

For information on
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Legislative Council Panel on Manpower

Latest Development in the Employment Services of the Labour Department

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the latest development in the employment services of the Labour Department (LD).

Continuing to provide free employment services

2. LD continues to provide a wide range of free employment and recruitment services to job seekers and employers through 13 job centres, two recruitment centres for the catering and retail industries, a Telephone Employment Service Centre and a Job Vacancy Processing Centre. Round-the-clock employment services are also provided through the Interactive Employment Service website (www.jobs.gov.hk), which recorded over 280 million page views in 2014, or an average page view of 0.78 million per day. In 2014, the number of private sector vacancies recorded by LD reached a historic high of 1 220 405. In the first four months of 2015, the number of private sector vacancies recorded was 402 059, up 7.0% over the corresponding period of 2014. In 2014, LD secured 151 536 placements for able-bodied job seekers. In the first four months of 2015, 43 811 able-bodied job seekers were placed, down 5.6% on the same period in 2014.

Organising job fairs

3. To enhance the efficiency of the recruitment process so as to benefit both employers and job seekers, the job centres located in various districts organised 959 district based job fairs last year for employers in their respective districts, attracting 35 083 job seekers to the events. Furthermore, LD will continue to cooperate with employers from various sectors in staging job fairs in 2015, including 18 large-scale job fairs (e.g. two for ethnic minorities (EMs), one for mature job seekers and four for the retail industry).

4. Later this year (in 2015), LD will organise a large-scale job fair featuring employment and vacancy information on the Mainland so as to enhance the understanding of local job seekers and young people on the job opportunities and employment conditions across the boundary. Employers who intend to employ local job seekers to work on the Mainland will be invited to participate in the job fair.

Setting up a new industry-based recruitment centre

5. The two existing industry-based recruitment centres, namely the Recruitment Centre for the Catering Industry and the Recruitment Centre for the Retail Industry, display job vacancies of the relevant industries and also provide free and one-stop on-the-spot recruitment and employment services for employers of these industries and job seekers. In 2014, the two Recruitment Centres organised a total of 491 job fairs, attracting 31 894 job seekers to attend on-the-spot interviews.

6. LD is now preparing for the establishment of the third industry-based recruitment centre - the Construction Industry Recruitment Centre - to assist local construction workers to find jobs and assist employers of the industry to recruit local workers. LD will also explore how to collaborate with the Construction Industry Council (CIC), so that this Centre can create synergy effect in assisting CIC to provide training for job seekers who wish to join the construction industry and workers who intend to change jobs or upgrade their skills. LD's target is to commission the Centre around early 2016.

Strengthening support for job seekers with employment difficulties

7. LD operates a wide range of employment services and programmes to provide customised employment support to job seekers with different needs. It regularly reviews the operation of the services and makes timely adjustments or implements enhanced measures in the light of the prevailing employment market situation so as to help job seekers find work more effectively.

8. To meet the employment needs of mature persons, EMs, young people and persons with disabilities, LD will continue implementing a series of enhancement measures on its employment support services in 2015-16 as described in paragraphs 9 – 18 below.

Enhancing employment support for mature persons

9. In addition to promoting a friendly working environment for mature persons through publicity, LD is implementing a series of measures to enhance employment support for them. These measures include organising employment briefings that serve the needs of mature job seekers to assist them in better understanding the latest situation of the employment market and improving their job search skills; setting up a dedicated webpage for mature persons under the “Interactive Employment Service” website and enhancing the functions of the vacancy search terminals to facilitate their access to employment information and looking for vacancies; and organising experience sharing sessions to encourage employers to hire mature job seekers. LD has also strengthened the liaison and cooperation with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) serving mature persons to promote LD’s employment services and special employment projects through NGOs and sought assistance from NGOs in referring mature persons having employment needs to LD. A large-scale thematic job fair for mature persons is planned for the third quarter of 2015 (as referred to in paragraph 3 above).

10. Furthermore, LD will extend the Employment Programme for the Middle-aged to part-time jobs in the second half of 2015. LD will encourage employers, through the provision of allowances, to provide more suitable part-time employment opportunities to persons aged 40 or above.

