service Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (2) Human Resource Management

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service (Thomas Chow)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Civil Service

Question:

According to Annex C of Reply Serial No. CSB034, the total number of full-time non-civil service contract (NCSC) staff with continuous service of 5 years or more in the same position stands high at 2 820. In this regard, please advise on the followings:

1. Why are these full-time NCSC staff not absorbed into the civil service establishment? What are the details of the considerations?
2. Regarding the 27 and 25 full-time NCSC staff with continuous service in the same position for 5 years to less than 10 years and 10 years or more respectively in the Buildings Department, what are their grades and numbers in each grade? Has the Civil Service Bureau considered converting them to staff under the civil service establishment? If yes, what are the timetable and relevant details? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen (Member Question No.)

Reply:

Before making any decision on the creation of additional civil service posts, the Government has to assess whether the long term operational need is fully justified, and the work involved cannot be absorbed through streamlining the procedures, re-organisation or re-deployment of resources, etc. It is the Government's recruitment policy to select the most suitable persons to fill civil service vacancies through an open, fair and competitive process. Hence, there is no direct appointment of non-civil service contract (NCSC) staff as civil servant. We welcome serving NCSC staff to apply for civil service posts through an open and fair recruitment process if they are interested in such posts. Since relevant working experience is one of the factors considered in civil service recruitment, NCSC staff who meet the basic entry requirements of civil service ranks should generally enjoy a competitive edge over other applicants given their working experience in the Government.

Regarding the full-time^(Note 1) NCSC staff in the Buildings Department with continuous service of five years or more in the same position, their duties and respective number as at 30 June 2015 are as follows:

Type of duties	Number of staff	
	with five years to less than ten years of continuous service	with ten years or more of continuous service
Professional services	4	4
Technical support	19	10
Clerical support	4	11
Total	27	25

Note 1 : “Full-time” means the employment is on a “continuous contract” as defined by the Employment Ordinance, namely an employee who works continuously for the same employer for four weeks or more, with at least 18 hours in each week.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. S0003)

Head: (143) Government Secretariat: Civil Service Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (4) Civil Service Training and Development

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service (Thomas Chow)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Civil Service

Question:

According to part (a) of Reply Serial No. CSB041, the Government has organised staff exchange programmes with Beijing and other cities. Will the Government advise on the content of these exchange programmes and whether the Government plans to extend the scope of these programmes to cover more Mainland cities?

Asked by: Hon WONG Kwok-hing (Member Question No.)

Reply:

Civil Service Bureau (CSB) currently organises a staff exchange programme with Beijing, Shanghai, Chongqing, Hangzhou and Wuhan. Hong Kong and the above participating cities attach civil servants to government departments of the other side for about one month. The dates and themes of exchange are decided according to the nature of work and needs of the participants. The areas of exchange in the past included city planning, traffic management, public housing, health and food safety, environmental protection, trade and commerce, information technology, culture and arts, etc. Preparatory work for the exchange programme 2016 is underway, and we have no plan to extend the programme to other Mainland cities for the time being.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-CSB04

(Question Serial No. S0005)

Head: (143) Government Secretariat: Civil Service Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (2) Human Resource Management

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service (Thomas Chow)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Civil Service

Question:

According to part (a) of Reply Serial No. CSB040, the Government plans to collect relevant data from bureaux/departments (B/Ds) for analysis after the Post-retirement Service Contract (PRSC) Scheme has operated for a longer period of time. In this regard, after how long a period of operation does the Government plan to collect relevant data from B/Ds for preliminary analysis?

Asked by: Hon WONG Kwok-hing (Member Question No.)

Reply:

The Government launched the Post-retirement Service Contract Scheme to enable bureaux/departments to engage staff to undertake ad hoc, time-limited, seasonal or part-time tasks that require specific civil service expertise/experience. In view of the nature of the Scheme, we will only be able to obtain more representative data, reflecting such factors as seasonal service needs, after the Scheme has operated for a longer period of time say a full year. We shall collect data for analysis in due course.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. S0004)

Head: (37) Department of Health

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (7) Medical and Dental Treatment for Civil Servants

Controlling Officer: Director of Health (Dr Constance CHAN)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Civil Service

Question:

This is a follow-up question on Reply Serial No. CSB054:

According to the Government's reply, the attendances of civil service eligible persons ("CSEPs") at some Families Clinics and Dental Clinics were obviously far higher than those in other districts in 2015 (e.g. the attendances at Cheung Sha Wan Government Offices Dental Clinic were 74 000, far higher than others). In this connection, does the Government conduct regular reviews on the consultation services at Families Clinics and Dental Clinics in various districts? Does the Government put in place measures to encourage CSEPs to attend cross-district consultations so that the attendances in various districts will be more balanced?

Asked by: Hon WONG Kwok-hing (Member Question No.)

Reply:

The attendances at dental clinics in various districts are directly related to the numbers of dental surgeries in these clinics. Since there are more dental surgeries in Cheung Sha Wan Government Offices Dental Clinic, the attendances at this Clinic are correspondingly higher.

The Department of Health ("DH") conducts reviews on the demand of civil service eligible persons ("CSEPs") for dental services from time to time and formulates appropriate measures, including pairing up dental clinics with longer waiting times and those with shorter waiting times and encouraging CSEPs attending the former to switch to the latter with a view to shortening the waiting times.

Similarly, DH also conducts reviews, from time to time, on the services at Families Clinics in various districts. CSEPs are encouraged to attend cross-district consultations when such need arises.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-CSB06

(Question Serial No. SV0001)

Head: (143) Government Secretariat: Civil Service Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (2) Human Resource Management

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service (Thomas Chow)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Civil Service

Question:

With regard to Reply Serial No. CSB034 provided by the Civil Service Bureau, please advise this Committee on the timeframe for reviewing the implementation of five-day week for staff of front-line grades in the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD).

(Discussed at the meeting at 2:28 pm on 1 April 2016)

Asked by: Hon WONG Kwok-hing (Member Question No.)

Reply:

The Government has all along been encouraging departments to explore possible ways to migrate more staff to five-day week (FDW) subject to their adhering to the four basic principles (i.e. no additional staffing resources, no reduction in staff's conditioned hours of work, no reduction in emergency services and continued provision of essential counter services on Saturdays and Sundays) and consultation with staff.

At present, some 4 700 civil service staff (47%) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) are working on a FDW work pattern, amongst whom 1 300 are departmental grades officers and 3 400 are general grades / common grades officers. FEHD has been constantly and actively exploring whether more of its civil service staff could work on a FDW work pattern, and the department will continue its work in this area.

Whether a staff could work on a FDW work pattern depends on factors such as the work nature and service needs of their respective departments and posts as well as occupational safety. We will continue to encourage departments to devise FDW trial schemes when practicable and appropriate, or to arrange staff to work in FDW posts on a rotation basis.

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