

Chapter 5

Employment Services



The Programme of Employment Services

www.labour.gov.hk/eng/service/content.htm

- 5.1** The objective of the Employment Services Programme is to provide a comprehensive range of free and efficient employment assistance and counselling services to help job seekers find suitable jobs and employers fill their vacancies. We achieve this by:
- providing user-friendly employment services to employers and job seekers;
 - offering intensive employment-related assistance and personalised service to vulnerable groups of unemployed people;
 - assisting young people to enhance their employability and advising them on careers choice;
 - regulating local employment agencies;
 - safeguarding the interests of local employees employed by employers outside Hong Kong to work in other territories; and
 - ensuring that employment opportunities for local workers are not adversely affected by abuse of the labour importation scheme.
- 5.2** The principal legislation administered by this programme area includes the Employment Agency Regulations made under the Employment Ordinance (EO) and the Contracts for Employment Outside Hong Kong Ordinance.
- 5.3** The Employment Agency Regulations, together with Part XII of the EO, regulate the operation of employment agencies in Hong Kong through a licensing system, inspection, investigation and prosecution.
- 5.4** The Contracts for Employment Outside Hong Kong Ordinance safeguards the interests of local manual workers and those non-manual employees with monthly wages not exceeding \$20,000 who are recruited by employers outside Hong Kong to work in other territories through the attestation of employment contracts for these jobs.



Our Work and Achievements in 2012

Employment Situation in Hong Kong

- 5.5** The department recorded a total of 1 144 424 vacancies offered by employers of the private sector for free recruitment service in 2012, an increase of 27.1 per cent when compared with 900 564 in 2011. For updated statistics on the labour force, unemployment rate and underemployment rate, please visit the webpage: www.censtatd.gov.hk/hong_kong_statistics/statistical_tables/index.jsp?charsetID=1&subjectID=2&tableID=006
- 5.6** The economy of Hong Kong remained stable and the local employment market was buoyant in 2012 with the unemployment rate staying at the low level of 3.3%. In the year, a total of 145 017 placements were secured. ([Figures 5.1](#) and [5.2](#))



A Wider Service Choice

Services offered at Job Centres

- 5.7** Job seekers can select suitable vacancies and seek referral service at all job centres, including the "Employment in One-stop (EOS)". Modern facilities such as digital display system, touchscreen vacancy search terminals, fax machines, toll-free telephones, computers connected to the Internet and a resource corner are available.

Telephone Employment Service

- 5.8** Job seekers registered at the Labour Department may call our Telephone Employment Service Centre on 2969 0888 for job referral service. Through conference calls, staff of the Centre can make arrangement for job seekers to talk to employers direct.

On-line Employment Service

- 5.9** Our Interactive Employment Service (iES) website (www.jobs.gov.hk) provides round-the-clock on-line employment service and comprehensive employment information. The iES is one of the most popular government websites, recording over 0.37 billion page views in 2012. It hosts a number of dedicated webpages for specific clientele.

5.10 In the year, we launched the iES smartphone application. Job seekers can use this application with their mobile devices to look for suitable vacancies in the job vacancy database of the Labour Department anytime and anywhere.

Central Processing of Job Vacancies

5.11 Employers who need to recruit staff can send their vacancy information to our Job Vacancy Processing Centre by fax (2566 3331) or through the Internet (www.jobs.gov.hk). The vacancy information will be disseminated through a network of 12 job centres (including EOS), two recruitment centres for the catering and retail industries, the Telephone Employment Service Centre, the Interactive Employment Service (iES) website and vacancy search terminals located in various sites throughout the territory after vetting.

Special Recruitment and Promotional Activities

5.12 We organise a variety of activities to promote our employment services and appeal for vacancies from employers. Job fairs are held to facilitate job seekers and employers to meet and communicate direct. To assist job seekers living in remote areas in securing employment, we held large-scale job fairs in Tuen Mun, Tung Chung and Sheung Shui in 2012. Moreover, to respond more promptly to the recruitment needs of employers and provide a more user-friendly service to job seekers of different districts, we held district-based job fairs at job centres to assist employers to recruit local staff and to enable job seekers to participate in job interviews without having to travel long distance. In the year, 17 large-scale job fairs and 455 district-based job fairs were held, attracting over 60 000 job seekers.



