

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**HAB320**

**(Question Serial No. 5673)**

Head: (95) Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (1) Recreation and Sports

Controlling Officer: Director of Leisure and Cultural Services (Vincent LIU)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Home Affairs

Question:

1. Regarding the recreation and sports activities organised for persons with disabilities (PWDs) by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) in the past 5 years, please provide information on the number of places, the types of activities, the number of places offered to non-government organisations (NGOs) and individuals respectively, and the number of individuals rejected due to insufficient places.
2. According to some PWDs, enrolment for the activities is restricted to designated locations at specific hours that are inconvenient to them. For instance, the locations are not readily accessible by wheelchair users and the hours specified are too early in the day. Does the Government regularly listen to the views of PWDs and make improvements accordingly (such as by allowing online enrolment)?
3. Regarding the ratio set on places offered to NGOs and individuals in recreation and sports activities organised for PWDs, what are the Government's reasons for setting such a ratio and will it review the ratio as appropriate? With subsidies from the Social Welfare Department (SWD) or other government departments, NGOs should be able to organise some of the activities with their own manpower and resources. If a large ratio of the places in LCSD activities goes to NGOs, will it lead to a duplication of resources and inhibit the participation of individual PWDs?
4. Please provide the figures on the participation of PWDs in general recreation and sports activities in the past 5 years, and give information on the modes of assistance offered by the LCSD and an overview in this regard. What strategy does the Government have for promoting and facilitating the participation of PWDs in general recreation and sports activities?
5. What are the LCSD's existing policies on staff training, staff and resource considerations, and provision of barrier-free facilities and ancillary equipment for facilitating PWDs' participation in recreation and sports activities?

6. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recognises the right of PWDs to take part in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport. What is the Government's overall policy for promoting community participation of PWDs on an equal basis with others?

Asked by: Hon CHEUNG Chiu-hung, Fernando (LegCo internal reference no.: 926)

Reply:

1. The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) organises a wide range of recreation and sports programmes for people of all ages and different abilities. As the programmes are open to the public, persons with disabilities (PWDs) may choose to participate according to their respective interest, level of ability and the programme requirements. Apart from these programmes, the LCSD also organises programmes specifically for PWDs. They include floor hockey, bocce, swimming, aerobic dance, fitness exercise, hydro-fitness, social dance, tai chi, badminton, table tennis, gateball, golf, camping, excursions and outreaching activities. Regarding the programmes for PWDs in the past 5 years, the LCSD offered around 74 000 places on average every year. The LCSD does not have a breakdown on the number of places offered to non-government organisations and individual PWDs. The LCSD does not have record on the number of individuals rejected due to insufficient places.
2. To further encourage sports participation by PWDs, the LCSD launched online enrolment service in 2019 so that PWDs can enrol in recreation and sports programmes specifically designed for them anytime and anywhere. With the launch of online enrolment, PWDs can enrol in recreation and sports programmes through various channels including the internet, self-service kiosks and booking counters at the LCSD's District Leisure Services Offices and leisure venues with Leisure Link Services.
3. To enhance the relevance of programmes for PWDs, the LCSD currently partners with disability organisations to organise community recreation and sports programmes. Members of these partner organisations are allowed up to 80% of the programme quota, while individual PWDs may subscribe to the remainder (i.e. at least 20%) on a first-come-first-served basis. The LCSD monitors the enrolment response regularly and makes adjustment for individual programmes when necessary. The arrangement has been working smoothly.
- 4.&6. The LCSD is committed to promoting "Sport for All" and organising diversified recreation and sports programmes for people of all ages and different abilities including PWDs. The LCSD does not have separate record on the number of PWDs participating in the recreation and sports programmes organised for all members of the public. To encourage the participation of PWDs in sports and help them develop the habit of regular exercise, the LCSD offers concessionary rates to PWDs and their minders for hiring LCSD recreation and sports facilities or enrolment in its fee-charging programmes.

