

Existing and Planned Measures on the Promotion of Racial Equality

Social Welfare Department

All Hong Kong residents in need, irrespective of their nationality or race, enjoy equal access to social welfare services as long as they fulfil the eligibility criteria.

Measures taken / to be taken by the Social Welfare Department (SWD) to promote racial equality and the provision of equal access to social welfare services for people of different races are set out below.

A. Measures which enable people of different races to have equal access to relevant welfare services

Services Concerned

- SWD puts in place measures which enable people of different races to have equal access to relevant social welfare services, and protect the personal data of people of different races who use social welfare services.

Existing Measures

Reference to statistics and information on people of different races

- In planning and implementing welfare services, SWD has made reference to the statistics and information on ethnic minorities available from various sources including the Census and Statistics Department, other government departments and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and has started to collect statistical figures on the use of interpretation and translation services of various units since January 2019 to better understand the social needs of people of different races.

Service leaflets in languages of different races

- Key service leaflets are available in Chinese, English and eight other languages¹. They are placed in service units and / or uploaded onto SWD's Homepage to facilitate easy access and reference.

¹ The eight other languages videlicet Bahasa Indonesia, Hindi, Nepali, Punjabi, Tagalog, Thai, Urdu and Vietnamese.

SWD's Homepage

- SWD has created a shortcut icon on “Information for people of different races” on SWD’s Homepage to facilitate easy access to relevant service information in languages of different races by people of different races, the public, staff of SWD and NGOs.

Interpretation service

- SWD will arrange interpretation service as appropriate when providing social welfare services for people of different races. Staff may make use of interpretation service for ethnic minorities from various sources, such as court interpretation service, interpretation service provided by the Hospital Authority, the Centre for Harmony and Enhancement of Ethnic Minority Residents (CHEER) under the Hong Kong Christian Service which provides interpretation services with the funding of the Home Affairs Department and other NGOs, etc.

Web-cam facilities

- SWD has installed web-cam facilities in ten service units for conducting tripartite video conferencing among service users, social workers (including departmental units and the Integrated Family Service Centres / Integrated Services Centres operated by NGOs) / social security staff and interpreters when needed.

Access to instant telephone interpretation service for callers of different races making enquiry to SWD Hotline

- SWD Hotline <2343 2255> has provided callers of different races to have instant access to telephone interpretation service in eight common languages of different races so as to facilitate their welfare service enquiry.

Points-to-note in providing welfare services for ethnic minorities

- SWD has issued “Points-to-note in providing welfare services for ethnic minorities” (Points-to-note) to social workers / social security staff of departmental units, social workers of Integrated Family Service Centres / Integrated Services Centres and young people services operated by

NGOs so as to provide reference for service units in serving groups of different races. It includes cultural practices of various groups of different races and ways to arrange suitable interpretation and translation services, etc. SWD has also given the service units an abridged version of Point-to-note, protocols and English scripts in handling drop-in / telephone enquiries from people of different races for reference of staff manning the counter and intake worker.

Notice on “Assistance and Interpretation Services for Ethnic Minorities”

- In order to enhance people of different races’ knowledge of their channels for obtaining welfare assistance as well as telephone interpretation services, SWD service units have posted up at reception areas a notice on “Assistance and Interpretation Services for Ethnic Minorities”, which is translated into languages of different races.
- Also, people of different races would be given a copy of the said notice when they turn up for enquiries / services. The information is also available on SWD’s Homepage.

Non-discriminatory entry policy on access to social welfare services

- Service units of SWD, subvented service units operated by NGOs and contract service operators shall comply with the requirements of the relevant service agreements and contracts to ensure that service users have clear and accurate information about how to enter and leave the service, and that the entry policy should be non-discriminatory.

Protection of personal data

- The Personal Information Collection Statement is available in Chinese, English and eight other languages², so that people of different races may better understand the purpose for which SWD staff collect their personal data when they ask for services / assistance, as well as their right to access and correct their personal data under the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance.

