

For discussion on
24 March 2025

Legislative Council Panel on Manpower

Protection for Digital Platform Workers

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the work progress of the Labour Department (LD) in protecting local digital platform workers.

Background

2. The platform economy is developing rapidly around the world, and involves complex and varied modes of work which are not entirely akin to the traditional employment relationship. The Government attaches importance to protecting the rights and benefits of platform workers. Apart from making reference to the experience and trends in other places, the Government also seeks to understand the working conditions of local platform workers through the channels of:

- (i) commissioning the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) to conduct a Thematic Household Survey (THS) to collect information on the characteristics and working conditions of local platform workers;
- (ii) conducting opinion surveys and focus groups to collect the views of platform workers engaging in food and goods delivery platforms (delivery platforms); and
- (iii) setting up a Liaison Group (LG) to discuss the situation of local platform workers with major delivery platform companies and labour organisations.

Thematic Household Survey

3. LD has commissioned C&SD to conduct a THS on the characteristics and working conditions of selected platform workers. The survey was conducted in the period from December 2023 to March 2024, with the target

respondents being persons aged 15 and over who were assigned or had accepted on-demand assignments of clients for earning money, via websites / mobile applications of digital platforms during the 12 months before enumeration. The Survey report (Thematic Household Survey Report No. 81)¹ was published on 17 March 2025. Extract of the major findings concerning the survey on platform workers can be found in Annex I. Salient points are set out below:

- (i) Some 12 900² persons engaged in the delivery platforms during the 12 months before enumeration. Of which, the majority (over 80%) were males. About half (52.5%) of them were in the younger age group (aged 15 to 39) while 24.2% were aged 50 and over. A greater part (over 80%) had attained secondary education or below.
- (ii) Some platform workers engaged in more than one platform company. Counting on the basis of the number of platforms with which the workers had worked during the 12 months before enumeration, some 18 100 delivery platform work posts were taken up by these 12 900 workers. In other words, each platform worker on average took orders from 1.4 platform companies during the 12 months before enumeration. Among these work posts, those providing food delivery and goods delivery service accounted for 72.6% and 21.6% respectively, with a minor proportion involving both food and goods delivery services. Analysed by the mode of work, the most common roles performed by those platform workers were cyclist (29.1%), followed by walker (26.5%), motorcyclist (22.7%) and van driver (21.6%), in the order of popularity.
- (iii) Among the 12 900 delivery platform workers mentioned above, a vast majority (98.2%) indicated that they could arrange their own working hours. The distribution of weekly working hours on digital platform work varied among those workers: nearly 30% (28.3%) worked less than 25 hours a week; one-quarter (24.9%) spent more than 44 hours on relevant platform work per week; whereas over one-fifth (21.2%) had irregular weekly working hours.

¹ Thematic Household Report No. 81 is set out in the below webpage:
<https://www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/wbr.html?ecode=B11302012025XX01&scode=453>

² The statistical figure did not include people who had registered / signed up but had never taken any order for the digital platforms, or had not taken orders for delivery service during the specific reference period.

- (iv) About two-thirds (64.7%) of the delivery platform workers cited that platform work was their main source of income. According to their average monthly income from platform work, over one-third (37.1%) were with at least \$15,000. The 90th percentile of the average monthly income fell in the income group of \$25,000 to \$29,999. In other words, it was estimated that one-tenth of the delivery platform workers earned at least \$25,000 to \$29,999 a month on average from platform work.
 - (v) A great majority (91.3%) of delivery platform workers took up the platform work due to its job nature, such as the ease of joining or quitting, flexible work style, better control on work procedure and style, and availability of more leisure time to achieve work-life balance.
 - (vi) Workers of delivery platforms generally considered that work autonomy (46.2%) and the current level of remuneration (41.2%) were the most important working conditions in platform work. With regard to working conditions to be improved by delivery platforms, the most sought-after item was entitlement to comparable protection of work-related injuries that was currently provided to employees (69.8%).
4. There are limitations to the data and analysis in this THS. Taking up platform work in the delivery service currently represents a relatively small proportion of the total employment in the Hong Kong labour market. The number of sampled cases obtained in a household survey was therefore relatively small, leading to greater random variation in the statistical estimates of relevant platform workers for comprehensive and detailed analyses. Thus, only limited breakdowns on relevant workers are made available in the present THS for broad reference only. Readers should exercise caution when interpreting the survey results on the subject as they are subject to relatively large sampling errors. Furthermore, some questions were related to certain past events that took place a long time ago (such as engaging in delivery platform work over a period of time). Respondents who only took orders a few times might find it difficult to recall the details thoroughly, and their answers might be prone to considerable memory lapses.

