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5 November 2021

Clerk to Panel on Public Service  
Legislative Council  
Legislative Council Complex  
1 Legislative Council Road  
Central, Hong Kong  
(Attn.: Ms Maggie CHUNG)

Dear Ms CHUNG,

### **Panel on Public Service**

#### **Follow-up to meeting on 19 October 2021**

At the meeting of 19 October 2021, the Panel on Public Service asked the Government for information on the number of civil servants who had been demoted due to unsatisfactory work performance in the past ten years. The following sets out our response.

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region attaches great importance to the performance management of civil servants and has a well-established system to manage civil servants' performance. Under the system, good performers are given due recognition and rewards, whereas sub-standard performers are counselled, monitored and offered assistance with a view to bringing their performance up to the required standard. To monitor and assess staff performance, supervisors should appraise the performance of their officers on an annual basis. A civil servant may be granted an increment only if his/her performance at work has been satisfactory during the appraisal period. For sub-standard performers, his/her increment could be stopped or deferred. Sub-standard performers are counselled, monitored and offered

assistance by the relevant Department/Grade with a view to bringing their performance up to the required standard. To facilitate timely improvements by the officers concerned, such actions may be taken during the appraisal period. The numbers of civil servants subject to stoppage or deferment of increment due to unsatisfactory performance in the past ten years are as follows

| Year | Number of civil servants subject to stoppage of increment |
|------|---|
| 2011 | 10 (4)  |
| 2012 | 5 (2)   |
| 2013 | 2 (1)   |
| 2014 | 14 (8)  |
| 2015 | 7 (2)   |
| 2016 | 8 (5)   |
| 2017 | 17 (7)  |
| 2018 | 10 (4)  |
| 2019 | 9 (7)   |
| 2020 | 9 (2)   |

*\* Figures in brackets denote those stoppage cases which were subsequently converted to deferment*

In addition, if civil servants have put up sub-standard performance, their promotion prospect will definitely be affected. The management may also consider other management actions such as posting and training for the staff concerned.

Demotion is not a measure under the prevailing performance management system, but we have other measures in place to terminate the service of civil servants with persistent sub-standard performance.

First, for officers appointed on probationary terms, it is the responsibility of the Heads of Departments/Grades to apply stringent standards in assessing the performance and conduct of probationers in accordance with the relevant provisions of Civil Service Regulations, to ensure that only those who are

considered suitable in all respects are allowed to pass the probation bar. The management may terminate the service of an officer at any time during the probationary period or refuse an officer's passage of probation bar at the end of the probationary period if he considers that, for reasons of persistent sub-standard performance or for other reasons, the officer appointed on probationary terms should no longer hold office.

As regards civil servants on permanent establishment, we may, in accordance with established procedures, retire those with persistent sub-standard performance in the public interest under section 12 of the Public Service (Administration) Order ("PS(A)O") (hereinafter referred to as "section 12 action"), which will result in termination of service of these officers. In the past ten years, eight officers were retired in the public interest due to persistent sub-standard performance and no improvement in performance during the observation period.

The Government may also invoke section 12 action to terminate the service of civil servants on permanent establishment without setting any observation period if the management considers it desirable to retire him/her in the public interest on grounds other than persistent sub-standard performance. In addition, if an officer is suspected to be unfit to perform the principal duties of his/her office due to ill health, a medical board may be convened upon the request of the management to examine the officer's state of health and his/her suitability for staying in the service for discharging his/her duties.

We will keep the civil service performance management system under review from time to time, with a view to enhancing the related arrangements and practices as appropriate. We will also take other appropriate measures (e.g. strengthening training and running commendation schemes) to enhance the performance of civil servants.

Yours sincerely,



( Miss Shirley Lau )

for Secretary for the Civil Service