

For information on  
16 January 2018

## **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).

#### **Comprehensive and free employment and recruitment services**

##### General employment and recruitment services

2. LD provides a wide range of comprehensive and 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 2017, 49 233 job seekers registered with LD for the above employment services<sup>1</sup>. At the same time, the number of private sector vacancies recorded by LD reached a historic high of 1 419 270.

3. LD's Interactive Employment Service (iES) website ([www.jobs.gov.hk](http://www.jobs.gov.hk)) provides job vacancy and employment information to job seekers while employers can submit and publicise job vacancy information through the website. Various dedicated webpages are also set up on the iES website to cater for the needs of different job seekers and employers. Concurrently, job

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<sup>1</sup> Currently, the vast majority of employers using LD's recruitment services readily accept direct applications from job seekers. Job seekers can easily obtain the relevant job vacancy information and employers' contact means through LD's Interactive Employment Service website, its mobile application and vacancy search terminals. In applying for these vacancies, job seekers do not need to register with LD.

seekers can make use of the iES mobile application running on smart phones or mobile devices to search suitable vacancies from the job vacancy database of LD anytime and anywhere. In 2017, LD upgraded the mobile application by which job seekers can regularly receive messages on newly posted job vacancies that match their pre-set job search criteria and updates on LD's employment services after subscribing its new 'Push Notification' function. In 2017, the iES website recorded about 211 million page views, or an average of around 0.58 million per day, while its mobile application registered about 156 million hits.

### Job fairs

4. To enhance efficiency of the recruitment process and facilitate placements of job seekers in the vicinity of their residences, job centres located across the territory worked closely with employers in their corresponding districts to organise 946 district-based job fairs in 2017, attracting 24 112 job seekers to the events. In the same year, the three industry-based recruitment centres organised a total of 641 job fairs, attracting 23 019 job seekers to the events. Moreover, LD organised 18 large-scale job fairs in 2017, offering 38 461 job vacancies and attracting 29 748 job seekers to the events.

5. The above 18 large-scale job fairs held in 2017 included, among others, two inclusive job fairs that were suitable for the ethnic minority (EM) job seekers and three job fairs targeted at middle-aged and elderly job seekers. Besides, LD organised four large-scale job fairs 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. LD will continue to cooperate with employers from various sectors in staging large-scale job fairs of different themes regularly in 2018.

### Higher Education Employment Information e-Platform (HEEIP)

6. To strengthen employment support for job seekers with higher education, including Hong Kong students who are educated in tertiary institutions outside Hong Kong, 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 launched HEEIP in December 2016 to enhance their understanding of the Hong Kong employment market and facilitate them to search and apply for suitable job openings through the e-platform.

7. In collaboration with relevant bodies including career service centres and student associations of local and overseas universities, and Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices overseas and on the Mainland, LD has promoted this dedicated employment information e-platform to graduates of local universities and persons with higher education residing outside Hong Kong. LD has also publicised this e-platform among employers and trade associations on a continuous basis to canvass suitable job vacancies. From its launch in late December 2016 up to December 2017, more than 27 000 job vacancies with an academic requirement of bachelor's degree or above were posted on HEEIP. During the same period, HEEIP recorded about 3.7 million page views, or an average of around 10 000 per day.

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

8. Dovetailing with the Government's population policies and poverty alleviation measures, LD operates dedicated employment services and programmes for job seekers with special needs to promote their employment, which will help replenish our local workforce and build an inclusive society. To meet the employment needs of the EMs, elderly persons, persons with disabilities and young people, LD will continue to implement a series of measures to enhance its employment support services as set out in paragraphs 9 to 21 below.

#### Employment support for EM job seekers

9. LD's job centres have been providing dedicated services for EM job seekers through special counters, resource corners, employment briefings, etc. EM job seekers in need may also meet employment officers to obtain personalised employment advisory service. In 2017, 1 036 EM job seekers

registered for LD's employment services<sup>2</sup>. Among them, 718 were job seekers of South Asian origins.

10. LD has also made arrangements with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to provide interpretation services for EM job seekers who speak neither Chinese nor English. In 2017, the staff of job centres/ industry-based recruitment centres introduced interpretation services to 2 844 EM job seekers, and in light of their needs, arranged interpretation services on 20 occasions.

11. 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 on the iES website, its mobile application and vacancy search terminals<sup>3</sup> to facilitate the EMs to browse vacancy information. In 2017, LD organised two large-scale inclusive job fairs and 12 district-based inclusive job fairs to enhance the employment opportunities of the EMs.

12. To further strengthen employment support for EM job seekers, LD has engaged two employment assistants who are proficient in EM languages at Kowloon West Job Centre in Sham Shui Po and Employment in One-stop in Tin Shui Wai on a pilot basis to provide employment services for EM job seekers since May 2017. Apart from partnering with experienced employment officers in providing personalised employment services for EM job seekers, these employment assistants conversant with EM languages and cultures also help LD proactively reach out to those with employment needs and encourage them to make use of LD's employment services.