Opinion Survey and Focus Groups

5. Apart from the THS, LD has also commissioned a contractor to conduct an opinion survey on delivery platform workers. The survey was conducted in July 2024 with 1 984 valid responses successfully received. The contractor also invited a total of 51 delivery platform workers to participate in eight focus group

meetings. An overview of the characteristics of the survey respondents and focus group participants are set out respectively at Annex 2 and Annex 3.

6. Most of the delivery platform workers who participated in the survey considered that the priority issues were preventing illegal workers from engaging in platform work (62.7%), followed by increasing income stability (51.8%) and enhancing compensation for work-related accidents (37.9%). In addition, 36.6% of the respondents supported enhancing the protection of platform workers through non-legislative means. Most of them were worried that legislation would lead to loss of flexibility in the platform work and hoped that the protection for platform workers could be improved through liaison among the Government, platform companies and other stakeholders. The percentage of respondents who supported a legislative approach was 34.2%. If delivery platforms were to be mandated by law to provide platform workers with an item of benefit and protection currently enjoyed by employees under the existing labour legislation, the majority of respondents indicated their preference for legislation which would provide delivery platform workers with the statutory compensation for work injuries currently offered to employees (39.0%).

7. The views of the participants in the focus group meetings were similar to the findings of the opinion survey. Participants in the focus group meetings were also concerned about the retirement protection for platform workers, inadequate support for work safety, as well as the relatively lack of transparency of the mechanism for allocating orders, setting delivery time standard, and giving rewards and imposing penalties by the platforms.

Liaison Group

8. LD set up LG in 2023 to enhance the communication with major delivery platform companies on issues pertaining to protection for platform workers, and extended the membership to include representatives of labour organisations in 2024 to facilitate tripartite exchanges and consultation. Apart from meetings of LG, LD also organised a retreat in November 2024, inviting members of LG to discuss with the academics and a representative of the insurance industry to jointly look into the topic on protection for platform workers. Discussions centred around the areas of accident compensation, communication mechanism between platforms and workers, and ensuring platform workers were legally working persons, and explored the feasibility of developing a standard contract and adopting a fair allocation of orders.

9. Members of LG generally agreed to take forward the work of safeguarding platform workers along the directions of:

- (i) enhancing the communication between platform companies and workers;
- (ii) raising the level of compensation for work-related accidents;
- (iii) strengthening the prevention of illegal workers from engaging in delivery platform work; and
- (iv) exploring feasible options that are conducive to the development of the industry while enhancing the protection for platform workers on the premise of a win-win situation of mutual benefit.

Overall observations

10. Major observations of the above work are consolidated as follows:

- (i) platform workers were particularly concerned about the protection for work-related accidents and generally hoped that platforms could provide them with the protection which was comparable to the work injury compensation offered to employees, while platform companies also concurred with the direction of enhancing the protection for work-related accidents for platform workers;
- (ii) platform workers valued the flexibility of engaging in platform work and the work autonomy available to them, and hoped that the flexibility of platform work would be maintained no matter if legislation would be in place to protect platform workers; and
- (iii) stakeholders of the platform industry supported exploring feasible options to enhance the protection for platform workers through tripartite consultation, while at the same time facilitating the sustainable development of the industry to achieve a win-win outcome.

Way Forward

11. Taking into account the data and views collected from the above surveys and exercises, LD will continue to maintain close communication with members of LG and relevant stakeholders to explore possible options to protect platform workers, with a view to mapping out the way forward within this year.

12. Members are invited to note the contents of this paper.

Labour and Welfare Bureau
Labour Department
March 2025



Thematic Household Survey Report - Report No. 81

(Survey period: December 2023 - March 2024)

1st Issue 2025

(Extract from the section "Characteristics and Working Conditions of the Food and Goods Delivery Digital Platforms")

3. Characteristics and Working Conditions of Workers of the Food and Goods Delivery Digital Platforms

Limitations of data

- Workers who have taken up digital platform work in the food and goods delivery service currently represents a relatively small proportion of the total employment in the Hong Kong labour market. The number of sampled cases obtained in a household survey was therefore relatively small, leading to greater random variation in the statistical estimates of relevant platform workers for comprehensive and detailed analysis.
- Therefore, only limited breakdowns on relevant workers are made available in the present Thematic Household Survey for broad reference only. Readers should exercise caution when interpreting the survey results provided in Sections 3 and 4 as they are subject to relatively large sampling errors. Further details on data limitations of the survey are given in Part 1 of the Explanatory Notes [here](#).

