

**For information
on 11 December 2009**

Legislative Council Panel on Constitutional Affairs

**Administrative Guidelines on Promotion of Racial Equality:
Implementation Progress**

Purpose

This paper informs Members of the progress regarding the implementation of the Administrative Guidelines on Promotion of Racial Equality since the discussion at the meeting of the Panel on Constitutional Affairs held on 16 October 2009.

Background

2. At the meeting of the Panel held on 7 July 2009, we briefed Members on the draft Administrative Guidelines on Promotion of Racial Equality drawn up by the Administration to provide guidance to relevant Bureaux and Departments and public authorities to promote racial equality and ensure equal access to public services in key areas concerned.

3. Under the Guidelines, relevant Bureaux, Departments and public authorities would draw up and publicise checklists of measures that would assist in promoting racial equality and equal access to key public services to enhance the transparency of their work.

4. At the Panel meeting on 16 October 2009, we provided to Members draft checklists covering the areas of education, vocational training and community services – communications and technology respectively. We also undertook to provide further updates when further draft checklists are available.

Progress on Implementation

5. Subsequent to the Panel meeting on 16 October 2009, relevant Bureaux, Departments and public authorities have prepared the remaining draft checklists to cover medical and health, employment, community services – social welfare, and community services – public enquiry and declaration services respectively. Copies of the checklists are at **Annexes A to D**.

6. We will continue to seek the views of relevant ethnic minority groups and organisations on the draft checklists through channels such as the Committee on the Promotion of Racial Harmony and Ethnic Minorities Forum. We will finalise the Guidelines and all the checklists after we have received the comments from concerned parties.

**Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau
December 2009**

**Existing and planned measures
on the promotion of equality for ethnic minorities**

Medical and Health

It is the Government's policy to promote and protect the health of our community and the public healthcare services are available to all members of the public regardless of their race and ethnic origins. Specific measures have been put in place to facilitate ethnic minorities to access to the public healthcare services.

Services Concerned The public healthcare services in Hong Kong cover a range of services from health promotion, disease prevention, to primary, secondary and tertiary care. The services to patients are mainly provided by the Hospital Authority (HA), which is a statutory body established under the Hospital Authority Ordinance (Cap.113) to manage all public hospitals in Hong Kong. HA provides medical treatment and rehabilitation services to the public through hospitals, general outpatient clinics, specialist outpatient clinics and outreaching services. Meanwhile, the Department of Health (DH) is the Government's health adviser and agency to execute health policies and statutory functions. It provides a range of services on health promotion, disease prevention, cure and rehabilitation.

Existing Measures Interpretation services at public hospitals/clinics:

- Interpretation services are now available in public hospitals/clinics under the management of HA through a service contractor, part-time court interpreters, volunteers and consulate offices. The interpretation service provided by the service contractor covers 12 languages (including Urdu, Hindi, Punjabi, Nepali, Bahasa Indonesia, Vietnamese, Thai, Korean, Bengali, Japanese, Tagalog and German). The service is provided on the site or through telephone depending on the needs in each case.

- For scheduled service (such as medical appointment at the specialist and general outpatient clinics of the HA and services of DH), patients may request the hospital/clinic/health centre concerned to arrange interpretation service in advance. For non-scheduled service (such as hospital admission during emergency), hospital staff will arrange for the provision of interpretation service where necessary or upon request of patients.
- To enhance the standard of interpretation services provided at public hospitals/clinics, HA has arranged to provide training to the interpreters of its service contractor to equip them with general knowledge on hospital operation, medical terminologies and infection control.

Other measures to facilitate communication:

- To facilitate communication with the ethnic minorities in public hospitals/clinics, HA has provided its frontline staff with response cue cards, patient information sheets and consent forms, etc in a number of ethnic minority languages to enhance the communication between the clinical staff and patients, and to facilitate the registration and provision of services. These documents contain information on some common illnesses (e.g. headache, chest pain and fever), treatment procedures (e.g. blood transfusion and radiation safety) and details of HA's service (e.g. fees and charges, and triage category in the Accident and Emergency Department). HA has currently produced cue cards, patient information sheets and consent forms in 15 languages, including Russian, Arabic, Nepalese, Vietnamese, Indonesian, Malaysian, Thai, Philippines, Japanese, Hindi, Korean, German, Portuguese, Spanish and French.