Services specially designed to address needs of people of different races

- Outreaching Team for Ethnic Minorities proactively reach out to people of different races and connect those in need with mainstream welfare services.
- Community education programmes to raise people of different races' awareness on domestic violence and sexual violence and to encourage those victims to seek help.
- Provision of subsidy for special child care centres and early education and training centres admitting pre-school ethnic minority children with special needs to provide enhanced support for children to facilitate their training, communication with their parents / carers and / or provision of social support for the families.
- Setting up specialised ethnic minorities units in five Parents / Relatives Resource Centres located in districts with more population of different races (viz. Central and Western, Kwun Tong, Yau Tsim Mong, Kwai Tsing and Yuen Long) to provide tailored services to people of different races with disabilities and their family members and carers in the district as well as nearby districts, so as to encourage their use of community services to meet their needs and to promote social inclusion

² The eight other languages videlicet Bahasa Indonesia, Hindi, Nepali, Punjabi, Tagalog, Thai, Urdu and Vietnamese.

Assessment of Future Work

Service leaflets in languages of different races

- SWD will continue to collect feedback on the service leaflets from staff and service users regularly.

SWD's Homepage

- SWD will continue to collect feedback on SWD's Homepage from staff and service users regularly.

Non-discriminatory entry policy on access to social welfare services

- Service units of SWD, subvented service units operated by NGOs and contract service operators will continue to monitor their compliance with the non-discriminatory entry policy as mentioned above through ongoing assessment.

Indicator(s) for promoting racial equality

- SWD will continue to promote racial equality and one of the means is by regularly monitoring the achievement rate(s) for the established indicator(s) and reviewing the effectiveness.

Additional Measures To be Taken

- SWD will continue to –
 - translate more service leaflets to cover key welfare services and upload them onto SWD's Homepage as appropriate;
 - update service information and leaflets in languages of different races as and when necessary; and
 - produce new service leaflets in languages of different races and upload them onto SWD's Homepage as and when necessary.

Services specially designed to address needs of people of different races

- SWD will continue to provide services to specifically addressing the needs of people of different races, for example, Pilot Scheme on EM District Ambassador.

B. Training for staff of SWD, NGOs and contract service units

Services Concerned

- To enhance SWD / NGOs / contract service units' staff awareness, understanding and sensitivity insofar as racial equality is concerned.

Existing Measures

- SWD will continue to –
 - arrange training on Race Discrimination Ordinance (RDO) and related guidelines for staff of SWD;
 - upload relevant guidelines onto SWD's Intranet for SWD staff's reference and the training materials onto the e-Learning Centre for SWD staff and NGOs' easy access;
 - conduct training programmes for staff of SWD, NGOs and contract service units to enhance their knowledge and sensitivity on the culture, lifestyle and service needs of people of different races; and
 - encourage staff of SWD to attend training courses on RDO and related guidelines, racial sensitivity and cultural diversity organised by the Civil Service Training and Development Institute, Equal Opportunities Commission or relevant bodies.

Assessment of Future Work

- SWD will continue to –
 - collect and analyse data on the number of related training activities conducted annually, and the number as well as grade / rank of the participants;
 - collect feedback from the participants on the training activities conducted; and
 - invite suggestions from staff on what training programmes should be offered.

Public Enquiries

For enquiries concerning the existing and planned measures on the promotion of racial equality, please contact the officers via the following channels,

- 1) Mr CHEUNG Ka-wan, Social Work Officer (Corporate Co-ordination) of Corporate Planning and Co-ordination Section

Telephone no. : 2152 9305
Fax no. : 2116 9070
Email : cpcsenq@swd.gov.hk
Postal Address : 8/F, Wu Chung House, 213 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai, Hong Kong

- 2) Ms Cathy TANG, Social Work Officer (Family) 6 of Family Services Section

Telephone no. : 2892 5179
Fax no. : 2833 5840
Email : fcwenq@swd.gov.hk
Postal Address : 8/F, Wu Chung House, 213 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai, Hong Kong

Social Welfare Department
June 2024