

**For discussion on
16 June 2006**

**Subcommittee to Study Issues Relating to the Provision of Boarding
Places,
Senior Secondary Education and Employment Opportunities
for Children with Special Educational Needs**

**Provision of Employment Service for Students with Special
Educational Needs and Identification of Sites for Hostels for People
with Disabilities**

Purpose

This paper aims to give response to the following items raised by Members upon the request of this Subcommittee:

- (i) The Labour Department's employment service for students with special educational needs (as regards the vocational rehabilitation and employment services provided under the Social Welfare Department, the Administration already submitted a paper on and reported the current situation of relevant service provision at the preceding Sub-committee meeting (19 May)); and
- (ii) Provision and building of rehabilitation hostels, as well as

related services.

Background

2. The objective of the Government's rehabilitation policy is to help people with disabilities develop their potentials and talents in full and to enable them to make contributions to the society. With this principle in mind, we seek to cater to the needs of people with disabilities through the provision of various mainstream services. For people with disabilities in need of special support, we provide them with a wide range of services to facilitate their full integration into the society.

Employment Service

3. Self-reliance is the prerequisite for independent living. To that end, the Selective Placement Division (SPD) of the Labour Department (LD) provides personalised employment service for people with disabilities to assist them in securing open employment. The SPD also helps students aged 15 or above with special educational needs to find employment after leaving schools.

4. Placement officers will be assigned by the SPD to assist each registered disabled job-seeker. Apart from providing vocational guidance, job matching and referral services to disabled job-seekers, placement officers will also help prepare them for interviews, accompany them to attend interviews when necessary, and provide them with post-placement service as well.

5. In 2005, the SPD provided placement service for 3 920 disabled job-seekers and successfully helped 2 459 of them secure placement, representing a placement rate of 62.7%. In the first four months of 2006, the SPD has arranged placement for 836 PWDs.

6. Measures taken by the LD to promote the employment opportunities for people with disabilities include the followings.

Work Orientation and Placement Scheme (WOPS)

7. The WOPS was launched by the SPD in April 2005 with the objective of encouraging employers to provide job vacancies for PWDs by offering them a three-month work trial. Under the WOPS, a short-term pre-employment training programme is made available to disabled job-seekers for improving their job-searching skills, interview techniques, communication and interpersonal skills, etc. For each disabled person engaged, a financial incentive, with an amount equal to half of the actual wages paid to the disabled employee and subject to a ceiling of \$3,000 per month, will be paid to participating employers for up to three months. Employers are also encouraged to assign an employee as a “mentor” to assist their disabled employees on trial in adapting to the new job and each mentor will receive a cash award of \$500 from the WOPS.

Self-Help Integrated Placement Service (SHIPS)

8. The SHIPS is introduced to encourage and help disabled

job-seekers to be more proactive and independent in the search for jobs. Under the SHIPS, group counselling sessions are provided to the participating disabled job-seekers by the SPD to improve their job-searching skills and interview techniques. Computer facilities (including internet browsing), telephones and fax machines, and access to updated career information are made available to them in employment offices. Apart from the continual placement service rendered by the SPD, these disabled job-seekers are also encouraged by the LD to search and apply for suitable jobs on their own initiative.

“Interactive Selective Placement Service” Website

9. The “Interactive Selective Placement Service” website enables people with disabilities to register for the SPD’s placement service or to renew their previous registrations through which they can use its placement service, to browse the vacancies available and to perform preliminary job matching. It also enables employers to place vacancy orders with the SPD, to identify suitable disabled job-seekers to fill their vacancies, or to request the SPD to refer candidates to them for selection interview.

Public Education and Publicity Activities

10. The SPD regularly organises public education and publicity activities to promote acceptance of people with disabilities by the community and enhance their employment opportunities. These activities include special promotional campaigns to targeted trades to canvass

vacancies, award presentation ceremonies to give recognition to enlightened employers and outstanding disabled employees, TV/radio programmes, newspaper/bus advertising, seminars and exhibitions etc.

Provision and Building of Hostels as well as Other Related Services

11. In achieving the policy objective of facilitating PWDs' full integration into society, the Administration provides a wide range of community support services for people with disabilities to enable them to live with their families and friends or by themselves independently in the community. For people with disabilities incapable of living an independent life or who cannot be provided with adequate support and care by their families or carers, the Administration will provide them with residential services.

Community Support Services

12. Community support services include Residential Respite Service, Home-based Training and Support Service, Specialised Home-based Training and Support Service, Integrated Home Care Services, Community Rehabilitation Network, Social and Recreational Centre for the Disabled and community-based projects etc. Services under community-based projects include holiday care, family-based respite service, home care service, home-based rehabilitation training service, day care service for severely disabled persons, personal development programme, specialised programmes for persons with autism and mentally handicapped persons with challenging behaviours and support

scheme for the newly blind etc. The projects are designed to strengthen carers' caring capacity for people with disabilities, to relieve their stress, and to provide people with disabilities and their families with a better quality of life.

13. Government's total expenditure on community support services in 2006-07 is estimated to be \$124 million and a total of 17 593 places for people with disabilities and 209 426 training/service hours will be provided.

Residential Services

14. The directions for the future development of residential services for people with disabilities have been discussed at the current review of the *Hong Kong Rehabilitation Programme Plan*. The Working Group for the review recommended the Administration to adopt a three-pronged development approach:

- (i) to continue to increase the provision of subvented hostels;
- (ii) to encourage the development of self-financing hostels; and
- (iii) to regulate private hostels for people with disabilities.

