

立法會

Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(4)771/12-13(05)

Ref: CB4/PL/PS

Panel on Public Service

Meeting on 17 June 2013

Background brief on the employment of persons with disabilities in the civil service

Purpose

This paper provides background information on the employment of persons with disabilities ("PWDs") in the civil service, and summarizes the major views and concerns expressed by members when the subject was discussed by the Panel on Public Service ("the Panel") at its meeting on 16 May 2011.

Background

2. According to the Administration¹, the Government provides employment opportunities for persons with disabilities through enabling civil service job applicants with disabilities to compete with able-bodied applicants on equal grounds. Candidates with disabilities who meet the basic entry requirements for a civil service post will not be subject to any shortlisting criteria and will be automatically invited to attend selection interviews. The recruiting department will make appropriate arrangements as far as possible to facilitate candidates with disabilities to attend the interviews. Candidates with disabilities would also be given an appropriate degree of preference for appointment, having regard to the circumstances of each case and relevant considerations such as overall fairness to disabled and able-bodied candidates alike. Once a candidate with disability is considered suitable to carry out duties of some posts in a specific rank, he or she would normally be recommended for appointment, even though the candidate may not be able to perform the full range of duties of every post in the concerned rank due to his or her disability.

¹ LC Paper No. [CB\(1\)2117/10-11\(03\)](#)

3. The Administration provides on-the-job assistance to PWDs working in the Government to facilitate them to carry out their duties, such as modifying the work areas and facilities, providing necessary equipment and making appropriate changes to job design and work schedules. The Administration established a central fund in April 1996 to finance the purchase of technical aids for civil servants with disabilities. Disbursements from the fund in the past three financial years were \$28,000, \$126,000 and \$49,000 respectively.

4. The Administration compiles statistics on the number of PWDs being employed in the civil service each year. As at 31 March 2012, the number of PWDs employed in the civil service stood at 3 391, representing about 2% of the strength of civil servants. A breakdown by types of disabilities from 2008 to 2012 is shown in **Appendix I**.

Major views and concerns expressed by Panel members

5. The Panel discussed issues relating to the employment of PWDs in the civil service with the Administration on 16 May 2011. The major views and concerns expressed by Panel members and the Administration's responses are summarized below.

Setting a target for employment of PWDs in the civil service

6. Noting that the number of PWDs being employed in the civil service was about 2% of the strength of the civil service over the years, members generally considered that the ratio was too small. Members were also concerned that the number of civil servants with disabilities had increased by only 50 from 2006 to 2010 and the number of disabled officers in certain types of disabilities had even decreased. They urged the Administration to devise measures to encourage bureaux/departments ("B/Ds") to employ more PWDs. Some members suggested that the Administration should set a benchmark target for employing PWDs for each B/D.

7. The Administration responded that the Equal Opportunities Commission ("EOC") had advised against the adoption of a quota system for the employment of PWDs. The Administration did not set a benchmark for employing PWDs in the Government because there was no objective basis for determining such a benchmark and hence any proposed benchmark could only be arbitrary. Instead, the Administration considered it more appropriate to enhance the awareness of B/Ds in complying with the prevailing policy on the employment of PWDs in the civil service and cultivating peer acceptance of disabled staff.

Recruitment arrangements

8. A member sought explanation on the arrangements mentioned in the Administration's paper that civil service job applicants with disabilities had to compete with able-bodied applicants on equal terms, but an appropriate degree of preference for appointment would be given to disabled applicants. The Administration explained that the following arrangements had been made –

- (a) candidates with a disability who met the basic entry requirements for a civil service post would not be subject to any shortlisting criteria and would be automatically invited to attend any written or skill tests or selection interviews. They were however required to provide proof of disability at the interview stage;
- (b) during the selection process, allowance would be suitably given to the disability of a disabled candidate if he/she was required to sit for a skill test by lowering the relevant passing requirement. He/She would also be provided with any assistance or accommodation needed to facilitate him or her to attend the test/selection interview where appropriate; and
- (c) in prioritizing successful candidates, a disabled candidate found suitable for the job would have priority over able-bodied candidates in the same category of preference for appointment. Such an arrangement had been found appropriate after discussion with various B/Ds and the Public Service Commission.

Barrier-free working environment

9. Some members enquired whether the Administration would enhance the accessibility of Government office buildings and upgrade the barrier-free facilities in Government offices, in order to facilitate PWDs to work in the Government. The Administration responded that the Government was actively following up the recommendations made in an investigation report published by EOC in June 2010² on the provision of a barrier-free working environment, and that the matter was presently overseen by the Chief Secretary for Administration. The Administration further advised that a timetable for retrofitting and upgrading barrier-free facilities in Government premises and facilities had been in place.

² Formal Investigation Report: Accessibility in Publicly Accessible Premises published by Equal Opportunities Commission in June 2010.

