

**For discussion on
7 July 2020**

Legislative Council Panel on Manpower

Employment Support Scheme and unemployment support measures

Employment Support Scheme (ESS)

Scheme details of the first tranche

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government has launched the ESS under the second round of the Anti-epidemic Fund to provide time-limited financial support to eligible employers in assisting them to retain employees who may otherwise be made redundant.

2. ESS provides wage subsidies to eligible employers for six months, which will be disbursed in two tranches. The first tranche of wage subsidies cover June to August 2020 while the second tranche cover September to November 2020. ESS also provides a one-off lump sum subsidy of \$7,500 to eligible self-employed persons (SEPs).

3. For the first tranche of ESS, except those who are not eligible (including the HKSAR Government, statutory bodies and subvented staff in government-funded organisations) and employers of food premises who have applied for the Catering Business (Social Distancing) Subsidy Scheme, all employers who have been making Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF) contributions or have set up Occupational Retirement Schemes Ordinance (ORSO) Schemes will be eligible for ESS. According to the information provided by the Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes Authority (MPFA) and the MPF trustees, it is estimated that about 256 000 employers would be eligible for ESS.¹

¹ We have earlier estimated that, excluding those ineligible employers, ESS is expected to benefit about 270 000 employers who have been making MPF contributions or have set up ORSO schemes for their employees. According to the latest assessment, which has excluded employers of food premises who have applied for the Catering Business (Social Distancing) Subsidy Scheme, and avoided double counting employers who have participated in both MPF and ORSO schemes, there are about 256 000 employers who are eligible for applying ESS.

4. Further to the Government’s announcement of the launch of ESS on 8 April, four areas of adjustment to ESS were announced on 12 May after further consideration and listening to the views of different sectors of the community, which include –

- (a) employers can apply for wage subsidies in respect of employees aged 65 or above who have MPF accounts. We have subsequently made clear that so long as employers have made MPF voluntary contributions for these relevant employees or have provided information on the basic salaries of these employees, the processing agent will calculate the amount of wage subsidies in respect of these employees;
- (b) employers may apply for wage subsidies for “regular employees” (i.e. employees who are 18 - 64 years of age and have been employed for a continuous period of 60 days or more) under the two MPF “Industry Schemes” (specifically for the construction industry and catering industry) if employers have made MPF contributions for them;
- (c) allowing SEPs who have set up an MPF account on or before 31 March 2020, which has not been terminated as of the date, to apply for a one-off lump sum subsidy of \$7,500 even if no contributions have been made; and
- (d) the amount of wage subsidies is to be calculated based on 50% of the actual wages paid to each employee in the “specified month”, with a wage cap at \$18,000 per month (i.e. the maximum wage subsidy per employee at \$9,000 per month)². After listening to the views of some of the sectors hard hit by the epidemic, the “specified month” for the purpose of applying for the first tranche of wage subsidy has been adjusted to any one month between December 2019 and March 2020, instead of between January and March 2020 as previously proposed.

5. Employers participating in the first tranche of ESS will be required to provide an undertaking that –

² The ESS does not require employers to use the wage subsidies to subsidise at maximum \$9,000 or half of the wages of each employee. This only serves as the basis for calculating the wage subsidies, rather than the maximum amount of subsidies that the employers can use for paying wages for each employee, or the requirement where employers have to spend the wage subsidy on each employee on a reimbursement basis.

- (a) the number of employees on the payroll in any one month of the three-month subsidy period (i.e. June to August 2020) must not be less than the total number of paid and unpaid employees in March 2020; and
- (b) the subsidy for each month of the subsidy period (i.e. June to August 2020) should be fully spent on paying the wages of employees in the same month.

6. If employers in receipt of the first tranche of wage subsidies fail to use all the wage subsidies received for a particular month to pay the wages of the employees in the same month during the three-month subsidy period (i.e. June to August 2020), the Government will claw back the unspent balance of the subsidies. Furthermore, if the number of employees on the payroll in any one month of the subsidy period is less than the number of paid and unpaid employees in March 2020, the employer receiving wage subsidies will have to pay a penalty to the Government. Please refer to **Annex I** for the calculation of penalty.

