

**Subcommittee to Study Issues Relating to the Provision of
Boarding Places, Senior Secondary Education and Employment
Opportunities for Children with Special Educational Needs**

**Written Response to Views and Suggestions raised by the
Deputations and Members at the Meeting on 6 July 2007**

- 3(a) The Administration and subvented non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should take the lead in the formulation of recruitment policies and employment indicators for persons with disabilities (PWDs). The employment indicators should be achieved on a progressive basis.**

As the largest employer in Hong Kong, the Administration fully recognised the importance of taking a lead in ensuring that PWDs enjoy equal opportunities for employment in the civil service. Candidates with disabilities are given an appropriate degree of preference for appointment if they are found suitable for employment. Over the years, the civil servants with disabilities have been maintained at over 2% of the total civil service force.

To encourage subvented organizations to employ more PWDs, the then Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food issued a letter in May 2003 to all concerned bureaux and departments requesting them to encourage public bodies and subvented organizations under their purview to implement the following measures-

- (a) to set up an indicator for employment of PWDs on a voluntary basis;
- (b) to formulate policies and procedures regarding employment of PWDs by drawing reference from the Civil Service; and
- (c) to announce the numbers of PWDs employed in annual reports.

The Labour and Welfare Bureau conducts tracking survey at regular intervals to keep track of the implementation of the measures by subvented organizations. A new round of survey is in progress and the result will be reported to the Legislative Council in January 2008.

3(b) Tax incentives should be introduced to encourage the employment of PWDs in private organizations.

Under the existing provisions of the Inland Revenue Ordinance, all costs related to the employment of staff (for both disabled people and able-bodied people) are already deductible in ascertaining the employer's assessable profits. Any enhanced tax deduction for the employment of PWDs would be against basic taxation principle. Besides, under Hong Kong's low-tax regime, the tax savings generated by other tax incentives are unlikely to be significant.

- 3(c) Organizations should be required to disclose regularly the number of disabled employees. The concern that disclosure of such information would create labeling effect on the disabled employees was groundless.**

As stated in 3(a) above, one of the measures to encourage organizations in the employment of PWDs is to announce the number of PWDs employed in their annual reports. When disclosing information on employment of PWDs, the principle on protecting the personal privacy of PWDs concerned will be strictly observed.

- 3(d) The Administration should publish the number of graduates with SEN from special schools and vocational training institutes, and conduct tracking surveys into their employment situation to assess the effectiveness of various measures introduced to enhance the employment opportunities for PWDs.**

The Education Bureau conducts a survey on post-school placement for special school leavers annually. The information collected can be provided to relevant departments for reference. Moreover, for the full-time courses offered by the three Skill Centres of the Vocational Training Council, a tracking survey is conducted annually to gather information on the employment situation of its graduates. These survey findings are circulated to relevant bureaux and advisory committees (Rehabilitation Advisory Committee, Committee on Vocational Training for People with Disabilities) for reference.

3(e) In the long run, the Administration should introduce legislation to implement an employment quota for PWDs in both public and private organizations.

A quota system for employment of PWDs was discussed several times in the Legislative Council. In general, it did not receive support from a majority of Members. The Administration is against a quota system for reasons that –

- (a) a quota system has not proven successful overseas in helping PWDs in finding jobs (UK abolished its quota system for reason of its effectiveness);
- (b) under a mandatory employment system, PWDs will be perceived as a liability, making them difficult to be accepted by their peers at work;
- (c) we should help PWDs to find appropriate jobs on the basis of their abilities rather than disabilities; and
- (d) a big majority of our companies in the private sector are small and medium sized enterprises. Imposing an employment quota on them will adversely affect their operation. If they were to be exempted, then a quota system could hardly achieve the desired outcome.

3(f) The Administration should create an environment conducive to the development of social enterprises through various means, such as by the provision of privileged offers, restricted tenders, and tax exemptions.

