

Support Programme for Employees with Disabilities accepts applications all year round

To support the employment of persons with disabilities, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) launched the Support Programme for Employees with Disabilities (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 aims to assist employees with disabilities in discharging their duties in the workplace and enhance their work efficiency. The SPED has been open for applications all year round since February 2019.

A wide range of assistive devices and workplace modifications which cater for the special needs of employees with disabilities at the workplace may be considered for support. 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 assists in administering and promoting the SPED, provides advisory services and follows up on the progress of the subsidised programmes. It also prepares assessments on the applications and makes recommendations to the Committee on the SPED set up by the SWD for consideration.

With a view to enhancing the support for employees with disabilities and their employers, a comprehensive review of the SPED has been conducted by the SWD. The maximum support level for the SPED has been raised from \$20,000 to \$40,000 with effect from March 2020. A more flexible approach is adopted in processing the applications to facilitate the matching of the needs of the employees with disabilities.

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

Members of the public may visit the SWD website at www.swd.gov.hk/en/index/site_pubsvc/page_rehab/sub_listofserv/id_vocational/id_sped/ for the latest updates and download the information note and SPED application form.