

For discussion on
23 June 2025

Legislative Council Panel on Manpower

Latest developments in the employment services of the Labour Department

Purpose

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

Diversified employment and recruitment services

2. LD provides diversified employment services and implements various employment programmes to offer appropriate employment support to job seekers. Through job centres across the territory, three recruitment centres for the catering, retail and construction industries, the Telephone Employment Service Centre, the Job Vacancy Processing Centre, the Interactive Employment Service (iES) website and mobile application, LD provides diversified and free employment and recruitment services to job seekers and employers. In 2024 and from January to May 2025, 49 350 and 24 719 job seekers respectively registered with LD for employment services. During the same periods, LD recorded 815 890 and 229 304 private sector vacancies, as well as 121 543 and 46 673 placements respectively.

3. In addition, LD organises various types of job fairs to provide job seekers and employers with effective and convenient employment and recruitment services. In 2024, LD staged 18 large-scale job fairs, offered nearly 33 000 job vacancies and attracted over 32 000 visitors. From January to May 2025, LD held four such job fairs, providing around 7 000 job vacancies and attracted over 6 000 visitors.

4. LD's iES website (www.jobs.gov.hk) and mobile application leverage information technology to enhance the efficiency of matching job seekers with job vacancies. The website and mobile application provide round-the-clock online employment services and employment information to facilitate job seekers in conducting job vacancy search and submitting job applications online; and notify them of the latest job vacancies and information on job fairs according to their pre-set criteria. Meanwhile, employers can identify suitable job seekers on the website for LD to notify the selected candidates to apply for the job vacancies. In 2024, the iES website recorded 429 million page views (an average of 1.17 million per day), whereas the mobile

application recorded 251 million hits.

Enhancing employment support for young people

5. The Chief Executive announced in the 2024 Policy Address measures to strengthen employment services and support for young people. Since January 2025, LD has enhanced the Greater Bay Area (GBA) Youth Employment Scheme and the Youth Employment and Training Programme (YETP) to provide young people with diversified pre-employment and on-the-job training, along with career guidance services, to support and promote youth employment.

GBA Youth Employment Scheme

6. LD implements the GBA Youth Employment Scheme to encourage enterprises with business in both Hong Kong and the GBA Mainland cities to employ Hong Kong young people in accordance with Hong Kong laws to work in the GBA Mainland cities, so as to foster their career development and the exchange of talents in the GBA. In 2023 and 2024, the Scheme recorded a total of over 1 100 employed young people.

7. Since 2025, enhancement measures introduced under the Scheme include relaxing the eligibility requirements for joining the Scheme to include young people aged 29 or below with sub-degree or higher qualifications, increasing the limit of allowance for employers to \$12,000 per month per young person as well as introducing the Arrangements for Mainland Youth to Work in Hong Kong to allow enterprises taking on Hong Kong young people under the Scheme to apply for the same number of Mainland young people to work in Hong Kong. As at May, the 2025 Scheme recorded 195 employed young people, including 11 sub-degree holders. This represented an increase of 178.6% over the same period last year.

Youth Employment and Training Programme

8. LD implements YETP to provide free and dedicated training and career development services to young people with educational attainment at sub-degree level or below. Service providers commissioned under YETP provide trainees with 12-month career development services. YETP also provides services including pre-employment training courses, one-month workplace attachment training and on-the-job training for six to 12 months.

9. Since January 2025, LD has relaxed the enrolment age of young people under YETP from 15 - 24 to 15 - 29. With effect from June 2025, LD also raised the workplace attachment training allowance for YETP trainees to

\$8,000 to further encourage young people to acquire work experience and explore employment opportunities.

10. In addition, LD launched the GBA Work Experience Attachment Programme (WEP) in June 2025. WEP provides YETP trainees aged 18 to 29 with one-month workplace attachment opportunities in the GBA Mainland cities, during which WEP provides trainees with free accommodation as well as training and attachment allowance, enabling them to experience the local work culture and understand the development opportunities in the GBA. The first class of 22 trainees commenced one-month workplace attachment in Guangdong Province on 14 June. In the programme year 2024/25¹ (as at May 2025), the number of trainees enrolled in YETP was 2 702, which represented an increase of 49.8% compared with the same period last year.

Youth Employment Start

11. LD sets up two youth employment resource centres, namely Youth Employment Start (Y.E.S.), located in Langham Place, Mong Kok and Metroplaza, Kwai Fong respectively, to provide one-stop integrated support services on employment and self-employment. All young people aged 15 to 29, irrespective of academic qualification, can enjoy the services of Y.E.S., including career assessment, professional consultation, value-added training, work attitude cultivation, job-hunting skills enhancement, self-employment support services, and provision of latest job market information, etc. In 2024 and from January to May 2025, 63 535 and 27 161 young people were served respectively.

Unleashing the potential labour force

12. Through providing employment support, promoting training and retraining, strengthening child care services and promoting family-friendly and elderly-friendly employment practices, etc., the Government has been nurturing local workforce and encouraging more people including women and older persons to enter the labour market, so as to unleash the labour force.

