



LABOUR DEPARTMENT (Headquarters)

勞工處（總處）

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Chairman
Finance Committee
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong
(Attn: Ms Anita SIT
Clerk to the Finance Committee)

4 March 2019

Dear Ms SIT,

**Follow-up issues of the meeting of the Finance Committee
of the Legislative Council held on 11 January 2019**

At the meeting of the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council held on 11 January 2019, members discussed and endorsed the creation of one permanent Chief Labour Officer post in the Labour Department (LD) for the purpose of undertaking the various new tasks in relation to the abolition of the “offsetting” of severance payment (SP) and long service payment (LSP) with employers’ mandatory contributions under the Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF) System. In response to the information requested by members at the meeting, the Government’s reply is as follows -

(a) The proportion of the time-limited posts of the Labour Officer Grade and that of the comparable Grades of other departments in the overall establishment of the respective departments for illustrating whether the number/ proportion of such time-limited posts in LD is on the high side such that there is a need to create the aforementioned Chief Labour Officer post on a permanent basis to alleviate the workload of LD

According to the existing establishment, there are around 530 posts in total in the Labour Officer Grade of LD. Among them, around 30 are time-limited posts, accounting for around 5% of the total posts in the Labour Officer Grade and 15% of the number of consequential vacancies in the rank of the Assistant Labour Officer II.

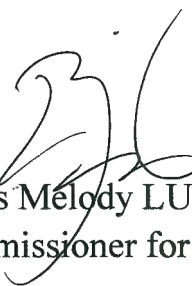
In creating a post and deciding whether the post should be a permanent or a time-limited one, the Government considers mainly the operational needs of the department. If the work to be undertaken is permanent and sustaining in nature, generally a permanent post is created; while time-limited posts are mainly for handling work of short duration or with a completion date, such as public works projects. Based on the above principle, and having considered that the preparation and implementation of the various supporting measures and arrangements for the abolition of the “offsetting” of SP and LSP with employers’ mandatory contributions under the MPF System, as well as monitoring of the sustainable and effective operation of the related measures are long-term tasks, we recommend that a permanent post must be created to undertake the said work.

Members enquired on how the proportion of time-limited posts of the Labour Officer Grade in the overall establishment of LD compares with that of the other Government departments. Since the work of individual Government departments and Grades, structure of the relevant Grades, staffing composition required at different stages of work, or suitability of engaging non-civil service contract staff to undertake the time-limited tasks, etc., are not the same, and suitable arrangements need to be made in accordance with the prevailing circumstances, it is therefore difficult to directly compare the manpower situation of different departments based on the respective number or proportion of the time-limited posts.

(b) The response to Part (ii) of the motion moved by Hon TSE Wai-chuen under paragraph 37A of the Finance Committee Procedure and passed at the meeting, i.e. “urging the Government to take measures to tackle the appeal concerning insufficient manpower of the Labour Officer Grade”

We thank members' concern over the manpower situation of the Labour Officer Grade of LD. LD has all long been taking various proactive measures, such as streamlining existing work processes, and appropriately deploying manpower amongst various work tasks according to their respective priorities, etc., with a view to optimising the use of resources while at the same time alleviating effectively the manpower shortage situation. Currently, LD is conducting a recruitment of Assistant Labour Officers II. We hope this would help fill up expeditiously the existing vacancies as well as the new posts to be created in the new financial year for improving existing services and launching new services. We will also constantly review the work currently handled by the time-limited posts. Where there is a long-term operational need, we will recommend replacing them by permanent posts according to the established mechanism.

Yours sincerely,



(Ms Melody LUK)
for Commissioner for Labour