



## Equal Opportunities Commission Strategic Plan 2016 – 2019

March 2017

# 1 FOREWORD



In the two decades since the EOC's establishment in 1996, there have been major developments in the equality landscape of our city, prompted by demographic, political and social changes and the ever-increasing expectations and awareness of everyone's right to non-discrimination.

The EOC is dedicated to advancing the equality frontier in Hong Kong – from our work with small and medium enterprises, to making recommendations to the Government on legislative reforms following the Discrimination Law Review completed in March 2016. As we look ahead to the future, we have an obligation to ensure that everyone's basic dignity is safeguarded and everyone has the same chances to have their potential realised. While opportunities have undoubtedly widened for previously marginalised groups, such as women, people with disabilities and ethnic minorities, still much remains to be done. We must not lose the momentum we have gained over the last 20 years as we consider how to shape the next 20 years.

Capitalising on the progresses made in previous years, the EOC shall continue its work towards eliminating discrimination and promoting equality of opportunities. We are ready to embrace change so that we can make deeper and higher-level impact in the Hong Kong community.

The EOC recognises that mainstreaming equal opportunities is a long-term goal. It requires changes at many levels, including legal, systemic and institutional changes, as well as changes in the practices, procedures and culture of organisations. To effect these changes, it is vital to have commitment including the top level, notably leaders in both public and private sectors, and consistent and concerted actions from all. As such, the EOC will continue its ongoing engagement with the Government and various sectors to advance and mainstream equality, particularly in education, training and employment opportunities, and in the access of public services through taking forward the strategies outlined in this Strategic Plan (the Plan) for the period of 2016 – 2019.

The Plan is the ‘roadmap’ that guides the EOC’s work for the period of 2016 – 2019. It outlines five key areas that the EOC has established as strategically vital, along with the strategic goals, the expected results and the key indicators of each area that have been put into place in order to appraise the work of the EOC. The Plan provides the bases for further development of operational goals to facilitate the formulation and implementation of specific programmes and actions.

The Plan is intended to be a dynamic and living document that will continue to evolve, as to reflect what the EOC will learn and achieve over time. We shall strive to keep pace with the development of Hong Kong, and adapt to meet the expectations of our serving community. The ultimate purpose of the Plan is to lay out the EOC’s strategies for creating a pluralistic and inclusive society where there is no barrier to equal opportunities.

**Prof. Alfred CHAN Cheung-ming, SBS, JP**

Chairperson

Equal Opportunities Commission

## 2 WHO WE ARE

The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) was established under the Sex Discrimination Ordinance (Cap. 480) in 1996 as an independent statutory body to implement the anti-discrimination ordinances in Hong Kong. These include: the Sex Discrimination Ordinance and the Disability Discrimination Ordinance (Cap. 487) implemented in 1996, followed by the Family Status Discrimination Ordinance (Cap. 527) in 1997, and then the Race Discrimination Ordinance (Cap. 602) in 2009.



### Our Vision

Our overall vision is to create a pluralistic and inclusive society where there is no barrier to equal opportunities.



## Our Mission

We have the responsibilities to speak out for the minorities and those vulnerable, to mainstream equality and promote inclusiveness in society. We seek to achieve our vision by:

- establishing partnerships with all sectors in the community;
- promoting awareness, understanding and acceptance of diversity and equal opportunities and providing education to prevent discrimination;
- enforcing compliance with provisions in the anti-discrimination legislation; and
- providing access to redress for discrimination



*We Speak out for the Minorities*

## Our Organisation and Work

The EOC Board provides guidance and leadership for the strategic directions and performance of the EOC and the discharge of its statutory duties. The Board comprises a Chairperson and not more than 16 Members, all appointed by the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

Under the EOC Board, there are four working committees composed of Members, namely the Administration and Finance Committee (A&FC), the Community Participation and Publicity Committee (CPPC), the Legal and Complaints Committee (CLC) and the Policy, Research and Training Committee (PRTC). Each of the committees has its distinctive terms of reference and responsibilities for specific functions of the EOC.

