

# 立法會 *Legislative Council*

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## **Panel on Public Service**

**Meeting on 20 June 2016**

### **Updated background brief on employment of persons with disabilities in the civil service**

#### **Purpose**

1. 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 previous meetings.

#### **Background**

##### Policy on employment of PWDs and facilitating measures

2. The Government's policy and related facilitating measures on the employment of PWDs seek to enable candidates with disabilities to compete with able-bodied candidates on equal footing, thereby allowing them, able-bodied or disabled alike, to have equal access to job opportunities in the Government. The facilitating measures being implemented by the Administration for PWDs to apply for civil service posts are as follows –

- (a) Candidates with disabilities who meet the basic entry requirements for a post will not be subject to shortlisting criteria, if any. Once candidates with disabilities meet the basic entry requirements, they will be automatically invited to attend selection interview/test.
- (b) Where a candidate who has indicated that he/she has a disability is invited to a test/interview, the recruiting bureau/department ("B/D") is required to proactively ascertain from the candidate any assistance or accommodation needed,

and the test/interview process would be suitably adjusted to cater for his/her special needs.

- (c) If a candidate with disability is found suitable by the recruitment board to carry out the duties of certain posts in a specific rank, he/she may be recommended for appointment even though he/she may not be able to perform the full range of duties of every post in the concerned rank due to his/her disability.
- (d) An appropriate degree of preference may be given to candidates with disabilities found suitable for appointment by placing them ahead of able-bodied candidates whose suitability for appointment is considered comparable to the former.
- (e) If a candidate with disability who has satisfied the basic entry requirement is not recommended for appointment, the recruitment board's recommendation will be referred to an officer not below the rank of Assistant Director for consideration and decision so as to ensure that the merits of each candidate with disability would be duly assessed.

### Assistance provided to PWDs working in the Government

3. The Administration provides on-the-job assistance and reasonable accommodation to PWDs working in the Government, 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 were \$126,000 in 2011-2012, \$49,000 in 2012-2013 and \$101,000 in 2013-2014 (as at 13 March 2014) respectively<sup>1</sup>.

### Statistics on PWDs being employed in the civil service

4. The Administration compiles statistics on the number of PWDs being employed in the civil service each year<sup>2</sup>. As at 31 March 2015, the number of PWDs employed in the civil service stood at 3 319, representing about 2% of the

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<sup>1</sup> Controlling Officer's Reply on the Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2014-2015 (Reply Serial No. CSB064).

<sup>2</sup> There is no mandatory requirement for civil service job applicants and serving officers to declare their disability, if any. The statistics are compiled on the basis of information available to the management of B/Ds.

strength of the civil service<sup>3</sup>.

5. Further statistics on the employment of PWDs in the civil service are set out in **Appendices I to V** as follows -

**Appendix I** Number of PWDs in the civil service from 2010-2011 to 2014-2015 with breakdown by types of disabilities

**Appendix II** Number of new recruits with disabilities from 2010-2011 to 2014-2015 with breakdown by types of disabilities

**Appendix III** Number of new recruits with disabilities from 2002-2003 to 2011-2012 with breakdown by B/Ds

**Appendix IV** Number of PWDs serving in and leaving the civil service from 2002-2003 to 2011-2012

**Appendix V** Number of PWDs in the civil service in 2012 and 2013 with breakdown by lower/middle and upper ranks

### **Past discussions**

6. The Panel discussed issues relating to the employment of PWDs in the civil service at its meetings on 16 May 2011, 17 June 2013, 15 July 2013 (with deputations attending), 23 June 2014 and 22 June 2015. The major issues discussed are summarized below.

#### Measures to promote and facilitate the employment of PWDs in the civil service

7. Members considered that the number of PWDs being employed in the civil service was 3 415 as at 31 March 2014, representing around 2% of the strength of the civil service, was too small. They pointed out that the number of PWDs serving in the civil service had merely increased by 190 since 2008 (i.e. 3 225 in 2008 vs 3 415 in 2014). Some members also queried that the figure of "2%" of PWDs in the civil service included some civil servants who became disabled after joining the civil service, and thus could not provide an accurate picture of the employment situation of PWDs in the civil service. To improve

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<sup>3</sup> Controlling Officer's Reply on the Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2016-2017 (Reply Serial No. CSB020).

the employment of PWDs in the civil service, the Administration was urged to devise measures to encourage B/Ds to employ more PWDs. Additional funding should also be allocated to B/Ds for them to employ more PWDs and to offer PWDs with long-term positions instead of engaging them under consecutive short-term contracts.