13. Moreover, LD will continue to implement the Employment Services Ambassador (ESA) Programme for the EMs to engage trainees of the Youth Employment and Training Programme (YETP) who can communicate in EM

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<sup>2</sup> As stated above, the vast majority of employers currently using LD's recruitment services readily accept direct applications from job seekers. Job seekers can easily obtain the relevant job vacancy information and employers' contact means through LD's Interactive Employment Service website, its mobile application and vacancy search terminals. In applying for these vacancies, job seekers do not need to register with LD.

<sup>3</sup> LD has installed vacancy search terminals in six Support Services Centres/Sub-centres for the EMs funded by the Home Affairs Department.

languages as ESAs in LD's job centres, industry-based recruitment centres and job fairs to undergo six-month on-the-job training. The programme not only can help LD serve EM job seekers more effectively but also enrich the ESAs' own working experience and resume, benefiting their job search in the open market. Launched in September 2014, the programme has so far engaged a total of 110 ESAs.

#### Employment support for elderly job seekers

14. LD has implemented a range of measures to enhance employment support for elderly job seekers. These initiatives include organising employment briefings that serve the needs of elderly job seekers, setting up a dedicated webpage on the iES website, as well as enhancing the functions of the vacancy search terminals and the mobile application to facilitate their access to employment information and search for suitable vacancies. LD will also continue to strengthen its liaison with NGOs serving the elderly and encourage them to refer those with employment needs to LD for employment services.

15. To encourage employers to engage elderly job seekers, job centres organise experience sharing sessions on employment of elderly persons. LD also stages large-scale thematic job fairs for middle-aged and elderly persons. To meet the needs of some elderly persons who are more interested in taking up part-time jobs, district-based job fairs on part-time employment are held in job centres. Furthermore, LD continues to implement the Employment Programme for the Middle-aged (EPM) to encourage employers, through the provision of on-the-job training allowance of up to \$3,000 per month for a period of three to six months, to engage mature job seekers and provide them with on-the-job training. LD has extended the EPM to cover part-time jobs as well.

#### Services for job seekers with disabilities

16. LD provides personalised employment services to job seekers with disabilities to help them find suitable jobs in the open market. LD will strive to enhance employment support for job seekers with disabilities.

*Raising the financial incentive for employers under the Work Orientation and*

### *Placement Scheme (WOPS)*

17. LD implements WOPS to encourage employers to engage job seekers with disabilities and provide them with coaching and support through the provision of an allowance. As a further encouragement to employers in offering employment to job seekers with disabilities having employment difficulty and assisting them to settle in their new jobs, WOPS will be enhanced by extending its work adaptation period from two months to three months, during which employers will be granted an allowance of up to \$5,500 per month. Thereafter, employers may continue to draw an allowance of up to \$4,000 per month for a maximum of six months. With this enhancement, for each job seeker with disabilities having employment difficulty employed under WOPS, the maximum amount of allowance payable to employers will be increased by \$5,500 to \$40,500, and the period within which the allowance is payable will be extended from eight months to nine months. LD plans to implement this new measure in the third quarter of 2018.

### *Implementing the Pilot Scheme on counselling services for job seekers with disabilities*

18. To further strengthen the employment support provided for job seekers with disabilities, LD launched a two-year pilot scheme in September 2016 to engage a non-governmental welfare organisation to provide in-depth psychological and emotional counselling service to needy job seekers. The scheme serves to alleviate emotional problems of job seekers with disabilities arising from the state of their disabilities or their personal or family matters, so as to help them concentrate on job search and settle in their new jobs promptly, thereby realising their potentials in employment.

19. From the launch of the pilot scheme in September 2016 to December 2017, LD has referred 88 job seekers with disabilities to receive the counselling service, of whom 53 job seekers concluded their cases, and the remaining 35 cases were in progress. For the concluded cases, the concerned job seekers considered that the counselling service could effectively help them deal with emotional distress, relieve their pressure and enhance their self-confidence which was beneficial to their job search. LD will review the pilot scheme, including factors such as feedback from job seekers with disabilities who have

received the counselling service and the usefulness of the counselling service in alleviating their emotional problems, with a view to assessing its effectiveness. LD will map out the way forward in light of the review findings.

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

20. LD's YETP has all along 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 strengthen the employment support to young people with acute employment difficulties, LD regularised and enhanced the time-limited employment project "Action S5" by implementing a new project named "Career Kick-start" in the second quarter of 2017 to offer on-the-job training of 12 months' duration to these young people with special needs through placements in NGOs. Enhancement measures under the new project include the extension of the coverage of target group<sup>4</sup> to young people suffering from prolonged unemployment and the provision of placement incentive to host NGOs for assisting engaged youths in securing jobs in open employment market. A total of 72 youths enrolled in Phase One of the project and commenced their on-the-job training during April to May 2017 in batches.

21. In addition, to encourage young people to join the YETP, LD increased the allowance for pre-employment training courses (from \$50 to \$70 per day) and workplace attachment training (from \$3,000 to \$4,500) in September 2017.

### **Conclusion**

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

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<sup>4</sup> The service target of "Career Kick-start" includes those vulnerable youths with low educational attainment, emotional/ behavioural problems or learning difficulties as well as young people suffering from prolonged unemployment.

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

Labour and Welfare Bureau  
Labour Department  
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