

MAY 2023 ISSUE

The EO Beat

THE OFFICIAL PERIODICAL OF
THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMISSION

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平等機會委員會
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMISSION

The EO Beat

EOC survey shows stigmatisation of persons with mental illness



In Hong Kong, mental illness is more common than you might expect. From mood disorders to depression, about 13% of residents have common mental disorders, according to a survey^[1] published in 2015. The situation, exacerbated by the three-year long pandemic, is believed to be much worse at present.

Despite the increased awareness of mental health, persons with mental illness (PMIs) are still facing tremendous challenges and stigmatisation in society. From 2018 to 2022, the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) received 310 complaints under the Disability Discrimination Ordinance (DDO) regarding psychiatric conditions, with 75% of them related to employment. The figure underlines the difficulties PMIs face in the workplace.

Latest EOC research revealed “prevalent” discrimination against PMIs

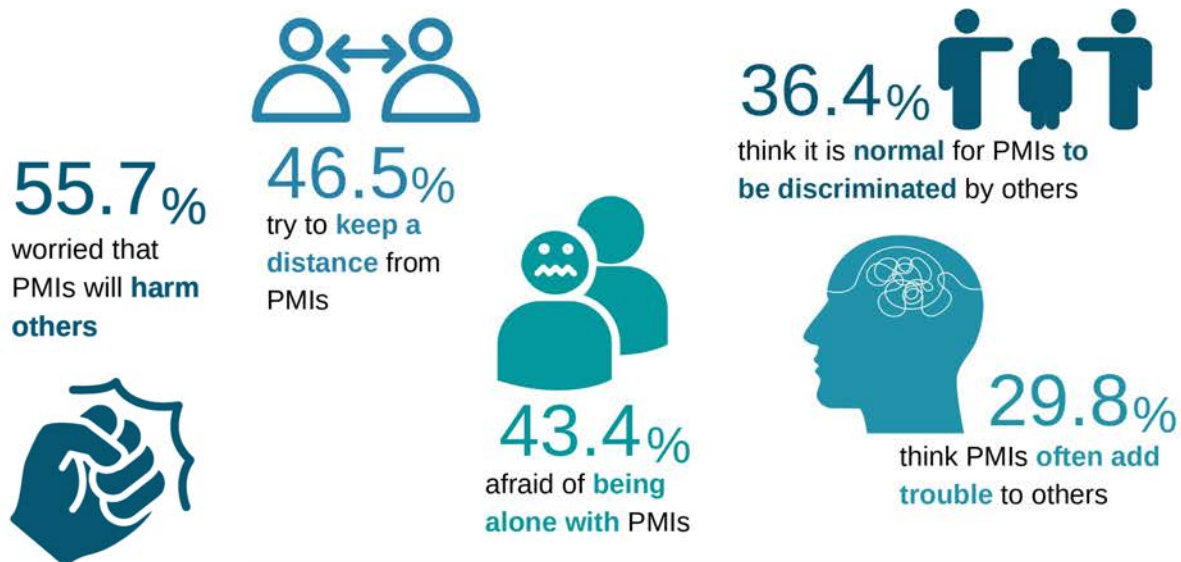
Indeed, around 80% of surveyed employees and PMIs considered that discrimination against PMIs in Hong Kong was “very or quite prevalent”, according to the EOC’s latest [“Study on Perceptions of Stigmatisation and Discrimination of Persons with Mental Illness in the Workplace”](#), which was released in February 2023.

[1] The Hong Kong Mental Morbidity Survey, funded by Food and Health Bureau, HKSAR Government

Commissioned to the Department of Psychology of The Education University of Hong Kong, the study collected data from 593 employed persons and 265 PMIs, and conducted in-depth interviews with employers and supervisors in managerial positions from different sectors to shed light on how PMIs are perceived and what assistance they need.

The study revealed an unsettling reality that PMIs are still bearing the brunt of prejudice and discrimination.

Common Stigmatisation towards PMIs Reported by the Employed Persons



In the survey, 21 statements were presented to employed persons to gauge their views about PMIs. While nearly 90% of the surveyed workers reported to show acceptance towards PMIs, many of them still held stigmatised views against PMIs. For instance, over 55% of them said they were worried that PMIs would harm others and around 45% of them tried to keep a distance from PMIs and were afraid of being alone with PMIs. In the views of the interviewed senior executives, PMIs were perceived to be less capable of controlling their behaviours and emotions and the employers were more hesitant about hiring PMIs for positions that involved intensive face-to-face communications.

Needless to say, there are myths that have to be debunked. In fact, only very few types of mental illness are associated with a violent tendency. Yet false information and a lack of communication, as well as some occasional dramatised and exaggerated cases spread in social media, constitute these rigid stereotypes, which hinder PMIs from fully integrating into society. The truth is, with adequate support, PMIs can take up a wide range of roles and make valuable contributions to companies and society.