8. The Administration advised that it would continue its efforts in promoting the employment of PWDs in the civil service. Apart from reminding B/Ds of the policy and guidelines on the employment of PWDs when conducting recruitment exercises, Civil Service Bureau ("CSB") would work closely with Labour Department ("LD") to encourage more job seekers with disabilities to apply for government jobs, and liaise with Social Welfare Department ("SWD") to explore further room to provide more job attachments in B/Ds for trainees with disabilities. Under the Non-Civil Service Contract Staff Scheme, B/Ds had the discretion to determine the contract duration having regard to operational needs. Disability of individual employees was not a pertinent factor in determining the duration of the contract.

9. The Administration also advised that the number of appointments offered to applicants with disabilities depended on a number of factors, including the number of qualified applicants with disabilities as well as their suitability for employment. According to a survey conducted by CSB, amongst the 1 788 applicants who had declared their disabilities in the 206 civil service recruitment exercises launched and concluded in 2013-2014 and 2014-2015, 78 (or 4.4%) were subsequently offered appointment. The percentage was broadly comparable to that of other applicants which was 3.7% (about 9 400 out of 255 000).

10. On the suggestion of setting a benchmark for employing PWDs, the Administration advised that as revealed by overseas experience, a mandatory employment quota for PWDs no longer represented the most appropriate means to promote the employment of PWDs. The prevailing trend had moved away from employment quota system to anti-discrimination legislation, enhanced support measures and promotion of equal opportunities for PWDs. Therefore, the Administration did not consider it appropriate to set any numeric target of PWDs working in the Government. Instead, the Administration had implemented suitable measures to ensure that applicants with disabilities could compete with able-bodied applicants on an equal footing, thereby allowing them to have equal access to job opportunities in the Government.

11. A member suggested that the Administration should visit special schools and arrange civil servants with disabilities to give talks to the students during the visits to raise the students' awareness of the job opportunities for PWDs in the civil service.

12. The Administration responded that CSB had, in collaboration with the LD, published a booklet entitled "Employ People Based on Their Abilities – Application for Government Jobs by Persons with Disabilities", which set out major points to be noted by applicants with disabilities in applying for government jobs and the assistance provided by the Selective Placement Division ("SPD") of LD for job seekers with disabilities. The booklet had been uploaded onto the websites of CSB and SPD and distributed to social welfare organizations, special schools, etc. to facilitate wider dissemination of the relevant information. The Administration added that consideration would be given to other suitable means for disseminating the information, including the member's suggestion of visiting special schools to apprise students of the government policy and facilitating measures on employment of PWDs.

13. A member said that if CSB refused to make any changes to the existing policy on employment of PWDs to enable more PWDs to become civil servants, it would undermine the work of the Commission on Poverty to, amongst others, assist the underprivileged groups with special needs, including PWDs, to integrate into the community and be self-reliant, in order to achieve the objectives of preventing and alleviating poverty.

14. The Administration reiterated that instead of setting a numeric target for employing PWDs, the Government's policy and facilitating measures represented, on balance, a more appropriate approach. It was noted that steady progress was made by B/Ds in employing PWDs. CSB would continue to work closely with the relevant B/Ds to facilitate job seekers with disabilities in obtaining a better understanding of the government policy and facilitating measures on employment of PWDs.

#### Disclosure of disability by civil service job applicants and serving employees

15. Some members enquired whether the Administration's practice of not requiring government job applicants and serving employees to declare their disability status on a mandatory basis was in line with international practices.

16. The Administration advised that the existing arrangement under which job applicants and serving civil servants with disability could choose to disclose their disability was considered appropriate, as it struck 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 PWDs in the civil service.

17. The Administration also pointed out that since there was no mandatory requirement for job applicants and government employees to declare their disabilities, the statistics on the employment of PWDs in the civil service only reflect the information available to the management of B/Ds instead of

providing a full picture of the exact number of job applicants and serving officers with disabilities.

