

For information on
22 June 2015

Legislative Council Panel on Public Service

Employment of Persons with Disabilities in the Civil Service

Purpose

This paper provides an update on the implementation of the policy and relevant measures to facilitate the employment of persons with disabilities in the civil service.

Implementation of the Policy and Relevant Measures on Employment of Persons with Disabilities

Overview

2. The Government, being an Equal Opportunities Employer, is committed to eliminating disabilities and other forms of discrimination in employment. Appointments to the civil service are based on the principle of open and fair competition. All applicants in an open recruitment exercise are assessed on the same basis of their ability, performance and character, having regard to the stipulated entry requirements set according to the job requirements.

3. We welcome persons with disabilities to apply for government jobs, and have put in place suitable facilitating measures to ensure that they can compete with all other applicants on equal footing, thereby allowing all of them to have equal access to job opportunities in the Government.

4. The Civil Service Bureau (CSB) has promulgated guidelines to all bureaux and departments (B/Ds), providing them with practical guidance on the application of the policy and facilitating measures on the employment of persons with disabilities. Under the existing guidelines, an applicant with disability who meets the basic entry requirements for a post will not be subject to any shortlisting criteria and will automatically be invited to attend the

selection test/interview to compete for the post on the same grounds as other applicants.

5. Also, the test/interview process would be suitably adjusted to cater for the special needs of individual applicants with disabilities. In accordance with the guidelines, the recruiting B/D is required to proactively ascertain from individual applicants with disabilities any assistance or accommodation needed so as to facilitate them in attending the test/interview. In the process, applicants with disabilities may indicate their special needs to the recruiting B/D to facilitate the latter's consideration and making of suitable adjustments after taking into account all relevant factors (e.g. circumstances of a particular recruitment exercise, preference of the applicants with disabilities, types and degree of their disabilities, assistance or accommodation required, etc.). Examples of adjustment include extension of the test time, provision of special transportation arrangements to facilitate the attendance of applicants with disabilities at selection test, etc.

6. As stipulated in the guidelines, if an applicant with disability is found suitable to carry out the duties of certain posts in a specific rank in the civil service, he/she may be recommended for appointment even though he/she may not be able, due to his/her disability, to perform the full range of duties of every post in the concerned rank. Also, an appropriate degree of preference may be given to applicants with disabilities found suitable for appointment by placing them ahead of able-bodied applicants whose suitability for appointment is considered comparable to the former¹.

7. To ensure that the merits of each applicant with disability will be duly assessed in the recruitment process and the recommendation of the recruitment board will be properly considered and processed, in case an applicant with disability who has satisfied the basic entry requirements is not recommended for appointment, the recruitment board's recommendation should be referred to an officer not below the rank of Assistant Director of the recruiting B/D concerned for consideration and decision as to why the applicant is not suitable for appointment.

8. To gauge the updated position on the application of the policy and facilitating measures above, we have conducted a survey with B/Ds. According to the available information, among the 206 civil service recruitment exercises involving qualified applicants who had declared their disabilities which were launched and concluded in 2013-14 and 2014-15, 97 exercises (or

¹ In accordance with the existing guidelines, the recruiting B/D should set a passing mark into three groups of suitability for appointment (i.e. very suitable, suitable and marginally suitable). The priority of an applicant with disability in a particular group will be advanced to the top of that group.

47.1%) involved applicants who had declared their disabilities and the adoption of shortlisting criteria at the same time. In accordance with our guidelines, 1 788 applicants who had declared their disabilities in these 206 civil service recruitment exercises and met the relevant entry requirements of the posts concerned were invited to selection tests/interviews without being subject to shortlisting criteria (if any). On the other hand, about 25.5% of the remaining qualified applicants (i.e. about 65 000 out of about 255 000) who met the shortlisting criteria were invited to selection interviews. Among the 1 788 applicants who had declared their disabilities, 78 (or 4.4%) were subsequently offered appointment², including 34 who were offered appointment even though they might not be able, due to their disabilities, to perform the full range of duties of every post in the concerned grade. The percentage of these applicants who were offered appointment was broadly comparable to that of other applicants which was 3.7% (about 9 400 out of 255 000).

9. In addition, we compile, based on the information available to the management of B/Ds, statistics on the persons with disabilities employed in the civil service as at 31 March each year to obtain an overview of their employment situation³. As at 31 March 2014⁴, there were 3 415 civil servants with disabilities known to their B/Ds, representing around 2% of the strength of the civil service. Breakdown figures on these civil servants by disability types are at **Annex**.

