

For Information

Legislative Council Panel on Public Service

**The Administration's Response to the Issues
Raised by the Panel at the Meeting on 17 June 2013**

At the meeting of the Panel on Public Service on 17 June 2013, the Administration was requested to provide the following information regarding the employment of people with disabilities in the Civil Service –

- (a) statistics on the employment of people with disabilities in the Civil Service;
- (b) a breakdown by bureaux/departments (B/Ds) and types of disability of the disabled candidates recruited;
- (c) statistics on the employment of visually impaired persons in the Civil Service broken down by year;
- (d) whether the Administration will review the employment situation of visually impaired persons in the Civil Service with a view to creating more job opportunities for such persons;
- (e) whether the Government's practice of not requiring government job applicants and serving employees to declare their disability status on a mandatory basis is in line with international practices, and to seek the views of the Equal Opportunities Commission on whether there would be any implications of discrimination for mandating such requirements;
- (f) reasons for the decrease in both the number and success rate of referrals made by the Selective Placement Division of the Labour Department for people with disabilities to apply for government jobs; and

- (g) details, including the success rate of applications, of the central fund managed by the Civil Service Bureau for financing the purchase of technical aids for people with disabilities working in the Government.

The Administration's response

Statistics and employment of persons with disabilities, including those with visual impairment, in the Civil Service

2. The Government, being an Equal Opportunities Employer, is committed to eliminating disabilities and other forms of discrimination in employment. Appointments to the Civil Service are based on the principle of open and fair competition. All candidates in an open recruitment exercise are assessed on the basis of their character, ability and performance having regard to the stipulated entry requirements set according to the job requirements of the civil service grades concerned. In line with this principle, our policy and related facilitating measures on the employment of persons with disabilities seek to enable candidates with disabilities, irrespective of the types of disability, to compete with able-bodied candidates on equal footing, thereby allowing them to have equal access to job opportunities in the Government.

3. We welcome persons with disabilities to apply for government jobs and have put in place suitable facilitating measures with a view to enabling candidates with disabilities who meet the basic entry requirements to compete with able-bodied candidates on equal footing. The policy and related facilitating measures are applicable to candidates with disabilities, including those with visual impairment.

4. For reference, we set out at Annex A the number of persons with disabilities, including those with visual impairment, serving in and leaving the Civil Service in the past ten years. Also, we provide at Annex B the number of new recruits to the Civil Service who have declared their disabilities, with breakdown by types of disability, in the past ten years. A table showing the number of new recruits with disabilities, with breakdown by B/Ds, is at Annex C. We do not

compile breakdown statistics on the education level of new recruits with disabilities, the posts filled by them, and the total number of vacancies involved.

5. It is noted from the statistics at Annex A that with natural wastage, coupled with the impact of the recruitment freeze, there had been a decrease in the number of people with disabilities in the Civil Service. But the number, including that of persons with visual impairment, has been increasing steadily in recent few years. In addition, as shown in the statistics at Annex B, since the lifting of the open recruitment freeze, the number of new recruits with visual impairment, alongside with other new recruits with disabilities, has been increasing steadily.

6. On the Panel's request for detailed information on the number of people with disabilities who were qualified candidates and offered appointment in each recruitment exercise in the past ten years, comparison with the relevant statistics concerning able-bodied candidates, and the number of vacancies involved, we do not have available information in this regard. That said, as reported to the Panel at the meeting on 17 June 2013, we have recently conducted a thematic survey with B/Ds on the application of the guidelines on the employment of people with disabilities within the Civil Service. According to available information, among the 227 civil service recruitment exercises launched and concluded in 2010-11 and 2011-12, 144 exercises (or 63%) involved applicants with disabilities and adoption of shortlisting criteria at the same time. In accordance with our guidelines, all the applicants who have indicated disability status and met the basic entry requirements (i.e. 3 152) were invited to attend selection interviews, while only about 34% of the remaining qualified applicants (i.e. about 164 000 out of some 476 000) who met the shortlisting criteria proceeded to the interview stage. Among the 3 152 qualified candidates with disabilities, 1 829 candidates (or 58%) turned up for the interviews and of whom, 94 candidates (or 3%) were subsequently offered appointment¹.

¹ 11 of these 94 candidates declined appointment offer eventually.

7. According to separate studies conducted by the Civil Service Bureau², for 2010-11 and 2011-12, the overall ratio of appointment offers to qualified applications is 1:53 (or 1.9%)³. As revealed from the findings in paragraph 6 above, the prevailing recruitment guidelines and relevant facilitating measures have served the objective of enabling qualified candidates with disabilities (of whom 3% were offered appointment) to compete with able-bodied candidates on equal footing. We will continue to work with B/Ds to ensure vigorous application of the guidelines in support for our policy on the employment of persons with disabilities.