Application numbers

7. The first tranche of subsidies under the ESS was opened for online application from 25 May to 14 June 2020, under which a total of 168 799 applications have been received from employers, accounting for about two-third (66%) of 256 000 eligible employers. As regards SEPs, about 259 860 applications have been received, which are more than the estimated number of 215 000 eligible SEPs based on the information provided by the MPFA. After vetting the applications, about 140 000 applications fail to meet the eligibility requirements³.

Disbursement of subsidies

8. The ESS Secretariat (the Secretariat) has started disbursing wage subsidies and one-off lump sum subsidy to eligible employers and SEPs respectively in batches since 12 June.

³ Under the ESS, the applicant must have enrolled himself or herself in a MPF Scheme as an SEP and the relevant SEP MPF account should have been set up on or before 31 March 2020 (i.e. it cannot be backdated to that date or any earlier date) and had not been terminated as of 31 March 2020. Ineligible applications include those which were submitted based on an employee MPF account or a personal account created after termination of previous self-employment, rather than a dedicated SEP MPF account, or the relevant SEP MPF accounts had already been terminated on or before 31 March 2020.

9. On the wage subsidy for employers, as at 30 June, four batches of employers' applications totalled at about \$25.4 billion were approved, covering about 100 600 employers and 1.11 million employees. The average amount of subsidy for each employee is about \$23,000. Among the four batches of employers with their wage subsidies approved, 97% of them are micro or small and medium-sized enterprises with less than 50 employees.

10. As regards the one-off lump sum subsidy of \$7,500 for SEPs, as at 30 June, three batches of payment covering about 74 000 SEPs have been disbursed by the Secretariat. The Secretariat will disburse subsidy to about 10 000 SEPs in early July. Four batches of payment altogether involve about \$632 million.

Auditing and monitoring

11. Appropriate monitoring and auditing mechanisms have been put in place under ESS. During and after the vetting of applications, the ESS Secretariat and/or its processing agent will vet and conduct sample verification of the information submitted by the employers, and conduct on-site checking at those employers' organisations to inspect the true copy of relevant contribution records or payroll records, etc., so as to verify the truthfulness of employees' payroll information submitted by employers. If an employer makes false statement, misinterprets or conceals the facts, or furnishes false or misleading documents or information to the Government, the Secretariat and/or its processing agent in an attempt to receive any subsidy under the ESS, the employer concerned may be subject to criminal prosecution.

12. Furthermore, starting from 22 June, the ESS Secretariat has published the list of employers who have received wage subsidies, the amount of subsidies and the committed headcount of employees on the ESS website (www.ess.gov.hk) to enable monitoring by employees concerned and the public. As of 30 June, the Secretariat has uploaded the list of first two batches of about 59 000 employers and the relevant information. Should employees concerned or members of the public find that there are any employers who abuse or violate the conditions of ESS, they may report to the ESS Secretariat (hotline: 1836-122; email: enquiry@employmentsupport.hk). The Secretariat will proactively follow up on these cases. As for enquiries relating to the provisions under the Employment Ordinance or conditions of employment, complainants may contact the Labour Relations Division of the Labour Department.

Way forward

13. The Government will continue to expeditiously process the remaining applications submitted under the first tranche, with a view to disbursing as soon as practicable wage subsidies or lump sum subsidy to more eligible employers and SEPs. Furthermore, the Secretariat and/or its processing agent will continue to conduct vetting and sample verification of the information submitted by employers in batches, as well as conducting on-site checking at selected employers' organisations.

14. Meanwhile, we are reviewing the experiences and arrangements of the first tranche of ESS and will later announce application details of the second tranche. We aim to disburse the second tranche of subsidies in September this year to subsidise employers to pay wages for September to November 2020.

Unemployment Support Measures

Cash Assistance Provided by the Government

15. The Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme provides a safety net to help persons and families who cannot support themselves financially to meet their basic needs. Having considered the unprecedented challenges posed by COVID-19 in Hong Kong, the Chief Executive announced on 8 April 2020 the second round of anti-epidemic measures including the provision of a time-limited unemployment support scheme through the CSSA system, with a view to providing timely and basic assistance to the unemployed during this difficult time. The Finance Committee of the Legislative Council approved the related funding on 18 April. The Social Welfare Department has temporarily relaxed the CSSA asset limits for able-bodied persons (including able-bodied adult singletons and able-bodied adults and children under family cases) by 100 per cent for six months (from 1 June to 30 November, i.e. the asset limits will revert to the normal level on 1 December). Separately, under the existing CSSA arrangement, the value of an owner-occupied residential property of households with able-bodied persons will be disregarded for a grace period of the first 12 months. This arrangement will also apply to applicants under the six-month unemployment support scheme.

