

For information on
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Legislative Council Panel on Manpower

Promoting good human resource management culture and family-friendly employment practices

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the progress of work of the Labour Department (LD) in promoting good human resource management (GHRM) culture and family-friendly employment practices (FFEPs).

Background

2. GHRM is the cornerstone of harmonious labour relations and a crucial human resource strategy in attracting and retaining talents. In addition to employment terms and benefits, good employment measures adopted by employers can help employees balance their work and family/personal life, build a motivated and efficient work team and thereby enhance the productivity and competitiveness of enterprises.

3. LD proactively promotes “employee-oriented” GHRM. Apart from disseminating information on the Employment Ordinance (Cap. 57) (EO) and GHRM to employers and employees, LD also encourages employers to adopt progressive and practicable GHRM policy and FFEPs that are suitable for enterprises, having regard to their individual circumstances such as business characteristics and scale of enterprises as well as the needs of their employees.

Promotion of GHRM and FFEPs

4. The coverage of GHRM is extensive. While the operating

conditions are diverse among industries and enterprises, the family situations and preferences of individual employees also vary. LD actively promotes GHRM culture and practices and encourages direct communication between employers and employees to jointly contemplate and adopt the most suitable FFEPs through various channels and at different levels. In order to assist employees in meeting responsibilities and needs during their different stages of life, employers are also encouraged to put in place appropriate and flexible work arrangements and support, which would serve the best interests of both the establishments and their staff.

Publicity to the public

5. LD promotes rights and benefits under EO as well as GHRM practices to members of the public through a wide range of publicity activities. In addition to organising seminars on EO regularly to introduce labour legislation and GHRM practices, LD has been producing and distributing publications of related themes and different types of promotional items, staging roving exhibitions throughout the territory, placing advertisements at public transport network, broadcasting television and radio Announcements in the Public Interest, and disseminating messages through LD's internet homepage, etc. Between December 2017 and January 2018, LD published a series of news supplement on "Effective Workplace Communication" to encourage employers and employees to set up appropriate communication mode and mechanism and call upon more employers to adopt various GHRM practices. The series of interviews were consolidated into a special publication for extensive distribution. Moreover, to deliver the information to the public in a lively and vivid way, LD has produced comics and animation videos on messages related to EO and GHRM practices. The videos have been broadcasted through offices of LD and uploaded to LD's internet homepage.

Promulgating the adoption of "employee-oriented" GHRM in enterprises and industries

6. LD continuously passes on the latest information of labour legislation and "employee-oriented" good employment measures through

meetings and sharing sessions with members of the 18 Human Resources Managers' Clubs (HRMCs)¹ of various trades and industries. Enterprises are encouraged to adopt these measures in various areas of human resource management including recruitment, training, staff communication, etc. For example, LD staged a series of thematic seminars on "Effective employer-employee communication to achieve win-win outcome" in September 2017 to promote communication and constructive interaction among employers, employees or their organisations. As regards the seminars held in 2018, a number of topics on GHRM practices were covered, such as establishing positive image to attract and retain talents, ways to unleash potential in the workplace and effective workplace communication, etc.

7. At the industry level, LD has been closely cooperating with nine industry-based Tripartite Committees (TCs)² to discuss and share views with employers' associations and trade unions on the effective means to implement various types of GHRM practices and FFEPs. In September 2017, for example, LD promulgated the "Good Human Resource Management Practices of the Property Management Industry" booklet in collaboration with TC on Property Management Industry. The booklet set out various good employment practices in different aspects with practical examples to encourage adoption by employers in the industry. To foster the formulation of GHRM policy from recruitment and in consultation with TC on Catering Industry, LD revamped the publication on "Good Human Resource Management of the Catering Industry – A Guide to Recruitment and Using Written Employment Contract" in 2018 by introducing guidelines for good recruitment procedures and case studies.

¹ A total of 18 HRMCs have been formed in various industries and trades including banking, building service, catering, construction, electronics, garment, logistics, manufacturing, retail, services, trading, community & social services organisations, education institutes, health care & personal services, hotel & tourism, information technology, property management and security services as well as one set up for small and medium enterprises. HRMCs have more than 2 000 member organisations.

² To promote tripartite dialogue and cooperation at the industry level, nine industry-based TCs, with members representing employers, employees and the Government, have been set up in the catering, construction, theatre, logistics, property management, printing, hotel and tourism, cement and concrete, and retail industries. These committees provide useful forums for members to discuss industry-specific issues of common concern.

