

SWD to accept Support Programme for Employees with Disabilities applications all year round

The Support Programme for Employees with Disabilities (SPED) administered by the Social Welfare Department (SWD) will be open for applications all year round from tomorrow (February 11).

To support the employment of persons with disabilities, the SWD launched SPED in June 2013 to provide employers of persons with disabilities with a one-off subsidy for each employee with disabilities for procurement of assistive devices and/or workplace modifications. The programme seeks to facilitate employees with disabilities in discharging their duties in the workplace and enhancing their work efficiency.

The subsidy is capped at a maximum support level of \$20,000 for each employee with disabilities. Starting from 2014-15, a grant of up to \$40,000 may be considered for deserving cases for which the price of a single item of assistive device and its essential accessories exceeds \$20,000.

A wide range of assistive devices and workplace modifications which cater to the special needs of employees with disabilities at the workplace will be considered. Examples include computer accessories or adaptive equipment, optical magnifying devices, hearing and assistive devices, Braille products and handrails.

The Po Leung Kuk has been commissioned to serve as the SPED Administrator. It will assist in administering and promoting SPED, provide advisory services and follow up on the progress of the subsidised programmes, prepare assessments on the applications and make recommendations to the Committee on the SPED set up by the SWD for consideration.

Employers may apply for a subsidy under the SPED through nomination of the following referring organisations:

1. non-governmental organisations (NGOs) operating SWD-subvented vocational rehabilitation services;
2. NGOs running training courses for persons with disabilities or persons recovering from work injuries with the funding support of the Employees Retraining Board;
3. the Selective Placement Division of the Labour Department;
4. the Vocational Training Council; or
5. the SPED Administrator (Po Leung Kuk).

Employers may submit their completed application forms together with the required documents by mail or by hand to the SWD through the referring organisations. No application fee is required and each applicant may submit

more than one application.

For enquiries, please contact Po Leung Kuk SPED Office by phone at 3980 9677, by email at sped@poleungkuk.org.hk or by fax at 3980 9633.

For more details, the information note and the SPED application form, people may visit and download from the SWD homepage www.swd.gov.hk/en/index/site_pubsvc/page_rehab/sub_listofserv/id_vocational/id_sped.