Characteristics of workers of the food and goods delivery digital platforms

- There were some 12 900 persons engaging in the food and goods delivery digital platforms during the 12 months before enumeration. Among these platform workers, more than half (52.5%) were in younger age group (aged 15-39) while 24.2% were aged 50 and over.

Chart 3.1 : Percentage of workers of the food and goods delivery digital platforms by age group

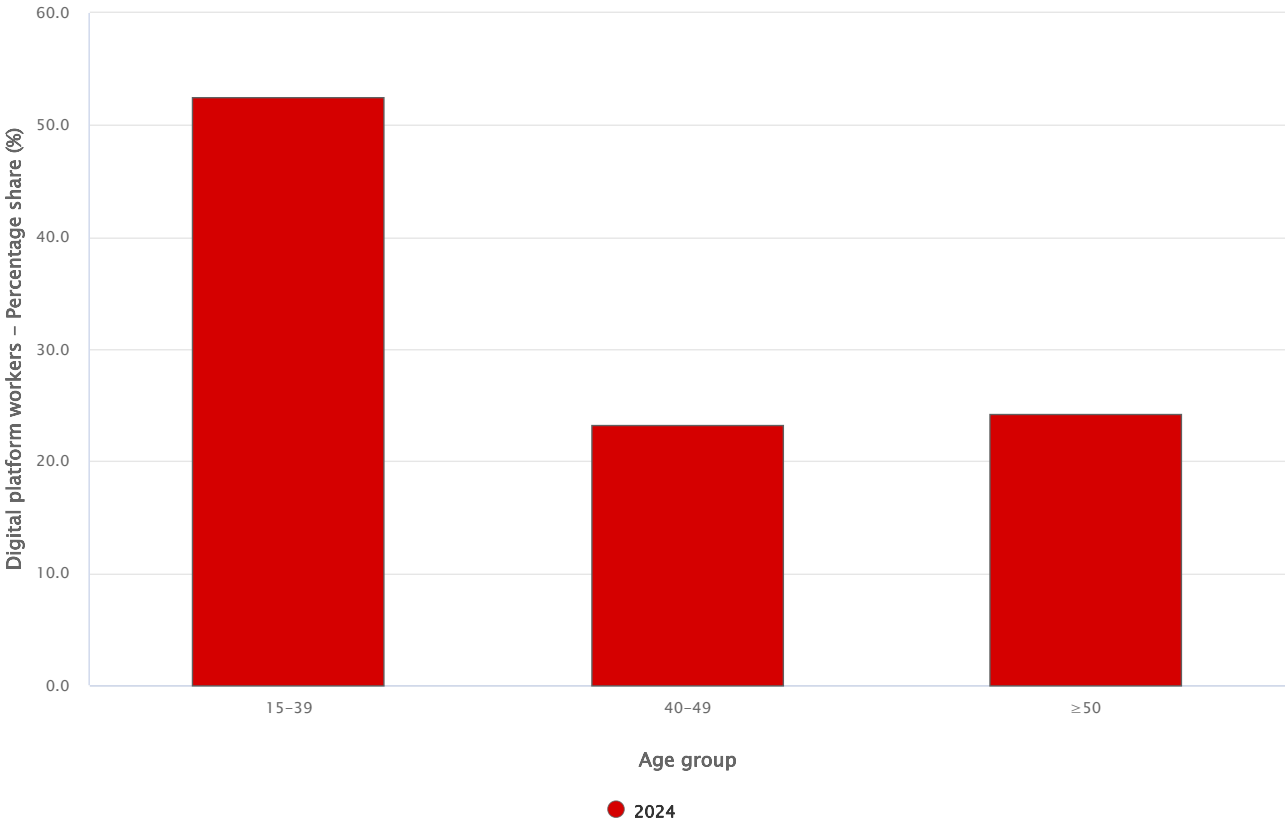


Table 3.1 : Workers of the food and goods delivery digital platforms by age group

Survey year		2024	
		Digital platform workers	
		No. ('000)	Percentage share (%)
Type of digital platform work	Age group		
Food and goods delivery	15-39	6.8	52.5
	40-49	3.0	23.2
	≥50	3.1	24.2
	≥15	12.9	100.0

Workers' pattern of staying online

- Some workers of the food and goods delivery digital platforms engaged in more than one platform company. More than half (68.6%) of the platform workers reported that they generally went online in only one food and goods delivery digital platform in a day.
- In relation to the prevalence of parallel work, nearly 30% (27.9%) of workers of the food and goods delivery digital platforms generally went online in two or more digital platforms concurrently.