Existing arrangement on the compilation of annual statistics

8. To monitor the employment of persons with disabilities in the Civil Service, we compile statistics on the number of persons with disabilities employed in the Civil Service as at 31 March each year. There is no mandatory requirement for applicants for government jobs and serving officers to declare their disability. The aforementioned statistics are compiled on the basis of information available to the management of B/Ds (e.g. through applicants' requests for special arrangements for selection interview/test, and serving officers' applications for central fund to purchase technical aids). While such statistics fall short of providing a complete picture of the exact number of persons with disabilities recruited to and serving in the Civil Service, we consider the existing arrangement appropriate as it strikes a balance between the need to protect the privacy of individual job applicants and serving officers and the desire of the Administration to monitor the general employment situation of persons with disabilities in the Civil Service. In this connection, we note that as stipulated in paragraph 6.20 of the Code of Practice on Employment under the Disability Discrimination Ordinance issued by the Equal Opportunities Commission, a general question in the application form asking applicants whether they require any special provision or facility at the interview is admissible. This not only gives the option to an applicant whether to declare a

² The Studies on the Attractiveness of Civil Service Jobs conducted for 2010-11 and 2011-12. The Studies covered the recruitment exercises for which appointment offers were made in the two financial years in question.

³ Overall figures cover both able-bodied candidates and those with disabilities.

disability for accommodation, it also demonstrates the employer's commitment to the principle of equal opportunity and helps the employer to prepare for such reasonable accommodation as is needed for the particular applicant. Irrespective of the inclusion or not of such a question in the application form, it remains an applicant's right to choose not to disclose his/her disability. We consider that the same principle should apply to serving officers in the Government.

Assistance provided to persons with disabilities working in the Government

9. As an essential part of the policy to integrate persons with disabilities in the workplace, we provide on-the-job assistance and reasonable accommodation to persons with disabilities working in the Government so as to facilitate them in performing their duties, e.g. modifications of work areas and facilities, appropriate adjustments to job design and work schedules, provision of necessary equipments, etc. A central fund has been set up under the Civil Service Bureau to finance purchase of technical aids, such as computers with braille displays, telephone amplifiers, scanners and magnifying devices, for officers with disabilities to facilitate their performance of duties. Details of the numbers of applications received and approved, and the amount of fund disbursed in the past five years are set out below –

Year	No. of applications received	No. of applications approved	Success rate	Amount of fund disbursed
2012-13	3	3	100%	\$49,400
2011-12	8	8	100%	\$125,400
2010-11	1	1	100%	\$28,300
2009-10	3	3	100%	\$57,100
2008-09	3	3	100%	\$86,700

Placement service

10. As advised by the Labour Department, in respect of government vacancies, job-seekers with disabilities who have registered with the Selective Placement Division (SPD) for employment service may make job applications through SPD's referral service, or they may submit

applications for the post to the recruiting B/Ds by themselves. As such, the number of referrals for government posts made by SPD in a year depends on different factors, including the number of government vacancies available in the year; types, salary package and entry requirements of the posts; job preference of the job-seekers with disabilities registered with SPD; whether they could meet the entry requirements of the posts; and whether they choose to apply for these posts through SPD.

11. Noting the decrease in number of referrals by SPD for job-seekers with disabilities who have applied for government vacancies in recent years, the Civil Service Bureau will work with the Labour Department in promoting our policy and facilitating measures on employment of persons with disabilities with a view to encouraging these persons to apply for government jobs. In addition, we will liaise with the Social Welfare Department to explore further room for providing more job attachments in B/Ds for trainees in different age groups and with varying types of disability.

Civil Service Bureau
July 2013

Annex A

**Number of persons with disabilities
including those with visual impairment serving in and
leaving the Civil Service in the past ten years**

Year ^{Note 1}	Number of persons with visual impairment serving in the Civil Service ^{Note 2}	Total number of persons with disabilities serving in the Civil Service ^{Note 2}	Total Strength in the Civil Service	Number of persons with visual impairment leaving the Civil Service ^{Note 3}	Total number of persons with disabilities leaving the Civil Service ^{Note 3}
2002-03 ^{Note 4}	594	3 398	169 100	35	176
2003-04 ^{Note 4}	565	3 319	163 039	33	198
2004-05 ^{Note 4}	542	3 241	157 300	25	168
2005-06 ^{Note 4}	523	3 256	155 019	12	103
2006-07 ^{Note 4}	509	3 263	153 805	18	126
2007-08	497	3 225	153 477	20	168
2008-09	484	3 238	155 128	28	179
2009-10	465	3 316	156 573	31	166
2010-11	456	3 317	156 886	23	204
2011-12	462	3 391	159 195	24	206

Note 1 Position as at the end of the financial year (i.e. as at 31 March).