The EOC strives to discharge its functions through the following:

- Providing services to address questions and complaints on discrimination; encouraging persons who are concerned with matters related to unlawful discriminatory acts to effect settlement by conciliation; and considering granting assistance to a person in instituting proceedings under the ordinances concerned, where there has not been a settlement;
- Assisting individuals and organisations to understand their rights and responsibilities and taking action to prevent discrimination through education and publicity;
- Undertaking or assisting in research and education to advocate non-discrimination and equal opportunities with a view to preventing discrimination; and making submissions to the Government and representative bodies for the same purpose; and
- Reviewing the working of the anti-discrimination ordinances and recommending amendments as necessary; and issuing codes of practices and guidelines under the anti-discrimination ordinances.

## Our Values

We seek to achieve our Vision and deliver our services according to the following principles:

- Equality: We will be in the forefront to uphold the principle of equal opportunities.
- Fairness: We will implement fair and impartial procedures and act with sound judgment in administering the anti-discrimination legislation.
- Integrity: We will respect the truth and act with integrity.
- Sensitivity: We will be courteous, sensitive and helpful to our clients and will do away with unnecessary bureaucracy.
- Energy: We will be energetic and proactive in pursuing issues of discrimination.
- Efficiency: We will carry out our functions and responsibilities with efficiency and will use our resources efficiently, effectively and responsibly.
- Transparency: We will operate with a high degree of transparency to enable the public to better understand our work and performance.
- Independence: We will act freely and independently within the confines of the law and will not be subject to undue influence or pressure.
- Accountability: We will be accountable to the public for our decisions and actions and will submit ourselves to whatever scrutiny that is appropriate.

### 3 Our Strategic Priorities 2016 – 2019

The EOC is guided in its mandate by the provisions of the anti-discrimination ordinances and the Plan provides a framework of reference to operationalise the EOC's mandate. The Plan, overarched by the EOC's corporate goals, provides a statement of intent on how we want to address priority issues of equal opportunities and anti-discrimination in the Hong Kong community for the duration of the Plan.

We reckon that in order to be effective, we must target our work and resources at a diverse range of members in the community so that we can create deeper impact. Therefore, we have identified five priority areas which provide thematic focuses across all areas of our work for the next three years. By implementing different programmes, and establishing partnerships with related parties, we aim to attain our Vision. These priorities are described in the next section, not in the order of their importance because each will create different impact in society.

Under each priority area, we have set out the respective focuses to illustrate our endeavours for creating significant and systemic impact on society in relation to the range of equality and anti-discrimination issues.

We are committed to continuous enhancement while conducting our work. Results and indicators pertinent to each of the strategic actions have been set accordingly. This framework of indicators not only ensures accountability and transparency, but also enables us to assess and evaluate our impact over time.

The Plan creates a common purpose for both the EOC Board Members and staff of the EOC Office. It seeks to establish a level of understanding regarding the direction the EOC is heading towards, while also directing different operational aspects. Some of the strategic actions will require partnerships with and the collaboration of other organisations, including the Government, the public and private sectors, non-profit-making organisations and other stakeholders and community groups. Based on the Plan, divisional, team and individual work plans would be formulated; and team/individual goals and targets, as well as the performance measurements and timelines would be developed and monitored.

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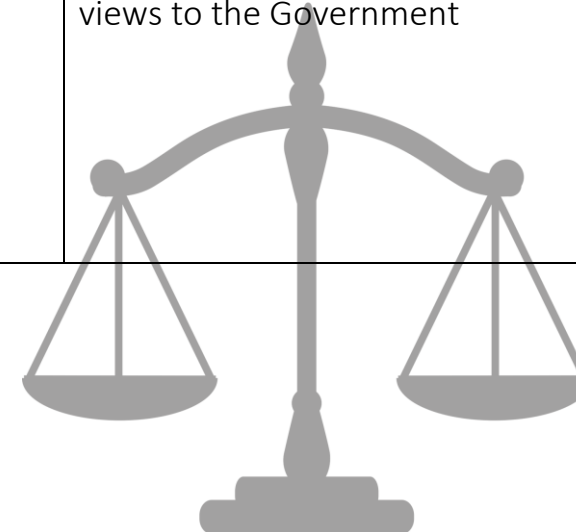
## Corporate Goal 1: Driving legislative improvement

