

**For discussion on
17 March 2014**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PANEL ON PUBLIC SERVICE

Review on the conditioned hours of work for Model Scale 1 Grades

PURPOSE

This paper briefs Members on the progress of the review on the conditioned hours of work for Model Scale 1 (MOD 1) Grades (“the review”).

BACKGROUND

Policy on conditioned hours of work of civil servants

2. All along, there is no uniform conditioned hours of work in the civil service. There are two systems of conditioned hours of work: gross (i.e. inclusive of meal breaks) and net (i.e. exclusive of meal breaks), and specific conditioned hours of work are laid down for different grades of civil servants, including civilian and disciplined services staff, according to operational requirements and other relevant considerations.

3. As the stipulated conditioned hours of work has been taken into account in determining the overall remuneration package offered to different civil service grades, a reduction in the conditioned hours of work of a particular grade without any corresponding change to its pay is an improvement to the pay and conditions of service of that grade.

4. To ensure prudent use of public funds and the upkeep of the level of service to the public, it is an established policy that the Administration will only consider a proposal to reduce the conditioned hours of work of a particular civil service grade if the proposal complies with the three prerequisites of cost-neutrality, no additional manpower, and maintaining the same level of service to the public. In considering a reduction proposal, the Administration will consider the duties and responsibilities of the grade concerned, the operational requirements, the manpower situation, the implications of the reduction on other civil service grades, and other relevant factors. Each proposal will be considered on its own merits and the advice of the relevant advisory body will be sought and taken into account before the Administration takes a decision. For parity consideration and proper management of

the civil service, the conditioned hours of work for all members of the same grade/rank should be the same (“same grade, same conditioned hours of work” principle).

Background on the review

5. There are 11 MOD 1 grades, namely Barber, Car Park Attendant II, Explosives Depot Attendant, Ganger, Gardener, Property Attendant, Supplies Attendant, Ward Attendant, Workman I, Workman II and Workshop Attendant. As at 30 June 2013, there were around 7 450 MOD 1 staff working in 63 Bureaux/Departments (B/Ds). The conditioned hours of work of MOD 1 grades are 45 hours net per week. According to the Civil Service Regulations, for officers whose conditioned hours of work are 45 hours net per week, the normal hours of attendance are from 8:30 a.m. to 12 noon and from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. from Monday to Saturday, both days inclusive. Where it is operationally feasible and no additional cost is involved, Heads of Department may vary the hours of attendance of staff in such a way as to enable them to work 5 or 5½ days a week. In reality, the hours of attendance of different MOD 1 staff vary significantly due to different operational needs.

6. In response to the call of the MOD 1 staff for the adoption of 44 or 45 gross conditioned hours of work per week, the Administration had embarked on a review in June 2013 to assess whether it would be feasible to reduce the conditioned hours of work of the MOD 1 grades to 45 hours gross per week, subject to the full compliance with the three prerequisites and the “same grade, same conditioned hours of work” principle. Without pre-empting the results of the review, we have emphasised to the Staff Side that a full-fledged reduction proposal for all the MOD 1 grades would not be easy to achieve given the large number of staff and B/Ds involved and the importance of upholding the established prerequisites and principle as in previous reduction proposals for other non-MOD 1 grades. We have recently completed the first stage of the review and details are set out in the ensuing paragraphs.

FIRST STAGE OF THE REVIEW

7. The review covers all MOD 1 staff working in 63 B/Ds. As the first step, B/Ds with MOD 1 staff were invited to carefully examine the work pattern, job nature and workload of the MOD 1 staff with a view to assessing the feasibility of reducing their conditioned hours of work to 45 hours gross per week. Upon receiving the returns from all B/Ds in late 2013, we have studied the findings thoroughly and met with individual B/Ds to conduct in-depth assessment. Since we embarked on the review, we have reiterated that any reduction proposal would need to fully meet the three prerequisites and the “same grade, same conditioned hours of work” principle.

FIRST STAGE FINDINGS

8. Upon the completion of the above steps, we have summarised the findings of the first stage of the review. Amongst the some 7 450 MOD 1 staff, it is considered that the conditioned hours of work of around 1 500 of them could be reduced to 45 hours gross per week without compromising the three prerequisites in theory. However, as it is necessary to uphold the “same grade, same conditioned hours of work” principle for parity consideration and proper management of the civil service, only four MOD 1 grades, namely Barber, Explosives Depot Attendant, Gardener and Supplies Attendant, involving a total of 40 staff are at the present moment considered feasible to reduce their conditioned hours of work to 45 hours gross per week. Taking a grade as the basis, the remaining seven grades involving around 7 410 staff, namely Car Park Attendant II, Ganger, Property Attendant, Ward Attendant, Workman I, Workman II and Workshop Attendant, cannot yet reduce their conditioned hours of work. Details of the initial stage findings are tabulated at **Annex**.

ANALYSIS

9. We have summarised the main reasons leading to the limited number of MOD 1 staff being considered as feasible to reduce their conditioned hours of work as follows –

- (a) past precedents where trial schemes to reduce the conditioned hours of work of a grade could be implemented under the three prerequisites were mainly achieved through streamlining or reprioritising of work procedures. B/Ds have advised that as the work of MOD 1 staff is mainly manually intensive and standardised, there is not much room for streamlining/reprioritising. In fact, some B/Ds consider the manpower of their MOD 1 staff already quite stringent. Services provided to the public will be adversely affected or additional manpower/financial implications will arise if the manpower is further thinned out upon reduction of conditioned hours of work; and
- (b) while some B/Ds consider it feasible for their MOD 1 staff to reduce the conditioned hours of work, the conditioned hours of work of the grade as a whole could not be reduced under the principle of “same grade, same conditioned hours of work”.

WAY FORWARD

10. We have reported the above initial stage findings to the MOD 1 Staff Consultative Council (“MOD 1 Council”) at its meeting on 21 February 2014, and proposed to proceed with the second stage of the review by setting up tripartite meetings to provide a platform for B/D management and MOD 1 staff representatives to exchange views on reduction proposals. We believe this will be a constructive communication process between the Staff Side and B/D management with a hope to identifying feasible reduction proposals based on mutual understanding. We will also continue to update the Staff Side of the overall progress through the MOD 1 Council.

11. Members are invited to note the progress of the review as set out in this paper.

Civil Service Bureau
March 2014

**Initial Stage Findings of the
Review on the Conditioned Hours of Work for Model Scale 1 Grades**

- (a) Grades which are feasible to reduce the conditioned hours of work at this stage

Grade	Number of Staff*	Number of Departments involved
Barber	1	1 Department
Explosives Depot Attendant	2	1 Department
Gardener	1	1 Department
Supplies Attendant	36	18 Departments
Total number of staff	40	

- (b) Grades which are not feasible to reduce the conditioned hours of work at this stage

Grade	Number of staff*	Number of Bureaux/Departments involved
Car Park Attendant II	8	3 Bureaux/Departments
Ganger	84	4 Bureaux/Departments
Property Attendant	95	19 Bureaux/Departments
Ward Attendant	116	2 Departments
Workshop Attendant	24	1 Department
Workman I	1 860	21 Bureaux/Departments
Workman II	5 224	63 Bureaux/Departments
Total number of staff	7 411	

*Number as at 30 June 2013