45.3% of surveyed PMIs reported being discriminated against while **applying for a job/ at work/ quitting a job**

18.9% found it difficult to apply for **sick leave** to seek medical advice



Unfortunately, over 45% of PMIs experienced discrimination during the hiring, employed or quitting processes over the past five years, the study revealed. Most of them did not take action as they deemed it unnecessary or were worried about their employers' views. In addition, almost one-fifth of PMIs struggled to apply for sick leave for seeking mental health advice mainly because of the concern over disclosing their medical conditions. The delayed medical consultation and support may worsen their condition and undermine their job performance.

Only **12.5%** said their current or former employer had offered **mental health support**



An equal opportunity employment policy could be the remedy for addressing PMIs' grievance. Among the surveyed PMIs, the majority expressed the need for companies to provide mental health support, but merely 12.5% of them reported that their current or former employers provided such support. The interviews with the employers and supervisors told the same story, as many companies or organisations did not have written anti-discrimination policies or complaint-handling mechanisms.

“My current company has not recruited anyone with mental illness, but if I told my colleagues that ‘I am recruiting a PMI’, I think it may not be acceptable to them.”

– Female, 35-44, Manager/department head, Transportation, warehouse, postal and express services

“If the employees with mental illness cannot control their emotions or behave abnormally, it is difficult for them to perform well at work.”

– Male, 35-44, Manager/department head, Accommodation and food services

“Is better treatment considered discrimination? It depends on how you define discrimination. I am not sure whether or not discrimination only refers to negative action.”

– Female, 45-54, Manager/department head, Real estate, professional and business services

“I don’t think there is any special arrangement. If we know there is an applicant with mental illness who needs special work arrangement, that person would likely not be hired. We should treat everyone equally in the company.”

– Female, 35-44, Manager/department head, Import/export, wholesale and retail

As revealed in the study, many senior executives or managers lacked knowledge about mental health, misconstrued what constitutes disability discrimination, and held misconceptions about the definitions of discrimination and workplace accommodation. Some supervisors misunderstood that providing PMIs with more support or accommodation could be regarded as a form of discrimination and considered treating all employees in the same way as the best management approach to avoid discrimination. Some expressed concern over the fairness to other staff members if special work arrangements are offered to PMIs.

Employers should take the time to understand their rights and responsibilities under the DDO, including the meaning of “reasonable accommodation”. They should also put in place appropriate policies and measures for preventing discrimination to avoid possible legal liability.

The following will further explain how the Ordinance works and give tips on cultivating an inclusive working environment for PMIs.



How does DDO protect PMIs?



[Disability Discrimination Ordinance](#) (DDO) protects people with a disability against discrimination, harassment and vilification on the grounds of their disability in the areas of employment, education, access to, disposal and management of premises, provision of goods, services and facilities, clubs and sporting activities, etc.

[PMIs are also protected](#) as the definition of disability under the DDO includes a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement or that results in disturbed behaviour, and includes disabilities which previously existed but no longer exist.



It is unlawful for employers to discriminate against a job applicant or an employee on the grounds of the person's disability unless (i) the person is unable to perform the inherent requirements of the job or (ii) the provision of accommodation would cause unjustifiable hardship to the employers. The DDO does not prohibit questions or information requests about one's disability. But medical information is private and personal. It should be obtained on a need-to-know basis and employers should only request such information for the above consideration.

Discrimination can be direct or indirect. Direct discrimination means a person with a disability is treated less favourably than another person without a disability in comparable circumstances. Indirect discrimination occurs when a condition or requirement is applied to everyone, but in practice affects people with a disability more adversely, is to their detriment, and such condition or requirement cannot be justified.



In a company, if some colleagues tease or insult PMIs, and intentionally repel them from joining the company's open-to-all activities, this could amount to discrimination or harassment under the DDO. The employers may also be held responsible for their employees' behaviour if they are unable to demonstrate that they have taken "reasonable practicable steps" to prevent discrimination in the workplace.



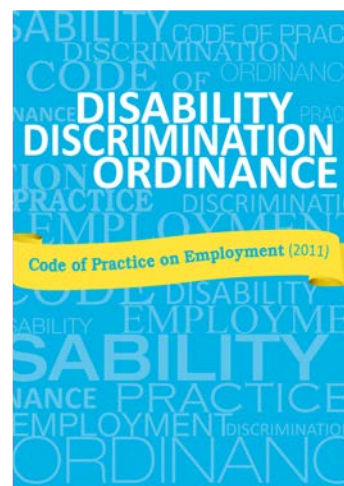
Tips for good practices in the workplace



Employers have a critical role to play in supporting the mental health of their employees. Here are some steps that employers should take to foster an inclusive workplace.[2]

These practices do not only act as a kind of legal defence but can also strengthen the collaborative relationships between employers, colleagues and PMIs, bringing a positive impact on companies or organisations in the long run.