- HA also provides suitable training to staff to facilitate their communication with patients of ethnic minorities. HA has organized training sessions in different hospital clusters to improve staff's communication skills with the ethnic minorities, as well as their knowledge on cultural sensitivity issues of the ethnic minorities and on the proper procedures in arranging interpretation service. Frontline staff, such as staff at the Enquiry Offices, clerks and nurses in hospitals and clinics, have attended the training sessions.
- The health education information produced by DH to the public is generally in both Chinese and English. Information in other languages, including some minority languages such as Hindi, Nepalese, Pakistani, Indonesian, etc, is also provided for a number of selected health topics and DH's services, such as childcare and parenting, home safety, prevention of Human Swine Influenza and HIV antibody test.

Assessment of Future Work and Existing Measures ● There were around 710 cases where interpretation services were provided in public hospitals/clinics during the period from April to September 2009. The feedback from service users indicates that the services are highly satisfactory. HA will continue to monitor the utilization and users' feedback on the interpretation services.

Additional Measures Taken / To Be Taken ● Starting from June 2009, HA has expanded the scope of interpretation service of its contractor to increase the number of ethnic minorities languages covered from four to twelve. HA and DH will continue their efforts to facilitate the access of ethnic minorities to public healthcare services and will enhance the supporting measures for the ethnic minorities as necessary.

**Existing and planned measures
on the promotion of equality for ethnic minorities**

Employment

The Government attaches great importance to monitoring and facilitating employment. To this end, we have put in place various measures to enhance the access to employment support services by ethnic minorities.

**A. Free and comprehensive employment services for ethnic minority
job seekers**

- Existing Measures
- Employment services are offered in English and Chinese through a network of 12 Job Centres, the Recruitment Centre for the Catering Industry, the Telephone Employment Service Centre and the Interactive Employment Service (iES) website (<http://www.jobs.gov.hk>).
 - Essential information on job vacancies is disseminated bilingually through the iES website as well as the Vacancy Search Terminals (VSTs) installed in Job Centres and other strategic locations.
 - Job Centres operate special counters and organising employment briefings tailor-made for ethnic minority job seekers. Resource corners providing reference information for ethnic minority job seekers are also set up in Job Centres.
 - To facilitate the use of the employment services by ethnic minority job seekers, relevant leaflets in various ethnic minority languages are made available.

- While Job Centres provide bilingual services, interpretation service is arranged for ethnic minority job seekers where necessary.

Assessment of Future Work

- We will review our services from time to time and make improvements where necessary.

Additional Measures Taken/To Be Taken

The following additional measures have been adopted –

- Job cards are displayed in Job Centres in either English or Chinese, or both, depending on the language requirements of the concerned vacancies.
- Employers are required to state the language requirements of their vacancies in placing job orders so as to facilitate job-matching for ethnic minority job seekers.
- Employers are encouraged to provide bilingual information on their vacancies to facilitate display of vacancy information in English and Chinese through the iES website and VSTs.
- The Labour Department has been liaising with NGOs providing services to ethnic minorities to better understand the employment needs of and promote its employment services to ethnic minority job-seekers.
- The Labour Department will encourage staff to attend training / workshops to enhance their understanding of the Race Discrimination Ordinance and related guidelines; and to promote their racial sensitivity so as to facilitate provision of services to the ethnic minorities.

B. Information for ethnic minorities on their statutory rights and benefits

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| Existing Measures | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Major pamphlets, concise guides and publicity leaflets are printed in various ethnic minority languages, in addition to English and Chinese, to help ethnic minorities understand their statutory rights and benefits, as well as the Labour Department's services. |
| Assessment of Future Work | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will review our services from time to time and make improvements where necessary. |
| Additional Measures Taken/To Be Taken | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will update the relevant publications and produce them in more language versions as and when necessary.• The Labour Department will encourage staff to attend training / workshops to enhance their understanding of the Race Discrimination Ordinance and related guidelines; and to promote their racial sensitivity so as to facilitate provision of services to the ethnic minorities. |

C. Translation and interpretation services for ethnic minorities

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| Existing Measures | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Various services of the Labour Department are provided in both English and Chinese. They include consultation service for employers and employees on matters relating to labour legislation and conditions of employment, enquiries on labour legislation and employees' rights and benefits, as well as services of the Occupational Health Clinics.• Translation and interpretation services are arranged where necessary to ensure that their access to our services will not be impeded owing to language barriers. |
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Assessment of Future Work • We will review our services from time to time and make improvements where necessary.