To encourage the establishment and development of social enterprise (SE), the Government has provided seed money in a number of specified areas. The Enhancing Self-Reliance Through District Partnership Programme of the Home Affairs Department (HAD) provides grants for NGOs to run SE projects during their initial operations to promote self-reliance of the socially disadvantaged. The Programme has granted about \$51 million to over 50 SE projects in various areas. At present, about \$100 million is available for application under the Programme from organizations to develop SE. We will consider increasing the fund allocation as necessary.

To encourage rehabilitation NGOs to create job opportunities for PWDs, the Social Welfare Department in September 2001 introduced the “Enhancing Employment of People with Disabilities through Small Enterprise” Project (3E’s Project), which aims to encourage the establishment of social firms to create training and work opportunities for people with disabilities. As at December 2007, 45 applications involving a total grant of about \$2.5 million were approved, and some 390 employment opportunities targeted for PWDs were created.

SE is a business. It should be able to make profits and operate on a self-financing basis. The successful development of SE requires not only commitment to society and attending to the

needs of different sectors of the community, but also innovation, just as any other successful commercial enterprise does. In this regard, the Government's strategies for promoting the further development of SE in Hong Kong include –

- (a) to enhance public understanding of SE, especially the social objectives achieved, with a view to creating a more conducive environment for the development of SE and its clientele. The Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) will continue to strengthen publicity for SE. To promote public understanding of SE, apart from leaflet and API, HAB has produced in end 2007 a booklet to introduce to the public successful cases of SE in Hong Kong and overseas. The relevant publication and the leaflet have been uploaded onto the webpage of HAB 《http://www.hab.gov.hk/en/policy_responsibilities/policy6.htm》;
- (b) to promote cross-sector collaboration and encourage more private enterprises to participate in the development of SE;
- (c) to nurture more talents for SE to enhance creativity; and
- (d) to strengthen support for SE in respect of marketing, exploring market niches, financing and other operational issues in order to enhance its competitiveness and sustainable development.

These development directions are in line with the views expressed by participants from various sectors at the Summit on Social Enterprise (Summit) held on 20 December 2007.

As announced by the CE at the Summit, HAD will set up a matching platform to provide necessary information to business organisations and NGOs which are interested in partnering with each other, so as to facilitate a more systematic and efficient cross-sector collaboration between private enterprises and SEs. Besides, HAD has liaised with some organisations and professionals to take part in SE Mentorship Scheme to provide business or operational advisory service to newly established SEs. Retired or working professionals from the business sector will advise and support SEs on various areas such as operation, marketing strategy and staff training.

In addition, the Government will introduce a pilot scheme to give eligible SEs priority in bidding 38 Government cleansing services contracts, involving a total value of about \$17 million. The scheme is expected to provide about 300 employment opportunities to SEs. The contracts will be provided by 19 departments and cover all 18 districts. SEs which take root in various districts are expected to benefit from the scheme. The Government will continue to look for suitable service contracts under the principles of transparency and fairness as well as conforming to the agreement of the World Trade Organisation, and review the effectiveness of the scheme.

As SE is a relatively new concept in Hong Kong, a number of issues have to be explored further. While supporting the development of SE, some sectors of the community have opined that the Government should not provide overly privileged treatment to SE so as to avoid adversely affecting the development of small and medium enterprises and/or that SE has to rely on the

Government on a long-term basis to maintain sustainability, going against the principle that SE should be sustainable on its own. The Government will continue to listen to the views of the community and consolidate our experience so as to improve our policies and measures on SE development.

3(g) The Administration should improve support services for students with SEN to transit from schools to adult life.

To facilitate the smooth transition of students with SEN from schools to work, post-school institutions or adult life, a project on extension of years of education has been implementing in special schools. Through the learning activities and an attachment programme of this project, students are able to enhance their independent living skills, social skills, positive work attitude and problem-solving skills.

Under the new senior secondary academic structure, special schools will provide Applied Learning as an elective subject. The curriculum of Applied Learning will emphasise foundation skills, thinking skills, people skills, values and attitudes, and career-related competencies in order to prepare students for further studies and/or for work as well as for life-long learning.

Special schools have all along been working closely with the relevant organizations to facilitate the smooth transition of their students from school to work, post-school institutions or adult life.