Table 3.2 : Workers of the food and goods delivery digital platforms by number of platforms went online in the same day in general

Survey year		2024	
		Digital platform workers	
		No. ('000)	Percentage share (%)
Type of digital platform work	Number of digital platforms went online in the same day in general		
Food and goods delivery	1	8.9	68.6
	≥2	4.1	31.4
	Total	12.9	100.0

Table 3.3 : Workers of the food and goods delivery digital platforms by number of platforms went online concurrently in general

Survey year		2024	
		Digital platform workers	
		No. ('000)	Percentage share (%)
Type of digital platform work	Number of digital platforms went online concurrently in general		
Food and goods delivery	1	9.3	72.1
	≥2	3.6	27.9
	Total	12.9	100.0

Autonomy for work and hours of work

- A vast majority (98.2%) of workers of the food and goods delivery digital platforms reported that they were able to arrange their own working hours.
- The distribution of weekly working hours on digital platform work varied among those workers. Nearly 30% (28.3%) of the workers worked for less than 25 hours a week, whereas one-quarter (24.9%) spent more than 44 hours on relevant platform work per week. Over one-fifth (21.2%) had irregular weekly working hours.

Table 3.4 : Workers of the food and goods delivery digital platforms by whether being able to arrange their own working hours

Survey year		2024	
		Digital platform workers	
		No. ('000)	Percentage share (%)
Type of digital platform work	Whether being able to arrange their own working hours		
Food and goods delivery	Yes	12.7	98.2
	No	[*7]	[*7]
	Total	12.9	100.0

[*7] Figure is not released due to relatively large sampling error.

Table 3.5 : Workers of the food and goods delivery digital platforms by weekly working hours

Survey year		2024	
		Digital platform workers	
		No. ('000)	Percentage share (%)
Type of digital platform work	Weekly working hours		
Food and goods delivery	<25	3.7	28.3
	25-44	3.3	25.6
	>44	3.2	24.9
	Not fixed	2.7	21.2
	Total	12.9	100.0

Earnings from digital platform work

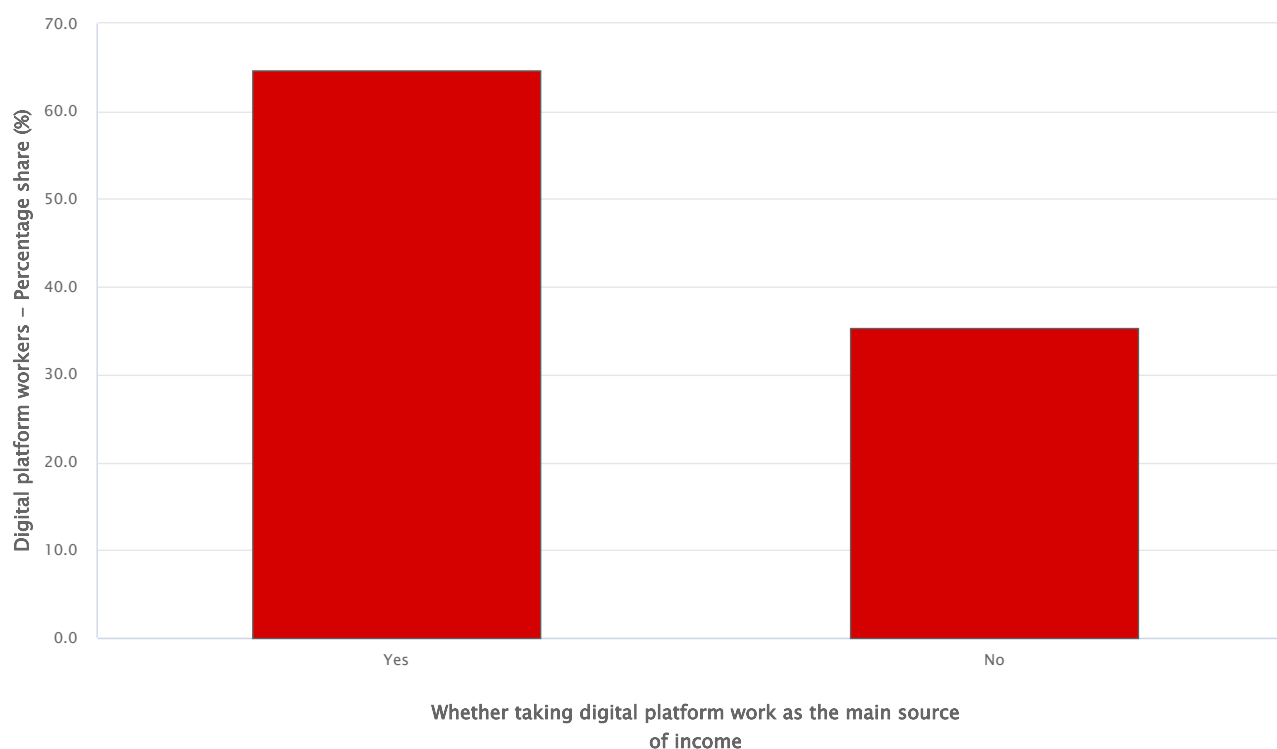
- About two-thirds (64.7%) of the workers of the food and goods delivery digital platforms stated that digital platform work was their main source of income.
- The average monthly income of digital platform work varied among workers of the food and goods delivery digital platforms. Over one-third (37.1%) of the workers had an average monthly income of at least \$15,000 from platform work, while another one-third (34.9%) earned less than \$5,000 a month on average.