Additional Measures Taken/To Be Taken • We will continue to collaborate with consulates, trade unions and NGOs to promote the understanding of labour legislation and employees' rights and benefits among the ethnic minorities.

- We will facilitate the ethnic minorities to make full use of the translation and interpretation services provided by the Support Services Centres operated by NGOs and sponsored by the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau.

Labour and Welfare Bureau

Labour Department

December 2009

**Existing and planned measures
on the promotion of equality for ethnic minorities**

Community Services – Social Welfare

All Hong Kong residents in need, irrespective of their race and ethnic origins, enjoy equal access to social welfare services as long as they can fulfil the eligibility criteria.

Measures taken/to be taken by the Social Welfare Department (SWD) to promote racial equality and the provision of equal access to social welfare services for ethnic minorities are set out below.

A. Measures which enable ethnic minorities to have equal access to relevant welfare services

Services Concerned SWD puts in place measures which enable ethnic minorities to have equal access to relevant social welfare services, and protect the personal data of ethnic minorities who use social welfare services.

Existing Measures Reference to statistics and information on ethnic minorities

- In planning and implementing welfare services, SWD has made reference to the statistics and information on ethnic minorities available from various sources including Census and Statistics Department, other government departments and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to better understand and cater for the social needs of the ethnic minorities.

Service information in ethnic minority languages

- Some service brochures/leaflets¹ have been translated into major ethnic minority languages. They are placed in service units and/or uploaded onto SWD's website to facilitate easy access and reference.

Interpretation service

- SWD will arrange interpretation service as appropriate when providing social welfare services to ethnic minorities. It has commissioned an NGO to provide the service.

Non-discriminatory entry policy on access to social welfare services

- As part of the Service Performance Monitoring System, service units under SWD and NGOs are required to ensure that service users have clear and accurate information about how to enter and leave the service, and that the entry policy should be non-discriminatory.

Assessment of Future Work Service information in ethnic minority languages

- SWD will collect feedback on the service leaflets and website from staff and service users as appropriate.

¹ These include service brochures/leaflets on "Considering Adoption", "Suicide Prevention Services", "Integrated Family Service Centre", "Support Service to Battered Spouse Cases", "Seek Early Assistance, Stop Family Violence, Services for Battered Men", "Safety Card" for cases in crisis, "Day Child Care Services", "Medical Social Services", "Rehabilitation Services", "Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme" and "What is Psychotherapy?".

Non-discriminatory entry policy on access to social welfare services

- SWD and subvented NGO service units will continue to undergo internal and external assessments for monitoring their compliance with the non-discriminatory entry policy as mentioned above.

Additional
Measures
To Be
Taken

Service information in ethnic minority languages

- SWD will –
 - translate more service leaflets to cover all key welfare services and upload them onto SWD's website;
 - update service information and leaflets in ethnic minority languages as and when necessary; and
 - produce new service leaflets in ethnic minority languages and upload them onto SWD's website as and when necessary.

Interpretation service

- SWD will upgrade the telephone devices of its service units to facilitate the provision of interpretation service for ethnic minority service users through telephone calls.

Non-discriminatory entry policy on access to social welfare services

- SWD will remind all SWD and subvented NGO service units of the requirement that all eligible target groups (including ethnic minorities) should have equal access to welfare services regardless of their sex, age and race, etc., to ensure effective implementation of

the non-discriminatory entry policy and to properly keep implementation records.

Protection of personal data

- SWD will translate the Personal Information Collection Statement into major ethnic minority languages, so that ethnic minority clients can better understand why SWD staff have to collect their personal data when they obtain services/assistance, as well as their right to access and correct their personal data under the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance.

B. Training for staff of SWD and NGOs

Services Concerned To enhance SWD/NGO staff's awareness and understanding of the Race Discrimination Ordinance (RDO).