The Hong Kong International Airport Job Expo 2012 co-hosted with the Airport Authority Hong Kong in August

5.13 To further strengthen the dissemination of local vacancy information and to promote Labour Department's employment services, we organise "Job Info Days" and other district-based employment promotional activities at various districts. In the year, we organised 13 such events which attracted about 9 500 visitors.



Job Info Day held at Choi Ming Shopping Centre, Tseung Kwan O in June 2012



Intensified Services for the Needy

Middle-aged Job Seekers

5.14 The Employment Programme for the Middle-aged was launched to assist the unemployed aged 40 or above to secure employment. Employers who engage an eligible middle-aged job seeker in a full-time permanent job and offer him/her on-the-job training will receive a training allowance of \$2,000 per month, for three to a maximum of six months. In 2012, a total of 2 500 placements were secured through the programme.

Work Trial Scheme

5.15 The Work Trial Scheme was launched to enhance the employability of job seekers who have special difficulties in finding jobs. There is no age limit for applicants. During the one-month work-trial without employer-employee relationship, participants take up jobs offered by participating organisations. On satisfactory completion of the one-month work trial, the Labour Department will pay each participant an allowance of \$5,500, while the participating organisation will contribute an additional allowance of \$500. In 2012, a total of 461 job seekers were placed into work trials.

Pilot Employment Navigator Programme (ENP)

5.16 To encourage the unemployed to land on and sustain employment, we launched a two-year Pilot ENP in December 2010 to provide the unemployed with in-depth and personalised employment consultation. A cash incentive of up to \$5,000 will be paid to each unemployed who successfully secures and stays in employment after receiving the employment consultation service under the programme. In 2012, 3 672 job seekers have enrolled in ENP.

Work Incentive Transport Subsidy (WITS) Scheme

5.17 Since October 2011, the territory-wide WITS Scheme has been open for application with a view to relieving the burden of work-related travelling expenses on low-income earners so as to promote sustained employment. Applicants may apply for WITS for the previous six to 12 months in each application, with the monthly subsidy of \$600 (or \$300 at half-rate). The income and asset limits of the scheme were raised from the claim month of March 2012. As at year end, a total of 37 585 applicants received subsidies totalling \$232 million. A mid-term review of the scheme was also completed during the year. Enhancement measures will be implemented from the claim months of 2013, including the option of individual-based applications as an alternative to household-based applications as well as further increases in the income and asset limits. We will continue to promote the scheme through a variety of publicity activities.

New Arrivals and Ethnic Minorities

5.18 We provide through our job centres a comprehensive range of employment services to new arrivals and ethnic minority job seekers. These include employment counselling, job referral, tailor-made employment briefing and employment information.

Workers affected by Large-scale Retrenchment

5.19 In major business closure or redundancy cases, the Labour Department sets up hotlines for enquiry and special counters at job centres to provide special employment services to affected employees. We canvass suitable vacancies from employers to facilitate job search of the affected employees. In addition, under the department's iES website, we set up a dedicated webpage to display vacancies offered by employers interested in recruiting job seekers who lost their jobs in recent closure or redundancy exercises. In 2012, we offered special employment services to 1 403 affected employees.