- 3(h) The Selective Placement Division (SPD) of the Labour Department and other departments providing supported employment services for PWDs should include students with specific learning difficulties (SpLD students) as their target clients. Support services for SpLD students to seek employment should be provided as soon as possible.**

SpLD has been included as one of the categories of disabilities in the new 2007 Rehabilitation Programme Plan (RPP). Since the launching of the RPP, the Selective Placement Division of Labour Department has expanded its scope of service to cover SpLD students.

- 3(i) The Administration should reinforce professional development programmes on SpLD for teachers/instructors engaged in the various services, including the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme and Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme, to help students with SEN to secure employment.**

For the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme and Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme, the Labour Department will encourage organizations/institutions concerned to arrange their teachers/instructors to receive suitable training or attend briefings by experts on SpLD as appropriate.

- 3(j) The training places in Integrated Vocational Training Centres, sheltered workshops, supported employment and Integrated Vocational Rehabilitation Services Centres should be increased to reduce the waiting time for such services.**

In 2007/08, we have secured new resources of \$19 million for providing 161 additional day care service places and 263 vocational rehabilitation training places. In the coming years, we will continue to seek additional resources for more day care service and vocational rehabilitation training places.

- 3(k) The Administration should strengthen public education on the needs and abilities of SpLD students, and enhance coordination and communication between employers and employees with SpLD in the workplaces.**

To enhance public understanding and awareness of SpLD, the Sub-committee on Public Education on Rehabilitation of the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee has decided to include SpLD as one of its main themes for public education activities in 2008.

- 4(a) The Administration should work out a development blueprint and an implementation timetable for subvented organizations on the formulation of recruitment policies and employment indicators for PWDs. For example, each subvented organization had to reach the target of having 2% disabled employees in three years' time. Subvented organizations failing to achieve the target should shoulder the consequence of reduced subvention.**

To be covered in the Administration's paper to be submitted for the meeting of 28 January 2008.

4(b) The Administration should consider requiring bureaux and departments to procure a specified amount or percentage of their services and supplies from social enterprises by way of restricted tenders.

It is Government's Rehabilitation policy to facilitate the full integration of PWDs into society through participation in gainful and productive employment in the open market. To achieve this policy objective, we consider it more effective to target the employment efforts on the basis of the abilities of PWDs. In contracting out Government services to Rehabilitation NGOs/SEs through restricted tenders with a view to promoting the employment opportunities of PWDs, we should therefore also select appropriate contracts that are suitable for PWDs to take up.

In response to a request made by the Director of Social Welfare in 2002, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) has set aside refreshment/catering outlets in some venues for restricted tendering among a predetermined list of Rehabilitation NGOs drawn up and maintained by the Social Welfare Department (SWD). Currently, LCSD has reserved refreshment/catering outlets in nine venues for this purpose and there are 36 Rehabilitation NGOs on SWD's predetermined list. Following the same procedure, the Home Affairs Department (HAD) and the Education Bureau have also each offered a similar venue for restricted tendering by those 36 Rehabilitation NGOs. Besides, HAD and other Government departments, including the Hong Kong Police Force and the Civil Service Training and Development Institute, have also invited bids exclusively from

Rehabilitation NGOs for some service contracts which are identified as suitable for PWDs, e.g., cleansing, car washing and catering.

SWD will continue to encourage individual bureaux/departments to identify suitable contracts for procurement under the restricted tendering arrangement with a view to providing more job opportunities for PWDs.

- 4(c) The Education Bureau should discuss proactively with school sponsoring bodies to promote the appointment of social enterprises for the provision of supplies and services to schools. A meeting should be conducted for that purpose.**

The Education Bureau had held a meeting with the school sponsoring bodies on 27 September 2007 to bring up the above subject for discussion. At the meeting, the Labour and Welfare Bureau briefed them on the employment of PWDs and social enterprises, and the Education Bureau encouraged them to enhance employment opportunities either through direct employment of PWDs or procurement of services provided by social enterprises to schools under their sponsorship.