16. Meanwhile, the Government has commenced payment of the one-off special allowance under the Anti-epidemic Fund (AEF) to eligible Working Family Allowance (WFA) households and Student Financial Assistance (SFA) households on 9 June 2020. It aims to support low-income households under the deteriorating economic and employment conditions as a result of the COVID-19

pandemic. This arrangement is to relax the proposal of providing time-limited cash allowance to the unemployed and the under-employed as announced by the Chief Executive in January 2020. Under the relaxed arrangement, eligible WFA and SFA households will receive the one-off special allowance, regardless of whether these low-income households are unemployed or under-employed. It is expected that about 200 000 low-income households will be benefitted from this special allowance.

Employment Services

17. The Labour Department (LD) provides comprehensive and free employment support for job seekers through its 13 job centres, three industry-based recruitment centres and on-line platforms, etc. LD strives to help job seekers secure employment by canvassing vacancies from employers in various industries for job seekers with different educational backgrounds and working experience, and organising various kinds of job fairs.

18. LD also implements and introduces timely enhancements to its various special employment programmes so as to raise the employability of job seekers who have special needs or difficulties in employment, and to encourage employers to hire them. In light of the deteriorating employment situation, LD will raise the ceiling of on-the-job training (OJT) allowance payable to employers under the Employment Programme for the Elderly and Middle-aged, the Youth Employment and Training Programme and the Work Orientation and Placement Scheme in September 2020, with a view to further encouraging employers to hire the elderly and middle-aged, young people and persons with disabilities and provide them with OJT. Upon enhancement, employers engaging job seekers under these three employment programmes will be paid an allowance of up to \$60,000 per employee. LD also plans to launch a pilot scheme in September 2020 to encourage eligible employees to undergo and complete OJT under the above employment programmes through the provision of a retention allowance, thereby stabilising employment. Subject to the length of OJT period, a full-time employee may receive a retention allowance of up to \$12,000.

19. LD will continue to monitor its employment services in the light of the local economic and labour market conditions. Corresponding adjustments or enhancements will be initiated in a timely manner so as to better serve the changing needs of both job seekers and employers.

The “Love Upgrading Special Scheme”

20. Entrusted by the Government, the Employees Retraining Board (ERB) launched the “Love Upgrading Special Scheme” (“Special Scheme”) in October

last year to provide employees affected by economic downturn with comprehensive training for two to three months, with special allowance during the training period, to assist them to upgrade their skills and pursue self-enhancement, with a view to rejoining the employment market as soon as possible. The Special Scheme imposes no restriction on the trade or educational attainment of trainees. The maximum amount of monthly allowance payable to each trainee during the training period has also been increased from \$4,000 to \$5,800 from 25 May this year. In addition, ERB has launched the enhanced new tranche of the Special Scheme this month. The Special Scheme, alongside ERB's regular training courses, could provide support to local workers under the current stringent economic environment.

Long Service Payment and Severance Payment

21. According to the Employment Ordinance (EO), if an employee who has been employed under a continuous contract is dismissed (other than summary dismissal due to serious misconduct) and meets the specified conditions and the qualifying length of service, he/she is entitled to long service payment⁴ (LSP) or severance payment⁵ (SP). The maximum amount of LSP and SP is \$390,000. The above requirements would provide economic support to the employees concerned to help alleviate their financial hardship caused by the loss of employment.

Employment Support Measures under the Anti-Epidemic Fund

Catering Business

22. Considering that the businesses of licensed food premises with seating areas are hard-hit by the epidemic as well as the social distancing measures implemented by the Government, the Government launched the Catering

⁴ Under EO, an employee who has been employed under a continuous contract for a period of not less than 5 years is eligible for LSP subject to meeting any one of the following conditions: (1) the employee is dismissed by the employer (other than redundancy or summary dismissal due to serious misconduct); (2) the employment contract of a fixed term expires without being renewed; (3) the employee dies; (4) the employee resigns upon granting of a certificate by a registered medical practitioner or a registered Chinese medicine practitioner certifying that he/she is permanently unfit for the present job; or (5) the employee, aged 65 or above, resigns on ground of old age.

