

**Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services
Special Meeting on 20 November 2018**

**‘Looking into the policy on vocational training for
persons with disabilities in the light of the redevelopment of the site for
Shine Skills Centre (Kwun Tong) into a civil service college’**

Position Paper of Vocational Training Council

Foreword

The Vocational Training Council Ordinance was amended in 1991 to widen the remit of the VTC. The objects of the Council have been:

- to provide and co-ordinate the provision of skills training to persons with a disability who are aged 15 and over for the purpose of improving their employment prospects and preparing them for open employment; (Added 35 of 1991 s. 4. Amended 2 of 2005 s. 3)
- to establish, operate and maintain technical colleges, technical institutes, industrial training centres and skills centres. (Added 35 of 1991 s. 4)

The Council shall:

- operate and maintain any skills centre assigned to it by the Government;
- provide technical aids and vocational assessment in connection with skills training. (Added 35 of 1991 s. 5)
- establish, operate and maintain technical colleges, technical institutes, industrial training centres and skills centres; (Amended 35 of 1991 s. 5)
- help candidates for industrial training and skills training to find suitable training facilities; (Amended 35 of 1991 s. 5)

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government announced in October its plan to build a civil service college in Kwun Tong in the Policy Address 2018. To tie in with the Government's plan, the Vocational

Training Council [VTC] will be required to return to the Government in Q. 4, 2021 the site in Kwun Tong on which the Shine Skills Centre sits and the operation of Shine Skills Centre (Kwun Tong) [Shine (KT)] will cease. Stakeholders have expressed great concerns over the decision. VTC looks forward to working with relevant Government departments with a view to exploring viable options to relocate Shine (KT)'s vocational training places and vocational assessment services to a venue in Kowloon East/Kowloon, to avoid tough commuting of disabled students in Kowloon East/Kowloon/Eastern District for studying Shine programmes. Shine (KT) will continue to have continuous development in vocational training and vocational assessment services according to the demands from the Government, disabled students, their parents, employers and the community.

In this regard, we would like to present our position as follows:

1. To retain the 300 full-time, 200 part-time vocational skills training places and Vocational Assessment Service as a rightful option for disabled students in Kowloon/Kowloon East/Eastern District

In 1968, the building of Shine Skills Centre [SSC] was established with the funding donated by The World Rehabilitation Fund (WRF) to provide services for people with disabilities. Since 1991, SSC has been put under VTC's management and has carried the following features:

- SSC has a well-established governance structure and rigorous quality assurance system.
- SSC serves students with different types of disabilities and multiple disabilities (Appendix 1). With its diverse programme choices, students' right of choice is well catered for, according to their interests and abilities.
- SSC has invited industry experts to serve as programme advisers to review the effectiveness of the full-time training programme, developed outcome-based teaching and learning, updated curriculum, training pedagogies and arrangements of internship on a regular basis to keep abreast of changes in the society and workplace needs. Resources had also been placed to advocate and develop the use of IT to enhance the teaching and learning effectiveness.

- SSC provides students with different types of job placement opportunities through its extensive connections with the industrial and commercial sectors. Through SSC's extensive connections, its social enterprise mode of catering and convenience shop operations as well as the collaboration with VTC institutions/departments and Government bureaus and departments, it provides disabled students with all-encompassing internship opportunities. Simultaneously, in the SSC curriculums, generic skills training, Physical Education, Whole Person Development, trial work placement and extracurricular activities (such as robots assembling/programming, music and microfilm production) are also provided. There is also a wide range of student and school leaver career support services (vocational counselling, on-the-job and post-placement services) and rehabilitation support (occupational therapy, Nursing) as the framework of vocational education and training for the disabled learners at SSC.

- SSC's well-experienced teaching team and the well-equipped training workshops have enabled the team to provide quality vocational training with great care and passion in helping the students for open employment. (For details on graduates' destinations and employment rates, please refer to Appendix 2).

With the implementation of the New Academic Structure (NAS) from the 2009/10 school year, students from special schools consider SSC an alternative for higher education (3+3+2) after they have completed the senior secondary education (3+3). SSC provides diverse training in the setting of a vocational education and training based institution for ten different types of disabilities and multiple disabilities. It works to help the students to have a smooth transition to adapt to the work environment, through the two-year comprehensive vocational training for joining the work force and contributing to the society. Parents are glad to see their development upon graduation. The choice of Shine (KT) as their rightful option for studying will be sacrificed upon the cessation of Shine (KT).

Apart from special school leavers, a portion of secondary school leavers with special education needs [SEN] from mainstream education under

the integrated education also pursue full time studies at SSC (105 student intakes were from mainstream schools, around one-third of the total full-time enrolment of 310 at Shine (KT) in its 2018/19 cohort). After completing the training at Shine (KT), they can still apply for admission to an array of programmes at different levels offered by VTC according to their abilities.

