

立法會 *Legislative Council*

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Panel on Home Affairs

Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat for the meeting on 26 November 2018

Participation in sports by people with disabilities

Purpose

This paper summarizes past discussions of the Panel on Home Affairs ("the Panel") on issues relating to the participation in sports by people with disabilities ("PWDs").

Background

2. The Chief Executive announced in the 2015 Policy Address that the Government would commission a consultancy study on how to support disabled athletes and promote sports participation by PWDs in a more comprehensive manner. In May 2015, the Government commissioned the Hong Kong Baptist University to conduct the Consultancy Study on Sport for People with Disabilities in Hong Kong ("the Consultancy Study"). According to the Administration, the Consultancy Study aimed to investigate the current level of sports participation by PWDs in Hong Kong; their needs in relation to sports participation; current levels of support provided by relevant sports and other organizations to PWDs (including athletes); and support provided by comparable places in developing opportunities for PWDs.

3. The final report of the Consultancy Study ("Consultancy Report") was submitted to the Government in August 2016. A summary of the consultant's recommendations is in **Appendix I**. Between 5 August and 4 November 2016, the Home Affairs Bureau conducted a public consultation exercise on the Consultancy Report to solicit public views on how to support athletes with disabilities ("AWDs") and promote sports participation by PWDs in a more comprehensive manner.

Deliberations of the Panel

4. The Administration briefed the Panel on the Consultancy Study at the meeting on 11 November 2016. Provision of support for AWDs was also considered by the Panel during discussion of the sports policy and sports development programmes at various meetings. The major views and concerns expressed by members are set out in the ensuing paragraphs.

Promoting sports participation by people with disabilities

5. Members in general shared the view that to promote sports participation by PWDs, it was most important to provide a barrier-free environment (such as the provision of access for wheelchair users) and provide barrier-free transportation (such as a barrier-free public transport system and the Rehabus service) so that PWDs could gain access freely to sports venues and use the facilities therein. Members requested the Administration to provide more electric wheelchairs and Rehabuses for use by PWDs to facilitate their participation in sport/leisure time and physical activities. Members considered that the Leisure and Cultural Services Department ("LCSD") should develop a dedicated webpage to provide a one-stop platform on information about ancillary facilities for PWDs available at various venues as well as relevant sports activities and training programmes. The Administration agreed to actively take forward the development of the suggested dedicated webpage.

6. The Administration advised that LCSD-managed sports venues built after 2008 were provided with barrier-free access. The Administration undertook to make sustained efforts in upgrading the barrier-free access to and supporting equipment for its public sports facilities. Members requested the Administration to publish a list of the existing barrier-free sports facilities as well as those pending enhancement and the timeframe of the necessary improvement works.

7. Some members suggested that the Administration should increase subsidies for special schools and disability organizations to offer sports and recreational activities for participation by PWDs. The Administration advised that a variety of sports activities and training programmes designed for PWDs were offered by LCSD, special schools and disability sports organizations. The major disability sports associations in Hong Kong currently had a total of about 5 000 to 6 000 registered members. LCSD also partnered with disability organizations to organize community recreation and sports programmes. According to the Consultancy Study, about 60% of the PWDs interviewed were regular participants of sport/leisure time and physical activities. The Administration further advised that there had been a steady increase in the financial resources allocated in supporting the sports development for PWDs

over the past few years, and in the 2016-2017 financial year, about \$30 million were allocated in this area. Some members, however, considered that as the number of PWDs in Hong Kong was estimated to be about 670 000, it was far from adequate that the estimated financial support to relevant disability sports organizations in 2016-2017 was only about \$30 million. The Administration advised that in considering the recommendations of the Consultancy Study, the Administration would consider the relevant manpower requirements and financial resources implications.

8. Some members expressed concern about the difficulties encountered by PWDs in enrolling in LCSD's recreation and sports programmes. They urged LCSD to make special arrangements to facilitate the participation by PWDs, such as giving priority for PWDs to enrol in some programmes. They also expressed support for the recommendation in the Consultancy Report that LCSD should launch a pilot scheme in some of its venues for special schools and disability sports organizations to make priority bookings for non-peak slots.

Support for athletes with disabilities

9. While members in general expressed support for the recommendation in the Consultancy Report of establishing a full-time athlete system for AWDs, some members considered that there was currently insufficient support for encouraging high-performance AWDs to be full-time athletes. They urged the Government to enhance support for AWDs in various areas including financial subsidies, career support and retirement security, and there should be a more transparent mechanism for selecting AWDs to participate in major competitions. They also considered that more resources should be allocated to promote the participation in sports by PWDs in order to lay a better foundation for the long-term development of elite sports for AWDs.

10. The Administration advised that it would consider the recommendation of establishing a full-time athlete system for AWDs. At present, the Hong Kong Sports Institute ("HKSI") adopted an integrated approach in training and providing support to both disabled and non-disabled athletes. Upon completion of its redevelopment project, HKSI had featured new sports facilities and more space for providing better training environment and equipment, as well as support in sports science and sports medicine, to elite athletes, including AWDs. HKSI also supported the elite training of the Hong Kong Paralympic Committee & Sports Association for the Physically Disabled ("HKPC&SAPD") and the Hong Kong Sports Association for Persons with Intellectual Disability ("HKSAPID") by financing the hiring of coaches, participating in local and overseas training and competitions, procuring of equipment, etc. Furthermore, AWDs were eligible to apply for financial support under the Hong Kong Athletes Fund to study degree or other courses, and HKPC&SAPD also offered

career development programmes for AWDs.

11. In response to members' concerns about training opportunities for AWDs with sporting potential and raising their standard at international competitions, the Administration advised that under the Feeder System Scheme, national sports associations ("NSAs") were provided with financial support for talent identification, training for regional and junior squads, and participation in overseas training and competitions. In the 2015-2016 financial year, LCSD allocated \$16.3 million to 52 NSAs (including HKPC&SAPD and HKSAPID) to implement their feeder programmes.