⁵ Under EO, an employee who has been employed under a continuous contract for a period of not less than 24 months is eligible for SP subject to meeting any one of the following conditions: (1) the employee is dismissed by reason of redundancy; (2) the employment contract of a fixed term expires without being renewed by reason of redundancy; or (3) the employee is laid off.

Business (Social Distancing) Subsidy Scheme⁶ to provide subsidies to those catering premises, ranging from \$250,000 to \$2,200,000 according to the floor area of the premises.

23. The subsidy will be dished out upfront, in two tranches, for the applicants to pay wages to their workers in six months from May to October 2020, with a view to sustaining their businesses and continuing their employment of the workers. Applicants would be required to undertake that there would be no redundancy of staff for the three months on receipt of the first tranche of subsidy and another three months on receipt of the second tranche; and to undertake that not less than 80% of the subsidies would be used for meeting staff salaries.

24. By the close of the application period (5 June 2020), the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department received a total of some 9 100 applications. As at 30 June 2020, payment for the first tranche has been authorised for about 8 700 applications, with subsidy disbursed amounting to about \$2.17 billion.

Construction Sector

25. Under the second round of the Anti-epidemic Fund, the Government will offer a one-off subsidy to employers in the construction sector who made contributions to their casual employees under the Industry Schemes of the Mandatory Provident Fund (“MPF”) for at least 15 days in March 2020 (“qualified employees”). The amount of financial subsidy to be offered to the employers for each of their qualified employee is \$36,000.

26. Applicants will have to undertake not to make their qualified employees redundant for the six-month period from August 2020 to January 2021 and to spend the full amount of the subsidies on paying their wages. It is expected that the subsidies will benefit about 3 500 employers in the construction sector who have employed some 44 000 qualified employees to help them tide over the current difficulties.

27. Application for the above subsidies was opened on 6 July 2020 and will be closed on 31 July 2020, with a view to disbursing the subsidies through the Construction Industry Council in about six to eight weeks upon receipt of application.

⁶ Apart from the Catering Business (Social Distancing) Subsidy Scheme, food business operators may also apply for the Employment Support Scheme. However, to avoid double benefits, applicants can only choose one of the two schemes.

Tourism Sector

28. The Government has launched the Travel Agents and Practitioners Support Scheme under the Anti-epidemic Fund, which includes providing travel agents' staff, as well as freelance accredited tourist guides and tour escorts whose main occupations are being tourist guides and tour escorts, each with a monthly subsidy of \$5,000 for six months. The application period of the scheme has already closed. As at 30 June, the applications from over 5 200 travel agents' staff and freelance tourist guides and tour escorts have been approved. The Government will continue to process the applications received as soon as possible to provide eligible applicants with timely financial support.

Transport Sector

29. In view of the operating pressure on the transport trades brought by the COVID-19 epidemic and the necessary social distancing measures, the Government introduced various financial support measures to the trades under the Anti-epidemic Fund. The cross-industry ESS would also help the employees of various public transport operators to maintain employment.

30. The ESS, however, is not applicable to taxi and red minibus (RMB) rentee-drivers. The Transport Department (TD) has therefore introduced a sector-specific scheme, to provide each eligible active taxi and RMB driver with a monthly subsidy of \$6,000⁷ for a period of six months from 1 April 2020 to 30 September 2020. The application for the scheme started on 17 June 2020. We expect that 59 000 taxi drivers and 4 000 RMB drivers will benefit from the measure.

31. On the other hand, a significant number of employees of green minibus (GMB) and local ferry operators are aged 65 or above. Most of these employees are not MPF scheme members and hence were not covered under ESS. TD has again introduced a specific scheme, and would provide the GMB and local ferry operators with a monthly subsidy of \$6,000 for a period of six months from June 2020 to November 2020 for each eligible employee aged 65 or above and who is not voluntary MPF scheme member. The subsidy would be used for salary payment by the operators. The application for the first tranche of the subsidy (for salary payment from June to August 2020) started on 29 May 2020. As of 30 June 2020, TD has received applications from 131 operators for nearly 2 650 employees. Disbursement of subsidy is in progress. The second tranche of the

⁷ For taxi and RMB drivers who cannot meet all the eligibility requirements of an active driver but can fulfill certain conditions, they would be provided with a one-off subsidy of \$7,500.

subsidy will start to be disbursed in September 2020 and TD will announce the application details later.