- 4(d) Strategies should be formulated and resources increased for the promotion of public education on the abilities and employability of PWDs, and on the development of a caring and inclusive culture in the community.**

To be covered in the Administration's paper to be submitted for the meeting of 28 January 2008.

5(a) Information on the employment situation of students with SEN after leaving special or ordinary schools.

The Education Bureau had provided the information in LC Paper No. CB(2)2665/06-07(01) on 3 September 2007.

5(b) Information on the waiting time for receiving supported employment service and for allocation of a training place in sheltered workshops and rehabilitation services.

The waiting time for sheltered workshops and supported employment are as follows:

Financial Year	Average waiting time (in months)	
	Sheltered Workshop	Supported Employment
2004/05	12.0	2.0
2005/06	14.4	2.7
2006/07	18.0	2.8

For other vocational rehabilitation services, no statistics on average waiting time is available as there is no central waiting system for these services.

5(c) A breakdown of the 3 256 PWDs in the civil service by their disabilities, terms of employment, salary levels and job types.

As at 31.3.2007, the total number of PWDs in the civil service is 3 263. The breakdowns are as below:

(a) Statistics on Civil Servants with Disabilities by Disability Types

Statistics on Civil Servants with Disabilities by Disability Types (as at 31.3.2007)	
Disability group	Number of civil servants with disabilities
Visual impairment	509 (15.60%)
Hearing impairment	281 (8.61%)
Physical handicap	1779 (54.52%)
Mental handicap	20 (0.61%)
With history of mental illness	274 (8.40%)
Visceral disability	387 (11.86%)
Others (e.g. autism, speech impairment)	13 (0.40%)
Total	3263

(b) Statistics on Civil Servants with Disabilities by Salary Levels

Statistics on Civil Servants with Disabilities by Salary Levels (as at 31.3.2007)		
Salary group	Pay scale	Number of civil servants with disabilities
Directorate Pay Scale and Directorate (Legal) Pay Scale	DPS/DLPS	16
Master Pay Scale	MPS 45-49	22
	MPS 34-44	86
	MPS 26-33	203
	MPS 0-25	1555
Police Pay Scale	PPS 48-54	1
	PPS 42-47	1
	PPS 30-41	13
	PPS 1a-29	246
General Disciplined Services Pay Scale	GDS(O)32-38	2
	GDS(O)21-31	21
	GDS(O)12-20	51
	GDS(O)1d-11	0
	GDS(R) 1a-27	276
Model Scale I	MOD 0-13	770
Total		3263

(c) Statistics on Civil Servants with Disabilities by Job Types

Statistics on Civil Servants with Disabilities by Job Types (as at 31.3.2007)	
Type of Job	Number of civil servants with disabilities
Officers performing administrative/executive/managerial functions (e.g. Administrative Officer, Executive Officer, Management Services Officer)	33 (1.01%)
Officers providing clerical/secretarial support/general internal office support (e.g. Assistant Clerical Officer, Clerical Assistant, Personal Secretary, Telephone Operator, Office Assistant, Supplies Attendant)	689 (21.12%)
Officers performing duties requiring professional qualification/expertise in a specific field of work (e.g. Assessor, Engineer, Social Work Officer, Official Languages Officer)	267 (8.18%)
Officers performing duties requiring technical skills (e.g. Artisan, Survey Officer, Technical Officer, Building Supervisor, Darkroom Technician, Field Officer II)	774 (23.72%)
Officers handling manual work (e.g. Workman II, Property Attendant, Ward Attendant)	810 (24.82%)
Officers providing disciplined service and law enforcement duties (e.g. Police Constable, Hawker Control Officer, Instructor)	647 (19.83%)
Officers providing frontline service (e.g. Postal Officer, Social Work Assistant, Welfare Worker)	43 (1.32%)
Total	3263

For the breakdown by terms of employment, according to the information of the Civil Service Bureau, PWDs are only classified into “civil service terms” and “non-civil service terms”, with no further classification of terms of employment available. As at 31.3.2007, all the 3 263 PWDs in the Government are employed on civil service terms.

Labour and Welfare Bureau
Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau
Home Affairs Bureau
Education Bureau
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