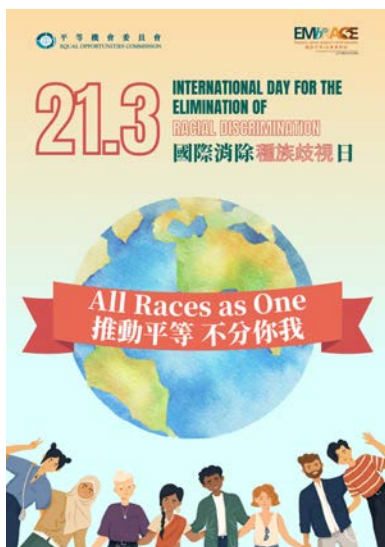
1. Formulate equal opportunities policy and grievance procedures for discrimination complaints.
2. Openly declare the support for equal opportunities, including mental health, so that employees are stress-free to seek help when they encounter mental health problems.
3. Offer reasonable work accommodation to employees as a mental health-friendly employment practice, such as flexible working arrangements and allowing PMIs to attend medical appointments and apply for sick leave without the fear of reprisals.
4. Disclosing mental health status in the workplace involves privacy and risks PMIs of being discriminated, so the employers have to implement the policies in a cautious manner. Designating a HR staff to handle the matter is preferred.
5. While work practices or arrangements based on the PMIs' abilities are welcomed, employers and supervisors must exercise caution to avoid discrimination. Transparency in decisions related to work practices or arrangements, substantive fairness in the distribution of resources and treating PMIs with sensitivity and respect are important.
6. Employers are encouraged to provide an employee assistance programme, such as a 24-hour hotline, psychological assessment and counselling services as a mental health first aid for employees in need.
7. More training and workshops should be organised for both employers and employees, to debunk and clarify common myths and misconceptions, promote mental health awareness, and teach communication skills in working with PMIs.
8. Employers are welcome to make reference to the EOC's [Code of Practice on Employment under the DDO](#) in which employers should adopt good management practices throughout the employment cycle within organisations.



EOC launches new “All Races As One” Campaign in commemoration of IDERD 2023

In 1966, the United Nations proclaimed 21 March as International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (IDERD). Since then, IDERD is celebrated around the world every year, symbolising the solidarity of the global community to combat racism and all types of racial prejudice.

This year, in commemoration of IDERD, the EOC initiated the “All Races As One” campaign, urging the public to eradicate racial discrimination and embrace racial diversity and inclusion (D&I).

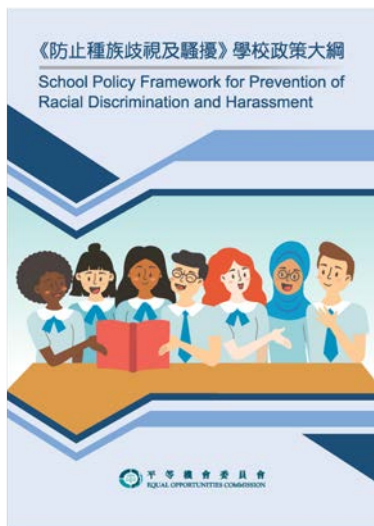


Education is the focus of our campaign. We launched a [Racially Friendly Campus Recognition Scheme](#) in February 2023, inviting primary and secondary schools to mark IDERD with school-based initiatives and activities throughout March. Schools that carried out the suggested initiatives in promoting racial inclusion would be recognised as Racially Friendly Campus Champions at the end of the prescribed period. Altogether 63 schools and educational institutions signed up for the scheme. The participating schools displayed IDERD posters on campus and organised events to mobilise students to celebrate IDERD. Some schools also encouraged their students to share photos taken with friends or schoolmates with different ethnicities in order to spread the message of racial inclusion.





For the education professionals, the EOC organised the “All Races As One” Racial Inclusion Seminar for Schools on 18 March, which attracted over 80 participants from nearly 70 schools. A group of panellists with different backgrounds, including EOC Member Dr Rizwan ULLAH, as well as Hina BUTT, the first local Chinese language teacher of South Asian ethnicity, Dr Jan GUBE, Assistant Professor of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at The Education University of Hong Kong, popular YouTuber New Dellily and English Schools Foundation’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Project Officer Hope WONG shared tips and insights on coming up with innovative methods to engage students in discussion about racial issues. In order to provide teachers with useful and up-to-date teaching materials and guidelines on the promotion of racial inclusion and anti-discrimination in schools, the EOC produced the [“All Races As One” Learning Kit on Eliminating Racial Discrimination](#) and [School Policy Framework for the Prevention of Racial Discrimination and Harassment](#). Both are available on the EOC website for access by education professionals and other interested parties.



The importance of education for ethnic minorities was further emphasised in [an opinion article in local newspapers](#) by EOC Chairperson Mr Ricky CHU Man-kin, who wrote that “Hong Kong must overhaul Chinese-language learning to give ethnic minorities a fair chance”. According to an informal focus group discussion carried out by the EOC in February 2023 with 20 ethnic minority university students, early interventions at school are needed to help them learn Chinese, so that they can uplift their academic and career competitiveness in the future.



