

Bills Committee on Minimum Wage Bill

Administration's Response to Hon LEE Cheuk-yan's List of Questions

Policy objectives of the Minimum Wage Bill

Questions 1 and 2

We have explained the policy objectives of the Minimum Wage Bill (the Bill) in the Legislative Council Brief and in our paper on the Administration's Response to Issues Raised at the Bills Committee Meeting Held on 13 October 2009 (LC Paper No. CB(2)169/09-10(01)). Details are provided in these documents. In essence, the Bill seeks to introduce an optimal statutory minimum wage (SMW) regime in Hong Kong to forestall excessively low wages but without unduly jeopardising our labour market flexibility, economic freedom and competitiveness and without causing significant adverse impact on the employment opportunities for the vulnerable employees. To help ensure that employees' pay would be commensurate with the duration that they are at work, the SMW rate will be expressed as an hourly rate.

Issues concerning CSSA

Questions 3 to 5

2. The Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme provides a safety net for those who cannot financially support themselves. It is designed to bring their income up to a prescribed level to meet their basic needs. All CSSA recipients, including those under the category of low earnings, must satisfy the prescribed requirements under the CSSA Scheme. They are also provided with free or highly subsidised services including housing, medical services and education.

3. In order to provide relevant information to those who have a need to apply for the CSSA, the Government has been actively disseminating information on CSSA to the general public, including information on eligibility criteria under the CSSA Scheme. Various pamphlets published by the Social Welfare Department (SWD) on the CSSA Scheme are available to the public at District Social Welfare Offices, Social Security Field Units and Integrated Family Service

Centres etc. These pamphlets outline the eligibility criteria and various arrangements under the CSSA Scheme in clear and simple terms. All such publications, as well as other publications on the CSSA Scheme, are uploaded to SWD website for easy access by the general public.

4. SWD has not conducted studies on the proportion of working households receiving CSSA under the category of low earnings.

5. We consider that the measures described above can provide an effective safety net for those in need. For those non-CSSA low-income families, the Government also provides free or highly subsidised services in a wide range of policy areas, such as housing, medical services and education etc., with a view to assisting them to meet the basic needs of their daily lives.

Other questions

6. We are collating information for responding to the rest of the questions and would endeavour to provide the Administration's response as soon as practicable.

Labour and Welfare Bureau
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