Shine (KT) is also the offering site for the Education Bureau's Adapted Applied Learning Courses for Students with Intellectual Disability (around 50 training places) and for Vocational Assessment Service (around 1300 assessees) for the public. Shine Vocational Assessment Service is the only centre that provides vocational assessment service for disabled persons in Hong Kong. The professional assessment team is composed of an occupational therapist, placement officers from Labour Department, a Hospital Authority doctor, experienced workshop assessors and social workers. Shine (KT) also provides part-time training programmes (around 200 training places) for people with disabilities, such as the disabled persons from shelter workshops, for upgrading their work skills. A training and assessment venue conveniently located near major public transportation points is especially needed for disabled students living in Kowloon East, Kowloon and Eastern District. As such, there is indeed a very strong demand for the training and services provided by Shine (KT). We sincerely and earnestly hope that the Government could relocate the training places and Vocational Assessment Services provided by SSC to a venue in Kowloon East/Kowloon.

2. Concerns over the arrangements for the 2020/2021 cohort at Shine Skills Centre (Kwun Tong)

Given that more time is required for the students with disabilities to struggle to adapt to the life after secondary school, life planning for post-graduation destinations will normally commence in Secondary 4/5. Even though the Government had announced that a site in Kowloon had been identified for a new vocational training centre providing more admission spaces to be placed, which would be up and running by September 2021, there are no details on the alternative arrangements made for the affected students who would be enrolling in 2020 yet. Special schools therefore have not been able to obtain the required information in time for school leavers of 2020 and 2021, which would greatly impact on devising the life-planning programmes for these students.

The obstacles for students with disabilities in learning do call for a long period of time to adapt to the new environment. As they enrol at Shine (KT) in 2020 for Year 1 studies while they have to transfer to a new training venue in the following year, either at Shine (Tuen Mun)/Shine (Pokfulum) or

at another organisation, these students would find it more difficult to adapt to the new environments. Then given the possible need to offer the “abridged” one-year programmes, instead of the original two-year programmes, it is anticipated that it would certainly be a greater impact on these students and their rights of learning would indeed be undermined.

3. Staff’s Anxiety on Shine’s development

Since the announcement of the cease of operation of Shine(KT), staff members of SSC were shocked and were extremely anxious about the future of SSC and their job security. The Shine team is dedicated in teaching students with disabilities with care and passion. The satisfaction also comes through seeing that the graduates can be engaged in their jobs. Despite such restless concerns, they are still committed to providing quality programme and service delivery. We sincerely and earnestly hope that our team could continue to provide the vocational training and Vocational Assessment Services in Kowloon East/ Kowloon districts for students with different disabilities.

Conclusion

4. We understand also that the Vocational Training Board for People with Disabilities have expressed similar views in writing to the Commissioner for Rehabilitation, Labour and Welfare Bureau, on 12 November 2018 for the Government’s re-consideration of this earlier plan to have Shine (KT) cease operation. VTC earnestly requests that the Government can relocate Shine (KT)’s vocational skills training places and Vocational Assessment Services to a venue in Kowloon East/Kowloon District.

Vocational Training Council
12 November 2018

Encl. 1. Distribution of SSC Student Disability Types (AY201819)
2. Destinations of SSC Graduates (2017)

Shine Skills Centre

AY 2018/19

Distribution of Student Disability Types

		Primary Disability	
Special Educational Needs / Disabilities 特殊教育需要 / 殘疾類別		No.	(Student No.) Total No. of Students (i.e. 647)
1	Intellectual disability 智障	324	50%
2	Autism 自閉症	168	26%
3	Mental illness 精神病	39	6%
4	Physical disability 肢體傷殘	29	4%
5	Hearing impairment 聽障	22	3%
6	Attention deficit / Hyperactivity disorder 注意力不足 / 過度活躍症	18	3%
7	Specific learning difficulties 特殊學習困難	17	3%
8	Speech impairment 言語障礙	12	2%
9	Visceral disability / Chronic illness 器官殘障 / 長期病患	11	2%
10	Visual impairment 視障	7	1%
Total (as of 30 Sep 2018)		647	

		Overall Disabilities	
Special Educational Needs / Disabilities 特殊教育需要 / 殘疾類別		No.	(Student No.) Total No. of Students (i.e. 647)
1	Intellectual disability 智障	480	74%
2	Autism 自閉症	201	31%
3	Speech impairment 言語障礙	125	19%
4	Visceral disability / Chronic illness 器官殘障 / 長期病患	74	11%
5	Mental illness 精神病	62	10%
6	Attention deficit / Hyperactivity disorder 注意力不足 / 過度活躍症	49	8%
7	Specific learning difficulties 特殊學習困難	43	7%
8	Physical disability 肢體傷殘	35	5%
9	Hearing impairment 聽障	33	5%
10	Visual impairment 視障	12	2%
Total (as of 30 Sep 2018)		1114	

Destinations of Graduates of Full-time Programmes of Shine Skills Centres (2017)

No. of graduates		236
Employment Rate:		87.7%
(No. of graduates in open employment)		114
(No. of graduates were found economically active)		130
Economically active	In Open Employment	114 48.3%
	Obtained a job offer and waiting to report for duty	3 1.3%
	Seeking employment	13 5.5%
	Sub-total	130
Economically inactive	In supported employment	11 4.7%
	In sheltered workshop placement	17 7.2%
	Pursuing further full-time study	30 12.7%
	Not seeking employment as planning for further study	8 3.4%
	Not seeking employment due to health or other personal reasons	23 9.7%
	Waiting for supported employment or sheltered workshop placement	8 3.4%
	Sub-total	97
Others	Unknown (Graduates did not respond to the survey)	9 3.8%