### Priority Area: Pursue with the Government on the EOC's Discrimination Law Review (DLR) recommendations

The DLR has been the most comprehensive and far-reaching review of the anti-discrimination legislation ever conducted by the EOC. The review, which served to simplify, harmonise and modernise the anti-discrimination legislation, attracted overwhelming response from the public, with a total of 125,041 public responses (288 from organisations; 124,753 from individuals) collected during the consultation period in 2014. The DLR was completed in January 2016. A summary report was given to the Government via the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau (CMAB) of the Government in March 2016. It contains 73 key recommendations on law reforms, with 27 set out for priority actions. Subsequently the CMAB requested the EOC to provide further information relating to some of the law reform recommendations, and the EOC had duly done so.

Item	Thematic Focus	Strategic actions	Expected Results	Indicators
1.1	Prioritise issues for follow-up actions.	Closely liaise with the Government to take forward the DLR recommendations	Law amendments underway / implemented	Government gives active consideration to EOC's DLR recommendations and follow up on the legislative process  Liaison group between the EOC and CMAB set up to consider the DLR recommendations for implementation

				Support CMAB with available evidences of discrimination, examples of cases, statistics and information on overseas legislation and legal cases to assist them to take forward the DLR recommendations
		Engage key stakeholders to support the DLR recommendations		Key stakeholders advocate their support and reflect their views on the DLR to the Government
1.2	Solicit public support to the DLR recommendations.	Conduct public education programmes to facilitate understanding of the deficiencies of the existing anti-discrimination legislation and the importance / necessity of the proposed changes	As above	The public and key stakeholder groups advocate their support for the DLR and reflect their views to the Government



## Corporate Goal 2: Advancing the rights of Ethnic Minorities (EMs)

Priority Area: Advocate equal education and employment opportunities and access to services for Ethnic Minorities (EMs)





educational opportunities for EM students, striving to enhance the employment opportunities of EMs and seeking to remove language barriers and difficulties in accessing public services.

The Ethnic Minorities (EMs) form an integral part of Hong Kong and they constitute about 6% of Hong Kong's population.

The EOC is committed to empowering the EM communities so that they can enjoy equal access to the full spectrum of opportunities available in the city. With additional funding from the Government, the EOC set up an Ethnic Minority Unit (EM Unit) in 2015, adopting a three-pronged approach of policy advocacy, training and outreach in its work. Noticeable progress has been made through working with the Government, public organisations and some non-profit-making organisations on different fronts such as improving the equal



Item	Thematic Focus	Strategic actions	Expected Results	Indicators
2.1	Promote equal education and employment opportunities and access to services for EMs	Understand the needs of and the barriers faced by the EMs in the stated areas by collecting views and conducting researches	EMs are able to enjoy level-playing field in terms of their education and employment opportunities	Increased number of schools adopting fair admission and inclusive policies
		Encourage and support schools to develop inclusive policies		
		Monitor and make recommendations to the Government on effective implementation of policy in learning / teaching Chinese as a second language		Evidence shows that the Government's implementation of the Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework in schools is effective
		Connect with public and private sector employers and provide suggestions to promote equal opportunities for EMs in employment		Employers review the level of Chinese proficiency requirement for jobs to ensure that it is appropriate and that information on jobs and careers are made fully accessible to all applicants

		Provide suggestions to promote EMs' access to services in the public and private sectors	The particular needs / concerns of EMs on access to services are proactively addressed by relevant organisations	Improved access to services for EMs, including transport, health care, housing, banking and interpretation provided by public and private service operators
2.2	Empower EMs and promote cultural sensitivity	Provide training and education on cultural sensitivity, racial equality and anti-discrimination legislation to the key stakeholders	Barriers to equal opportunities for EMs are reduced / eliminated	<p>Better understanding of racial equality and cultural sensitivity among key stakeholders, which are conducive to providing appropriate support for EMs.</p> <p>EMs are more willing (with the support of NGOs as needed) to seek redress on the discrimination they face</p>



### Corporate Goal 3: Promoting the rights of Persons with Disabilities

Priority Area: Advocate equal education and employment opportunities and access to public services for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)



The EOC holds great concerns about the barriers faced by people with disabilities (PWDs), which prevent them from accessing equal opportunities in education, employment and participation in society.

