

For discussion on
21 April 2017

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PANEL ON PUBLIC SERVICE

Implementation of Five-day Week in the Government

PURPOSE

This paper updates Members on the position of the implementation of five-day week (FDW) in the Government.

POLICY ON FIVE-DAY WEEK

2. The Government has implemented the FDW initiative in three phases starting from 2006¹. The policy objective is to improve the quality of civil servants' family life without compromising the level and efficiency of public services or incurring additional costs to taxpayers. Under this policy objective, bureaux and departments (B/Ds) are encouraged to migrate staff to FDW while following the four basic principles below –

- (a) no additional staffing resources;
- (b) no reduction in the conditioned hours of work of individual staff;
- (c) no reduction in emergency services; and
- (d) continued provision of essential counter services on Saturdays/Sundays.

3. The FDW work pattern includes working on a “Monday-to-Friday” basis, a “five-day-on, two-day-off roster in every seven days”, or “fewer than five days/shifts in every seven days”. Upon the third phase of implementation in July 2007, a total of some 94 300 out of 145 500 civil servants (i.e. around 65% of the then civil service strength) were working on a FDW work pattern. Ever since, we have continued our effort in encouraging B/Ds to explore trial schemes on further migrating more staff to FDW when and where it is feasible and appropriate.

¹ The three phases started from 1 July 2006, 1 January 2007 and 1 July 2007 respectively.

BIENNIAL SURVEYS

4. The Government conducts biennial surveys to monitor the progress of migration to FDW in B/Ds. At the meeting of the Legislative Council Panel on Public Service on 16 May 2016, the Government reported (LC Paper No. CB(4)961/15-16(04)) that a biennial survey would be conducted to capture the implementation of FDW in the Government as at 30 September 2016. We have now completed the survey and the major findings are set out in the ensuing paragraphs.

5. As at 30 September 2016, around 115 500² (i.e. around 73% of the civil service strength) civil servants were working on a FDW work pattern. This is the highest number (and percentage) of civil servants working on a FDW work pattern since the introduction of the FDW initiative in 2006. Compared with the position of 30 September 2014 when around 112 600 civil servants (i.e. around 72.4% of the then civil service strength) were working on a FDW pattern, there was an increase of about 2 900 civil servants (or 0.6%) on FDW. A breakdown of the civil servants on FDW by work pattern is set out in the table below -

	Number of staff³ (as at 30 September 2016)
Staff working on a “Monday-to-Friday” basis	88 300
Staff working on a “five-day-on, two-day-off roster in every seven days” or “fewer than five days/shifts in every seven days”	26 700
Staff on FDW trial schemes	500
<i>Sub-total</i>	115 500 (73.0%)
Staff on a non-FDW work pattern	42 800 (27.0%)
<i>Total</i>	158 300 (100%)

6. To avoid compromising the level and efficiency of public services, and to ensure the continued provision of essential services on Saturdays/Sundays, around 42 800 civil servants (i.e. around 27.0% of the civil service strength) delivering social welfare services, certain immigration counter services, cultural services, postal services or environmental hygiene services, or engaged in law enforcement, passenger/cargo clearance, management of penal institutions, etc., were working on a non-FDW work pattern as at 30 September 2016. This represented a reduction of about 100 civil servants (or 0.6%) as compared with the position of 30 September 2014 when around 42 900 civil servants (or 27.6%) were on a non-FDW work pattern.

² Following the approach adopted in previous surveys, this figure included staff who were on FDW trial schemes, but excluded civil servants working in government schools, the Judiciary, the Hospital Authority, the Vocation Training Council, the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, the Independent Commission Against Corruption and the Legal Aid Services Council.

³ Figures rounded off to the nearest hundred.

7. Of the 500 staff or so who were undergoing FDW trial schemes as shown in the table in paragraph 5 above, they were staff of three departments, namely the Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD), the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) and the Immigration Department (ImmD). The trial scheme of ImmD, involving some 70 staff, has been proven to be successful. The civil servants concerned are expected to migrate formally to FDW in the second quarter of 2017. The trial scheme of CEDD, involving around 40 staff was completed in April 2015 and is now under review. For the trial scheme of FEHD, it has been scheduled to run from July 2016 till June 2017 and involves about 400 staff of different grades/ranks. Taking into account the actual progress of the trial scheme and having regard to the staff side's appeal for an earlier conclusion of the trial scheme, FEHD has started to evaluate the implementation of the trial scheme to assess whether there is room for formal migration of the staff concerned to a FDW work pattern upon the completion of the whole one-year period of the trial scheme.

NEW DEVELOPMENT AFTER THE SURVEY

8. We encourage B/Ds to explore trial schemes that may facilitate further migration of staff to FDW. After the completion of survey, we note that some government departments have arranged further trial schemes for their staff, though on a smaller scale. They involve civil servants in the Department of Health (DH) and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department. Separately, with the commencement of the Judiciary (Five-day Week) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Ordinance 2016 on 3 January 2017⁴, some 70 civil servants in DH who were covered in the survey as non-FDW staff and whose work is related to the Judiciary's FDW pattern have since migrated to FDW.

WAY FORWARD

9. To avoid compromising the level and efficiency of public services, and in keeping with the four basic principles set out in paragraph 2 above, not all civil servants can migrate to FDW. Nevertheless, we will continue to encourage B/Ds which have yet to fully implement FDW to explore, in consultation with their staff, migrating more staff to work on a FDW work pattern where feasible. We will also encourage B/Ds to arrange staff to work in FDW posts by rotation where practicable and appropriate.

⁴ Following the commencement of the Ordinance and as at 31 March 2017, a total of some 1 600 civil servants working in the Judiciary, which is not part of the Government, have migrated to FDW.

ADVICE SOUGHT

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

**Civil Service Bureau
April 2017**