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LABOUR AND WELFARE BUREAU  
GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT

Central Government Offices  
Tim Mei Avenue  
Tamar, Hong Kong

本函檔號 Our Ref.:

來函檔號 Your Ref.:

29 April 2020

Ms Anita SIT  
Clerk to the Legislative Council Finance Committee  
Legislative Council Complex  
1 Legislative Council Road, Central, Hong Kong

Dear Ms SIT,

**Follow-up Reply to  
Legislative Council Finance Committee Meeting on  
17 and 18 April 2020**

In the Legislative Council Finance Committee meeting on 17 and 18 April 2020, members requested the Administration to provide supplementary information on the Employment Support Scheme (ESS). Our reply is as follows.

Under the ESS, the amount of subsidy provided by the Government for an employer would be calculated on the basis of 50% of the actual wages paid to employees at the “specified month”, with a wage cap at \$18,000 (i.e. the median monthly wage of employees in Q2 2019) per month, and the maximum subsidy is \$9,000 per month per employee. Employers may choose any one month from January to March 2020 as the “specified month” depending on the circumstances of their businesses. The number of staff (including those who were on duty, on no-pay leave or half-pay leave at that time) and the relevant wages during that month will be taken as the basis for

the calculation of the subsidies. Hence, if the number, composition and wages of employees during the time of application for wage subsidies (for example in May) differ from that of the “specified month”, it will not affect the Government’s calculation of the wage subsidies amount.

Nonetheless, all eligible employers joining the ESS will be required to provide an undertaking not to implement redundancy during the subsidy period, i.e. the number of paid employees during the subsidy period should not be smaller than the number of employees (regardless of whether they are paid or not) in March 2020, and to spend all the government wage subsidies in paying wages to employees. If an employer violates these two conditions during the subsidy period, the Government will adjust the wage subsidies for that employer including claw back and impose other penalty. If it was found that the employer’s irregularities involve fraud or other criminal offences, we shall refer such case to relevant enforcement agents for follow-up.

In respect of prevention of abuse, monitoring and auditing mechanism will be put in place under the ESS as appropriate, so as to screen out and follow-up any cases involving abuse or irregularities. We are finalising the details of relevant mechanism and penalties with stakeholders, and will announce details prior to receiving application. Furthermore, the Government will adopt a highly transparent approach, which includes announcing the list of employers applying for the subsidy, the total number of employees benefited and the amount of subsidy. As such, employees concerned and members of the public will be informed of the employer’s receipt of subsidy. Should an employer is found to have violated the conditions of the scheme, employees concerned or members of the public may report to relevant authorities.

Yours sincerely,



(Dominic Chow)

for Secretary for Labour and Welfare

c.c:

Head, Policy Innovation and Co-ordination Office  
(Attn: Ms Joyce HO Kwok-shan)