In the EOC's submission to the Government under the DLR, the EOC has made a number of recommendations that aim to eliminate the discrimination faced by PWDs. For example, the EOC has recommended to the Government to amend the Disability Discrimination Ordinance (DDO) by introducing a distinct duty to make reasonable accommodation for PWDs in all relevant fields, including employment, education, and the provision of goods, services and facilities. The EOC has also recommended to the

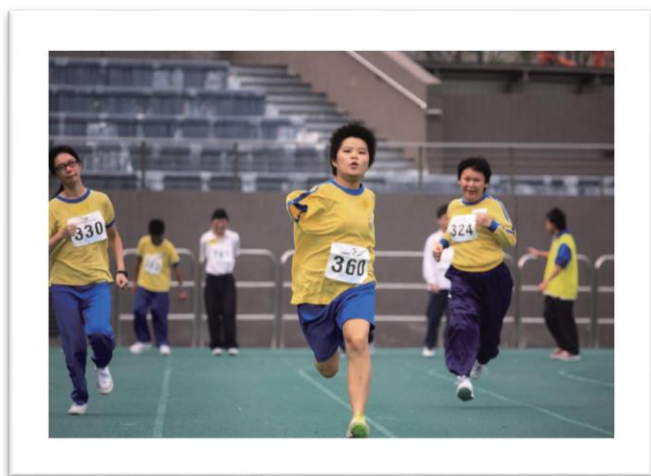
Government to conduct public consultation and research on introducing a public sector equality duty to promote equality and eliminate discrimination on all grounds, including disability.



Item	Thematic Focus	Strategic actions	Expected Results	Indicators
3.1	Promote integrated education for students with special educational needs (SEN)	Collaborate with the Government and key stakeholder groups to explore ways of enhancing support services for SEN students	Barriers to equal opportunities for SEN students in schools are reduced / eliminated	<p>Improved education and support services are made available for SEN students, their parents and teachers</p> <p>Programmes to promote inclusive school environment are organised</p>
3.2	Promote employment opportunities for PWDs	Collaborate with key stakeholder groups to improve employment opportunities for PWDs	Employment opportunities for PWDs are improved with more in gainful employment	<p>Seminars and campaigns on hiring of PWDs are organised to promote their employment opportunities</p> <p>Employers have a better understanding of the DDO and misconception on employing PWDs are gradually removed</p> <p>Employers who regularly employ PWDs are engaged to share their experiences and best practices for reference by other employers</p>

3.3	Promote accessibility of public transport	Promote accessible air travel for PWDs	Policies and practices are adopted by the local airlines to promote accessible air travel by PWDs	Support of stakeholders in the airline industry, travel agencies and disability groups on accessible air travel is enlisted, and a guide for accessible air travel is developed for persons with disabilities and/or reduced mobility
		Advocate improvement of the accessibility of local public transport services	Policies and good practices are adopted by local public transport operators to promote accessible transport by PWDs	Recommendations on the accessibility of local public transport services through research endeavours are released and ways to improve accessibility of local public transport services are pursued with the Government and key stakeholder groups
3.4	Promote inclusion of discharged mental health patients in the community	Lobby for inclusion of discharged mental health patients in the community through collaboration with NGOs, concern groups and the Government	Better awareness and understanding of the needs and increased acceptance of discharged mental patients among community members	Increased awareness of the importance of integrating discharged mental patients in the community

		Lobby the support of community leaders regarding the siting of Integrated Community Centres for Mental Wellness and identify effective approaches to reducing public opposition in the siting of these centres and other mental health facilities		Researches and seminars / campaigns are conducted to improve public understanding and reduce opposition in the siting of mental health facilities
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## Corporate Goal 4: Address prevalent discrimination and harassment issues and promote diversity and inclusion

Priority Area: Foster a safe environment free from discrimination and harassment



The EOC recognises its role as a forerunner and driver in mainstreaming values of equality and fostering a friendly environment in the Hong Kong community free from discrimination and harassment. Particular areas of concerns have been identified.

