

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

LC Paper No. CB(4)875/17-18(04)

Ref.: CB4/PL/PS

**Panel on Public Service**

**Meeting on 13 April 2018**

**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 2016, as at 30 September 2016, 115 500 civil servants<sup>2</sup> (around 73% of the then civil service strength) were working on a FDW work pattern (including 500 staff<sup>3</sup> who were undergoing FDW trial schemes), whilst 42 800 civil servants (around 27% 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. Some departments, e.g. the Department of Health and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, have arranged further trial schemes for their staff after the 2016 survey.

5. Separately, with the commencement of the Judiciary (Five-day Week) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Ordinance 2016 on 3 January 2017,<sup>4</sup> some 70 civil servants in the Department of Health who were covered in the survey as non-FDW staff and whose work was related to the Judiciary's FDW pattern had since migrated to FDW.

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

6. Members in general supported the FDW initiative and welcomed the progress on implementation of FDW in the Government. However,

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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 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, the Immigration Department and the Civil Engineering and Development Department.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

they expressed concern that some civil servants could not join the FDW arrangement. At the Panel meeting on 21 April 2017, members noted from the submission from the Government Amenity Management Supervisors General Union that some staff of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department could not enjoy FDW, and the Union proposed the provision of additional staffing resources to enable the full implementation of FDW. In this connection, members enquired about the Administration's plan to address these civil servants' aspiration for working on FDW and whether the Administration had made a realistic assessment on the feasibility of implementing FDW for the entire civil service. 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.

7. The Administration clarified that FDW was not a condition of service, and 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. For example, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department had conducted trial schemes for staff of the Amenities Assistant grade in three leisure venues, and the Amenities Assistants deployed in tree teams and individual venues/facilities had successfully migrated to FDW. The Administration believed that with a 1.9% increase in civil service establishment for 2017-2018, B/Ds might have flexibility to migrate more staff to FDW.

8. 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.

9. 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 any modification to the four principles would have an impact on conditions of service for individual staff and incur additional resources. FDW was one of the family-friendly policies adopted by the Administration with a view to improving the quality of civil servants' family life. 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.

10. Some members considered that the majority of the civil servants who could not migrate to FDW probably because of their long conditioned working hours, such as those who had to perform 51 hours of work per week, and regular overtime. If they performed duties on a FDW basis, they would have to work very long hours daily.

11. The Administration advised 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. The pay and conditions of service of civil servants were set based on, amongst other things, their conditioned hours of service. 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. The Administration also pointed out that Heads of department/grade 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**

12. The Administration will update the Panel on the implementation of FDW in the Government at the Panel meeting on 13 April 2018.

### **Relevant papers**

13. 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>
Panel on Public Service	21.4.2017	<a href="#">Administration's paper</a>  <a href="#">Updated background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat</a>  <a href="#">Minutes</a>  <a href="#">Administration's response to the submission dated 3 April 2017 from Government Amenity Management Supervisors General Union regarding the implementation of five-day week in the Government</a>
Council Meeting	28.6.2017	<a href="#">Question raised by Hon Kwok Wai-keung on "Implementation of five-day week"</a>

\*Issue date

Council Business Division 4  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
12 April 2018