#### Referrals by LD for PWDs to apply for civil service posts

18. Some members expressed concern over the decrease in both the number and success rate of referrals made by the Selective Placement Division ("SPD") of LD for PWDs applying for civil service posts. The Administration explained that the number of referrals made by SPD hinged on a number of factors, including the number of government vacancies available and preference of job seekers with disability to apply government jobs through SPD or by other means. LD would step up promotional efforts to encourage more PWDs to apply for government jobs.

#### Promotion prospects of civil servants with disabilities

19. On the promotion prospects of civil servants with disabilities, the Administration advised that in a promotion exercise, all eligible civil servants in a lower rank would be considered according to the same selection criteria. The disability status, if any, of individual officers, would not be a factor to be considered.

#### Effectiveness of the Sunnyway Programme

20. Members noted that CSB, in collaboration with SWD, had been implementing a job attachment scheme in B/Ds under the Sunnyway Programme since 2006. On the effectiveness of the Sunnyway Programme, the Administration advised that about 20 B/Ds participated in the Programme offering about 30 job placements each year. Under the Programme, trainees with disabilities would gain employment skills in a real working environment and such experience would be beneficial to the participants who wished to apply for government jobs in future. CSB would continue to work closely with B/Ds to provide more placement opportunities and liaise with SWD to see if more matching could be made.

#### Barrier-free working environment

21. 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

the Equal Opportunities Commission in June 2010<sup>4</sup> on the provision of a barrier-free working environment, and the matter was presently overseen by the Chief Secretary for Administration. A timetable for retrofitting and upgrading barrier-free facilities in Government premises and facilities had been in place.

#### Provision of adequate rebus service for PWDs to go to work

22. Concern was raised that the inadequate supply of rebus service and the high cost of similar service provided by the private sector might discourage PWDs to take up employment. The Administration advised that special arrangements would be made to post appointees with disabilities to an office near their place of residence, where possible. Furthermore, PWDs would be accorded with priority in using rebus service for travelling to and from their place of work on regular basis.

#### **Latest development**

23. The Administration will brief the Panel on the employment of PWDs in the civil service at the Panel meeting scheduled for 20 June 2016.

#### **Relevant papers**

24. A list of the relevant papers is in **Appendix VI**.

Council Business Division 4  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
16 June 2016

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<sup>4</sup> Formal Investigation Report: Accessibility in Publicly Accessible Premises published by Equal Opportunities Commission in June 2010.

## Appendix I

### Number of persons with disabilities in the civil service with breakdown by types of disabilities from 2010-11 to 2014-15 <sup>Note 1</sup>

(Source: Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2016-2017  
by the Finance Committee - Reply Serial No. CSB020)

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Physical handicap	1 739	1 750	1 729	1 696	1 626
Visceral disability	481	494	511	546	544
With history of mental illness	309	330	348	366	352
Intellectual disability	18	19	19	17	15
Visual impairment <sup>Note 2</sup>	456	462	456	439	412
Hearing impairment	302	320	320	335	352
Others (e.g. autism, speech impairment, specific learning difficulties, etc.)	12	16	18	16	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 317</b>	<b>3 391</b>	<b>3 401</b>	<b>3 415</b>	<b>3 319</b>
<b>Percentage of strength of civil service</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>2%</b>

<sup>Note 1</sup> The statistics, which captured the position as at 31 March of the relevant year, are compiled on the basis of information available to the management of bureaux/departments (e.g. through the requests of applicants during the recruitment process for special arrangements for selection interview/test having regard to their disabilities, or applications from serving officers with disabilities for financial assistance to purchase technical aids to assist in their performance of duties).

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



## Appendix II

### Number of new recruits to the civil service who declared their disabilities, with breakdown by types of disability, from 2010-11 to 2014-15 <sup>Note 1</sup>

(Source: Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2016-2017  
by the Finance Committee - Reply Serial No. CSB020)

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Physical handicap	12	8	5	14	7
Visceral disability	6	12	5	21	15
With history of mental illness	4	1	3	7	2
Intellectual disability	0	0	0	1	1
Visual impairment <sup>Note 2</sup>	8	12	7	7	11
Hearing impairment	10	15	8	28	20
Others (e.g. autism, speech impairment, specific learning difficulties, etc.)	0	2	2	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>Percentage of new recruits in the civil service</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>0.6%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>0.8%</b>

<sup>Note 1</sup> The statistics, which captured the position as at 31 March of the relevant year, are compiled on the basis of information available to the management of bureaux/departments (e.g. through the requests of applicants during the recruitment process for special arrangements for selection interview/test having regard to their disabilities, or applications from serving officers with disabilities for financial assistance to purchase technical aids to assist in their performance of duties).

