

For information  
on 6 July 2006

**Panel on Manpower and  
Panel on Welfare Services**

**Measures to promote employment opportunities  
for people with disabilities**

**Purpose**

This paper outlines the measures currently adopted by the Administration to promote employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

**Background**

2. The Administration is committed to promoting employment for people with disabilities and to ensuring that they enjoy equal opportunity of participating in productive and gainful employment in the open market. We have put in place a wide range of measures to facilitate their entry into open employment in both the public and private sectors. For those who do not have the ability or are not ready to take up open employment, we provide supported or sheltered employment.

**Collaboration among Bureaux and Departments**

3. The Sub-committee on Employment of the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee (RAC Sub-committee on Employment) advises the Government on all matters concerning employment for people with disabilities. Its membership includes both government and non-government representatives. All relevant bureaux and government departments are represented on it. They work closely with each other and seek advice, where necessary, from the Sub-committee with the common goal of improving employment prospects and exploring new employment avenues for people with disabilities in both the public and private sectors.

## **Vocational Training for People with Disabilities**

4. The Vocational Training Council (VTC), with subventions from the Government, operates three skills centres for people with disabilities aged 15 and above who are assessed as having the ability to work in the open market. The skills centres offer a wide range of programmes at the operative level and pre-craft level in technical, commercial and service-related streams covering different occupations and trades for people with disabilities. The objective is to enhance the employability of people with disabilities and prepare them for eventual open employment. In the 2005/06 academic year, the three skills centres offer a total of 630 full-time training places for people with disabilities, including 120 boarding places.

5. The training programmes of the skills centres are reviewed regularly to ensure that the training courses offered and planned match with the local occupational skills required and meet the needs of the employment market.

6. According to the last round of employment survey conducted in January 2006 for graduates from the skills centres in the 2004/05 academic year, the employment rate for those actively seeking employment was 77%.

## **Labour Department's Employment Service for People with Disabilities**

7. The Selective Placement Division (SPD) of the Labour Department (LD) provides a personalized employment service to help place people with disabilities in open employment. A placement officer is assigned to look after each disabled job-seeker registered with the SPD. Apart from providing employment counselling and arranging job matching and referral, the placement officer will prepare disabled job-seekers for job interviews beforehand and, where necessary, accompany them to attend such interviews. When a job-seeker has been placed, the placement officer will provide follow-up service. In 2005, the SPD provided assistance to 3 920 people with disabilities and successfully helped 2 459 of them find employment, representing a placement rate of 62.7%. During the first five months of this year, the

SPD registered 1 435 disabled job-seekers and helped place 1 040 of them in employment. A statistical summary on the performance of the SPD in 2005 and the first five months of 2006 is at Annex A.

### **Employment Measures taken by Labour Department**

8. The LD has taken the following measures to enhance employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

#### ***Work Orientation and Placement Scheme***

9. Launched by the SPD in April 2005, this scheme aims at encouraging employers to offer job vacancies for people with disabilities through a three-month trial placement. On joining the scheme, disabled job-seekers will undergo a short pre-employment training programme to improve their job-searching skills, interviewing techniques, communication and interpersonal skills, etc. For each disabled employee engaged under the scheme, participating employers will receive a financial incentive equivalent to half of the employee's wages, subject to a maximum of \$ 3,000 per month, for up to three months. Employers are also encouraged to appoint a staff member to be the "mentor" to help the disabled workers settle in their jobs smoothly. Mentors will receive a one-off cash award of \$500.

10. As at 31 May 2006, the scheme recorded 409 disabled participants in its pre-employment training programme and achieved 365 work placements.

#### ***Self Help Integrated Placement Service (SHIPS)***

11. The SPD launched this programme in April 2000 to encourage and help disabled job-seekers to be more proactive and independent in their job search. Under the programme, the SPD provides group counselling sessions to the participants to improve their job-searching skills and interviewing techniques. Computer facilities (including Internet browsing), telephones and fax machines as well as access to up-to-date careers information are made available to them in the employment offices of the SPD. Whilst continuing to enjoy the placement service rendered by the SPD, they are encouraged to search

and apply for suitable jobs on their own initiative. As at 31 May 2006, 3 847 job-seekers with disabilities had participated in the programme and made a total of 13 752 self-initiated job applications.