Disparity in financial subsidies

12. Members raised concern about the disparity in the financial subsidies provided to able-bodied elite athletes and disabled elite athletes. Some members considered that there should not be a discrepancy between the financial subsidies for elite AWDs (i.e. about \$8,000 a month) and those for able-bodied elite athletes (i.e. about \$30,000 a month). There was a view that the Administration should accord the same treatment to disabled and non-disabled elite athletes, so that disabled elite athletes might participate in sports on a full-time basis.

13. The Administration advised that the disparity in the levels of financial subsidies for able-bodied and disabled elite athletes was due to historical reasons and the development of two different systems of financial subsidies. The amount of financial subsidies for able-bodied athletes was set based on factors including the competitiveness of the sports concerned and the number of training hours required.

14. The Administration further advised that under its Hong Kong Paralympians Fund, the Social Welfare Department provided grants to relevant sports associations for hiring coaches and enhancing technical support for target sports programmes with the aim of assisting AWDs. The Fund also provided subsistence allowance to AWDs to participate in training and purchase individual supplies, and provided an employment facilitating grant to assist retired AWDs in their job attachment and vocational training.

Latest development

15. The Administration will brief the Panel on the implementation progress of the promotional measures relating to the participation in sports by PWDs, including a pilot scheme to provide full-time training to AWDs and funding

support to elite sports for the disabled, at the next meeting on 26 November 2018.

Relevant papers

16. A list of the relevant papers on the Legislative Council website is in **Appendix II**.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
20 November 2018

For discussion
on 11 November 2016

Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs

Consultancy Study on Sport for People with Disabilities in Hong Kong

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Consultant's recommendations

9. According to views of stakeholders collected in interviews and findings of the study, the consultant, based on the four major aspects in relation to sports development for PWDs in Hong Kong, put forward recommendations (paragraphs 168 to 187 of the report) as summarised below:

Promoting Sports Participation by PWDs

- (a) The LCSD should launch a pilot scheme in some of its venues for relevant organisations to make priority bookings for non-peak slots;
- (b) the LCSD should further upgrade the barrier-free access to and supporting equipment for its public sports facilities;
- (c) the LCSD should develop a dedicated webpage on its website to provide a one-stop platform on information about ancillary facilities for PWDs available at various venues as well as relevant sports activities and training programmes;
- (d) the Government should promote co-operation between schools and groups of PWDs by encouraging schools to open their sports facilities;
- (e) the LCSD should strengthen the on-the-job training so that venue management staff could understand the needs of people with different types of disability in participating in sports activities;

- (f) the LCSD should strengthen the liaison with special schools and relevant national sports associations (NSAs), and continue to enhance the content of the School Sports Programme implemented in special schools;
- (g) the HAB should work with the Social Welfare Department (SWD) and relevant organisations to consider organising sports activities under the guidance of eligible coaches in a workshop-based or centre-based approach;
- (h) the LCSD should continue to enhance the provision of activities for PWDs in the Hong Kong Games and the Sport for All Day;
- (i) more organisers of sports competitions should be encouraged to provide opportunities for PWDs to participate;
- (j) the HAB and the SWD should consider enhancing further the co-ordination in the development of sports for the disabled and the funding support to disabled athletes;
- (k) the HAB should strengthen the liaison with the Labour and Welfare Bureau to facilitate the participation in full by PWDs in various activities, including sports activities, in the community;

Enhancing support to high-performance AWDs

- (l) a study on the establishment of a corresponding system for disability sports should be conducted with reference to the existing assessment criteria under the Elite Vite Support System and the performance of able-bodied and disabled athletes in high-level competitions;
- (m) a study on the establishment of a full-time athlete system for AWDs (for example, requiring full-time AWDs to, under the arrangements of their coaches, receive training not less than 5 days and 20 hours per week, including training related to sports science) should be conducted;
- (n) the HKPC&SAPD and relevant NSAs should consider developing programmes similar to the “Hong Kong Athletes Career and Education Programme” under the Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China (SF&OC);

Structure and Mode of Co-operation of Sports Organisations for PWDs

- (o) the HKPC&SAPD should consider whether it is necessary to update its structure in the light of the types of disabilities (i.e. physical disabilities, sports for the blind and persons with intellectual disability) included by the International Paralympic Committee. This can also allay the concerns of some PWDs and groups over the dual roles of the HKPC&SAPD;
- (p) relevant organisations should share their experiences and explore opportunities for co-operation in the light of the strategies of their respective international associations;

Capacity Building

- (q) ways should be examined to strengthen the awareness of PWDs' needs among coaches and tutors at various levels, providing, among other things, opportunities for trainees during an internship to participate in disability sports;
- (r) seminars targeted at parents, friends, volunteers and caregivers of PWDs should be held to enhance their understanding of the importance of sports on the health and overall development of PWDs; and
- (s) the idea of absorbing parents, friends, volunteers and caregivers of PWDs to be tutors of some basic programmes should be considered.

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**Relevant papers on
Participation in sports by people with disabilities**

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Home Affairs	14.1.2011 (Item V)	Agenda Minutes
	14.12.2012 (Item VII)	Agenda Minutes
Legislative Council	19.3.2014	Official Records of Proceedings – Members' motions dealt with on 21.3.2014 (Pages 40-137)
Panel on Home Affairs	10.4.2015 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes
	12.6.2015 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes
Legislative Council	2.12.2015	Official Records of Proceedings – Written answers to questions (Pages 84-89)
Panel on Home Affairs	24.3.2016 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes
	11.11.2016 (Item VII)	Agenda Minutes