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



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
<b>Total number of new recruits who declared their disabilities</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>50</b>

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.

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

(Source: Annex A to LC Papers No. CB(4)902/12-13(03))

<b>Year</b> <sup>Note 1</sup>	<b>Total number of persons with disabilities <sup>Note 2</sup> serving in the Civil Service</b>	<b>Total number of persons with disabilities leaving the Civil Service</b> <sup>Note 3</sup>	<b>Total Strength in the Civil Service</b>
2002-03 <sup>Note 4</sup>	3 398	176	169 100
2003-04 <sup>Note 4</sup>	3 319	198	163 039
2004-05 <sup>Note 4</sup>	3 241	168	157 300
2005-06 <sup>Note 4</sup>	3 256	103	155 019
2006-07 <sup>Note 4</sup>	3 263	126	153 805
2007-08	3 225	168	153 477
2008-09	3 238	179	155 128
2009-10	3 316	166	156 573
2010-11	3 317	204	156 886
2011-12	3 391	206	159 195

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).

**Number of persons with disabilities<sup>Note 1</sup> in the Civil Service with  
breakdown by the lower and middle ranks and the upper ranks as at  
31 March for the years of 2012 and 2013**

(Source: Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2014-15  
by the Finance Committee - Reply Serial No. CSB064)

Group	As at 31 March 2012		As at 31 March 2013	
	No. of persons with disabilities in the Civil Service	% of strength in that group	No. of persons with disabilities in the Civil Service	% of strength in that group
Lower and middle ranks <sup>Note 2</sup> (Covers ranks with maximum salary below Master Pay Scale (MPS) Point 34 or equivalent)	3 230	2.32%	3 232	2.30%
Upper ranks (Covers ranks with maximum salary between MPS Point 34 to 49 and on Directorate Pay Scale or equivalent)	161	0.81%	169	0.83%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 391</b>	<b>2.13%</b>	<b>3 401</b>	<b>2.12%</b>

Note 1 Persons with colour blindness or defective colour perception in the Civil Service are not included in the statistics.

Note 2 We do not collect breakdown figures specifically for the lower ranks.

## Employment of persons with disabilities in the civil service

## List of relevant papers

Meeting	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Public Service	16.5.2011 (item IV)	<a href="#">Administration's paper</a>  <a href="#">Press Release</a>  <a href="#">Minutes</a>  <a href="#">Administration's follow-up paper</a>
	17.6.2013 (item V)	<a href="#">Agenda</a>  <a href="#">Administration's paper</a>  <a href="#">Minutes</a>  <a href="#">Administration's follow-up response to issues raised at the Panel meeting</a>
	15.7.2013 (item V)	<a href="#">Agenda</a>  <a href="#">Administration's paper</a>  <a href="#">Minutes</a>
	23.6.2014 (item V)	<a href="#">Agenda</a>  <a href="#">Administration's paper</a>  <a href="#">Minutes</a>  <a href="#">Administration's follow-up response to issues raised at the Panel meeting</a>

Meeting	Date of meeting	Paper
	22.6.2015 (item IV)	<a href="#">Agenda</a>  <a href="#">Administration's paper</a>  <a href="#">Minutes</a>
Council Meeting	24.10.2012	<a href="#">Official Record of Proceedings Pages 88 - 94 (Written question raised by Hon TAM Yiu-chung)</a>
	5.6.2013	<a href="#">Official Record of Proceedings Pages 138-141 (Written question raised by Hon Emily LAU)</a>
	26.3.2014	<a href="#">Official Record of Proceedings Pages 72-88 (Written question raised by Hon Fernando CHEUNG)</a>
	4.2.2015	<a href="#">Official Record of Proceedings Pages 107-112 (Written question raised by Hon LEE Chuek-yan)</a>
Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2014-15	31.3.2014	<a href="#">Controlling Officer's Reply (Reply Serial No. CSB064)</a>
Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2015-16	27.3.2015	<a href="#">Controlling Officer's Reply (Reply Serial No. CSB062)</a>
Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2016-17	1.4.2016	<a href="#">Controlling Officer's Reply (Reply Serial No. CSB012)</a>
		<a href="#">Controlling Officer's Reply (Reply Serial No. CSB020)</a>