### ***Interactive Selective Placement Service***

12. The SPD has since January 2003 established the “Interactive Selective Placement Service” web-site to provide improved employment services to disabled job-seekers and their prospective employers through the Internet. The web-site enables disabled persons to register for the SPD’s placement service or renew their previous registrations, browse the vacancies available and perform preliminary job-matching. It also enables employers to place vacancy orders with the SPD, identify suitable disabled job-seekers to fill their vacancies, or request the SPD to refer candidates to them for selection interview.

13. Up to the end of May 2006, the web-site had recorded a total of 9 637 755 page views and 28 703 online requests for the SPD’s services.

### ***Public Education and Publicity Programmes***

14. The SPD regularly organizes public education and publicity programmes to promote public acceptance of people with disabilities and to enhance their employment opportunities. These programmes include:

- special promotional campaigns to canvass vacancies from targeted trades and explore new employment opportunities for people with disabilities.
- award-presentation ceremonies to commend enlightened employers and outstanding disabled employees.
- seminars and exhibitions in collaboration with employers associations to enhance employers’ understanding of the working abilities of people with disabilities.
- radio programmes to promote public understanding and acceptance of people with disabilities.

- video tapes/VCDs on successful employment cases of people with disabilities.
- tailor-made training courses for job-seekers with disabilities to improve their employability in collaboration with the Vocational Training Council and the Employees Retraining Board.

### **Employment Programmes offered by Social Welfare Department (SWD)**

15. The SWD provides a range of vocational rehabilitation service covering both sheltered workshops and supported employment to meet various needs of people with disabilities.

#### ***Sheltered Workshops (SW)***

16. SW provides people with disabilities a training environment specially designed to accommodate the limitations arising from their disabilities, in which they can be trained to engage in income-generating work processes, learn to adjust to normal work requirements, develop social skills and relationships, and prepare for potential advancement to supported/open employment where possible. As at March 2006, there were 36 SWs providing 5 243 places.

#### ***Supported Employment (SE)***

17. SE provides support to people with disabilities in employment. With services encompassing job finding and matching, job coaching, follow-through support and employment-related skills training, it serves as an avenue for upward mobility of people with disabilities in SWs and a necessary step towards integration for those people with disabilities who otherwise cannot take up open employment. As at March 2006, there were 29 non-government organizations (NGOs) providing 1 655 places.

### ***Integrated Vocational Rehabilitation Services Centres (IVRSC)***

18. SWD has started to implement the new service delivery model of IVRSC since April 2004 through re-engineering SW and SE services. IVRSC provides people with disabilities with a series of integrated and seamless vocational rehabilitation services in a training environment specially designed to accommodate the limitations arising from disabilities. The services provided by IVRSC include centre-based training, non-centre-based training, employment-related training, retraining and other support services. As at March 2006, there were 19 IVRSCs providing a total of 3 146 training places.

### ***Integrated Vocational Training Centres (IVTC)***

19. IVTC provides people with disabilities with comprehensive vocational training and rehabilitation services to equip them for advancement to open employment to develop their social and economic potentials and to enable them to integrate into the community. IVTC provides a series of tailor-made and time-limited training programmes including vocational training, sheltered work, supported employment and retraining, etc. to prepare trainees for open employment. As at March 2006, two IVTCs provided a total of 453 places.

### ***On the Job Training Programme for People with Disabilities (OJT)***

20. OJT aims to enhance the employment of people with disabilities through a proactive training, market-driven and placement-tied approach, and to encourage employers to offer job opportunities for people with disabilities. Services of the programme include individual counselling and training, job matching, job attachment, job trial and not less than 6 months' post-placement service. During the job attachment period, an allowance of \$1,250 per month will be paid for a maximum of 3 months to the trainees who have achieved not less than 80% attendance each month. Employers providing job trials to the disabled participants are given a financial incentive at a rate equal to half of the monthly salary paid to the disabled participants or \$3,000, whichever is the lower, for a maximum of three months. As at March 2006, there were 14 NGOs offering 432 OJT places per year.

