

For discussion on
13 April 2018

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PANEL ON PUBLIC SERVICE

Implementation of Five-day Week in the Government

PURPOSE

This paper updates Members on the position of the implementation of five-day week (FDW) in the Government.

POLICY ON FIVE-DAY WEEK

2. The Government has implemented the FDW initiative in three phases starting from 2006¹. The policy objective is to improve the quality of civil servants' family life without compromising the level and efficiency of public services or incurring additional costs to taxpayers. Under this policy objective, bureaux and departments (B/Ds) are encouraged to migrate staff to FDW while following the four basic principles below –

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

IMPLEMENTATION OF FDW IN THE GOVERNMENT

3. The FDW work pattern includes working on a “Monday-to-Friday” basis, a “five-day-on, two-day-off roster in every seven days”, or “fewer than five days/shifts in every seven days”. Upon the third phase of implementation in July 2007, a total of some 94 300 out of 145 500 civil servants (i.e. around 65% of the then civil service strength) were working on a FDW work pattern.

4. The Government conducts biennial surveys to monitor the progress of migration to FDW in B/Ds. At the meeting of the Legislative Council Panel on Public Service on 21 April 2017, the Government reported (LC Paper No. CB(4)840/16-17(03)) on the position of the implementation of FDW in the Government as at 30 September 2016. In overall terms, as at

¹ The three phases started from 1 July 2006, 1 January 2007 and 1 July 2007 respectively.

30 September 2016, there were around 115 500² civil servants (i.e. around 73% of the then civil service strength) working on a FDW work pattern.

5. Separately, there were around 42 800 civil servants (i.e. around 27% of the then civil service strength) delivering social welfare services, immigration counter services, cultural services, postal services or environmental hygiene services, or engaged in law enforcement, passenger/cargo clearance, management of penal institutions, etc., working on a non-FDW work pattern also as at 30 September 2016.

6. The Government is now preparing for the next survey which will capture the position of the implementation of FDW in the Government as at 30 September 2018. If everything proceeds smoothly, we expect that we will complete collecting the relevant data in the first quarter of 2019 and will report the latest position to the Panel when appropriate.

LATEST DEVELOPMENT

7. As at 30 September 2016, there were still 23 departments which had not fully implemented FDW. We have all along been encouraging departments to explore the feasibility of trial schemes in a pragmatic manner in order to facilitate the migration of more staff to FDW. Amongst the trial schemes reported last year, the result of that involving more than 70 staff of the disciplined services and civilian grades in the Immigration Department (ImmD) was satisfactory and the relevant staff have formally migrated to FDW since May 2017. About 430 staff of the Hawker Control Task Force of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) and about 30 staff of the Mines Division of the Civil Engineering and Development Department have migrated to FDW since September 2017 and April 2018 respectively.

8. In addition to the above examples, since we reported to the Panel in April 2017, staff of the following departments have also migrated to FDW after going through trial schemes –

- (a) 22 staff of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) working in Kowloon Walled City Park, Carpenter Road Park and Hong Kong Park formally migrated to FDW in June and September 2017;

² Following the approach adopted in previous surveys, this figure included staff who were on FDW trial schemes, but excluded civil servants working in government schools, the Judiciary, the Hospital Authority, the Vocation Training Council, the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, the Independent Commission Against Corruption and the Legal Aid Services Council.

- (b) four staff in Shek Wu Hui Jockey Club General Out-patient Clinic, Ha Kwai Chung Polyclinic and Special Education Services Centre and Wan Chai Polyclinic of the Department of Health migrated to FDW in September 2017; and
 - (c) seven staff of the disciplined services and civilian grades of the Management Audit Section of ImmD migrated to FDW in January 2018.
9. At present, three departments are implementing / will implement trial schemes involving some 270 civil servants. The details are as follows –
- (a) eight staff of LCSO in So Kon Po Recreation Ground completed a nine-month trial scheme in January 2018, the result of which is pending review. Meanwhile, the relevant staff have continued to work on a FDW pattern;
 - (b) about 140 staff in 10 correctional institutions of the Correctional Services Department commenced FDW trials in phases from February to October 2017. The trial schemes are now in progress and the Department will review their effectiveness when appropriate; and
 - (c) FEHD is now studying the implementation details of the trial schemes for about 120 staff in Shop Front Extension Control Task Forces and Technical Support Unit in Transport Section. It is expected that the trial schemes will commence within this year.
10. The above examples demonstrate that although the scale of trial schemes varies, individual departments are still able to further promote FDW through various arrangements in accordance with the four basic principles. Despite some posts or jobs will have to remain in a non-FDW pattern unavoidably, the Government has a responsibility to balance all relevant factors, including the expectation of civil servants towards FDW, proper use of public resources, the maintenance of the quality of public services and the effective management of the civil service establishment, and to continue following the four basic principles.
11. The Civil Service Bureau (CSB) will continue to encourage the departments which have not yet fully implemented FDW to explore feasible arrangements so that more staff may work according to a FDW pattern in accordance with the four basic principles and to arrange staff to rotate to FDW posts where appropriate. CSB also welcomes the staff side to continue to communicate with the departmental management and put forth proposals to implement FDW.

ADVICE SOUGHT

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

Civil Service Bureau
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