

**Information Paper for
the Legislative Council Panel on Manpower**

Re-employment Pilot Programme for the Middle-aged

Introduction

This paper informs Members of the launching of the “Re-employment Pilot Programme for the Middle-aged” by the Labour Department.

Background

2. The Chief Executive announced in his Policy Address in October that the Labour Department would launch a pilot programme to help the long-term unemployed workers aged above 40 to return to work. This pilot programme, titled “Re-employment Pilot Programme for the Middle-aged”, will be launched in February 2001 to last for a period of 12 months.

Eligibility

3. All persons aged above 40 who have been on the live register of job seekers at the Job Centres of the Labour Department for three months and are actively looking for jobs are eligible for the services under this pilot programme. They will be invited by the Placement Officers of the Labour Department to become the programme's target clients.

Programme Design

4. The programme has four core components namely, counselling service, pre-employment training, employment with induction training and follow-up service.

Counselling Service

5. Placement Officers of the Labour Department will prepare a profile of training needs for each target client. This will be done through counselling and interviews with the target clients, taking into account their previous training and feedback from employers at recent unsuccessful job interviews. The profile will serve to provide timely and regular feedback to individual target clients on their needs for pre-employment training.

Pre-employment Training

6. Target clients may attend, on a voluntary basis, pre-employment training focused on their individual training needs. The training program is geared to behavioral modification, i.e. the development of positive work attitude, good work habits, service and communication skills and emotional intelligence.

7. The training will be organized regularly in small classes with different modules held separately. The duration of the training will be up to 5 days totally and the job-seekers can choose to attend one or more modules. The courses will be run by experienced training bodies at their training centres, if possible, in the vicinity of the Job Centres of the Labour Department.

8. In addition, the target clients will be invited to attend a one-day 'Get-Ready' workshop, which will cover labour market information, experience sharing, role playing and activities focused on problems faced by long-term unemployed people. The workshops will be held by training bodies at Job Centres of the Labour Department.

9. The above programmes aim at helping the target clients to get prepared for re-employment. Those who have attended similar training courses offered by other publicly funded training programmes will not be asked to receive the training again.

10. Target clients will also receive, if they so wish, a post-training counselling service provided by social workers to give them support in their job search.

Placement with Induction Training

11. Placement Officers of the Labour Department will actively refer target clients to suitable job openings. They are developing a standard training package to help those employers interested in participating in the pilot programme to develop their own induction training. This package will include such elements as workplace orientation, working procedures, equipment operation and occupational safety and health issues and may be modified with comparative ease to suit individual needs.

12. The Placement Officers will also help the employers identify mentors from among their more experienced staff to assist the target clients during the

induction training. During the induction training period, they will also visit the employers regularly to collect feedback and assist them in the training delivery.

13. As an incentive for employers providing the induction training to the target clients, they will be eligible for a one-off training subsidy of \$2,800 on completion of the one-month induction training of each target client engaged. Employers are expected to continue employing them upon satisfactory completion of the training.

Follow-up Service

14. To help target clients overcome their initial adjustment problems, counsellors will follow up their progress and provide counselling and backup for a period of three months after placement. The Placement Officers will also monitor progress and development of the target clients during their first three months in employment.

Publicity

15. The Commissioner for Labour will send an appeal letter to employers in January 2001 through the Labour Department's newsletter, 'Labour Focus'. This will reach over 100,000 establishments employing 5 persons or more. Promotional leaflets will be prepared and sent to employers' associations, trade unions, and non-government organisations. They will also be made available for the public at the Job Centres of the Labour Department.

Evaluation

16. The pilot programme will be launched on a trial basis and progress will be monitored closely. A comprehensive review will be conducted upon completion of the programme in early 2002.

Labour Department
December 2000