Table 3.6 : Workers of the food and goods delivery digital platforms by average monthly income of digital platform work

Survey year		2024	
		Digital platform workers	
		No. ('000)	Percentage share (%)
Type of digital platform work	Average monthly income of digital platform work		
Food and goods delivery	< \$5,000	4.5	34.9
	\$5,000 - \$14,999	3.4	26.1
	≥ \$15,000	4.8	37.1
	Refused to answer	[*7]	[*7]
	Total	12.9	100.0

[*7] Figure is not released due to relatively large sampling error.

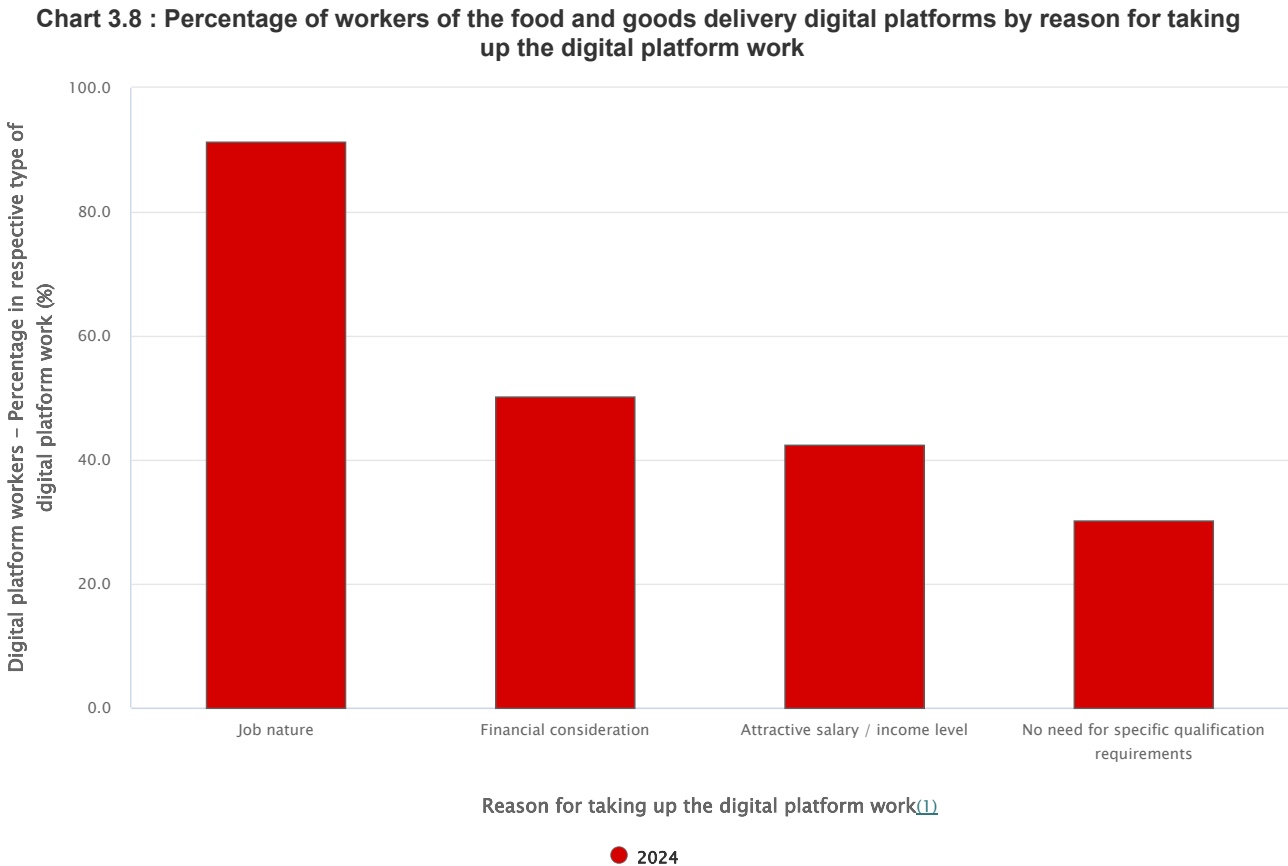
Chart 3.7 : Percentage of workers of the food and goods delivery digital platforms by whether taking digital platform work as the main source of income



