

**立法會**  
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**Panel on Public Service**

**Meeting on 21 April 2017**

**Updated background brief on  
implementation of five-day week in the government**

**Purpose**

This paper provides background information on the implementation of the five-day week ("FDW") initiative in the Government and summarizes the major concerns expressed by members at previous meetings of the Panel on Public Service ("the Panel").

**Background**

2. The Administration decided to implement the FDW initiative in the Government in three phases starting from 2006<sup>1</sup> to improve the quality of civil servants' family life. Bureaux and departments ("B/Ds") have to abide by the following four basic principles in their implementation of the FDW initiative:

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

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<sup>1</sup> The FDW initiative was implemented in three phases, namely on 1 July 2006, 1 January 2007 and 1 July 2007.

3. 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 implementation of the final phase in July 2007, a total of some 94 300 civil servants were working on a FDW work pattern, and all government units suitable for five-day operation at that time had migrated to a FDW work pattern.

4. The Civil Service Bureau ("CSB") conducted biennial surveys on the implementation of FDW in B/Ds. As revealed by the latest survey conducted in 2014, as at 30 September 2014, 112 600 civil servants<sup>2</sup> (around 72.4% of the then civil service strength) were working on a FDW work pattern (including 700 staff<sup>3</sup> who were undergoing FDW trial schemes), whilst 42 900 civil servants (around 27.6% of the then civil service strength) were unable to work on a FDW work pattern due to the need to maintain the overall level and efficiency of public services, e.g. services provided by the Police Force; or other services that were provided on Saturdays/Sundays such as social welfare services, some immigration counter services, cultural services, postal services, environmental hygiene services, law enforcement, passenger/cargo clearance, and management of penal institutions, etc. In answering Legislative Council Finance Committee members' questions on the Estimates of Expenditure 2016-2017, the Secretary for the Civil Service advised that whether individual civil servants of different grades could work on a FDW work pattern depended on the operational and service needs of their respective departments and positions.<sup>4</sup> The next biennial survey would capture the position of FDW in the Government as at 30 September 2016.

### **Views expressed by the Panel at previous meetings**

5. The Panel had discussed FDW implementation since 2006. Members in general supported the FDW initiative and welcomed the progress on implementation of FDW in the Government. However, they expressed concern that some civil servants could not join the FDW

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<sup>2</sup> Following the approach adopted in previous surveys, this figure excluded civil servants working in government schools, the Judiciary, the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the Hospital Authority, the Vocation Training Council and the Hong Kong Monetary Authority.

<sup>3</sup> The departments involved were the Customs and Excise Department, the Social Welfare Department and the Civil Engineering and Development Department. According to the Administration, the vast majority of these 700 staff had been migrated to FDW upon the successful completion of their respective trial schemes.

<sup>4</sup> Source: [Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2016-17 by the Finance Committee - Reply Serial No. CSB028](#).

arrangement. Members enquired about the Administration's plan to address these civil servants' aspiration for working on FDW, so as to alleviate any discontent that might arise from differences in working hours among civil servants. They were also concerned that differences in working hours among civil servants might give rise to complaints about different pay for the same job, and affect civil servants' morale and quality of government service. Another member asked what measures would be taken by B/Ds to ensure parity in arranging Saturday/Sunday off for their staff who were on a FDW work pattern.

6. The Administration clarified that the conditioned hours of work of civil servants would not be affected by the implementation of FDW in the Government. The Government had all along been encouraging B/Ds to explore possible ways to migrate more staff to FDW. Some B/Ds were actively exploring the feasibility of introducing trial schemes to migrate more staff to a FDW pattern and arranging their staff to fill the posts with a FDW work pattern by rotation. At the Panel meeting on 16 May 2016, the Administration advised that the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department had devised a FDW trial scheme for around 430 staff, and would conduct a review after one year to ensure that the new arrangements would not affect enforcement efficacy. The Immigration Department would also launch a trial scheme for around 70 of its staff.

7. The Administration further advised that given the need to comply with the four basic principles set out in paragraph 2 above, it might not be possible for all of the civil servants to enjoy FDW eventually. Moreover, not all staff preferred working from Monday to Friday. CSB would encourage B/Ds to arrange their staff to rotate between FDW posts where operational circumstances permitted. Also, some civil servants preferred a six-day week work pattern because they did not want to work longer hours on weekdays to make up for not working on Saturdays.

8. On the suggestion that the Administration should review the aforesaid four basic principles in order not to hinder the implementation of the FDW initiative to promote family friendliness and to create more jobs, the Administration advised that there was no need to review the four basic principles at the present stage. Creation of additional jobs was never the objective of implementing the FDW initiative. The Administration pointed out that shortening the conditioned hours of work of civil servants would be the simplest way to create jobs but it would, however, entail the need for review of and changes to the pay and conditions of service of staff concerned.

9. Some members considered that the majority of the civil servants who could not migrate to FDW probably because of their long conditioned working hours. If they performed duties on a FDW basis, they would have to work very long hours daily. These members suggested that the Administration should review the conditioned hours of service for those grades of staff who had to perform 51 hours of work per week, with a view to reducing the working hours to 44 hours per week.

10. The Administration pointed out that specific conditioned hours of work were laid down for different grades in the civil service having regard to their job nature and operational requirements. As the pay and conditions of service of civil servants were set based on, amongst other things, their conditioned hours of service, any change in the number of working hours would also affect pay. The terms and conditions of service as well as the conditioned hours of service for different grades in the civil service had been reviewed in the 2006 Pay Level Survey. CSB had no intention to conduct another review. The Administration also pointed out that Heads of department/grade ("HoDs/HoGs") had been in close consultation with the staff sides in their respective departments prior to and throughout the implementation of FDW to ensure smooth operation.

### **Recent development**

11. The Administration will update the Panel on the implementation of FDW in the Government at the Panel meeting on 21 April 2017.

### **Relevant papers**

12. A list of relevant papers is in **Appendix**.

## Implementation of five-day week in the government

## List of relevant papers

Meeting	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Public Service	15.5.2006	<a href="#">Administration's paper</a>  <a href="#">Minutes</a>
Panel on Public Service	20.11.2006	<a href="#">Administration's paper</a>  <a href="#">Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat</a>  <a href="#">Minutes</a>
Panel on Public Service	21.5.2007	<a href="#">Administration's paper</a>  <a href="#">Minutes</a>
Panel on Public Service	19.11.2007	<a href="#">Administration's paper</a>  <a href="#">Updated background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat</a>  <a href="#">Minutes</a>
Panel on Public Service	19.1.2009	<a href="#">Administration's paper</a>  <a href="#">Updated background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat</a>  <a href="#">Minutes</a>
Panel on Public Service	11.9.2012*	<a href="#">Administration's paper</a>

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>Paper</b>
Panel on Public Service	16.5.2016	<a href="#">Administration's paper</a>  <a href="#">Updated background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat</a>  <a href="#">Minutes</a>

\*Issue date

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