

For discussion on
21 June 2019

Legislative Council Panel on Public Service Employment of Persons with Disabilities in the Civil Service

Purpose

This paper provides an update on the employment of persons with disabilities in the civil service.

Overview

2. As an equal opportunities employer, the Government is committed to eliminating all forms of discrimination against persons with disabilities in employment. To this end, we endeavour to ensure that persons with disabilities, like other applicants, enjoy equal opportunities in applying for government jobs by putting in place appropriate measures to facilitate their participation in the recruitment process. These measures include: (i) applicants who have declared disabilities and meet the basic entry requirements for a post will not be subject to shortlisting criteria, if any, and will automatically be invited to attend the selection test/interview; (ii) the recruiting bureau/department (“B/D”) is required to proactively ascertain from individual applicants who have declared disabilities any assistance or accommodation needed, and suitably adjust the test/interview process to cater for their special needs¹; (iii) if an applicant who has declared disability is found suitable by the recruitment board to carry out the duties of certain posts in a specific rank, he/she may be recommended for appointment even though he/she may not be able to perform the full range of duties of every post in the concerned rank due to his/her disability; (iv) an appropriate degree of preference may be given to applicants who have

¹ Examples including extending the examination duration for applicants with dyslexia, providing larger monitors, electronic magnifiers, enlarged/braille test papers, enlarged answer books and table lamps for applicants with visual impairment, and conducting interviews through written communication for applicants with hearing impairment, etc.

declared disabilities found suitable for appointment by placing them ahead of other applicants whose suitability for appointment is considered comparable to the former²; and (v) if an applicant with disabilities who meets the basic entry requirements for a post is not recommended for appointment, the recruitment board should submit the recommendation to an officer at a rank not lower than the Assistant Director level in the recruiting department/grade for consideration and decision.

3. The Government does not require serving civil servants to declare if they have any disabilities. However, if they, for example, make requests for financial assistance to purchase technical aids to assist in their performance of duties, then their situation would be made known to B/Ds to which they belong. The Government also does not require applicants for government jobs to declare their disabilities, but they may declare on a voluntary basis and request the recruiting B/D to provide special arrangements for them in attending the selection test/interview having regard to their disabilities; under these circumstances, their disabilities will be made known to B/Ds.

Statistics of 2018-19 and Analysis

4. Every year, we report to the Panel the situation of serving civil servants with disabilities/applicants who have declared disabilities that are made known to B/Ds through the above channels. On the basis of the information collected, there were 2 942 serving civil servants with disabilities as at 31 March 2018, representing around 1.7% of the strength of the civil service. As mentioned above, since we only have limited information on the number of serving civil servants with disabilities, these statistics only represent the lowest estimate known to us. On the other hand, among the recruitment exercises concluded³ in 2018-19, 123 exercises (conducted by 43 B/Ds respectively) involved qualified applicants who had

² In accordance with the existing guidelines, a recruiting B/D will categorise applicants who have attained the passing mark into three groups of suitability for appointment (i.e. very suitable, suitable and marginally suitable) as appropriate. The priority of applicants who have declared their disabilities in a particular group will be advanced to the top of that group.

³ This refers to recruitment exercises in which the relevant B/Ds have made offers of appointment in respect of all vacancies targeted to be filled or to all candidates found suitable for appointment.

declared their disabilities. Among the 280 319 qualified applicants in these exercises, 2 263 (or 0.81%)⁴ had declared their disabilities and all of them were invited to the selection tests/interviews. For the remaining 278 056 qualified applicants, 59 256 (or 21.3%) were invited to selection tests/interviews.

5. In the recruitment exercises concluded in 2018-19, 44 applicants who had declared their disabilities were offered appointment. As regards the latest development, we note that in a large-scale recruitment exercise launched in 2018-19 which straddles across more than a year, more than 20 applicants with disabilities were already offered appointment. However, this development is not reflected in the 2018-19 statistics yet.

6. We observe that among the 43 B/Ds mentioned above, the success rates of applicants who had declared their disabilities were higher (between 2.8% to 25%) in nine of the B/Ds (namely Civil Service Bureau (CSB), Department of Health, Education Bureau, Fire Services Department, Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, Government Logistics Department, Hong Kong Police Force, Office of the Government Chief Information Officer and Social Welfare Department). As for the recruitment exercises conducted by the remaining 34 B/Ds, the highest success rate is 1.75%. Overall speaking, the success rate of applicants who had declared disabilities for civil service vacancies in 2018-19 was about 2%, whereas the success of other applicants was 3.6%. The corresponding success rates were 3.42% and 3.67% respectively in 2017-18. It is worth noting that some of the recruitment exercises conducted by B/Ds straddle across two years, or are not held every year, and some recruitment exercises launched in 2018-19 will only be concluded in 2019-20. Therefore, it may not be appropriate to directly compare the success rates of different years.

7. For B/Ds where applicants who had declared disabilities had lower success rates, CSB will continue to follow up with them with a view to exploring if there would be room for further enhancement in the recruitment arrangements to facilitate persons with disabilities in the process. We will also sustain our efforts in making arrangements for B/Ds with higher success rates of applicants who had declared disabilities to share their experience and tips, so that colleagues responsible for recruitment work in other B/Ds may apply such practical skills in their future recruitment

⁴ The ratio was 0.88% in 2017-18.

exercises. As regards the drop of applications received from persons with disabilities, we will follow up with the Selective Placement Division of Labour Department to help promote the recruitment exercises with a view to attracting more applications from qualified persons with disabilities. We will continue to keep in close view the success rates of persons with disabilities and other persons in civil service recruitment, and monitor the effectiveness of these targeted measures.

Internship Scheme for Students with Disabilities

8. CSB has since 2016 launched the Internship Scheme for Students with Disabilities (“the Scheme”), and doubled the number of internship places in 2018 from an average of 50 a year to 100⁵. In the past three years, over 200 full-time students from tertiary institutes as well as the Shine Skills Centre (“Shine”) of Vocational Training Council⁶ participated in the internship programme. They were assigned to 49 B/Ds to perform administrative support, clerical or other duties. Each year, the Secretary for the Civil Service would meet the interns in person and has received very positive feedbacks on the Scheme from them. Such meetings have also offered an opportunity for the Secretary to personally give them support and encouragement. We are pleased to know that some alumni of the Scheme were offered employment in government departments of their choice or in the private sector upon graduation.

9. This year, we have made arrangements for more than 60 students with disabilities from post-secondary institutes to have their internship in about 40 B/Ds. They will be assigned with various duties, including making preparation for setting up and updating database and technical systems, editing departmental publications, event management, graphics design and production, developing teaching aids, and providing support for enquiry counter services, so as to enable them to gain practical working experience. We will also arrange around 30 students from Shine to participate in the

⁵ The Chief Executive announced in the 2017 Policy Address that we would further expand the Scheme in 2018, with a target to double the number of internship places from an average of 50 a year to 100. Meanwhile, all local subvented and self-financing post-secondary institutes have been invited to nominate students to participate in the Scheme since 2018.

⁶ Shine offers vocational training programmes and support services for development of students with special education needs who are aged 15 or above.

Scheme later this year. We will continue to assign them with diversified jobs in the light of their aptitude and interests, including compiling simple statistical reports, editing and processing databases, topical research, as well as event coordination and support, etc.

Advice Sought

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

**Civil Service Bureau
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