Laundry Trade

32. The Government has earmarked \$90 million under the Anti-epidemic Fund to launch the Anti-epidemic Subsidy Scheme for the Laundry Trade to help the laundry trade cope with the challenges brought by the current economic situation. Each eligible laundry shop or workshop will receive a one-off subsidy ranging from \$10,000 to \$150,000, depending on its size of operation. To take care of the livelihood of aged employees in the laundry trade, the Government requires an undertaking from the applicants of the Scheme not to reduce the total number of employees aged 65 or above for three months upon receipt of the subsidies. Otherwise, the Government may claw back any subsidy already disbursed. The Subsidy Scheme has received over 1 400 applications. Vetting of applications is underway and the first batch of subsidies have been disbursed to applicants on 18 June 2020.

Education Sector

33. Regarding the second round of relief measures funded by the Anti-epidemic Fund to schools and their related service providers who have been affected by the prolonged class suspension, details of the measures and implementation progress are as follows:

- (a) To provide a one-off relief grant of \$40,000 to each private school offering non-formal curriculum (PSNFC) registered under the Education Ordinance (Cap. 279) (commonly referred as “tutorial schools”) and designated centre under the Financial Assistance Scheme for Designated Evening Adult Education Courses (FAEAEC). As of 30 June 2020, among 2 599 applications received, 2 182 applications have been approved.
- (b) To provide the operators of catering outlets (namely tuck shops, canteens and restaurants) at primary schools, secondary schools and post-secondary institutions a one-off relief grant of \$80,000 to each outlet. For catering outlets at primary and secondary schools, as of 30 June 2020, among 894 applications received, 606 applications have been approved. For catering outlets at post-secondary institutions, all 152 applications received have been approved.

- (c) To provide the lunchbox providers of primary and secondary schools a one-off relief grant of \$10,000 per school each provider is serving. As of 30 June 2020, among 814 applications received, 755 applications have been approved.
- (d) To provide school bus drivers, school private light bus drivers and escorts (commonly known as “nannies”) a one-off relief grant of \$10,000 for each driver and \$10,000 per vehicle for escorts. As of 30 June 2020, among 9 242 applications received, 3 441 applications have been approved.
- (e) To provide each instructor, coach, trainer and operator of interest classes engaged by schools a one-off relief grant of \$7,500. As of 30 June 2020, among 24 014 applications received, 23 917 applications have been approved.

34. Payment of subsidy to eligible applicants is expected to be completed by end of July 2020.

Registered Sports Coaches

35. The spreading of COVID-19 and social distancing measures implemented by the Government have greatly affected sports coaching and training. To alleviate the financial burden of sports coaches, the Government has launched the ‘One-off Grant to Registered Sports Coaches’ (the Scheme) under the second round of Anti-epidemic Fund.

36. Application period of the Scheme was from 15 May to 16 June. Registered sports coaches of National Sports Associations or specific sports organizations who have performed sports training duties last year were eligible to apply. After the close of application period, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) received about 12 700 applications. As of 23 June, around 6 100 applications were approved, involving around \$45.75 million. LCSD anticipated that the vetting of all applications would be completed by end July 2020.

Interest Class Instructors under Social Welfare Department

37. Similarly, the Social welfare Department (SWD) launched a scheme on relief grants for interest class instructors on 15 May 2020. It aims at providing relief grants for interest class instructors hired by subvented welfare service units of SWD-subvented organisations such as youth centres, elderly centres, community centres and rehabilitation centres, so as to help lessen the impact of

the COVID-19 pandemic on them. A one-off relief grant of \$7,500 would be provided for eligible interest class instructors engaged or planned to be engaged by subvented welfare service units during the period from February to August 2020. The instructors should not be beneficiaries of the schemes on relief grants for interest class instructors under the Education Bureau or sports coaches under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department. The application was closed on 15 June 2020. A total of 3 099 applications were received by SWD. Payment of relief grants to eligible applicants will be made within one month following approval⁸.