Measures To Be Taken

- SWD will –
 - arrange training on RDO and related guidelines for staff;
 - upload relevant guidelines and training materials onto SWD's Intranet for staff's easy access and reference as appropriate;
 - conduct workshops for staff, to enhance their understanding of the characteristics, needs, and cultural and religious background of service users from ethnic minority groups;
 - encourage staff to attend training courses on the RDO and related guidelines, racial sensitivity and cultural diversity organised by Civil Service Training and Development Institute,

Equal Opportunities Commission or relevant bodies; and

- encourage NGOs to organise relevant training and sharing sessions for their staff.

Assessment
of Future
Work

- SWD will –
 - collect and analyse data on the number of seminars and workshops conducted annually, and the number as well as grade/rank of staff attending the seminars and workshops;
 - collect feedback from staff on the training activities conducted; and
 - invite suggestions from staff on relevant training programmes to be offered.

Social Welfare Department
December 2009

**Existing and planned measures
on the promotion of equality for ethnic minorities**

Community Services – Public Enquiry and Declaration Services

One of the main roles of Home Affairs Department (HAD) is to enhance communication between the Government and the people of Hong Kong. As a bridge between the Government and the public, HAD endeavours to understand and reflect the community's aspirations with a view to assisting the Government in formulating its policies, and to coordinate work of various departments in the districts.

HAD attaches importance to enabling ethnic minorities to have access to the government information and services provided by the department. Measures to promote racial equality and the provision of equal access to our community services for ethnic minorities are in place.

A. Public Enquiry Service Centres

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|-----------------------|--|
| Services
Concerned | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The public can obtain information on the full range of government services in the Public Enquiry Service Centres (PESCs) of our 18 District Offices located throughout the territory to serve the public. To ensure that the public enquiry service can be easily accessible by the public irrespective of their racial background, measures have been taken to overcome the language barrier in the daily provision of the service. |
| Existing
Measures | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interpretation service will be arranged where necessary and appropriate when providing information on government services to ethnic minorities, or when receiving / interviewing those who wish to seek services through the PESCs, such as applications for free legal advice provided by the Duty Lawyer Service under the Free Legal Advice Scheme. |

- Information leaflets and pamphlets available in ethnic minority languages from bureaux/departments (B/Ds) will be prominently displayed in PESCAs for distribution.
- Additional Measure Taken
- Requests from ethnic minorities for B/D's publications to be made available in different ethnic minority languages will be recorded and, where appropriate, referred to B/Ds concerned for consideration.
- Assessment of Future Work
- Feedback on effectiveness of the interpretation services provided to the ethnic minorities will be regularly reviewed for continuous improvement.
 - Other feedback and suggestions from the ethnic minority users of our services will be recorded and considered, to better meet their needs.

B. Administration of Declaration for Private Use

- Services Concerned
- Members of the public can make use of the free Administration of Declaration service in either of the two official languages in Hong Kong (i.e. Chinese and English) provided in our District Offices for private use.
- Existing Measures
- If an ethnic minority user of the Administration of Declaration service requires interpretation assistance in enquiring the procedures for making a statutory declaration, the District Office staff will arrange interpretation service as appropriate.
 - On-site interpretation service will be arranged where necessary and appropriate for ethnic minority users in making the declaration.
- Additional Measure To Be Taken
- Information leaflet on declaration service will be translated into major ethnic minorities languages for users' reference.

- Assessment of Future Work
- District Office staff will gauge the views of the ethnic minority users on the existing measures to better understand their needs and consider enhancements where necessary and appropriate.
 - Feedback from staff will also be collected for continuous improvement of the services provided and for strengthening the support for the staff.

C. Training for staff of Home Affairs Department

Services Concerned To enhance HAD staff's awareness of racial sensitivity and understanding of the Race Discrimination Ordinance (RDO).

Measures Taken / To Be Taken

- HAD will work with the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau, the Civil Service Training and Development Institute or those non-governmental organisations providing services as appropriate to ethnic minorities in arranging training on RDO and related guidelines and racial sensitivity for staff.

- Training sessions have been and experience sharing sessions will be arranged for staff to increase their awareness and sensitivity on racial equality. Refresher courses will also be arranged periodically.
- Focused staff training will be arranged for those District Offices which have more ethnic minorities visitors, as appropriate.

Assessment of Future Work

- Feedback / suggestions from training bodies and staff attending the training will be collected for enriching the content of the training materials.