“This is a structural issue that calls for a systemic solution. It cannot be handled at the individual, school or even community level,” Mr Chu wrote in the article. “As Hong Kong emerges from the haze of the pandemic and starts to reinvent itself, I hope there is more energy and intention in doing away with the old and bringing in the new, where required. The education system for non-Chinese students could certainly do with fresh impetus.”



Besides the education front, the EOC also encouraged the wider public to stand in solidarity with people of different ethnicities on IDERD. A six-week advertising campaign under the tagline of “Interrupt Bias. All Races As One” was rolled out across buses and MTR in the city. The ad featuring smiling faces with different ethnicities resembled the ultimate joy of racial harmony.

On the social media platforms, the EOC curated content related to racial D&I to address the needs of eliminating racial discrimination. For example, our YouTube channel recently added [a new video](#) that captures how local non-Chinese residents face challenges when they rent a flat in the city; our recent Instagram post [polled the followers if they had ever been asked whether they knew kung fu](#) when travelling abroad to highlight the prevalence of racial bias and stereotypes.

The EOC is also mobilising the business sector to embrace racial equality. The EOC launched [The Racial Diversity and Inclusion Charter for Employers](#) in 2018 to provide employers with guidelines and best practices for fostering racial D&I in the workplace, and recognise those who demonstrate their staunch commitment to propelling D&I. As of March 2023, over 300 companies and organisations had already signed the Charter and we believe that there will certainly be more joining our ranks of making Hong Kong a truly diverse and inclusive place.

EO Youth Ambassadors learn through an extraordinary DEI journey



To promote the values of diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI) among the younger generation and rally young staunch supporters for equal opportunities, the EOC commenced its first-ever Equal Opportunity Youth Ambassador Scheme in October 2022.

Thirty-six ambassadors from 12 tertiary institutions were selected to join this six-month programme after a vigorous screening process. They were arranged to take part in a wide range of experiential learning and mentoring activities to enhance their knowledge and experience of equal opportunities. During the course of this experiential journey, they demonstrated their energy, enthusiasm and eagerness to learn about DEI. It is hoped that the ambassadors, after engaging in all these activities, can help spread the message of DEI to their peers on campus.

Let's recap what they have achieved so far!



On 7 January, the ambassadors joined an orientation session at the EOC Office. They took part in some ice-breaking games to connect with their peers and were given a brief introduction to the work of the EOC and the anti-discrimination ordinances.

On 12 January, the ambassadors joined a training session of the Fearless Dragon Running Team founded by Hong Kong Network for the Promotion of Inclusive Society (HKNPIS). Coached by Ms Christy YIU Kit-ching, the Chief Coach of the running team and award-winning long-distance runner, the tertiary students were given the valuable opportunity to interact with persons with disabilities and understand their challenges in everyday life.



On 2 February, the ambassadors were invited to join Hong Kong Disneyland Resort's "Open House for Dream Makers" event. They attended the sharing sessions by the Resort's leaders and casts to deepen their knowledge of how a modern corporation embraces diversity and inclusion to drive innovation and growth.

On 11 and 18 February, the EOC, in collaboration with WEDO GLOBAL, lined up for the ambassadors a Multicultural Community Tour and Experience to explore the diverse neighbourhood of Wan Chai. They visited various landmarks, including Tai Yuen Street, Blue House, Pak Tai Temple and Sikh Temple, from which they learnt different cultures and histories of the communities.



On 4 March, the ambassadors visited Hong Kong Seeing Eye Dog Training School, which is the first guide dog training school in the city. With their eyes blindfolded, the ambassadors navigated the school with the help of guide dogs. They also took part in a short course and mini experiential games to learn how to assist people with visual disabilities.



On 1 April, the ambassadors participated in a mentoring event held at the EOC Office. EOC Chairperson Mr Ricky CHU Man-kin and EOC members Prof Cecilia CHAN Lai-wan, The Hon Vincent CHENG Wing-shun, Dr Rizwan ULLAH and Mr Gary WONG Chi-him shared their personal experiences and career paths with the ambassadors. In particular, they deliberated on how they overcame difficulties and put their beliefs in equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion into practice.

On EOC’s Instagram page “EO Matters”, we posted [many memorable moments of the programme in IG Story](#) so that the participating students could share their experiences with their friends on social media.

The Recognition Ceremony of the programme will be held in June 2023, during which the ambassadors will showcase what they have learnt. To recognise their remarkable achievement of completing the half-year programme, they will be presented with certificates. We look forward to seeing these ambassadors continue their effort in promoting DEI in the future.