● 2024

Reasons for taking up digital platform work

- Majority (91.3%) of workers of the food and goods delivery digital platforms took up digital platform work mainly because of its job nature, such as the ease of joining or quitting, flexible work style, better control on work procedure and style, and availability of more leisure time to achieve work-life balance. This was followed by financial consideration (50.3%).



1 Multiple answers were allowed.

4. Characteristics of Work in the Food and Goods Delivery Digital Platforms

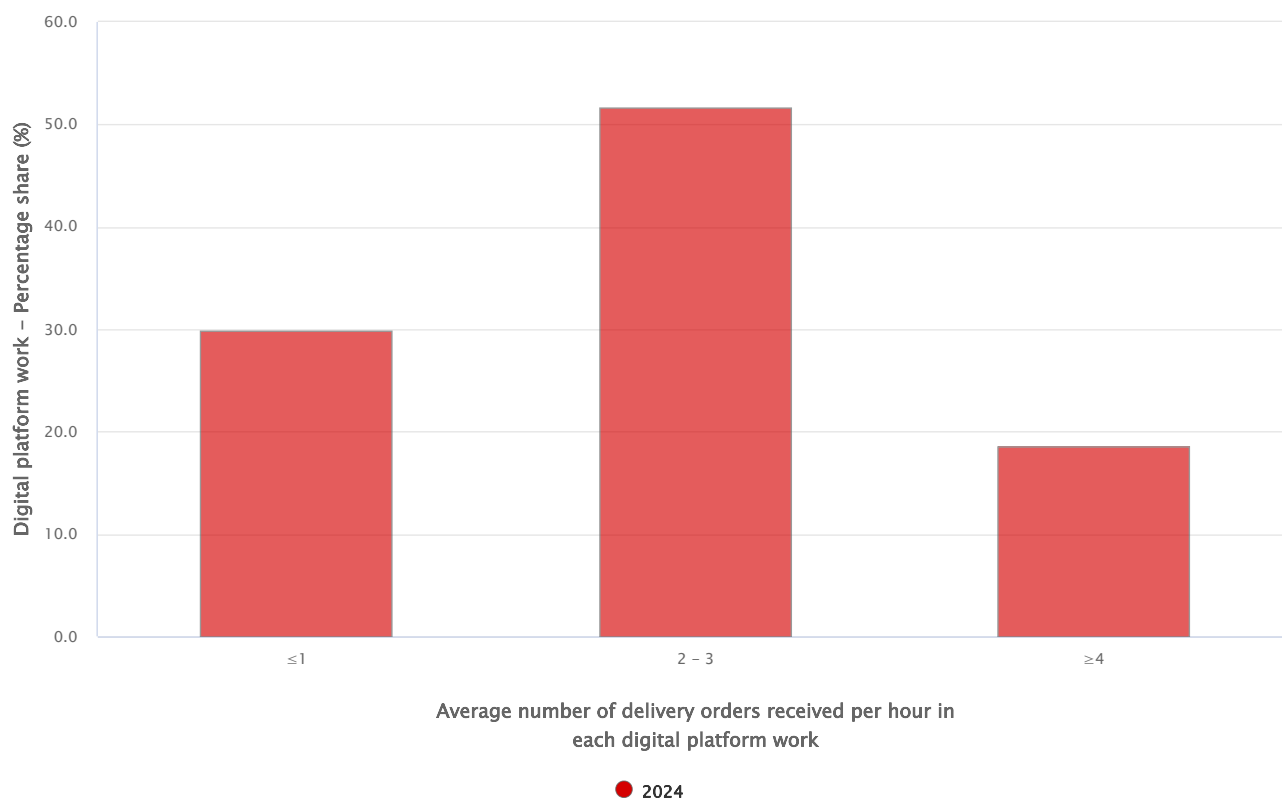
Working conditions of digital platform work

- Some platform workers engaged in more than one platform company. To be specific, a platform worker was regarded as having engaged in two platform work if he/she provided services to two platforms at the same time. Based on this counting method, some 18 100 work in the food and goods delivery digital platforms were taken up by the 12 900 workers during the 12 months before enumeration.
- Analysed by mode of work, the most common mode performed by those platform workers was “cyclist” (29.1%), followed by “walker” (26.5%), “motorcyclist” (22.7%) and “van driver” (21.6%).
- On average, there were two to three orders received per hour for about half (51.6%) of those work in the food and goods delivery digital platforms.

