

Introduction

The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC), set up in 1996, is a statutory body tasked with implementing the anti-discrimination ordinances in Hong Kong, which currently include the Sex Discrimination Ordinance (SDO) (Cap 480), the Disability Discrimination Ordinance (DDO) (Cap 487), the Family Status Discrimination Ordinance (FSDO) (Cap 527) and the Race Discrimination Ordinance (RDO) (Cap 602).

These ordinances protect individuals from discrimination on the basis of sex, marital status, pregnancy, disability, family status, and race. The EOC's mission is to eliminate discrimination and foster an inclusive society in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity.

The EOC has a number of functions. These include undertaking investigation, conciliating complaints, providing litigation support, promoting equal opportunities through public education and training, conducting research, and advocating policy changes on issues related to discrimination and equal opportunities.

Upon receiving a complaint, the EOC would investigate into the matter and, if possible, attempt as an impartial facilitator to encourage conciliation or a voluntary settlement between the disputing parties.

Between September 1996 and December 2016, the Commission received 15,448 complaints, about half of which fell under the DDO (51%), followed by the SDO (42%), the RDO (4%), and the FSDO (3%). The EOC achieved an overall conciliation success rate of 71% in 2016/17. Settlement terms vary from case to case, and may include an apology,

changes in policies and practices, and monetary compensation.

If conciliation fails, the complainant can apply to the EOC for legal assistance to take the case to the District Court. The Commission decides whether or not to give legal assistance based on a number of factors, including whether the case raises a question of principle.

In producing this book, the EOC's aims are multi-fold. First, by discussing typical discrimination cases, the Commission hopes to encourage those who face similar situations to seek redress. The cases can also deepen the understanding of employers and service providers on their legal responsibilities. Additionally, the cases clarify the application of the anti-discrimination ordinances and raise awareness of one's rights and responsibilities.

Furthermore, the cases serve to illustrate how the Commission approaches and handles complaints. The EOC is dedicated to maintaining transparency in its work. It is hoped that the cases will provide a clearer understanding of the EOC's complaint-handling process and considerations.

Finally, the EOC hopes that the cases can concretely demonstrate its commitment to creating a more equitable society. Discrimination is an issue that affects everyone. Only by working together, raising awareness and putting in place preventive measures can we eradicate discrimination and achieve a fairer and better city for all.