Preventing sexual harassment in different domains and sectors remains an ongoing commitment of the EOC, given the negative impact of this unlawful act on both individuals and organisations. On average, about 30% of the 300-plus complaints received by the EOC under the Sex Discrimination Ordinance each year are related to sexual harassment in the workplace.




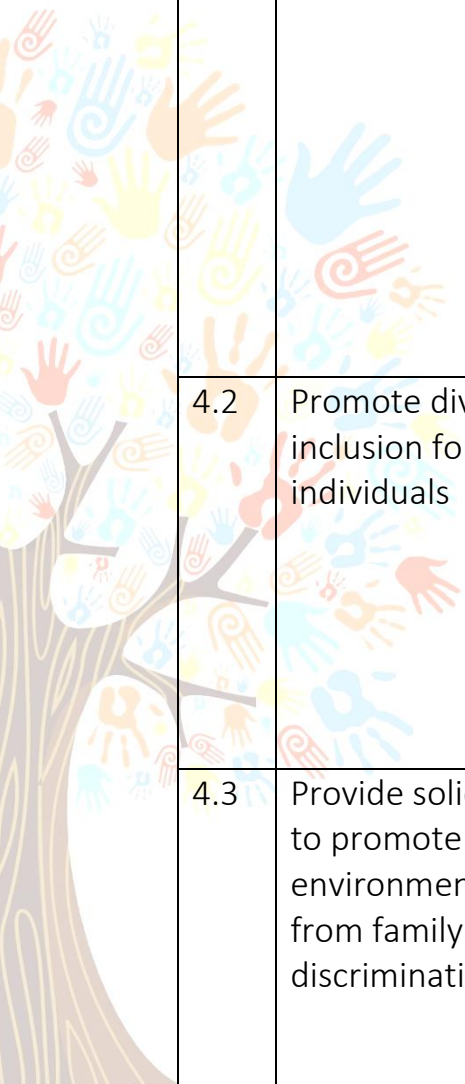


With a strong evidence base, the EOC has been advocating on various discriminatory issues. One of the attention areas is discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status. In addition, the EOC has urged the Government to give further consideration to explore claims about possible discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief.

In January 2016, the EOC released the findings of the “Exploratory Study on Age Discrimination in Employment”, which indicates that age discrimination is a common occurrence in Hong Kong’s workplace. The most common forms of discrimination included receiving lower salaries, being denied a job promotion, and being targeted for redundancy in organisational re-structuring. Ageist stereotypes remain common, which feed discriminatory behaviour in the workplace. These perceptions pose a barrier to ensuring that our human resources are best deployed for the city’s continuous development.

Item	Thematic Focus	Strategic actions	Expected Results	Indicators
4.1	Continue the Anti-Sexual Harassment Campaign	Promote anti-sexual harassment in various sectors in particular the social service sector through targeted campaigns	Better awareness of sexual harassment and the legal requirements, policies and procedures adopted to prevent sexual harassment by targeted sectors	Seminars and training on sexual harassment issues and ways of tackling them are continuously provided to the public and private sectors

		<p>Raise the awareness of sexual harassment among parents/relatives/carers of social service users with disabilities through training endeavours</p> <p>Raise awareness of sexual harassment among new immigrants through research endeavours</p>	<p>NGOs and private operators providing social services are facilitated to formulate anti-sexual harassment policies and /related preventive measures and take part in the targeted campaigns against sexual harassment</p> <p>Enhanced understanding of sexual harassment among parents/relatives/carers of social service users with disabilities on their rights under the law and channels of redressing grievances</p> <p>Based on research findings, recommendations on raising the awareness of the rights under the SDO among new immigrants are pursued with relevant stakeholders</p>
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			Examine knowledge and victimisation experience of sexual harassment among new female immigrants in the service industries through research	Based on research findings, knowledge of sexual harassment and victimisation experience among female Mainland Chinese immigrants are used for the development of targeted campaigns and training for relevant stakeholder groups to prevent sexual harassment
4.2	Promote diversity and inclusion for LGBTI individuals	Promote non-discrimination of persons with different sexual orientations and gender identity, and advocate diversity and inclusion	Greater acceptance and respect and reduced bias for LGBTI persons	Positive feedback on the publicity and educational campaigns conducted to enhance acceptance of persons with different sexual orientation and gender identity; and prejudice against LGBTI persons are reduced
4.3	Provide solid evidence to promote a working environment free from family status discrimination	Examine the knowledge and prevalence of family status discrimination in the Hong Kong workplace through research	Family status discrimination in the workplace is reduced / eliminated	Findings of the researches will be used to develop recommendations for the Government to consider implementing policy changes so as to eliminate family status discrimination