10. A member enquired whether the Administration had conducted any surveys to understand the practical difficulties faced by PWDs working in the Government. The Administration advised that there were many established channels for collecting views from PWDs working in the Government, and the message from civil service staff unions/associations and representatives of departments/grades was that disabled civil servants did not regard their integration into the civil service and their working environment a major problem.

Promotion prospects of civil servants with disabilities

11. Members expressed concern on whether civil servants with disabilities would be in a disadvantaged position if they were considered alongside other candidates against the same selection criteria in a promotion exercise. The Administration responded that although the promotion prospects of civil servants with disabilities might be affected by the staff's postability limitation, their promotion prospects would mainly depend on the number of posts available in the higher rank. Civil servants with disabilities would have better postability and thus better chance for advancement if there were many posts in the higher rank.

12. As to the number of civil servants with disabilities who were promoted in the past few years, the Administration advised that they did not collect such information at present, and B/Ds were only required to report on the number of new recruits who were PWDs and the total number of PWDs employed on an annual basis. The Administration agreed to consider requesting B/Ds to provide information on the number of PWDs who had been selected for promotion in future.

Relevant questions raised at Council meetings

13. Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che raised a written question on 5 January 2011 regarding the Administration's policy on the employment of PWDs. In its reply, the Administration advised that it had been the Government's policy to ensuring that PWDs enjoy equal opportunity to participate in productive and gainful employment in the open market, and that the Administration had been promoting the employment of PWDs in the Government through enabling PWDs to compete with able-bodied applicants on equal grounds for civil service posts.

14. On 9 May 2012, Dr PAN Pey-chyou raised a written question regarding the employment of PWDs by the Government and public organizations. In its reply, the Administration advised that the Government had been proactively encouraging government departments, government

subvented organizations and statutory bodies to employ PWDs. In a survey conducted in 2009, of the 261 government subvented organizations and public bodies surveyed, 63 of them had employed a total of 772 PWDs, which accounted for about 2% on average of their total number of employees. The Administration also advised that government subvented organizations and public bodies under its purview had been encouraged to formulate recruitment policy and employment indicator for PWDs.

Latest development

15. The Administration would brief the Panel on the employment of PWDs in the civil service at the next Panel meeting scheduled for 17 June 2013.

Relevant papers

16. A list of relevant papers is given in **Appendix II**.

Council Business Division 4
Legislative Council Secretariat
14 June 2013

Appendix I

Number of persons with disabilities in the civil service with breakdown by types of disabilities as at 31 March for the years from 2008 to 2012

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Physical handicap	1 742	1 754	1 768	1 739	1 750
Visceral disability ^{Note}	389	403	455	481	494
With history of mental illness	284	284	300	309	330
Intellectual disability	20	20	20	18	19
Visual impairment	497	484	465	456	462
Hearing impairment	280	280	295	302	320
Others (e.g. autism, speech impairment, specific learning difficulties, etc.)	13	13	13	12	16
Total	3 225	3 238	3 316	3 317	3 391

Note: Persons with chronic illness in the Civil Service are grouped under "Visceral disability".

(Source: Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2013-14 by the Finance Committee - Reply Serial No. CSB001.)

Employment of persons with disabilities in the civil service

List of relevant papers

Date	Meeting/Event	References
16.5.2011	Panel on Public Service	<p>Administration's paper on "Employment of Persons with Disabilities in the Civil Service" (LC Paper No. CB(1)2117/10-11(03)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr10-11/english/panels/ps/papers/ps0516cb1-2117-3-e.pdf</p> <p>Press Release (LC Paper No. CB(1)2117/10-11(04)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr10-11/english/panels/ps/papers/ps0516cb1-2117-4-e.pdf</p> <p>Minutes of meeting http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr10-11/english/panels/ps/minutes/ps20110516.pdf</p> <p>Administration's follow-up paper on "The Administration's Responses to the Issues Raised at the Meetings held on 21 February, 16 May and 20 June 2011" (LC Paper No. CB(1)3081/10-11(01)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr10-11/english/panels/ps/papers/ps0221cb1-3081-1-e.pdf</p>
27.3.2013	Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2013-14	<p>Question Serial No. 2027 (Reply Serial No. CSB001) http://www.csb.gov.hk/english/info/files/Special_Meeting_2013_14_eng.pdf</p>
27.3.2013	Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2013-14	<p>Question Serial No. 1390 (Reply Serial No. CSB004) http://www.csb.gov.hk/english/info/files/Special_Meeting_2013_14_eng.pdf</p>

Date	Meeting/Event	References
2.4.2013	Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2013-14	Question Serial No. 3833 (Reply Serial No. CSB047) http://www.csb.gov.hk/english/info/files/Special_Meeting_2013_14_eng.pdf
9.5.2012	Council Meeting	Hansard http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr11-12/english/commtg/hansard/cm0509-translate-e.pdf

Council Business Division 4
Legislative Council Secretariat
14 June 2013