

LCQ18: Jobs at HKJC's telebet centres

Following is a question by the Hon Wong Sing-chi and a written reply by the Acting Secretary for Home Affairs, Ms Florence Hui, in the Legislative Council today (May 25):

Question:

When the Hong Kong Jockey Club (HKJC) proposed to the authorities in 2009 to introduce five additional race days per racing season, it estimated that the proposal would create 1 500 new jobs, and help sustain the 2 500 jobs planned for its Telebet cum Volunteers and Training Centre already established in Tin Shui Wai. In this connection, will the Executive Authorities inform this Council:

(a) whether they know the total number of new jobs created by HKJC in the past six months to tie in with the introduction of the additional race days, and the number of additional staff employed; among these staff members, the respective numbers of those who were offered posts at the telebet centre in Tin Shui Wai, and those who were offered off-course betting, catering and other posts;

(b) given that quite a number of front-line staff working at telebet centres have relayed to me that they have suffered from different levels of hearing impairment because they are engaged in jobs which require them to listen to telephone instructions for a prolonged period of time, which has even affected their daily lives, and that they are worried that it will be difficult for them to return to the labour market once they lose their jobs, whether the authorities know the number of working hours per day for staff working at the telebet centre in Tin Shui Wai in the past six months, as well as the number of bets placed in the calls received by them per hour, and list in a table the average, maximum and minimum figures; if such figures are not available, of the reasons for that; and

(c) whether the authorities have any targeted measure to help the staff of telebet centres in (b); if they have, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

(a) According to information provided by the Hong Kong Jockey Club (HKJC), since the introduction of five additional local race days per year in the 2009/10 racing season, HKJC has provided 2 100 new jobs and employed 1 870 additional staff to tie in with the work arising from the additional race days. Among the additional staff employed, 1 470 of them have been offered posts at the Tin Shui Wai Telebet Centre, while 400 of them have been offered catering and other posts.

(b) According to information provided by HKJC, peak service periods of the Tin Shui Wai Telebet Centre mainly fall on every local race days, days on which Mark Six Lottery are drawn and evenings in which bets for football matches are accepted. In the past six months, the staff are, on average, on duty for six to seven hours per day during the peak service periods. The maximum number of working hours per shift is nine while the minimum is four.

Local race days are the peak service periods of the Tin Shui Wai Telebet Centre and each staff would on average need to answer 40 betting calls per hour. This figure is calculated using the total number of calls handled by the Centre per hour divided by the number of on-duty staff. HKJC does not have the maximum or minimum number of calls handled by individual staff.

(c) According to information provided by the Labour and Welfare Bureau, the Labour Department (LD) has measured on-site the exposure of workers to noise while working at the telebet centres of HKJC on local race days. The results indicate that their daily noise exposure falls within the acceptable limit. There is, therefore, no evidence showing that the workers may have an increased risk of occupational deafness because of employment in such work. Nevertheless, LD has recommended the management of HKJC to strengthen the training for workers to enhance their awareness of lowering the volume of the earphone as far as possible if it does not affect their work.

LD provides comprehensive and free employment services to assist job-seekers with different employment needs to find jobs, including the able-bodied and job-seekers with disabilities. Job-seekers with employment difficulties can join the various employment programmes launched by LD to enhance their employability.

Job-seekers with hearing impairment may also approach the regional offices of the Selective Placement Division (SPD) of LD for employment assistance. SPD

provides them with free employment services to seek open employment. The placement officers will help job-seekers seek suitable work, having regard to their background, qualifications and job preference.

Ends/Wednesday, May 25, 2011

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