13. LD launched the three-year Re-employment Allowance Pilot Scheme (REA Scheme) on 15 July 2024 to encourage persons aged 40 or above who have not been in paid work for three consecutive months or more to join the employment market. The REA Scheme covers full-time jobs, part-time²

¹ Programme year 2024/25 runs from September 2024 to August 2025.

² “Part-time” refers to employed under a continuous contract and works for less than 30 hours per week.

jobs, and qualified “casual work”³ to cater for the needs of the elderly and middle-aged persons for flexible employment. Participants may use various channels, including LD’s employment services, to look for jobs. Each eligible participant who has worked full-time for six months continuously will be provided with a re-employment allowance (REA) of \$10,000, while those who have worked full-time for 12 months continuously will be given an additional allowance of \$10,000. Half-rate REA will be given to those who have worked part-time. During the implementation period of the Scheme, each eligible participant can receive a maximum REA of \$20,000.

14. LD has set up a dedicated webpage for the REA Scheme on the iES website, facilitating members of the public to register online for the Scheme. The dedicated webpage features links to other relevant websites, including day child care services⁴ of the Social Welfare Department’s website and employee retraining courses⁵, etc., facilitating members of the public to browse relevant information and obtain services. LD has also been encouraging employers, having regard to business situation, to offer employment benefits that are more favourable than statutory requirements, such as better maternity protection⁶, with a view to attracting more women and other people to work.

15. The response of the REA Scheme is very favourable. As at May 2025, over 43 000 participants and nearly 21 000 placements were recorded, far exceeding the original target of benefiting 6 000 employed persons during the three-year implementation period. Of which, about 23% of participants and 24% of placements are persons aged 60 or above, while 58% of participants and 60% of placements are females.

16. In tandem with the REA Scheme, LD implements the Employment Programme for the Elderly and Middle-aged (EPEM) to encourage employers

³ Qualified “Casual Work” refers to employed under a continuous contract and at least 76 aggregate working hours for every 30 consecutive days.

⁴ The Government subsidises non-government organisations to provide a variety of day child care services, including Child Care Centre services, After School Care Programme for Pre-primary Children, After School Care Programme for Primary School Student and the Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project, to assist parents who cannot take care of their young children.

⁵ Employees Retraining Board provides around 700 market-oriented training courses straddling across 28 industries and generic skills for eligible persons including women and older persons to encourage the potential workforce to enter the labour market.

⁶ Maternity protection stipulated by the Employment Ordinance includes 14 weeks of maternity leave, entitlement to sickness allowance for prenatal care and postnatal treatment, employment protection and prohibition of assignment of heavy, hazardous or harmful work to pregnant employees, etc.

to hire persons aged 40 or above and provide them with on-the-job training (OJT). Employers engaging each job seeker aged 60 or above who has left the workforce can receive a maximum OJT allowance of \$5,000 per month for six to 12 months, while engaging each unemployed job seeker aged 40 to 59 is entitled to a maximum OJT allowance of \$4,000 per month for three to six months. EPEM covers all industries, as well as full-time and part-time jobs. LD welcomes employers taking on participants of the REA Scheme to join the EPEM to provide OJT.

17. To meet the target on unleashing Silver Productivity put forth by the Government's Working Group on Promoting Silver Economy, LD will stage about 60 large-scale or district-based thematic job fairs suitable for the elderly and middle-aged people in 2025, doubling the number in 2024. LD will also step up the promotion of elderly-friendly employment measures and conduct a mid-term review on the REA Scheme in the first quarter of 2026, along with EPEM, to explore further measures to encourage the employment of people aged 60 or above.

On-going employment programmes

Racial Diversity Employment Programme

18. To strengthen the employment support for ethnic minority (EM) job seekers, LD implements the Racial Diversity Employment Programme (RDEP), commissioning non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to provide one-stop employment services for EM job seekers through a case management approach. The NGOs assign registered social workers to provide EM participants with services comprising employment needs assessment, pre-employment counselling, employment assistance, job matching and case review, etc. Meanwhile, RDEP also strengthens liaison with other government departments that provide outreaching services, proactively reaching out and encouraging EMs with employment needs to participate in RDEP, and organising vocational language workshops for the participants, etc. In 2024 and from January to May 2025, RDEP rendered services to 475 and 311 EM job seekers respectively.

Work Orientation and Placement Scheme

19. The Selective Placement Division of LD provides job seekers with disabilities who are fit for open employment with personalised employment services, including employment counselling, job matching and referral, and post-placement follow-up services. LD also implements the Work Orientation and Placement Scheme (WOPS) to encourage employers to engage persons with disabilities who are fit for open employment. Eligible

employers will be granted an allowance at a maximum of \$60,000 for engaging each job seeker with disabilities who is encountering employment difficulties during the nine-month subsidy period. In 2024 and from January to May 2025, WOPS recorded 1 134 and 463 placements respectively.

Concluding remarks

20. Members are invited to note the content of this paper and give views.

Labour and Welfare Bureau
Labour Department
June 2025