On-going Efforts to Promote Awareness

10. CSB has been organising regular briefing-cum-sharing sessions for human resource managers in all B/Ds to refresh their understanding of the policy and guidelines, and to share with them practical tips on how to facilitate the conduct of recruitment exercises involving applicants with disabilities and integration of officers with disabilities into the workplace. On the latter, we have also invited human resource personnel of outside organisations to share their experience. Through such briefing-cum-sharing sessions, we hope to enhance the awareness of and ensure consistency in the application of the relevant policy and recruitment guidelines among B/Ds.

² Seven of these 78 applicants declined appointment offer eventually.

³ There is no mandatory requirement for applicants for government jobs and serving officers to declare their disabilities, if any. The statistics in question are compiled on an anonymous basis by using the information available to the management of B/Ds (e.g. through requests of applicants who have declared disabilities for special arrangements for selection tests/interviews, or applications from serving officers with disabilities for fund to purchase technical aids to assist in their performance of duties). Given the foregoing, the statistics serve only the purpose of providing general reference rather than indicating the exact number of persons with disabilities in the civil service.

⁴ Statistics as at 31 March 2015 are being compiled and will be available in the third quarter of 2015.

11. At the same time, to facilitate job seekers with disabilities in obtaining a better understanding of the government policy and facilitating measures on employment of persons with disabilities, CSB has, in collaboration with the Labour Department (LD), published a booklet entitled “Employ People Based on Their Abilities – Application for Government Jobs by Persons with Disabilities”. It sets out the major points to be noted by applicants with disabilities in applying for government jobs and the assistance provided by the Selective Placement Division (SPD) of LD for job seekers with disabilities. The booklet has been uploaded onto the websites of CSB and SPD to facilitate wider dissemination of the relevant information. Meanwhile, we have continued with our cooperation with the Social Welfare Department in providing job attachment opportunities in B/Ds under the Sunnyway – On the Job Training Programme for Young People with Disabilities.

Assistance Provided for Persons with Disabilities Working in the Government

12. As an essential part of the policy to integrate officers with disabilities in the workplace, we continue to provide on-the-job assistance and reasonable accommodation to persons with disabilities working in the Government so as to facilitate them in performing their duties, e.g. modifications of work areas and facilities, appropriate adjustments to job design and work schedules, provision of necessary equipment, etc. CSB will continue to provide funding for B/Ds to purchase technical aids, such as scanners and magnifying devices, braille displays, telephone amplifiers, office tables with adjustable heights, etc., for officers with disabilities so as to enable them to perform their duties more efficiently.

13. To complement our recruitment efforts, special arrangements have been made, where appropriate, to job-match suitable posting for appointees with disabilities having regard to their different nature and degree of disabilities.

14. In addition, we will continue to cultivate peer acceptance of officers with disabilities in the workplace and has incorporated this important message as an integral part of our training courses for human resource managers and induction programmes for new recruits (including seminars on equal opportunities for all new recruits, code of practice on employment under the Disability Discrimination Ordinance as well as valuing diversity in the workplace, etc.) so as to ensure that officers with disabilities can integrate well into workplace.

Participation in the Talent-Wise Employment Charter and Inclusive Organisations Recognition Scheme (the “Scheme”)

15. All B/Ds have joined the Scheme launched by the Labour and Welfare Bureau, in collaboration with the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee, Hong Kong Council of Social Service and Hong Kong Joint Council for People with Disabilities. This has shown the commitment of the Government as a whole and individual B/Ds to promoting the employment of persons with disabilities. A total of 16 B/Ds have been awarded as the “Outstanding Inclusive Organisations”⁵, while 21 other B/Ds have been awarded as the “Partnering Inclusive Organisations”⁶ under the Scheme.

Advice Sought

16. Members are invited to note the content of this paper.

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⁵ An “Outstanding Inclusive Organisation” should have formulated the policy and measures on employment of persons with disabilities in the organisation, and employed persons with disabilities as well as implementing five to six additional measures to promote employment of persons with disabilities.

⁶ A “Partnering Inclusive Organisation” should have formulated the policy and measures on employment of persons with disabilities in the organisation and employed persons with disabilities as well as implementing three to four additional measures to promote employment of persons with disabilities.

**Number of persons with disabilities
in the civil service known to bureaux/departments
as at 31 March 2014 (By types of disability)**

| Type of disability | Number of persons |
|--|--------------------------|
| Visual impairment | 439 |
| Hearing impairment | 335 |
| Physical disability | 1 696 |
| Intellectual disability | 17 |
| Ex-mentally ill persons | 366 |
| Visceral disability | 546 |
| Others, e.g. autism, speech impairment, specific learning difficulties, etc. | 16 |
| Total | 3 415 |