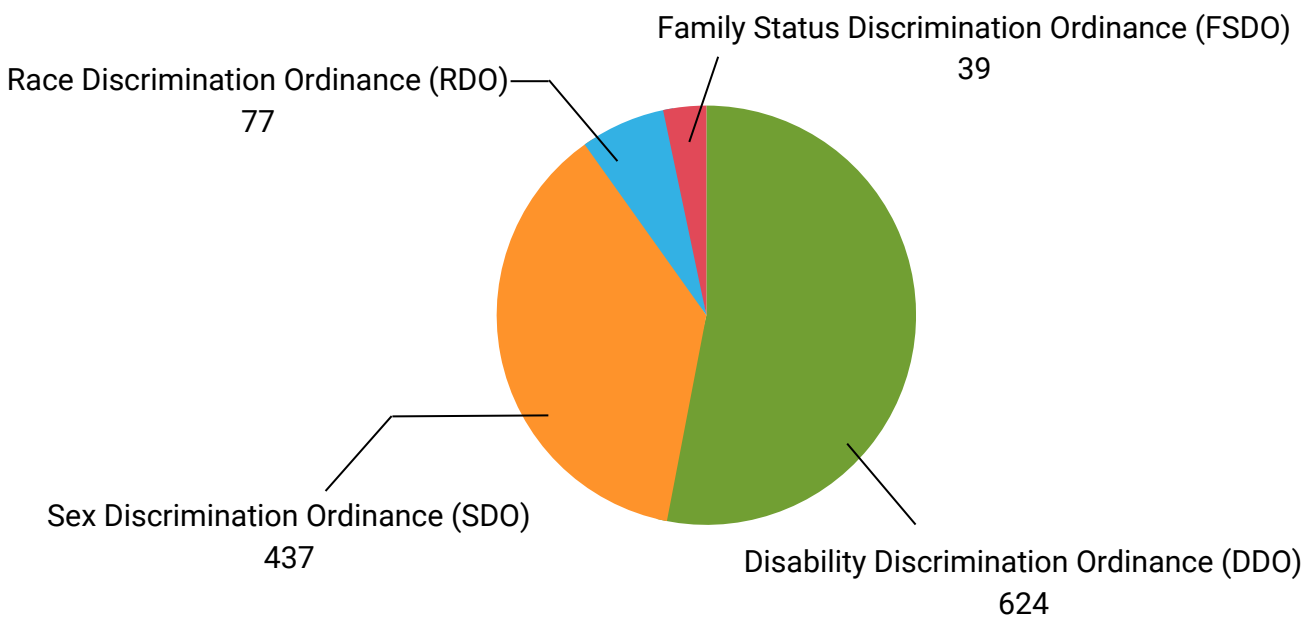


The Law at Work: EOC Law Enforcement in 2022



One of the key functions of the EOC is to handle the complaints made by members of the public under the four anti-discrimination ordinances, namely the Sex Discrimination Ordinance (SDO), the Disability Discrimination Ordinance (DDO), the Family Status Discrimination Ordinance (FSDO) and the Race Discrimination Ordinance (RDO).