Good Employer Charter

8. In order to further forge a consensus in the community and advocate the wider adoption of “employee-oriented” GHRM and FFEPs, LD launched the first Good Employer Charter (the Charter) in December 2017. The Charter aimed to encourage employers of different trades and scale (including small and medium enterprises (SMEs)) to adopt employee-oriented and progressive GHRM. The theme of the inaugural Charter embraced four major areas, namely (i) introducing employee-caring employment practices; (ii) promoting work-family/work-life balance of employees; (iii) providing employment benefits more favourable than statutory requirements; and (iv) maintaining good communication with employees, thereby fostering harmonious labour relations and mutual trust. Organisations accredited by the Panel of Judges would be awarded the Certificate of the Charter and be authorised to use the Charter logo for a period of two years.

9. The Charter had the support of major employers’ associations and SMEs organisations which joined hands with the Government in promoting GHRM culture and FFEPs. It provided employers with a clear framework for implementing their strategies and practices under the four major areas of GHRM with regard to their own business nature and scale. A variety of organisations enrolled to participate in the Charter, including private organisations and public bodies from different industries, professional bodies, trade unions, social enterprises and education institutes, etc.

10. To signify the launch of the Charter and to enhance its publicity, a kick-off ceremony cum seminar was held in December 2017. During the event, two members of the Panel of Judges shared in the seminar with participants from various industries and organisations on “people-oriented and progressive” GHRM practices and probed into the qualities of a “good employer” from different perspectives. In the Charter Ceremony held in September 2018, over 360 representatives from a variety of organisations participated, sharing and conducting exchanges on the exemplary examples of the employer signatories.

11. More than 540 employer organisations from various sectors and of different size have joined the inaugural Charter as signatories. Over 90% of the signatories are private establishments and, among them, more than half are SMEs. In addition, quite a number of signatories belong to the property management and retail industries, indicating that the implementation of GHRM has been gaining popularity and wide recognition across different industries and scale of operation. Among the various GHRM practices adopted by the signatories, not a few are creative and employee-caring measures. Examples include: providing food allowance to encourage employees who are the ethnic minorities to share their hometown dishes with colleagues, hereby enhancing cultural integration in the workplace; allowing the staff to bring children to work in case of need and providing resting area, thus alleviating their pressure in child minding; granting special leaves on top of statutory requirements to meet employees' family needs, such as birthday leave, family-friendly leave, study leave, urgent family leave, etc.; inviting family members of new staff to join dinner with the management for their better understanding of company culture through sharing and exchanges, thereby enhancing employees' sense of belonging and mutual communication, etc. It is envisaged that with more employers enrolling in the Charter to build up cooperative and mutual-trusting work conditions with employees, harmonious relations in the workplace would be strengthened. To enhance the public understanding of GHRM practices and facilitate employers in drawing reference from each other, LD produced an experience sharing video of signatories for showing at the Charter Ceremony and uploading to the thematic homepage of the Charter. LD also worked with the newspaper media for publishing a series of supplements on the Charter from February to September 2019 for showcasing the successful examples of various signatories, so as to further the community's understanding and inspire more enterprises to adopt GHRM practices.

Family-Friendly Employers Award Scheme

12. The Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) and the Family Council are committed to fostering a pro-family culture and environment in partnership with various sectors in the society. Since 2011, HAB and the Family Council have launched the biennial "Family-Friendly Employers Award

Scheme” (the Award Scheme) to give recognition to and encourage more employers to implement diversified FFEPs. There were two new awards, namely the “Family-Friendly Employers – Grand Award” and “Outstanding Family-Friendly Employment Practices”, added to the fourth Award Scheme held in 2017-18. The number of entrants for the Award Scheme also reached a record high of more than 3 500 participating companies, organisations and government bureaux and departments. After assessment, a total of 3 264 awardees were commended. The award presentation ceremony was held on 8 December 2018. The 2019-20 fifth Award Scheme will be launched in the fourth quarter of 2019. As in the past, LD helps promote the Award Scheme to employers through its network and encourages their participation.

Conclusion

13. Recognition and concerted efforts by employers, employees and the community are crucial to the success of fostering GHRM culture and implementing FFEPs. LD will continue to promote GHRM culture and FFEPs at various levels through a diverse range of promotional activities with a view to achieving a win-win outcome for both employers and employees.

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