Job Seekers with Disabilities

5.20 The Selective Placement Division (SPD) offers employment assistance to job seekers with disabilities looking for open employment. Placement officers will provide personalised employment services, including employment counseling, job matching and referral and post placement follow-up services. In 2012, the SPD registered 2 686 job seekers with disabilities and secured 2 512 placements. ([Figure 5.3](#))

Work Orientation and Placement Scheme (WOPS)

5.21 The WOPS was launched to facilitate open employment of persons with disabilities by encouraging employers to offer job vacancies to persons with disabilities through the provision of an allowance. Eligible employers participating in the scheme receive an allowance from the Labour Department, equal to two-thirds of the actual salary paid to the employee with disabilities (subject to a ceiling of \$4,000 per month) for up to a maximum of six months. The scheme also provides pre-employment training to persons with disabilities with a view to enhancing their employability. In 2012, 551 placements were secured through the scheme.

Self Help Integrated Placement Service (SHIPS)

5.22 The SHIPS aims at improving the job-searching skills of job seekers with disabilities and encouraging them to be more proactive in search for jobs, thereby enhancing their employment opportunities. In 2012, 397 job seekers with disabilities participated in the programme.

Interactive Selective Placement Service (iSPS) Website

5.23 The iSPS Website (www.jobs.gov.hk/isps) provides employment services for job seekers with disabilities and employers through the Internet. The website enables persons with disabilities to register with the SPD, browse job vacancy information and perform preliminary job-matching. It also enables employers to place vacancy orders, identify suitable job seekers with disabilities to fill their vacancies and request the SPD to refer candidates to them for selection interview. The website facilitates employers to browse information on the work capacity of persons with disabilities more readily. At the same time, it helps persons with disabilities to access to various on-line employment services and other related support services.

Promotional Activities

5.24 To enhance public understanding of the working abilities of persons with disabilities as well as to publicise the services of SPD and WOPS, the division conducted a series of promotional activities, such as exhibitions, production of publications and advertisements, broadcast of promotional videos, etc during the year. In addition, a large-scale seminar was held for employers and human resources practitioners. Visits were paid and publicity materials were sent to employers of different trades with a view to canvassing job vacancies for persons with disabilities.



Services for Young People

Youth Pre-employment Training Programme and Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme (YPTP&YWETS)

5.25 To enhance the employability of young people, the Labour Department administers the YPTP&YWETS, a “through-train” programme providing seamless and comprehensive youth training and employment support to young school leavers aged 15 to 24 with educational attainment at sub-degree level or below.

5.26 Trainees can enrol on a year-round basis and are entitled to a full range of coordinated and customised training and employment support services, including pre-employment training, one-month workplace attachment training, on-the-job training of six to 12 months, reimbursement of off-the-job course and examination fees up to \$4,000 per trainee, as well as case management services rendered by registered social workers. Participating employers are entitled to a monthly training subsidy of \$2,000 per trainee during the period of on-the-job training.

5.27 In the 2011/12 programme year running from September 2011 to August 2012, some 4 700 young people attended pre-employment training and around 3 300 trainees were placed into training vacancies under YPTP&YWETS. In addition, some 500 trainees found employment in the open market with the assistance of case managers.

5.28 YPTP&YWETS also closely collaborates with training bodies to launch well-received special employment projects for industries and individual establishments. These projects include “tailor-made employment projects” and “tailor-made training-cum-employment projects”. The former refers to projects co-organised with establishments offering large number of on-the-job training vacancies while the latter provides pre-employment job skills training custom-made for a particular establishment which is immediately followed by on-the-job training. In the 2011/12 programme year, 54 special employment projects were run for employers in the retail, catering, tourism, education, construction and engineering, business services and transport industries.

5.29 In August, we co-organised the Award Ceremony of Most Improved Trainees of YPTP&YWETS cum Concert with Radio 2 of Radio Television Hong Kong. The event named “Solar Project 2012 – Dream Journey with YPTP&YWETS” showcased the creditable improvements of trainees after joining the programme and commended the caring efforts of training bodies and employers. Trainees’ striving experience for improvement constituted the best encouragement to their peers. It was also a sterling testimony to the achievements of trainees, training bodies, employers and the Government in nurturing the development of the younger generation.



