

For Information
on 27 June 2009

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
PANEL ON EDUCATION**

**Vocational Rehabilitation and Training Services
for Persons with Disabilities**

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the provision of vocational rehabilitation and training services for persons with disabilities (PWDs). These services are also available to students with intellectual disability following their graduation from schools.

Vocational Rehabilitation and Training Services for PWDs

2. The Government strives to provide a wide range of vocational rehabilitation and training services for PWDs so as to equip them with job skills that meet market requirements and assist them in securing suitable employment commensurate with their abilities. These services are detailed in the ensuing paragraphs.

Skills Centres of the Vocational Training Council (“VTC”)

3. The three Skills Centres of VTC offer a range of market-driven training courses/programmes for PWDs aged 15 or above who are assessed as having the ability to work in the open market with a view to enhancing their employment prospects and equipping them for open employment. These include courses in commercial and retailing services, catering, computer and network, design and desktop publishing, printing, packaging, office practice, logistics service, massage service, etc. The Skills Centres offer a total of 660 such full-time training places, of which 120 training places are provided with boarding facilities.

4. Apart from full-time courses, the Skills Centres also offer part-time evening courses with the duration of one-year and special tailor-made short courses of flexible attendance mode to meet the specific needs of PWDs. Sixty part-time evening course training places and 300 short course training places are provided annually. Currently, most applicants can be admitted to the Skills Centres’ training programmes within a reasonable time after completion of the application and evaluation process. In 2008, the average waiting time was about two weeks.

5. Training programmes of the Skills Centres are subject to regular reviews and moderation by the Course Sub-committee under the purview of VTC's Committee on Vocational Training for People with Disabilities. Members of the Committee and the Sub-committee include representatives from the Special Schools Council, Integrated Vocational Training Centres, employers' associations, relevant government departments and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). They provide valuable input for the design of the training programmes to ensure that these programmes would match the local occupational skills requirements and meet the needs of the employment market.

Day Training and Vocational Rehabilitation Services provided by Social Welfare Department (SWD)

6. To assist PWDs to improve their social adjustment capabilities and enhance their social and vocational skills, SWD provides various day training and vocational rehabilitation services as follows –

(a) Integrated Vocational Training Centres (IVTCs)

IVTCs provide comprehensive and systematic vocational training for PWDs to assist them in achieving open employment and developing their potential. At present, there are two IVTCs operated by NGOs with government subvention, providing a total of 453 training places.

(b) Sheltered Workshops (SWs)

SWs provide PWDs, who are not yet able to take up open employment, with appropriate vocational training in a specially designed work environment, in which they can learn to adjust to normal work requirements, develop social skills and relationships, and prepare for potential advancement to supported and open employment. As at March 2009, there are 35 SWs providing 5 113 places.

(c) Supported Employment (SE)

SE provides PWDs with vocational training, job matching, on-the-job coaching, follow-through guidance services and employment-related skills, etc. It serves as an avenue for upward mobility of SW trainees and a necessary step towards social integration for those PWDs who otherwise cannot take up open employment. As at March 2009, there are 28 NGOs providing 1 655 places.

(d) Integrated Vocational Rehabilitation Services Centres (IVRSCs)

SWD has implemented the new service delivery model of IVRSC since 2004 through re-engineering the SW and SE services. IVRSCs provide a series of one-stop and integrated vocational rehabilitation services including work skills training and development of their social and interpersonal skills with a view to preparing them for potential advancement to open employment. As at March 2009, there are 23 IVRSCs providing a total of 3 675 places.

(e) On the Job Training Programme for PWDs and Sunnyway -
On the Job Training Programme for Young PWDs

These two programmes provide wage subsidy to employers to encourage them to provide job opportunities for PWDs. Under these programmes, services including job attachment, job matching, on-the-job training, job related counseling and post-placement support etc. are provided to PWDs. As at March 2009, a total of 743 places are offered under these programmes.

(f) Day Activity Centres (DACs)

For persons with severe intellectual disability who are unable to receive vocational training or sheltered employment, DACs provide them with day care and training in daily living skills and simple work skills. As at March 2009, there are 77 DACs providing 4 442 places.

7. When students with disabilities reach the age of 15, they can apply for these services and be put on the waiting lists when they are still studying at school. Referrals/applications can be made by school social workers, medical social workers, family caseworkers and staff of rehabilitation service units to SWD's Central Referral System for Rehabilitation Services.

Retraining Courses for PWDs provided by the Employees Retraining Board (ERB)

8. Hong Kong residents aged 15 or above with education level at sub-degree or below are eligible for retraining services provided by ERB. ERB has developed a number of full-time and part-time retraining programmes tailor-made for PWDs. These programmes can be grouped under two major categories. The first category is full-time placement-tied job specific skills training courses which include, among others, 'pre-employment induction training', 'tele-marketing training', 'desktop publishing training', 'homepage design training', 'reception and clerical work training', 'cleaning service training' and 'shop assistant training'. The other category is basic generic skills training courses, usually offered in part-time mode, such as 'computer application training' and 'vocational language training'. In 2008-09, around 1 400 PWDs enrolled in these training courses. In 2009-10, altogether 48 training courses (28 full-time and 20 part-time ones) involving a total of 2 000 places would be offered to PWDs through 15 training providers. To specifically cater for the needs of persons with intellectual disability, the ERB offers 3 placement-tied training courses in Retail, Environmental Hygiene and Courier Service through 5 training bodies.

Advice Sought

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

**Social Welfare Department
Vocational Training Council
Employees Retraining Board**

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