(i) Government Subvented Hostels for PWDs

15. Over the years, various kinds of appropriate residential care and related facilities have been made available to people with disabilities who are incapable of living an independent life or who can not be provided with adequate support and care by their families or carers. In addition to

residential care, such services also provide training and support for people with disabilities to enhance the quality of their lives and to help them develop independent living skills. A brief description of various kinds of residential services and their respective waiting time is at Annex 1.

16. At present, there is a waiting time for applying for this kind of residential service. The Administration has made vigorous efforts to shorten the waiting time, enabling those in need to receive the service as soon as possible. The Administration has also been actively identifying suitable sites for building new subvented hostels to meet the genuine residential needs of people with disabilities. In this financial year (2006-07), the total expenditure on residential services is estimated to be about \$830 million, and a total of 10 147 places will be provided.

17. Resources and suitable locations are the requisites for setting up new hostels. There are two ways to identify sites for setting up subvented hostels: (i) to convert existing vacated and suitable housing for use as subvented hostels; and (ii) to collaborate with the Housing Department, Home Affairs Department, the Government Property Agency and other government departments to incorporate the related facilities in the blue print for planning community and housing development.

18. Residential places for PWDs are treated as “Social Welfare Facility” (SWF) under the land use planning system. SWF is a use always permitted within land zoned as “Government, Institution or Community”, “Residential (Group A)”, or “Commercial” in a statutory town plan prepared under the Town Planning Ordinance. Such a use may also be allowed upon application to the Town Planning Board in a

number of other land use zones, such as ‘Residential (Group B)’, ‘Residential (Group C)’ and ‘Village Type Development’. Hence, the present town planning system has already served to facilitate the development of SWF by allowing the use in many land use zones.

19. The Social Welfare Department, upon receiving invitation of bids for SWF from the Housing Department, Home Affairs Department, Government Property Agency or other government departments, will identify service demands and initiate bids for SWF based on policy perspective, territory-wide consideration, views from the districts and financial implications.

(ii) Self-financing Hostels

20. Having regard to the need of providing larger quantity of and more diversified residential service for people with disabilities, the Administration recognises that development of self-financing hostels run by NGOs could be a good way forward.

(iii) Private Hostels

21. The Administration is studying the introduction of a licensing scheme for private hostels with a view to further protecting the welfare of their residents. In the interim, the Administration will take measures to strengthen the monitoring of the service quality of private hostels and introduce a voluntary registration scheme (VRS) for private hostels for people with disabilities with a view to encouraging the operators to enhance the quality of their services.

Way Forward

22. Currently, there is a strong demand for government subvented hostels by people with disabilities. As such, the hostel places available still cannot meet their need even though the number of hostel places has almost doubled over the past decade. We appreciate the genuine needs of some people with disabilities for residential service, and the worry expressed by parents of people with disabilities about the lack of care for their disabled children when they become old and frail. Therefore, the Administration will continue to provide and increase subvented places. For this year (2006/07), the Administration has allocated an additional funding of \$30 million for 230 new places. We have also been actively identifying suitable sites and tapping more resources for providing about 200 additional places in 2007-08.

23. Furthermore, we will continue to strengthen community support services to dovetail with the broad direction of rehabilitation service development. In recent years, the Administration has been enhancing such services in terms of diversity and quantity. The Administration will continue to invest resources with a view to progressively increasing and improving the services.

24. With the further development of community support services and the emergence of self-financing hostels and private hostels, it is envisaged that people with disabilities will have more choices and this will help meet their demand for subvented hostels. The Administration will adopt a multi-pronged approach by pushing the development of community support services, taking forward the policy on the

development of self-financing hostels and private hostels, and continuing its efforts to provide more rehabilitation hostels to meet the needs of PWDs.

For Information

25. Members are invited to note the above response to their concerns raised in the last meeting.

Health, Welfare and Food Bureau

Labour Department

Social Welfare Department

June 2006

Appendix 1

Residential Services

Services	Brief Description of Services	Provision (No. of places)	Average Waiting Time (month)
Long Stay Care Home	Provide residential care for chronic mental patients who are in stable conditions but requiring some nursing care	1,407	73.2
Halfway House	Provide a transitional period of residential care to facilitate ex-mentally ill persons to achieve an optimal level of functioning for the purpose of community reintegration	1,509	6
Hostel for Moderately Mentally Handicapped Persons	Provide home living for persons with moderate mental handicap who are capable of basic self-care but lack adequate daily living skills to live independently in the community	2,044	49.2
Hostel for Severely Mentally Handicapped Persons	Provide home living for persons with severe mental handicap who lack basic self-care skills and require assistance in personal and nursing care	2,889	68.4
Care and Attention Home for Severely Disabled Person	Provide home living for severely mentally handicapped or severely physically handicapped persons who are in need of nursing and intensive personal care	705	36
Hostel for Severely Physically Handicapped Persons	Provide home living for severely physically handicapped persons, with or without mental handicap, who lack self-care skills and require assistance in personal and nursing care	461	42

Services	Brief Description of Services	Provision (No. of places)	Average Waiting Time (month)
Care and Attention Homes for the Aged Blind	Provide residential care, meals, personal care and limited nursing care for elderly blind persons who suffer from poor health or physical/mental disabilities with deficiency in activities of daily living but are mentally suitable for group living (Some care & attention homes for the aged blind have infirmary care unit, in which the level of care provided is equivalent to infirmary.)	815	10.8
Supported Hostel	Provide group home living for people with disabilities who can only live semi-independently with a fair amount of assistance from hostel staff in daily activities	307	22.8