A “LIKE” given by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin Chung (4th from left, back row), and Commissioner for Labour, Mr Cheuk Wing Hing (5th from left, back row), together with the 10 Most Improved Trainees of YPTP&YWETS 2012

Programme for Youths with Acute Employment Difficulties

5.30 To strengthen the employment support for vulnerable youths, the Labour Department in July 2010 launched a special employment project, "Action S5", targeting young people aged 15 to 24 with acute employment difficulties. Under this project, non-governmental organisations are commissioned to nominate vulnerable youths and provide on-the-job training opportunities to them for 12 months. Through intensive and customised training and employment support, the project aims at nurturing the work knowledge and skills of participants for their personal and career development. There were 109 and 144 trainees enrolled in the first and second phases of the project respectively. The Labour Department launched the third phase in August 2012. A total of 83 enrolled trainees started on-the-job training in November.

Youth Employment Support

5.31 The Labour Department operates two youth employment resource centres named Youth Employment Start (Y.E.S.). The two centres provide personalised advisory and support services on employment and self-employment to young people aged between 15 and 29 to facilitate them to map out their career path, enhance their employability and support them to pursue self-employment. Services provided include career assessment, career guidance, professional counselling, value-adding training, self-employment support as well as up-to-date labour market information. In 2012, the two centres provided services to 73 758 young people.

Regulating Local Employment Agencies and Employment Outside Hong Kong

5.32 We monitor the operation of employment agencies through licensing, inspection and investigation of complaints. In 2012, we issued 2 346 employment agency licences and revoked two. As at year-end, there were 2 388 licensed employment agencies in Hong Kong. A total of 1 328 inspections were made to employment agencies in the year.

5.33 We regulate employment outside the territory to safeguard the interests of local employees engaged by employers outside Hong Kong to work in other territories by attesting all employment contracts entered into in Hong Kong involving manual employees and non-manual employees with monthly wages not exceeding \$20,000.



Regulating Labour Importation

Supplementary Labour Scheme

- 5.34** To cater for the genuine needs of employers, the department administers the Supplementary Labour Scheme that allows the entry of imported workers to take up jobs at technician level or below which cannot be filled locally. The scheme operates on the principles of ensuring the priority of local workers in employment while allowing employers with proven local recruitment difficulties to import labour.
- 5.35** We provide active job matching and referral services for local job seekers to ensure their employment priority. Vacancies under the scheme are widely publicised. Local workers can attend tailor-made retraining courses, if appropriate, to better equip themselves to fill the vacancies. Applications from employers who have set restrictive and unreasonable job requirements or who have no sincerity in employing local workers will be rejected.
- 5.36** As at the end of 2012, there were 2 415 imported workers working in Hong Kong under the Supplementary Labour Scheme.

Policy on Foreign Domestic Helpers (FDHs)

- 5.37** FDHs have been admitted to work in Hong Kong since the 1970's. Apart from enjoying the same statutory rights and benefits as all employees in Hong Kong, FDHs are further protected by a written Standard Employment Contract. The Standard Employment Contract prescribes that the employer has to provide to the FDH free accommodation with reasonable privacy, free food (or food allowance in lieu), free passage to and from the FDH's place of origin and free medical treatment, etc. Furthermore, the Government has since the 1970s prescribed a Minimum Allowable Wage for FDHs as an additional safeguard against exploitation. The Government attaches great importance to safeguarding their statutory and contractual rights. Claims of breach of statutory rights are promptly investigated and prosecution action will be taken out if there is sufficient evidence. In the year, the department widely publicised the rights and benefits of FDHs by, for instance, staging four information kiosks for FDHs at places they frequently gather in different months. The event attracted over 24 000 visitors. The department also maintains close liaison with consulates of the FDH-exporting countries, non-governmental organisations serving FDHs and FDH employer groups to suitably address issues relating to importation of FDHs.
- 5.38** As at the end of 2012, there were 312 395 FDHs in Hong Kong, an increase of 4.1 per cent compared with 299 961 in 2011. About 50 per cent of the FDHs in Hong Kong were from the Philippines and 48 per cent from Indonesia.