***On the Job Training Programme for Young People with Disabilities (Sunnyway)***

21. Taking account of the demand for intensive vocational and employment services of young people with disabilities and the successful experience of the OJT, SWD is convinced that many young people with disabilities could also benefit from a similar structured programme with training element specially designed for their varied needs. Sunnyway was piloted with effect from October 2005 on a 3-year basis, benefiting young people aged between 15 and 24 with disabilities or early signs of mental illness. With service components similar to those under the OJT as described above, each participant of Sunnyway will receive individual counselling, job matching, job attachment, job trial and post-placement service. In addition, 180 hours of employment training will be provided to each participant. As at March 2006, there were 16 NGOs offering 311 Sunnyway places.

***Community Mental Health Care Services (CMHC)***

22. CMHC commenced operation in October 2005. It aims at providing tailor-made vocational training programmes for residents at halfway houses so as to develop and maintain their social and economic functioning as well as to assist those with good potential and employability to engage in gainful employment and meaningful activities. As at March 2006, 11 NGOs operated this service.

***“Enhancing Employment of People with Disabilities through Small Enterprise” Project (3E’s Project)***

23. In his speech on the 2001-02 Budget, the Financial Secretary announced a one-off provision of \$50 million for NGOs to create employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Through the payment of grants as seed money to NGOs, the 3E’s Project supports the creation of small enterprises/businesses to ensure that people with disabilities can enjoy genuine employment in a carefully planned and sympathetic working environment. The number of employees with disabilities should not be less than 60% of the total number of employees in each enterprise and a proper employer-employee relationship is required.

24. As at March 2006, a total sum of \$19.4 million had been granted under the 3E's Project to support 20 NGOs to set up 36 businesses of various natures including cleaning, catering, car beauty, mobile massage, retail shops, vegetable supply and processing, household service, travel agency, etc. These businesses created 489 employment opportunities of which 369 were tailor-made for people with disabilities.

### ***Marketing Consultancy Office (Rehabilitation) (MCO(R))***

25. The objective of MCO(R) is to enhance employment and training opportunities for people with disabilities through innovative, effective and efficient business development and marketing approaches. Services of the MCO(R) include assisting NGOs in setting up social firms and small businesses under the 3E's Project, promoting the products produced and services provided by people with disabilities, strengthening NGOs' cooperation with the government and private sectors, coordinating NGOs to secure job orders, providing business consultation for NGOs and organizing marketing events and publicity activities for promoting the working abilities of people with disabilities and the brand name of "SEPD" (Support the Employment of People with Disabilities), which is a registered trademark for the products produced and services provided by people with disabilities.

26. In 2005-06, the MCO(R) secured job orders and tender contracts amounting to \$15.4 million for various vocational rehabilitation services units. MCO(R) also successfully negotiated and attained free advertising, poster, newspaper and magazine spaces which had a total market value of \$1.7 million, and attended more than 10 TV and 40 newspaper interviews. In addition, 60 marketing programmes were organized in the year.

### **Employment of People with Disabilities in the Civil Service**

27. As the largest employer in Hong Kong, the Government fully recognizes the importance of taking a lead in employing people with disabilities in order to help them integrate into the community.

28. The Government seeks to place people with disabilities in appropriate jobs whenever possible and welcomes applications from them for both civil service and non-civil service vacancies. Disabled candidates are given an appropriate degree of preference for appointment if they are found suitable for employment. Disabled applicants who meet the basic entry requirements for a post will not be subject to any further shortlisting criteria and will be automatically invited to attend the selection interview. They will then compete for the post on the same grounds as other applicants. Once they are considered suitable by the selection board to carry out the duties of a particular post, they would normally be recommended for appointment even though they may not be able, due to their disabilities, to perform the duties of every post in the same rank.

29. We also provide on-the-job assistance to officers with disabilities to facilitate them in carrying out their duties. Such assistance may take the form of modifications of work areas and facilities (e.g. modifying the office door to facilitate smooth passage of wheelchairs); appropriate changes to job design or work schedules (e.g. placing mentally handicapped staff in less demanding jobs and not assigning outdoor duties to physically handicapped staff); provision of necessary equipment, etc. In April 1996, a central fund, with a commitment of \$4.4 million, was established for the purchase of technical aids for disabled government employees. So far, a total of about \$3.7 million has been disbursed from the fund for the purchase of technical aids such as computer with Braille display, scanner, hearing aids, etc. for 82 disabled employees.

