

For information on
21 December 2015

Legislative Council Panel on Public Service

Update on Extension of the Service of Civil Servants

Purpose

This paper reports on the progress made in implementing the initiatives announced by the Government in January this year for extending the service of civil servants.

Background

2. The Government announced in January 2015 the adoption of a package of flexible initiatives for extending the service of civil servants. These initiatives serve to enable the Civil Service to keep pace with the demographic changes of society; address the different operational and succession needs of individual grades/departments; and balance the interests of different cohorts of civil servants while maintaining effective management of the Civil Service. At the Panel meeting on 19 January 2015, we briefed Members on these initiatives vide LC Paper No. CB(4)343/14-15(04). The matter was further discussed at the Panel meeting on 18 May 2015, during which deputations were invited to provide their views.

Progress Update

3. Subsequent to the announcement in January 2015, we have been following up on the implementation of the above initiatives. A progress update is set out in paragraphs 4 – 9 below.

(a) Higher retirement age for new recruits

4. Higher retirement age is now applied to all new recruits appointed to the Civil Service on or after 1 June 2015. Specifically, we have raised the retirement age of those new recruits to 65 in respect of the civilian grades, and 60 in respect of the disciplined services grades

regardless of their ranks. This provides a long-term solution to address the challenges arising from the ageing population ahead.

(b) Streamlined control regime on post-service outside work

5. We have implemented, with effect from 1 September 2015, the streamlined arrangements governing the taking up of outside work by non-directorate civil servants retiring/retired from the Government on pensionable terms. Specifically, under the streamlined arrangements, blanket permission is given to non-directorate civil servants on pensionable terms in 157 junior ranks whose maximum pay points do not exceed Master Pay Scale Point 20 or equivalent to take up outside work during their pre-retirement leave and within the first two years of their retirement, subject to relevant conditions being met (including the civil servant concerned has had no past dealings with the prospective employer in his last two years of government service, and he has to comply with the relevant work restrictions in his taking up of the post-service outside work up to the end of two years of retirement).

(c) Post-retirement Service Contract (PRSC) Scheme

6. We promulgated in November 2015 a set of guidelines that gives immediate effect to the PRSC Scheme. Under the Scheme, bureaux/departments (B/Ds) may engage retired/retiring civil servants on contract terms to undertake ad hoc, time-limited, seasonal or part-time tasks which call for specific civil service expertise/experience. It enables B/Ds to flexibly adjust their staffing level and staff mix to meet their service needs; facilitate transfer of expertise/experience by tapping the pool of retired/retiring civil servants; and ensure the quality, efficiency and cost-effectiveness of service delivery through flexible redeployment of manpower resources.

(d) Adjusted mechanism on further employment of civil servants beyond retirement age

7. Following consultation with the bureau/departmental management and the Public Service Commission (PSC), we issued in May 2015 a draft implementation framework for the adjusted mechanism on further employment (covering final extension of service and further employment for a longer duration) for staff consultation. The adjusted mechanism will include raising the maximum period for final extension of service beyond retirement age from 90 days to 120 days; allowing a longer period of up to five years for further employment other than final extension;

adjusting suitably the approval criteria; and extending the coverage of the further employment mechanism to officers on the CSPF Scheme¹. The adjusted further employment mechanism will give a scalable solution for B/Ds to retain experienced staff beyond retirement age having regard to the changing manpower/succession needs of individual grades from time to time.

8. Under the draft implementation framework for the adjusted further employment mechanism –

- (a) openings for further employment will be determined in a reasonable and objective manner;
- (b) by making reference to the modus operandi for promotion and recruitment, selection boards will be convened to consider applications for further employment; and
- (c) reports of the selection boards will be subject to scrutiny by the Civil Service Bureau and PSC as appropriate.

9. We have considered the feedback received from the staff sides on the draft implementation framework. With a broad consensus among stakeholders on the adjustments regarding final extension of service, we will roll out the revised arrangements for processing applications for final extension shortly. As regards further employment other than final extension of service, we are discussing with relevant stakeholders, including both bureau/departmental management and the staff sides, and hope to be able to finalise the implementation details as soon as practicable.

Advice Sought

10. Members are invited to note the contents of this paper.

Civil Service Bureau
December 2015

¹ At present, there is no specific provision in the Civil Service Regulations for further employment of CSPF officers beyond retirement age.