To promote sports participation by PWDs, the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) has developed a work plan in collaboration with stakeholders based on the report of the "Consultancy Study on Sport for People with Disabilities in Hong Kong" completed in 2016 and comments received from the public consultation. Various measures

have been implemented by phases in accordance with the work plan. Some of the key measures include:

- With the assistance of the Hong Kong Sports Institute, the HAB introduced a full-time athlete system and implemented a Pilot Scheme for Elite Vote Support System (EVSS) for Disability Sports (the Pilot Scheme) in December 2017 to enhance financial support for elite athletes with disabilities (AWDs) and elite disability sports. Having reviewed the effectiveness of the Pilot Scheme, the HAB regularised the EVSS for disability sports in April 2019. As at February 2020, there were 59 elite AWDs benefiting from the Scheme, including 38 full-time athletes;
- In collaboration with relevant disability “national sports associations” (NSAs), the HAB has launched recreation and sports outreach programmes for PWDs in subvented workshops or centres to facilitate their participation in sports training programmes in their workshops or centres so as to increase their level of physical activeness and sports participation; and introduced coaching programmes to cater for the needs of PWDs in sports participation and the sustainable development of various disability sports. We will also assist the Hong Kong Paralympic Committee & Sports Association for the Physically Disabled in its re-organisation with a view to establishing the Hong Kong Paralympic Committee into an independent body;
- The LCSD has launched a scheme for priority booking to allow organisations of PWDs to make priority bookings of facilities in 6 designated sports centres for non-peak slots to organise sports activities suitable for PWDs. The 6 designated sports centres include Chai Wan Sports Centre, Shun Lee Tsuen Sports Centre, Yuen Chau Kok Sports Centre, Yuen Long Sports Centre, Tsing Yi Southwest Sports Centre and Ap Lei Chau Sports Centre. Various improvement measures on venue facilities have been carried out in the above sports centres, with ancillary facilities suitable for PWDs enhanced. For example, an induction loop system is installed at the booking and check-in counters; bigger lockers are provided at the changing rooms for storing personal items such as crutches; lockers with tactile-braille number plates are provided, etc.;
- The LCSD has launched a dedicated webpage on recreation and sports offering a one-stop information platform for PWDs and included a dedicated column in the monthly “Community Recreation and Sports Programme” booklet listing out all activities which are suitable for PWDs in 18 districts;
- The LCSD has introduced cross-district and online enrolment arrangements for PWDs to facilitate their enrolment in recreation and sports activities to be held in all 18 districts; and
- The LCSD has organised about 70 additional activities especially for PWDs and launched a series of sports training programmes for PWDs on a pilot basis to provide them with more opportunities for sports participation.

Apart from the above, the Social Welfare Department provides funding support under the Hong Kong Paralympians Fund to support athletes with disabilities and promote disability sports by (i) grants to sports organisations for hiring coaches and enhancing technical support for target sports programmes; (ii) subsistence allowance to AWDs to encourage their participation and meet their expenses for participation in training and sports, as well as purchase of individual sports goods, etc.; and (iii) employment facilitating grant to assist retired AWDs in their job attachment in sports-related fields (e.g. training to be an assistant coach), other suitable employment or vocational training before or after their retirement.

5. The LCSD provides on-the-job training for its staff to enhance their understanding of PWDs in organising related sports activities, and employs qualified instructors for training courses designed for PWDs. To ensure that consistent services are provided, the LCSD has issued guidelines on the organisation of recreation and sports activities for PWDs. The guidelines set out in detail on the planning, implementation and arrangement of the activities jointly organised with disabled organisations, and serve as a reference for staff involved in the implementation of activities. Besides, barrier-free access and suitable ancillary facilities for PWDs are provided at LCSD leisure venues. All LCSD leisure venues built after 2008 are in compliance with the requirements of the prevailing design manual. As for leisure venues built before 2008, the LCSD has arranged improvement works in the form of renovation or alterations insofar as the geographical environment, architectural conditions and technologies permit.

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