Number of complaints handled by the EOC in 2022

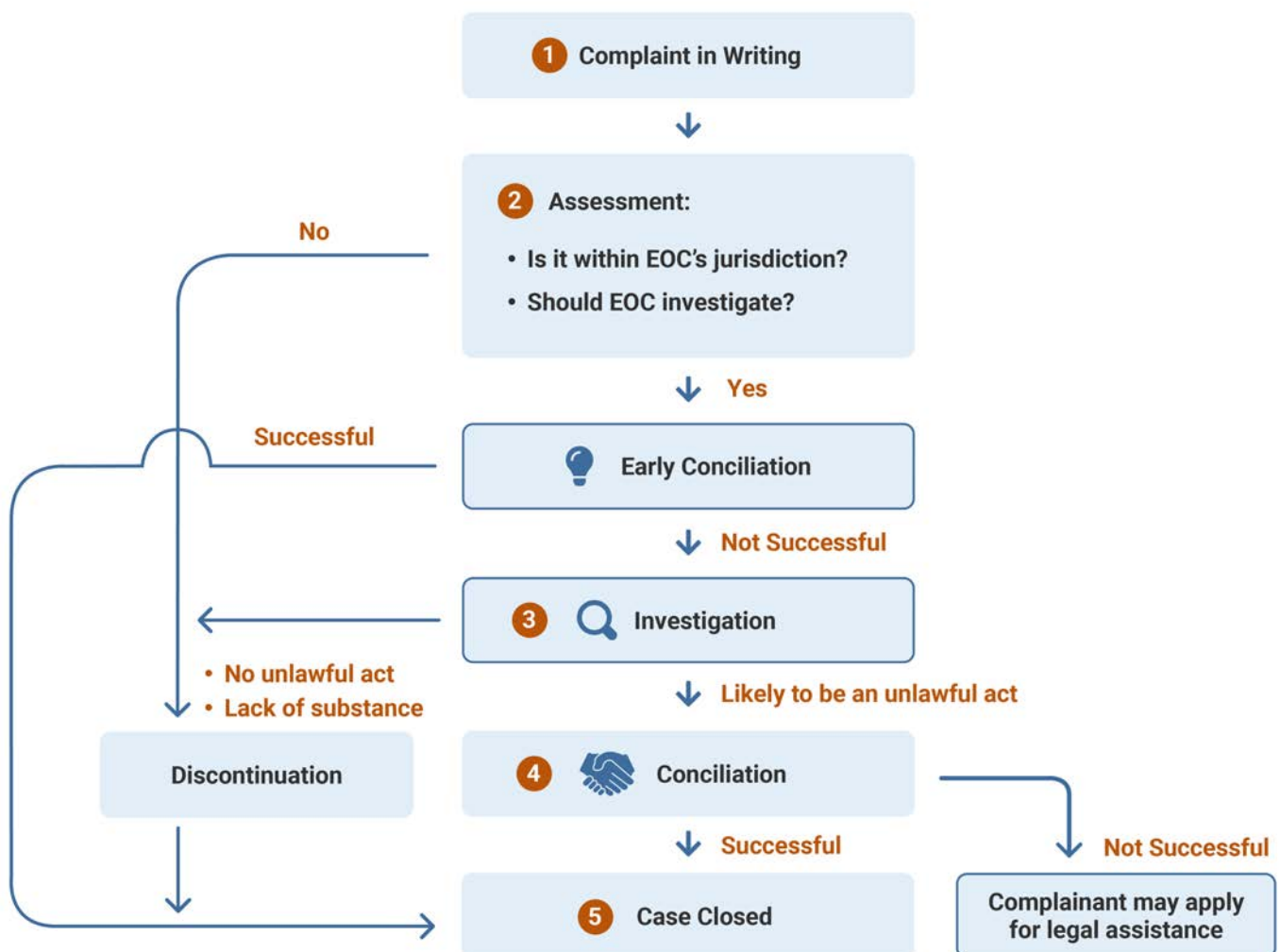


In 2022 , the EOC handled 1 140 complaint investigations and 37 self-initiated investigations, including those carried forward from previous years. More than half of the complaints handled were DDO-related and the majority belonged to the employment field. Complaints lodged under the SDO came second. Among the 423 SDO-related complaint investigations, there were 243 sexual harassment cases and 85 pregnancy discrimination cases. For RDO and FSDO, there were 76 and 39 complaint investigations respectively.

When handling the complaints, the EOC has a statutory duty to encourage voluntary conciliation between the parties in disputes. In 2022, the EOC facilitated conciliation for 154 cases, and the conciliation success rate reached 87%, as compared to an average of 60-70% in previous years.

If the case is not conciliated, the complainant can apply for assistance from the EOC. The assistance may include legal advice to the applicant by the EOC lawyer(s), legal services related to the gathering and assessment of further information or evidence, or representation in legal proceedings by the EOC lawyer(s) or by lawyer(s) in private practice engaged by the EOC. In 2022, the EOC handled 12 applications and provided assistance for 8 cases.

The EOC’s complaint-handling procedures





In November 2022, the EOC issued legal proceedings under the DDO in the District Court on behalf of a person (the Claimant) who alleged that his former employer (the Respondent) discriminated against him by terminating his employment on the grounds of his disability.

The Claimant was a waiter employed by a Chinese restaurant. A couple days after he had reported for duty, he suffered from leg pain and was diagnosed with Left Lower Limb Cellulitis. He was granted four days of sick leave. During his sick leave, the Respondent informed the Claimant that his position had been temporarily filled by another person and he could resume duty after he had recovered. A few days later, the Claimant told the Respondent that he was ready to resume duty but the Respondent replied that he was dismissed for the fear that his leg pain would reoccur in the future.

In January 2023, the court ruled in favour of the Claimant in the absence of the Respondent. The Claimant was awarded HK\$20,000 in damages for injury to feelings and the Respondent had to pay for the legal costs.

By taking this case to court, the EOC would like to reiterate that it is unlawful for an employer to dismiss an employee on the grounds of the employee's disabilities without first considering the availability of reasonable accommodation or alternative arrangements.

For more information about the complaint and legally assisted cases handled by the EOC, please visit the [EOC website](#).



EOC Snapshots

EOC presents 2023-24 work plan at Legislative Council

EOC Chairperson Mr Ricky CHU Man-kin attended a meeting of the Legislative Council Panel on Constitutional Affairs on 20 March 2023 to [present an update on the work progress made by the EOC](#) in 2022-23 and its focuses for 2023-24.

Despite the grave challenges imposed by the epidemic last year, the EOC continued to implement a range of initiatives and activities to tackle discrimination and promote equal opportunities through a three-pronged approach of law enforcement, prevention and education in 2022-23.



