

For discussion on
4 May 2020

Legislative Council Panel on Public Service

Employment of Non-ethnic Chinese in the Civil Service

Purpose

This paper provides an update on the implementation of the measures to facilitate the employment of non-ethnic Chinese (NEC) in the civil service.

Background

2. The Government, being the largest employer in Hong Kong, is a strong advocate for equal opportunities in employment. Appointment to the civil service is based on the principle of open and fair competition. All candidates in an open recruitment exercise are assessed on the basis of their ability, performance and character, and having regard to the stipulated entry requirements (including language proficiency) set according to the job requirements of the grade concerned. Race is not a relevant consideration in the selection process.

3. In order to maintain effective communication for delivering public service, Heads of Department/Grade (HoDs/HoGs), having regard to the job requirements of the grades under their respective purview, specify appropriate Chinese and English language proficiency requirements (LPRs) as part of the entry requirements for the grades concerned. This arrangement is in line with the guidance of the Equal Opportunities Commission as set out in its Code of Practice on Employment under the Race Discrimination Ordinance, which provides that an employer must ensure that any language requirement for a job is relevant to and should be commensurate with the satisfactory performance of a job. It is Government policy to ensure the Chinese and English LPRs for all the grades of the civil service are no more than necessary for performance of

the job, so that NEC, like other applicants, have equal access to government job opportunities.

Review of Chinese LPRs

4. We understand that Chinese language proficiency (especially in writing), as an entry requirement of civil service posts, is a major difficulty for NEC in applying for government jobs. To increase government job opportunities for NEC, the Civil Service Bureau (CSB) completed in February 2018 a comprehensive review on the entry requirements relating to Chinese language proficiency for all the civil service grades, increasing the total number of grades that have lowered/will lower their Chinese LPRs from 31 to 53. CSB will continue to monitor the recruitment situation of these grades and remind HoDs/HoGs to keep on reviewing and ensuring that the Chinese LPRs of related government jobs are no more than necessary for performance of the job on the basis of maintaining satisfactory public services.

5. With a view to publicising the aforesaid information, CSB has, since late 2018, regularly disseminated information on civil service vacancies with relatively lower or lowered Chinese LPRs through the Home Affairs Department's (HAD) support service centres for ethnic minorities (EMs), which are operated by non-profit-making organisations. Since early 2019, CSB has also started providing such information to NEC job seekers through the Labour Department's (LD) job centres located across the territory.

Promotional Efforts

6. Recently, CSB collaborated with the Efficiency Office (EffO), and launched a thematic webpage entitled "Job Corner for NEC" on the Government Youth Portal in March this year. The webpage summarised the Government's policy and related measures on promoting equal access to government job opportunities for NEC. CSB has also worked with EffO to produce publicity material, which were distributed at HAD's support service centres for EMs operated by non-profit-making

organisations, as well as job fairs organised by LD, etc. These materials enable more NEC to obtain related information on employment in the government. CSB has also been encouraging bureaux/departments (B/Ds) to place recruitment advertisements, where appropriate, with HAD's support service centres for EMs, so as to widen the trawl for NEC for the recruitment exercises concerned.

7. At the same time, the Government's multi-faceted promotion efforts seek to encourage and help young NEC to equip themselves for future employment. For example, the Police Force has continued to launch the "Cross-disciplined Forces Training Programme for Ethnic Minority Youth" to provide disciplinary, physical and team building training to young NEC through various activities such as training camps, recruitment talks and visits to facilities of the disciplined forces. Representatives of various disciplined forces have also shared with the young NEC participants about the work of the disciplined forces and the entry requirements for different disciplinary posts, with a view to helping these young NEC plan their career paths. In addition, LD continues implementing the "Employment Services Ambassador Programme for Ethnic Minorities", engaging trainees who can communicate in NEC languages to serve as service ambassadors at LD's job centres, industry-based recruitment centres and job fairs. LD also provides on-the-job training for these trainees, and has extended the training period from six months to one year since September 2018. A total of around 150 NEC service ambassadors have been engaged by LD through 11 batches since the launch of the scheme in September 2014.

8. Furthermore, LD will launch a three-year pilot programme in the second half of this year in conjunction with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to provide one-stop employment support services for EM job seekers through a case management approach. In addition to canvassing vacancies suitable for EMs and providing support in their job search, these NGOs will also provide post-placement follow-up services for EMs and their employers, such as assisting the employees to adapt to the new working environment, fostering both parties' understanding of each other's work expectations and practices, etc.

Internship Programme for NEC Students

9. In the summer of 2019, CSB introduced a Government internship programme for NEC university students on a pilot basis to enable them to gain working experience and strengthen their competitiveness in job seeking. Over ten NEC students nominated by the eight universities funded by the University Grants Committee were assigned to various government B/Ds for an internship lasting about eight weeks. Some internship placements involve the provision of public services to NEC communities, and require the interns to apply their knowledge in NEC languages or culture. Such assignments not only allow the interns to have a taste of delivery of public service to the NEC communities, they also allow the interns to give play to their talents. We are pleased to have received positive feedback from the participants and believe that the internship experience could help equip them for future career development. We also believe that the internship programme could provide valuable opportunities for the NEC students to acquire hands-on working experience, and thereby strengthen their competitiveness before joining the labour market. In view of the positive feedback from the participants, the programme will continue to be rolled out this summer. We will also double the number of internship placements and invite more higher education institutions in Hong Kong to participate in the programme.

Advice Sought

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

Civil Service Bureau
April 2020