## Corporate Goal 5: Striving for organisational excellence

### Priority Area: Deliver better services for the community



We will improve our internal capability by enhancing our organisational culture, developing and enhancing the competencies and expertise of staff to perform our role effectively, and implementing employment practices which align with equal opportunities.

We will continue to foster effectiveness and expertise in our staff and in our work and strive to keep pace with the development of Hong Kong, as the community undergoes significant changes.



Item	Thematic Focus	Strategic actions	Expected Results	Indicators
5.1	Develop a service charter	Draw up a service charter to reflect the EOC's commitment to delivering quality and cost-effective services	The public has a high regard for EOC's work	<p>A service charter spelling out the service standards and confines of the EOC's services to be in place</p> <p>EOC staff members are equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to meet service standards</p>
5.2	Promulgate an updated Vision and Mission statements of the EOC	Review and revise the EOC's Vision, Mission statements so that they accurately state what the EOC's organisational values are and what the EOC intends to achieve	EOC's Vision and Mission will be the guiding principles of its work and intended achievements	<p>Public feedback on the EOC's work is positive</p> <p>The EOC's Vision, Mission statements, Core Values and Service Pledges are updated to reflect the EOC's mandate and its service standards</p>
5.3	Communicate the EOC values through popular platforms	Promote EO values to the public through existing and new platforms including the social media	Demonstrate the EOC's commitment and accountability and mainstream EO values in society	Increased positive coverage of equal opportunities issues in mainstream media and the web and other media to demonstrate effective reach to the general community and targeted audiences

		Engage and develop close rapport with NGOs/other organisations to help promote EO values		Closer ties and collaboration with partner organisations are evident through joint initiatives, programmes and projects in promoting EO values
5.4	Engage the younger generation on the EOC's work	Reach out to the younger generation via popular platforms among young people, including the social media	Greater awareness on EO legislation, concepts, values and a more supportive stand of the EOC's work among young people	<p>Projects / campaigns organised for young people on equal opportunities receive positive feedback</p> <p>Research endeavours to provide the EOC with insight into young people's knowledge and attitudes towards equal opportunities and anti-discrimination for formulating future publicity and educational strategies</p>
5.5	Streamline EOC policies, procedures and practices to ensure efficiency and effectiveness of our service provision	Review and where appropriate re-engineer policies and operational procedures and case-handling protocols to improve internal efficiencies and cross-team collaboration	Work efficiency and effectiveness are achieved	Efficiency gained in terms of productivity and service improvements for the benefits of service users and stakeholder groups are evident

5.6	Devise strategies to cope with EOC's staffing and financial challenges	Implement initiatives and programmes to restore budgetary surplus and rebuild a healthy financial reserve balance	The EOC maintains a healthy financial position and staff members have the capacity to manage its work effectively and achieve the EOC's objectives	Actual expense of the EOC is kept within the Government's subvention, while resources are deployed effectively to deliver services according to the evolving needs of the community
		Continuously commit to capacity building and workforce development with refined human resource strategies		The overall productivity is enhanced with the application of refined human resources strategies

## Contacts

This document and related equal opportunities resources are available from the EOC's website: [www.eoc.org.hk](http://www.eoc.org.hk).

For advice, information or enquiry about equal opportunities or discrimination issues in the areas of sex, disabilities, race and family status, please contact us through the following:

Enquiry hotline: 2511 8211

Fax: 2511 8142

Address: 19/F, Cityplaza Three, 14 Taikoo Wan Road, Taikoo Shing, Hong Kong

E-mail: [eoc@eoc.org.hk](mailto:eoc@eoc.org.hk)



平等機會委員會  
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMISSION