

For information on  
15 November 2016

## **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).

#### **Free and comprehensive employment and recruitment services**

##### General employment and recruitment services

2. LD continues to provide a wide range of free employment and recruitment services to job seekers and employers through 13 job centres, three recruitment centres for the catering, retail and construction industries, a Telephone Employment Service Centre and a Job Vacancy Processing Centre. In 2015 and the first three quarters of 2016, 67 221 and 53 912 job seekers registered with LD respectively for the above employment services. Round-the-clock employment services are provided concurrently through the Interactive Employment Service (iES) website ([www.jobs.gov.hk](http://www.jobs.gov.hk)) and its mobile application. The iES website recorded about 250 million page views in 2015 or an average page view of 0.68 million per day while hit counts of its mobile application also exceeded 140 million in the same year. In 2015, the number of private sector vacancies recorded by LD reached a historic high of 1 343 035. In the first three quarters of 2016, the number of private sector vacancies recorded was 1 016 137, up 2.8% over the corresponding period of 2015.

## Job fairs

3. To enhance efficiency of the recruitment process and facilitate placements of job seekers in the vicinity of their residences, in 2015 and the first three quarters of 2016, job centres located across the territory worked closely with employers in their corresponding districts to organise 985 and 724 district based job fairs respectively, attracting 32 151 and 26 938 job seekers to the events. Besides, LD organised 17 and 15 large-scale job fairs in 2015 and the first three quarters of 2016 respectively, offering 40 936 and 27 633 job vacancies and attracting 32 278 and 26 413 job seekers to the events.

4. In 2015, LD staged the first large-scale job fair for middle-aged and mature persons to encourage and assist them to re-join the employment market, and four such job fairs have been held so far. In the same year, LD organised the first large-scale job fair featuring employment and vacancy information on the Mainland to enhance the understanding of local job seekers and young people on the job opportunities and employment conditions across the boundary. So far, five such job fairs have been held. LD will continue to cooperate with employers from various sectors in staging large-scale job fairs of different themes in 2017.

## Construction Industry Recruitment Centre

5. To facilitate employers of the construction industry to recruit workers and local construction workers to find jobs, LD set up the Construction Industry Recruitment Centre (CIRC) in January 2016, with reference to the experience of the two industry-based recruitment centres on catering and retail. CIRC provides venue for employers of the industry to organise job fairs and conduct on-the-spot interviews with job seekers. Located at the Construction Industry Council (CIC) Kowloon Bay Training Centre, CIRC co-organises recruitment events with CIC from time to time, and assists CIC's trainees to find jobs as well as refers job seekers to CIC for training, so as to achieve better synergy of the services between LD and CIC. LD also maintains close contact with industry stakeholders, and widely publicises the services of CIRC to employer associations, trade unions, contractors / subcontractors and job seekers through different channels.

6. In the first three quarters of 2016, there were 13 915 visitors using various facilities and services of CIRC. In the same period, CIRC organised 100 job fairs involving 6 194 vacancies which attracted 3 334 job seekers to attend on-the-spot interviews.

#### Higher Education Employment Information e-Platform

7. To strengthen employment support for persons with higher education, including local job seekers with higher academic, qualifications and Hong Kong students who are educated in overseas tertiary institutes, the second generation of Hong Kong emigrants who are interested in working in Hong Kong, as well as persons from overseas with higher academic / professional qualifications, LD will launch a dedicated employment information e-platform in December 2016. The e-platform, named “Higher Education Employment Information e-Platform”, aims to enhance the users’ understanding of the Hong Kong employment market and facilitate their search and application for suitable job openings through the new webpage.

8. LD will collaborate with relevant bodies including career service centres and student associations of local and overseas universities or colleges, as well as the Government’s Economic and Trade Offices overseas to publicise the services of this e-platform to persons with higher educational attainment overseas.

#### **Support for job seekers with employment difficulties**

9. Dovetailing with the Government’s population policies and poverty alleviation measures, LD operates dedicated employment services and programmes for job seekers with different needs to promote their employment, which will help replenish our local workforce and build an inclusive society. To meet the employment needs of ethnic minorities (EMs), mature persons, young people and persons with disabilities, LD will continue to implement a series of measures to enhance its employment support services as described in paragraphs 10 – 22 below.

## Employment support for EMs

10. LD's job centres have been providing dedicated services for EM job seekers through special counters, resource corners and employment briefings. EM job seekers may also meet employment officers at job centres to obtain personalised employment advisory service. In 2015 and the first three quarters of 2016, 994 and 904 EM job seekers registered for LD's employment services respectively. 1 721 and 1 645 job referrals were arranged for them in the respective periods.

11. LD has also made arrangements with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to provide simultaneous interpretation services for EM job seekers who speak neither Chinese nor English. In 2015 and the first three quarters of 2016, the staff of job/recruitment centres introduced simultaneous interpretation services to 1 467 and 1 942 EM job seekers respectively, and in light of their needs, arranged interpretation services on 15 and 20 occasions.

12. Meanwhile, LD continues to canvass and disseminate information on vacancies suitable for EMs. Key information of all job vacancies is translated and displayed in Chinese and English in the iES website, its mobile application and vacancy search terminals to facilitate EMs to browse vacancy information. In 2015 and the first three quarters of 2016, LD organised four large-scale inclusive job fairs and 20 district based inclusive job fairs to enhance the employment opportunities of EMs.

13. Since September 2014, LD has implemented the Employment Services Ambassador (ESA) Programme for Ethnic Minorities to employ trainees of Youth Employment and Training Programme (YETP) who can communicate in EM languages as ESAs to help EM job seekers make use of various job search facilities and services at job centres, industry-based recruitment centres and job fairs. The programme also enriches the working experience and qualifications of the EM trainees, thereby enhancing their employability in the open market. LD has so far employed 78 ESAs under the programme.

### Employment support for mature persons

14. LD has implemented a series of measures to enhance employment support for mature persons. These measures include organising employment briefings that serve the needs of mature job seekers; setting up a dedicated webpage for mature persons under the iES website; and enhancing the functions of the vacancy search terminals to facilitate their access to employment information and search for suitable vacancies.

15. To encourage employers to engage mature persons, LD regularly organises experience sharing sessions on employment of mature persons and invites representatives of the Hong Kong Federation of Insurers to brief employers on matters relating to the taking out of employees' compensation insurance policies for mature persons. LD also stages large-scale thematic job fairs for middle-aged and mature persons, and district based job fairs on part-time employment to meet the needs of some mature persons who are more interested in taking up part-time jobs. Furthermore, LD's Employment Programme for the Middle-aged<sup>1</sup>, which originally covered only full-time employment, has been extended to cover part-time jobs (i.e. working 18 hours to less than 30 hours per week) since September 2015 with a view to encouraging employers to offer more suitable part-time employment opportunities and on-the-job training for middle-aged and mature job seekers.

### Employment project for young people with acute employment difficulties

16. LD's YETP has been providing one-stop pre-employment and on-the-job training for young school leavers aged 15 to 24 with educational attainment at sub-degree level or below. To cater for the need of young people with acute employment difficulties, YETP was granted a sum of non-recurrent funding to launch a special employment project named Action S5 in 2010 targeting vulnerable youth with low educational attainment, emotional / behavioural problems or learning difficulties. The project offered on-the-job training of 12 months' duration to young people through placements in NGOs. It has offered on-the-job training opportunities to a total of 466

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<sup>1</sup> Employment Programme for the Middle-aged provides on-the-job training allowance of up to \$3,000 per month (for a period of three to six months) for employers to encourage them to engage job seekers aged 40 or above and provide them with on-the-job training.

young people with acute employment difficulties. Both the participating young people and NGOs found that the project had improved the employability of vulnerable youth and was beneficial to their personal and career developments.

17. In view of the above, LD plans to regularise and enhance the project, which will come to an end in November 2016, through the implementation of a new project named Career Kick-start in the second quarter of 2017 in order to strengthen the employment support to young people with special needs. Enhancement measures under the new project will include the extension of the coverage of target group to young people suffering from prolonged unemployment and the provision of placement incentive to host NGOs for assisting engaged youth in securing jobs in open employment market, etc. The new project is expected to provide around 100 young people with on-the-job training opportunities of 12 months' duration each year.

#### Services for job seekers with disabilities

18. LD continues to provide personalised employment services to persons with disabilities to help them find suitable jobs in the open market. In 2015 and 2016, two new measures were launched to enhance the employment support for job seekers with disabilities.

#### *Strengthen post-placement support*

19. With effect from September 2015, LD has enhanced the post-placement follow-up service provided for job seekers with disabilities by extending the follow up service period from three months to six months. During the follow-up period, LD's employment consultants 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 as soon as possible. More intensive support services are provided to employers to assist them to better understand the particular needs of their employees with disabilities. Employment consultants also help both parties build up good working relationship in the process.

20. Of the 1 331 placement cases secured by LD from September 2015 to March 2016, there were 462 cases involving employees with disabilities having been employed in the same post for six months or more, representing an increase of 17% compared with the 396 placement cases of similar nature out of a total of 1 313 cases secured in the corresponding period of the previous year. The figures show that the new measure is able to provide appropriate support for both parties in the employment and help the employees with disabilities sustain their employment in the same post, thereby enabling them to give full play to their strength.

*Provide psychological and emotional counselling services*

21. To further strengthen the employment support provided for job seekers with disabilities, with effect from September 2016, LD has also launched a two-year pilot scheme to engage an NGO to offer professional psychological and emotional counselling service to needy job seekers with disabilities registered with LD. The counselling service is provided by registered social workers of the NGO which has expertise and experience in this respect. The new service aims to alleviate the emotional problems of job seekers with disabilities arising from the state of their disabilities, personal or family matters, so as to help them concentrate on job search and settle down in their new jobs, thereby realising their potential in employment. During the operation of the pilot scheme, LD will continue to provide employment services, including employment counselling, job matching and referrals, and follow-up service upon placement, to job seekers with disabilities.

22. From the launching of the pilot in September 2016 up to the end of October 2016, LD has referred 20 job seekers with disabilities to receive the counselling service. The counselling cases involving three job seekers have been completed. These job seekers considered the counselling service to be effective in helping them deal with their emotional problems, alleviating their stress and pressure as well as enhancing their self-confidence, which would be conducive to their job search and employment. LD will review the pilot scheme upon its completion and map out the way forward in light of the review findings.

## **Conclusion**

23. LD is committed to providing effective and convenient employment support and recruitment services to meet the needs of different job seekers and employers. LD will continue to provide a wide array of dedicated employment services for various groups with special needs to enhance their employability and employment opportunities. Those services will be reviewed from time to time and adjustments or enhancement measures will be carried out in a timely manner.

24. Members are invited to note the contents of this paper and give their advice.

Labour and Welfare Bureau  
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