Table 4.1 : Work in the food and goods delivery digital platforms by major mode of work

Survey year		2024	
		Digital platform work	
		No. ('000)	Percentage share (%)
Type of digital platform work	Major mode of work		
Food and goods delivery	Cyclist	5.3	29.1
	Walker	4.8	26.5
	Motorcyclist	4.1	22.7
	Van driver	3.9	21.6
	Total	18.1	100.0

Chart 4.2 : Percentage of work in the food and goods delivery digital platforms by average number of delivery orders received per hour in each digital platform work



Reward and penalty mechanism in digital platform work

- Of the work in the food and goods delivery digital platforms engaged in by the platform workers during the 12 months before enumeration, about three-quarters had reward mechanism and penalty mechanism, accounting for 77.6% and 73.5% respectively.
- Among all the platform work, the three most commonly cited criteria of giving reward were “high order acceptance rate” (50.2%), “punctuality” (49.7%) and “high online rate” (40.3%).
- On the other hand, “customer complaint” (39.7%) and “late delivery” (36.1%) were the two most common criteria of imposing penalty.

Table 4.3 : Work in the food and goods delivery digital platforms by whether having a reward mechanism and criterion of giving reward

Survey year			2024	
			Digital platform work	
			No. ('000)	Percentage share (%)
Type of digital platform work	Whether having a reward mechanism	Criterion of giving reward (1)		
Food and goods delivery	Yes	High order acceptance rate	9.1	50.2
		Punctuality	9.0	49.7
		High online rate	7.3	40.3
		Good service attitude	3.4	18.6
		Others (2)	[*7]	[*7]
		Overall	14.0	77.6
	No		4.1	22.4
Total			18.1	100.0

1 Multiple answers were allowed.

2 Including willing to work in specific location and good quality of service.

[*7] Figure is not released due to relatively large sampling error.

Table 4.4 : Work in the food and goods delivery digital platforms by whether having a penalty mechanism and criterion of imposing penalty

Survey year			2024	
			Digital platform work	
			No. ('000)	Percentage share (%)
Type of digital platform work	Whether having a penalty mechanism	Criterion of imposing penalty (1)		
Food and goods delivery	Yes	Customer complaint	7.2	39.7
		Late delivery	6.5	36.1
		Food spilt / Damage or loss of goods delivered	4.9	27.1
		Order refusal	3.1	17.3
		Others (2)	[*7]	[*7]
		Overall	13.3	73.5
	No		4.8	26.5
Total			18.1	100.0

1 Multiple answers were allowed.

2 Including low order acceptance rate and low online rate.

[*7] Figure is not released due to relatively large sampling error.

Restriction on parallel work by digital platforms

- In 2024, less than one-fifth (18.4%) of digital platform work had restriction imposed for workers to work for other companies or platforms simultaneously.

Table 4.5 : Work in the food and goods delivery digital platforms by whether being restricted from working in other companies or digital platforms simultaneously

Survey year		2024	
		Digital platform work	
		No. ('000)	Percentage share (%)
Type of digital platform work	Whether being restricted from working in other companies or digital platforms simultaneously		
Food and goods delivery	Yes	3.3	18.4
	No	13.0	71.7
	Did not know / Could not remember	[*7]	[*7]
	Total	18.1	100.0

[*7] Figure is not released due to relatively large sampling error.

5. Explanatory Notes

Survey coverage and methodology

This round of the Thematic Household Survey (THS) was conducted from December 2023 to March 2024 which covered the land-based non-institutional population of Hong Kong Resident Population (i.e. comprising Usual Residents and Mobile Residents), but did not include foreign domestic helpers.

Some 10 000 households within a scientifically selected sample of quarters were successfully enumerated in this survey, constituting a response rate of 76%. Within each enumerated household, all persons aged 15 and over (excluding foreign domestic helpers) were selected for interview. For details of survey methodology, information collected and reliability of the estimates for this round of THS, please refer to Part 1 of the Explanatory Notes [here](#).