30. We have been devoting tremendous efforts to promoting the Government's policy on employment of the disabled in the civil service as well as cultivating peer acceptance of the disabled staff. This is done through publications issued to departments which introduce the said policy and provide practical tips on how to work with disabled staff, and insertion of relevant contents into the various training courses for human resources managers and new recruits to the civil service.

31. As at 31 March 2006, there were 3 256 disabled civil servants, representing around 2.1% of the strength of the civil service. As at the same date, 265 disabled persons were employed by the Government on

non-civil service terms. A breakdown of these figures is at Annex B.

32. In addition, SWD has extended its Sunnyway Programme to government departments on a pilot basis. As at May 2006, nine participants of the Programme are working or have worked in three government departments. SWD has sent another round of invitations to government departments to solicit more job attachment places for youngsters with disabilities joining the Programme.

### **Encouraging the formulation of recruitment policy and employment indicator for people with disabilities**

33. To further promote employment opportunities for people with disabilities and on the recommendation of the RAC Sub-committee on Employment, the Health, Welfare and Food Bureau (HWFB) mobilized all relevant government bureaux in May 2003 to encourage 369 Government Subvented Organizations and Statutory Bodies (GSOs and SBs) to formulate a recruitment policy and an employment indicator for people with disabilities.

34. In early 2004, HWFB conducted a tracking survey to follow up the above effort. Findings of the survey revealed that 85 GSOs and SBs had formulated policies on recruitment of people with disabilities, and 21 amongst them had also set up employment indicators for people with disabilities. The employment indicators set by these GSOs and SBs ranged from 0.1% to 33%, while most were in the range of 1% to 2%. The total number of people with disabilities employed by these 21 GSOs and SBs was 926.

35. In view of a general increase in the number of GSOs and SBs adopting the above recommended measures as compared with the findings of a similar survey conducted in 2002, the RAC Sub-committee on Employment considered the tracking survey capable of helping to promote the employment of people with disabilities by GSOs and SBs, and recommended the Administration to continue to conduct similar surveys in the future. HWFB is conducting another tracking survey this year.

## **Conclusion**

36. The Administration is sparing no effort in helping people with disabilities to find jobs in the open employment market or secure placements, where appropriate, in sheltered and supported employment. We will continue to explore viable measures to further enhance the employment opportunities of people with disabilities.

Economic Development and Labour Bureau  
Health, Welfare and Food Bureau  
Civil Service Bureau  
Social Welfare Department  
Labour Department

July 2006

**Statistical Summary on Performance  
of Selective Placement Division, Labour Department**

**Performance statistics for 2005 (compared with 2004)**

	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>% change</b>
<b>Registrations</b>	4 002	3 920	-2.0%
<b>Vacancies</b>	7 104	9 144	+28.7%
<b>Referrals</b>	13 611	16 231	+19.2%
<b>Placements</b>	2 391	2 459	+2.8%

**Performance statistics for the first five months of 2006 (compared with the same period of 2005)**

	<b>2005 (Jan - May)</b>	<b>2006 (Jan - May)</b>	<b>% change</b>
<b>Registrations</b>	1 679	1 435	-14.5%
<b>Vacancies</b>	3 593	4 171	+16.1%
<b>Referrals</b>	6 359	6 720	+5.7%
<b>Placements</b>	991	1 040	+4.9%

**Statistics on Disabled Civil Servants and Government Staff**  
**Employed on Non-civil Service Terms**  
**(as at 31.3.2006)**

<b>Disability group</b>	<b>Number of civil servants with disabilities</b>	<b>Number of staff employed on non-civil service terms with disabilities</b>
Visual impairment	523 (16.06%)	38 (14.34%)
Hearing impairment	283 (8.69%)	50 (18.87%)
Physical handicap	1 777 (54.58%)	98 (36.98%)
Mental handicap	20 (0.61%)	3 (1.13%)
With history of mental illness	283 (8.69%)	37 (13.96%)
Visceral disability	360 (11.06%)	38 (14.34%)
Others ( e.g. autism, speech impairment )	10 (0.31%)	1 (0.38%)
Total	3 256	265