Note 2 Persons with colour blindness or defective colour perception are not included in the statistics.

Note 3 Reasons for leaving the Civil Service include retirement, resignation, death, etc.

Note 4 Implementation of enhanced efficiency drives in the period, particularly the six years of open recruitment freeze which ended in March 2007 (namely from 1999-2000 to 2006-07, save for 2001-02 and 2002-03 when exceptional approval was given for a limited number of grades to conduct open recruitment to meet special operational needs).

Annex B

Number of new recruits to the Civil Service who declared their disabilities, with breakdown by types of disability, in the past ten years

	2002-03 ^{Note 1}	2003-04 ^{Note 1}	2004-05 ^{Note 1}	2005-06 ^{Note 1}	2006-07 ^{Note 1}	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Visual impairment ^{Note 2}	0	0	1	0	0	0	7	7	8	12
Hearing impairment	0	0	0	0	1	4	6	16	10	15
Physical disability	0	0	0	0	2	5	1	9	12	8
Intellectual disability	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ex-mentally ill persons	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	4	1
Visceral disability	0	0	0	0	0	3	13	8	6	12
Others, e.g. autism, speech impairment, specific learning difficulties, etc.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Total number of new recruits who declared their disabilities	2	0	1	0	3	13	28	41	40	50
Total number of new recruits	1 917	173	558	1 404	2 780	4 202	6 112	6 027	5 465	7 877

^{Note 1} There was significant drop in the recruitment figures due to the implementation of enhanced efficiency drives in the period, particularly the six years of open recruitment freeze which ended in March 2007 (namely from 1999-2000 to 2006-07, save for 2001-02 and 2002-03 when exceptional approval was given for a limited number of grades to conduct open recruitment to meet special operational needs).

^{Note 2} New recruits with colour blindness or defective colour perception are not included in the statistics.

Number of new recruits to the Civil Service who declared their disabilities, with breakdown by B/Ds, in the past ten years

	2002-03 ^{Note 1}	2003-04 ^{Note 1}	2004-05 ^{Note 1}	2005-06 ^{Note 1}	2006-07 ^{Note 1}	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department								1	3	1
Census and Statistics Department								2		
Civil Aviation Department						1		1		
Civil Engineering and Development Department							1	1		1
Companies Registry									1	
Correctional Services Department							3	2		1
Department of Health					1			2	1	
Drainage Services Department							1		1	1
Electrical and Mechanical Services Department							1			
Environmental Protection Department								1		
Fire Services Department							7		1	
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department								1	9	17
Government Logistics Department								1	1	2
GS: Commerce and Economic Development Bureau (including Innovation and Technology Commission)									1	
GS: Education Bureau									3	1
GS : Health, Welfare and Food Bureau ^{Note 2}			1							
Highways Department								1	1	
Home Affairs Department						1	1	3		2
Hong Kong Police Force	1									
Housing Department								5	1	4
Inland Revenue Department						2	3	1	6	7
Intellectual Property Department								1		
Labour Department										1
Land Registry										1
Lands Department							1	1	1	
Leisure and Cultural Services Department						5	1	6	2	4
Marine Department										1
Post Office						2		3	3	

	2002-03 ^{Note 1}	2003-04 ^{Note 1}	2004-05 ^{Note 1}	2005-06 ^{Note 1}	2006-07 ^{Note 1}	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Social Welfare Department					2	2	4	4	3	2
Student Financial Assistance Agency									1	
Trade and Industry Department								1		
Transport Department									1	1
Treasury	1							1		
Water Supplies Department							5	2		3
Total number of new recruits who declared their disabilities	2	0	1	0	3	13	28	41	40	50

Note 1 Implementation of enhanced efficiency drives in the period, particularly the six years of open recruitment freeze which ended in March 2007 (namely from 1999-2000 to 2006-07, save for 2001-02 and 2002-03 when exceptional approval was given for a limited number of grades to conduct open recruitment to meet special operational needs).

Note 2 Upon the re-organisation of the Government Secretariat in July 2007, the former Health, Welfare and Food Bureau was renamed as Food and Health Bureau with change in the policy portfolios.