Launching pilot employment projects for young people

11. The Youth Employment and Training Programme (YETP) launched by LD provides one-stop pre-employment and on-the-job training for young school leavers aged 15 to 24 with educational attainment at sub-degree or below. In 2014, LD, in collaboration with employers and various organisations, launched six pilot employment projects under YETP, making available about 760 on-the-job training places to enhance the employability of young people and promote their employment. These pilot projects aimed to address the employment needs of specific groups of young people such as those younger and less-experienced young people, sub-degree holders, EMs; or to cater for industries with recruitment needs such as retail, customer service, information technology and banking etc.

12. In 2015, LD continues to launch pilot projects and two such projects have already commenced. One of the projects is the “Hotel Operation Trainee Training Project” whereby LD, in collaboration with six international hotels, offer young people 30 on-the-job training opportunities without requirements of related academic qualification and working experience. LD has also teamed up with three local leading cultural enterprises to launch another pilot project

entitled “Reading Culture” to provide 60 on-the-job training opportunities for young people seeking a career in the culture and publishing industry.

Strengthening employment support for Ethnic Minorities

13. In 2015, LD will organise two large-scale and 11 district based inclusive job fairs on the employment opportunities for EMs. Employers participating in these job fairs are encouraged to employ EMs and are advised to consider the genuine occupational qualifications of the posts when specifying the language requirement and should relax, as far as possible, the language requirement of these vacancies so as to enable more EMs to submit applications. LD, in collaboration with NGOs serving EMs, will continue to arrange interpretation service for EM job seekers at these job fairs.

14. In September 2014, LD piloted an “Employment Services Ambassador Programme for Ethnic Minorities”. Under this pilot programme, 15 EM trainees of the YETP were employed as employment services ambassadors for six months to serve as job seekers at job centres and job fairs while undergoing on-the-job training. The initial response to the pilot project was positive. LD further employed a second batch of 17 EM employment services ambassadors in March 2015.

Enhancing the services for job seekers with disabilities

15. LD continues to provide personalised employment services to persons with disabilities to help them find suitable jobs in the open market. This is mainly done through a dedicated division, which is the Selective Placement Division (SPD) of LD. It plans to enhance the post-placement follow-up service provided for job seekers with disabilities, with effect from September 2015, by extending the follow up service period from three months to six months after each job placement. During the follow-up period, placement officers will keep track of the work progress of employees with disabilities by maintaining close contacts with them so as to help them adapt to their work. Placement officers will also provide more intensive support services for employers to assist them in better understanding the particular needs of their employees with disabilities. Furthermore, placement officers will help both parties build up good working relationship.

16. LD will also produce an Employer Resource Kit for Employing Persons with Disabilities to provide employers with useful information relating to employment of persons with disabilities, including its SPD services, points-to-note in communicating and working with employees with disabilities, and relevant labour legislation etc.

17. On the other hand, LD will also help enhance the employability of persons with disabilities. LD is organising four workshops, from March to July 2015, to help persons with disabilities to better equip for selection interviews of government vacancies. Such job seekers will be given useful information on, among others, preparation for selection tests and interviews, interviewing skills, frequently asked questions in the interviews, points to note and general flow of interviews, etc. The workshops will also include mock interviews to help job seekers with disabilities improve their performance in job interviews.

18. LD will organise a large-scale seminar for persons with disabilities with higher educational qualifications in June 2015 to provide them with useful information on job search tailored to their needs. The seminar will cover topics such as pre-employment training, relevant legislation on equal opportunities, the Continuing Education Fund and strategies of job search, etc. Invitations will be sent to local universities and the Vocational Training Council for inviting their students with disabilities to attend the seminar. Interested students will also be encouraged to register with the SPD for employment services.

Conclusion

19. Hong Kong's hard-working adaptable workforce is one of our most valuable assets and a key contributor to our economic competitiveness. LD will continue to assist job seekers to enter or re-enter the labour market, while also helping employers find suitable employees to drive their businesses. Special emphasis will continue to be placed on those job seekers with special needs. In its endeavours, LD will not only continue to work closely with employers and employees but also with other stakeholders and the community as a whole.

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