In terms of law enforcement, between April 2022 and end-January 2023, the EOC concluded 85% of the complaints within six months, fulfilling the pledge to conclude 75% of the complaints within six months. During the same period, 119 out of the 139 cases that underwent conciliation reached a settlement, translating into a success rate of 86%, as compared to an average of 60% to 70% in previous years. The EOC also managed to secure \$6.41 million of monetary payment for complainants through conciliation.

On the prevention front, since April 2022, the EOC released a total of 11 research studies, covering issues such as sexual harassment, sexuality education, discrimination of persons with mental illness in the workplace, and challenges faced by ethnic minorities, caregivers and students with special education needs (SEN). These research projects, which were commissioned or funded by the EOC, not only captured media attention and raised public awareness about combatting discrimination, but also provided important evidence for making policy recommendations to the Government and relevant parties to address systemic inequality problems.

As for public education, the EOC embarked on a citywide awareness and promotional campaign, "Equal Opportunities Month: Together for an Equal and Inclusive Hong Kong", in June 2022. The initiative, in celebration of the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the HKSAR, mobilised the community to embrace the values of diversity and inclusion through an array of activities and promotions across multiple platforms. The EOC also inaugurated the first-ever Equal Opportunity Youth Ambassador Scheme tailored to tertiary students, with the purpose of cultivating our university students with the values of diversity, equality and inclusion.

Looking ahead to 2023-24, [Mr Chu noted during the Panel meeting](#), “Some communities in our society, such as people with disabilities and ethnic minorities, are still feeling the pinch as the epidemic over the past years has exacerbated their plights. Many people have lost their jobs and are struggling financially. The EOC considers it imperative that these communities enjoy equal rights to take part in society’s development. The EOC will proactively promote the equal opportunities of the disadvantaged groups in education, employment, and access to services and facilities through enforcement, policy advocacy and education.”

EOC hosts visits for Mainland judges and China Disabled Persons’ Federation

As Hong Kong and the Mainland have returned to normalcy after combatting the three-year long pandemic, the EOC started to resume face-to-face exchanges with our Mainland partners and guests.

On 22 March and 18 April 2023, the EOC hosted two visits for a total of over 50 Mainland judges and other legal professionals, who are taking part in the Doctor of Juridical Science (JSD) Programme and the Master of Law (LLM) Programme for Chinese Senior Judges run by The Centre for Judicial Education and Research cum Identification of Hong Kong Law of The City University of Hong Kong. These programmes aim to familiarise them with Hong Kong’s common law system as well as the functions and operations of Hong Kong’s statutory bodies.

At the exchange sessions, EOC Chairperson Mr Ricky CHU Man-kin introduced the work of the EOC and Hong Kong’s anti-discrimination ordinances, while the Mainland judges shared their judicial work across the border. The exchanges helped both sides gain up-to-date knowledge of the respective legal systems.



Under the National 14th Five-Year Plan, the Central Government supports Hong Kong to develop into a centre for international legal and dispute resolution services in the Asia-Pacific region. It is important for the EOC, as the statutory body to enforce Hong Kong's anti-discrimination ordinances, to gain knowledge of the legal system in the Mainland so that we can contribute to the development of the Greater Bay Area (GBA).

On 19 April 2023, the EOC hosted another visit to welcome a delegation comprising representatives from the Legislative Affairs Commission and the Social Development Affairs Committee of the National People's Congress and the China Disabled Persons' Federation (CDPF), with the purpose of strengthening cross-border collaboration to protect and promote the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities. Established in 1988, CDPF is a national organisation which aims to represent and safeguard the rights and interests of people with diverse disabilities in China.

The development of the GBA has increased the mobility of people and cross-border travel across the region. There are many areas that Hong Kong and the Mainland can work on in terms of accessibility and facilitative measures for people with disabilities.

At the meeting, Mr Chu gave an introduction to Hong Kong's four anti-discrimination ordinances and went into detail about how we enhance accessibility to foster an inclusive environment in Hong Kong through law enforcement, investigations, policy advocacy and education. In particular, Mr Chu highlighted how the EOC has promoted the concept of universal design, which means to create products and build facilities that take into account the needs of everyone in society, including but not limited to people with disabilities.

The delegation visited Hong Kong for three days to visit a wide range of inclusive facilities. They also shared with the EOC how the Mainland creates an inclusive environment for people with disabilities at the national and city levels.