Job Creation

38. To relieve the worsening unemployment situation due to the COVID-19 epidemic, \$6 billion has been earmarked under the Anti-epidemic Fund to create 30 000 time-limited jobs in the public and private sectors in the coming two years for people of different skill sets and academic qualifications, including seasoned professionals and fresh graduates. These time-limited jobs cover various job categories. Some of them require professional or general skills, e.g. work relating to surveying, town planning and information technology. Some are for the professional sector, e.g. jobs provided for personnel of the legal, accounting, financial services, engineering and architecture sectors. Some relate to the promotion of arts and culture or green lifestyle.

39. Some of these additional jobs would be created by procurement of services from private consultants or contractors through contractual arrangements. It triggers the demand for manpower which in turn drives the private organisations to recruit more staff. Besides, the Government will arrange open recruitment of Non-Civil Service Contract staff to fill the positions within the relevant departments. The Civil Service Bureau is also coordinating the recruitment exercises for some general time-limited executive and clerical positions, in order to expedite the job creation process. The central recruitment for Executive Service Assistants has been open for application in mid-June, and the selection process is in progress.

40. At the same time, bureaux and departments concerned are engaging their stakeholders to formulate the plan of job creation in the non-governmental sector. For example, Development Bureau and Environment Bureau launch subsidy schemes for the employment of graduates and assistant professionals in the engineering, architecture, surveying, town planning and landscape streams and graduates in the environment-related area respectively by private employers

⁸ SWD is considering an extension to cater for eligible interest class instructors who have not submitted applications before the closing date.

so as to enable the graduates and/or assistant professionals to acquire the necessary work experience. Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau also implements a job creation scheme to subsidise FINTECH companies to employ staff.

Conclusion

41. Members are invited to give views on the above measures.

Labour and Welfare Bureau
Food and Health Bureau
Development Bureau
Commerce and Economic Development Bureau
Transport and Housing Bureau
Environment Bureau
Home Affairs Bureau
Education Bureau
Civil Service Bureau
Policy Innovation and Co-ordination Office

July 2020

The Calculation of Penalty under the Employment Support Scheme

All employers applying for wage subsidies are required to provide an **undertaking** not to make redundancies during the subsidy period. With regard to the first tranche of subsidies, it means that the number of employees on the payroll in any one month of the subsidy period (from June to August 2020) should not be less than the number of paid and unpaid staff in **March 2020**. The employers should also undertake to spend all the wage subsidies on paying wages to the employees.

For an employer who has received the first tranche of subsidies, if he/she fails to use all the wage subsidies received for a particular month during the three-month subsidy period to pay the wages of his/her employees in the same month, the Government will claw back the unspent balance of the subsidy.

Claw back for a particular month (June/ July/ August 2020) (\$)	=	Subsidies received (\$)	-	Total actual wages paid to employees (\$)
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Furthermore, if the number of employees on the payroll in any one month of the subsidy period is less than the number of paid or unpaid staff in **March 2020**, the employer will have to pay a penalty to the Government. The penalty for a particular month during the subsidy period will be calculated as below:

Subsidies received for a particular month (\$)	×	Headcount reduction percentage (%)	×	Penalty percentage (%)
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Headcount reduction percentage (%)	=	$\frac{\text{Total no. of paid and unpaid staff (as of March 2020)} - \text{Total no. of paid staff in a particular month}}{\text{Total no. of paid and unpaid staff (as of March 2020)}} \times 100\%$
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The **penalty percentage** is determined by the employer's total number of employees (whether paid or unpaid) in March 2020, viz, the larger the number of employees, the higher the penalty percentage. Details are set out below:

Total number of employees in March 2020 (whether paid or unpaid)	Penalty Percentage
Less than 10	10%
10 - 49	20%
50 - 99	40%
100 - 499	60%
500 or more	80%

Please note that:

If an employer has made MPF contributions for new employees in March 2020 and the relevant information is shown in their MPF record certificates, the employees concerned will be counted towards the total number of employees for March 2020 which provides the basis for comparison with the headcount during the subsidy period (June to August 2020). Similarly, if information relating to the employer's MPF contributions for new employees is shown in the MPF record certificates for any one month during the subsidy period, the employees concerned will be counted towards the total number of paid staff for that month.

Regarding employees aged 65 or above, employers who have received subsidies should provide information on the basic salaries of employees aged 65 or above in their return of remittance statements for their MPF contributions to the trustees for June to August 2020, so as to prove that salaries have been paid to the relevant employees. Otherwise, the employees concerned will not be counted towards the total number of paid staff.