

For information on
16 May 2011

Legislative Council Panel on Public Service

Employment of Persons with Disabilities in the Civil Service

Purpose

This paper informs Members of the policy on employment of persons with disabilities (PWDs) in the civil service and the assistance currently available to PWDs who apply for vacancies in the civil service.

Employment of PWDs in the Civil Service

2. As the largest employer in Hong Kong, the Government fully recognises the importance of taking a lead in employing PWDs. It is the Government's policy to place the PWDs in appropriate jobs wherever possible. This is consistent with the Government's general policy to integrate the disabled into the community through the process of vocational rehabilitation and eventual gainful employment in the commercial and industrial sector as well as in the Civil Service.

3. The Administration is dedicated to providing employment opportunities for PWDs through enabling civil service job applicants with disabilities to compete with able-bodied applicants. PWDs are considered on equal terms with other applicants. If they are found suitable for employment, they would be given an appropriate degree of preference for appointment over other applicants.

4. Candidates with a disability who meet the basic entry requirements for a post in the civil service will not be subject to any shortlisting criteria and will be automatically invited to attend selection interviews. If a candidate who has indicated in the application form that he

or she has a disability is invited to a test or selection interview, the recruiting department would ascertain from the candidate the assistance or accommodation needed (if any) to facilitate him or her to attend the test/selection interview. When a request for special arrangement from a candidate with disability cannot be acceded to (e.g. exemption from certain stipulated crucial requirements), the department concerned needs to explain its decision to the candidate concerned.

5. When a candidate with disability is considered suitable by the recruitment board to carry out the duties of some posts in a specific rank in the civil service, he or she would normally be recommended for appointment even though he or she may not be able, due to his or her disability, to perform the full range of duties of every post in the concerned rank. He or she would be given an appropriate degree of preference for appointment, having regard to the circumstances of each case and relevant considerations such as proportionality and overall fairness to disabled and able-bodied candidates alike. When appointment to the civil service is offered to a candidate with a particular disability which may limit his or her postability, this would be made clear to him or her; and the candidate would also be advised that this limitation may affect his or her prospects for further advancement.

6. As set out in the **Annex** attached, the number of civil servants with disabilities has remained at around 2% of the strength of the civil service over the years. As at 31 March 2010, there were 3,316 civil servants with disabilities¹.

7. The Administration provides on-the-job assistance to PWDs working in the Government to facilitate them to carry out their duties. Such assistance may take the form of modifications of work areas and facilities, appropriate changes to job design and work schedules, provision of necessary equipments, etc. A central fund has been set up by the Administration since 1996 to finance purchase of technical aids (e.g. computers with Braille displays, telephone amplifiers, scanners and magnifying devices) for officers with disabilities to facilitate their performance of duties. So far, a total of about \$3.9 million has been disbursed from the fund for this purpose.

¹ Employees with colour blindness or defective colour perception are not included in the statistics.

Promotion in the Civil Service

8. The Administration's policy on promotion in the civil service is to select the most suitable and meritorious officer in a lower rank of one grade to fill a vacancy in the next higher rank of the same grade. The general criteria for promotion in the civil service include character; ability; qualifications prescribed for the promotion rank, if any; experience; and postability. In a promotion exercise, a disabled officer is considered alongside other candidates against the same selection criteria.

Sunnyway Programme

9. Administered by the Social Welfare Department, the Sunnyway Programme provides on-the-job training for persons between the age of 15 and 25 with disabilities with a view to enhancing their employment prospect through proactive training. Under the Programme, disabled trainees will receive job-related counseling, 180-hour employment training, 3-month job attachment, 3-month job trial and 6-month post-placement service.

10. Bureaux and departments (B/Ds) are encouraged to support the Programme by identifying suitable job attachment opportunities for Programme participants to enable them to acquire work habits and gain employment skills in a real working environment. Job attachments under the Programme have been extended to all B/Ds since June 2006. As at 31 March 2011, over 170 participants of the Programme are working or have worked in various B/Ds.

Enhancing Awareness

11. The Civil Service Bureau (CSB) will continue to impress upon B/Ds the importance of complying with the prevailing policy on employment of PWDs in the civil service, cultivating peer acceptance of disabled staff. The same message is already an integral part of training courses for human resources managers and induction programmes for new recruits to the civil service. The CSB also requires B/Ds to collate annual statistics on disabled civil servants.

12. The Administration will continue to place PWDs in appropriate jobs in the Civil Service, recognising that the abilities of many disabled persons outweigh their disabilities and that only in productive and remunerative employment will their fullest possible vocational, social and economic potential be realised. Disabled employees have much to offer.

Advice sought

13. Members are invited to note this paper.

Civil Service Bureau
May 2011

Number of Civil Servants with Disabilities (2006 - 2010)

No. of civil servants with disabilities as at	Type of disabilities							
	Visual impairment	Hearing impairment	Physical handicap	Mental handicap	With history of mental illness	Visceral disability	Others, e.g. autism, speech impairment, specific learning difficulties, etc.	Total
31/03/2010	465	295	1768	20	300	455	13	3316
31/03/2009	484	280	1754	20	284	403	13	3238
31/03/2008	497	280	1742	20	284	389	13	3225
31/03/2007	509	281	1779	20	274	387	13	3263
31/03/2006	523	283	1777	20	283	360	10	3256