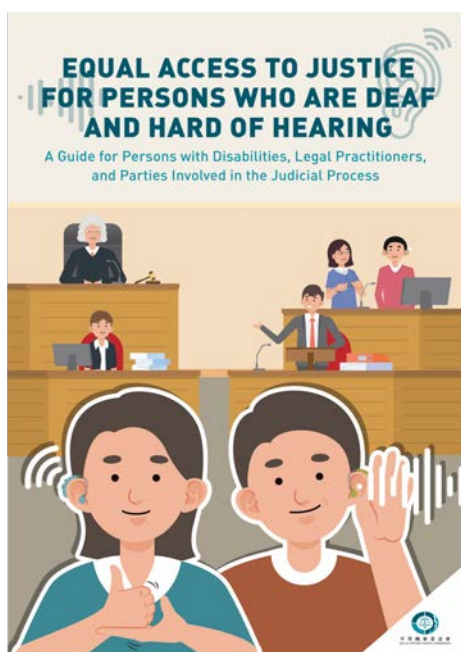


New guide on equal access to justice for persons with hearing challenges



In November 2022, the EOC released [Equal Access to Justice for Persons Who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing: A Guide for Persons with Disabilities, Legal Practitioners, and Parties Involved in the Judicial Process](#) (the “Guide”), to facilitate communication between different parties in the judicial process, including people who are deaf and hard of hearing (DHoH). The EOC strongly believes that persons with disabilities should enjoy equal rights before the law and have effective access to justice.

The Guide is a practical tool that provides some guiding principles for communicating with DHoH persons as well as possible appropriate accommodation measures during legal proceedings. In particular, the Guide lays down specific “dos and don’ts” for effective communication, such as finding a well-lit and quiet area, attracting the attention of DHoH persons before speaking, keeping good eye contact with DHoH persons, avoiding complex terms and languages, etc.



The Guide also explains the rights of DHoH persons under the DDO, the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Bill of Rights Ordinance and the Basic Law, in the context of equal access to justice. It provides recommendations for different parties, including the court, judges, judicial officers, sign language interpreters and DHoH persons, as to what each participant can do to facilitate effective communication with DHoH persons.

It is recommended that all public institutions in the justice system, including courtrooms, legal aid offices and police stations, equip themselves with as many and various forms of auxiliary aids and services as possible – such as sign language interpretation, assistive listening devices, speech-to-text reporters and lip-speakers – in order to meet the needs of different DHoH persons.

Release of EOC-funded research studies



On 9 February 2023, the Speech, Language and Reading Lab in the Faculty of Education at The University of Hong Kong (HKU) released an EOC-funded study, titled [“Creating a Barrier-free Online Learning Environment for Primary School Students with Special Educational Needs \(SEN\) in Hong Kong”](#), to shed light on the challenges and psychological impacts that primary students with special educational needs (SEN) experienced in online learning.

Collecting data from 932 participants, including caregivers, students with or without SEN and teachers, through online questionnaires and in-depth interviews, the study revealed that students with SEN were perceived by parents and teachers as having a higher level of online learning anxiety and a lower level of e-learning effectiveness. Most students with SEN reported a decline in their academic performance because of the lack of an in-class environment. Some of them found it difficult to build friendships with their peers as there were fewer opportunities for them to learn social skills and rules.

The research team urged the Government, schools, teachers and parents to work together strategically to promote e-inclusion and create a socially inclusive online learning environment to help students with SEN learn effectively and maintain their mental health.



Another EOC-funded study [“Exploring the experiences and needs of college students with Autism Spectrum Disorder \(ASD\)”](#), conducted by The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK)’s Department of Educational Psychology, found that students with ASD in post-secondary education were encountering difficulties in areas of academic learning, social communication and career development.



Thirty college students were interviewed in the study about their experiences. Other participants included eight parents of college students with ASD, 10 college teaching staff members, eight college professional support staff members and nine neurotypical students who had experiences interacting with college students with ASD.

Some students with ASD found the post-secondary curriculum too “abstract” and “unstructured”, compared to secondary schools where they could learn with concrete guidance. Some students expressed concerns over navigating social life in post-secondary institutions, such as participating in group projects and living in a hostel on campus. Implicit social rules were complex for them to discern and understand. The study also found that people’s limited understanding of ASD and low sensitivity to their needs, coupled with institutional policies, hindered college students with ASD from seeking help, further exacerbating their learning challenges and mental health needs.

The research team suggested setting up a systematic support framework across institutions with clearly delineated roles and functions of different stakeholders within the college community so that students and stakeholders can get access to relevant services more smoothly. Teaching and support staff in tertiary education should also be provided with more training about SEN, specifically ASD. It is believed that enhancing awareness and understanding of ASD in colleges and society is paramount to creating an autism-friendly environment and promoting inclusion.



同一天空下

Under the Same Sky

生命短片系列

Short movie series on equal opportunities



八個感人故事，剖析基於殘疾、性別、婚姻狀況、懷孕、餵哺母乳、家庭崗位或種族的偏見和歧視。明白被歧視的羣體所面對的困難和需要，改變歧視的現象。

Eight touching stories depict prejudice and discrimination based on disability, gender, marital status, pregnancy, breastfeeding, family status or race. Understand the difficulties and needs faced by those who are being discriminated against, and help stop discrimination.



觀看短片
Watch the videos

從心出發 放下歧視
Stop discrimination now!

ViuTV 99台

編劇 導演 監製：馬浚偉
Script Writer Director Producer：Steven Ma

14-5-2023 (星期日Sunday) 14:30 - 16:00
28-5-2023 (星期日Sunday) 13:30 - 15:00



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