Rounding of figures

There may be a slight discrepancy between the sum of individual items and the total as shown in the charts and tables due to rounding.

Terms and definitions

Employment Benefits in the Present Job

- **Employee** refers to a person aged 15 and over who works for an employer (private company, household or the Government) for wage, salary, commission, tips or payment in kind, including paid family worker.
- **Employees in the non-government sector** refer to employees other than those Civil Servants, Non-Civil Service Contract Staff and temporary staff employed by Government policy bureaux and departments. For the purpose of this statistical survey, outworkers and employees of non-Hong Kong companies working outside Hong Kong are also excluded.
- **Present job** refers to the main employment which a person spent most of his/her time on if he/she has engaged in two jobs or more at the time of enumeration.

Characteristics and Working Conditions of Workers of the Food and Goods Delivery Digital Platforms

For the purpose of this statistical survey,

- **Digital platform work** refers to the on-demand orders allocated or made available by the digital platforms via their websites / mobile applications to the platform workers.
- **Digital platform worker** refers to a person aged 15 and over who had taken order(s) via digital platform(s) for earning money during the 12 months before enumeration.

For the full list of terms and definitions (including common terms and definitions of the socio-economic characteristics of population) for this round of THS, please refer to Part 2 of the Explanatory Notes [here](#).

Explanatory Notes (Complete Version)

[Explanatory Notes \(Complete Version\)](#)

6. Enquiries

Social Surveys Section (2)

Census and Statistics Department

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Email : thematic@censtatd.gov.hk

Opinion Survey for Delivery Platform Workers in 2024

Data on the Background and Working Conditions of the 1 984 Respondents

1. Gender and age

- Respondents were mostly males (87.3%) with an average age of 38.4 years old
- The predominant age range was 35 to 44 (39.5%), followed by those aged 25 to 34 (29.3%)

2. Ethnicity

- Majority of the respondents were Chinese (87.9%)
- Non-Chinese respondents took up 12.1% of the overall respondents and they worked mainly in the food delivery segment

3. Number of platforms engaged simultaneously

- On average, the respondents worked for 2.1 platforms simultaneously
- The respondents from food delivery platforms tended to engage in more than one platform and those from goods delivery worked usually with one platform only

4. Major mode of work

- The major mode of work for the respondents engaging in food delivery was on foot (60.8%), followed by motorcycle (25.8%) and by bicycle (19.2%)
- Most of the respondents engaging in goods delivery mostly registered as van drivers (75.2%)

5. Length of service as a delivery platform worker

- 41.8% of the respondents had an experience of three years or above, while 27.2% were new joiners with experience of less than one year
- As compared with respondents engaging in food delivery, those engaging in goods delivery tended to have a longer service with over half (51.9%) having worked for three years or above

6. Working hours

- The average working hours of respondents per week was 23.7; over half (59.9%) worked weekly for 20 hours or below, while one fifth (20.8%) worked over 40 hours per week
- Most of the respondents chose to work at peak hours (lunch/ dinner time)

(80.1%) and weekends / public holidays (57.4%)

7. Income

- The average monthly income of respondents was \$10,900
- The level of income of respondents was proportionate to their working hours; the average monthly income of respondents was higher among those who worked for 21 to 40 hours per week (\$13,200) and over 40 hours per week (\$21,600)
- 42.1% of the respondents (excluding those who answered “don’t know”) stated that platform work contributed over 70.0% of their total income, while 45.2% of the respondents (excluding those who answered “don’t know”) stated that platform work contributed to at most 40.0% of their total income

Focus Groups for Delivery Platform Workers in 2024
Composition and Characteristics of the Eight Focus Groups

Group	Type of delivery	Mode of delivery/ transport	Type of platform(s) served	Categorisation by proportion of income derived from platform delivery work ¹	Number of participants
Group 1	Food	On foot	Digital platforms mainly providing food delivery service	NA	7
Group 2	Food	By motorcycle		NA	8
Group 3 (conducted in English) ²	Food	On foot/ by motorcycle/ by car		NA	8
Group 4	Food	By bicycle		NA	6
Group 5	Food	On foot/by motorcycle		Less than 40%	7
Group 6	Food	On foot/by motorcycle		More than 70%	9
Group 7	Goods	By van/ truck	Digital platforms mainly providing goods delivery service	NA	4
Group 8	Goods	By van/ truck		NA	2
Total number of participants:				51	

¹ Delivery platform workers were arranged to join Groups 5 and 6 according to the proportion of their income from platform work to their total income. The other groups were organised according to the type of delivery, and hence no corresponding percentages were available.

² Other groups were conducted in Cantonese.