

Labour Department launches enhancement measures to promote employment of elderly and middle-aged people, young people and persons with disabilities

The Labour Department (LD) today (September 1) launched new measures to enhance its employment programmes with the aim of strengthening employment support for elderly and middle-aged people, young people and persons with disabilities.

On a pilot basis, the LD is providing a retention allowance to the elderly aged 60 or above, young people and persons with disabilities who have participated in the Employment Programme for the Elderly and Middle-aged (EPEM), the Youth Employment and Training Programme (YETP) and the Work Orientation and Placement Scheme (WOPS) to encourage them to undergo and complete on-the-job training (OJT), thereby stabilising employment.

The pilot scheme will run for three years during which these employees will be offered a retention allowance of \$3,000 if they have stayed in full-time posts for three months. Thereafter, they will receive an additional allowance of \$1,000 for completion of each subsequent month until the end of the six to 12-month OJT period. For part-time posts, the respective amounts payable will be halved. Subject to the length of the OJT period, the maximum amount of the retention allowance an eligible employee may receive under the pilot scheme is \$12,000.

In addition, the ceiling of the OJT allowance payable to employers for engaging a job seeker under the above three employment programmes is also increased in tandem, with a view to further encouraging employers to hire elderly and middle-aged people, young people and persons with disabilities. Details are as follows:

(1) The maximum amount of the OJT allowance payable to employers engaging job seekers aged 60 or above who are unemployed or have left the workforce and providing them with OJT under the EPEM is increased from \$4,000 to \$5,000 per month for a period of six to 12 months. The maximum amount of the OJT allowance for engaging unemployed job seekers aged 40 to 59 is increased from \$3,000 to \$4,000 per month for a period of three to six months;

(2) The maximum amount of the OJT allowance payable to employers under the YETP is increased from \$4,000 to \$5,000 per month for a period of six to 12 months; and

(3) The maximum amount of the OJT allowance payable to employers under the WOPS is raised from \$7,000 to \$8,000 per month during the three-month work adaptation period and from \$5,000 to \$6,000 per month for the following six months.

Through the provision of the OJT allowance to employers, the EPEM encourages employers to take on mature unemployed job seekers aged 40 or above and offer them OJT, which can facilitate their adaptation to the new working environment and acquisition of essential job-specific skills, thereby stabilising their employment. The YETP provides comprehensive training and employment support to young school leavers aged 15 to 24 with educational attainment at sub-degree level or below to enhance their employability. The WOPS aims to encourage employers, through the provision of financial incentives, to hire persons with disabilities and provide them with coaching and support, so as to enhance their employability and career prospects.

Details of the above employment programmes are available at the Interactive Employment Service's website (www.jobs.gov.hk), the YETP's website (www.yes.labour.gov.hk), and the Interactive Selective Placement Service's website (www.jobs.gov.hk/isps). Members of the public can also call the EPEM's hotline at 2150 6398, the YETP's hotline at 2112 9932, or the Selective Placement Division at 2852 4801 for more information.